

UN's Balancing Strategy for Controversial Issues

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ABSTRACT. *There is no shortage of heat and intensity in international controversial issues, because they involve the interests, rights and claims of the state, and some of them even involve the ideology of the state. When promoting the issues of international disputes, the United Nations information dissemination system uses the three sharp tools of openness, fairness and justice to deal with the three major problems of distortion, dishonesty and imbalance faced by current international disputes. By fully revealing the real intention of both sides of the dispute, equally expressing the views of both sides, separating facts from values and other specific means of communication, the international dispute issues are promoted in a balanced way. It is of great significance to promote international disputes in a balanced way: first, it can bridge different ideological divergences; Second, it can balance the stance difference of different countries*

KEYWORDS: *Controversial issues; Balancing strategy*

With the emergence of the state, the interaction and development between the states began. International disputes, including between state actors and non-state actors, may arise because of differences among states in their interests, claims, rights, demands and even in their understanding of objective facts. A wide range of disputes, queries, support and even dissenting voices to international disputes will form a public opinion field with "opinion diversification" in the international community, and "international controversial issues" will generate immediately. There are two key structural elements in international controversial issues: first, the issues are closely related to the interests of the international public and are sufficiently focused; Second, the international public has formed pluralistic opinions on such issues, including support, objection and neutrality, which are controversial and conflicting, such as the Palestinian-Israeli issue, the Iranian nuclear issue, gender identity, and the death penalty.

International disputes often involve the vital interests of the international public, national political criteria and international social ethics, etc. Therefore, different social actors will try to participate in the meaning scramble. When screening certain facts and elaborating them, their views will be intentionally or unintentionally added,

playing a subtle role. As today's most universal, authoritative and pluralistic international organization, what ideas the United Nations adheres to in dealing with issues of international controversy and how to drive the trend of the issues have an impact on the international public cognition and public opinion.

1. Difficulties to promote issues of international disputes

Basically, there are three difficulties in promoting issues of international disputes now as follows.

1.1 The political tendency of the media leading to information discredit

The far-reaching influence and extensive coverage of media politicization make it difficult for news organizations to realize freedom and justice in a real sense in the face of politics. In abnormal periods (emergencies and wars), especially in the state of war in which national interests are paramount, "some media basically accept wholly all kinds of policies adopted by the authorities without reservation". This media-political interaction attached to the state reflects the role of the participants, collaborators and Allies of the media under the political stranglehold. Of course, not all media will become political advocates, but if they run counter to national policies, the media will be marginalized and ultimately disappear. The essence of information dissemination lies in the dissemination of truth, which is infinitely close to the truth, while the dissemination contaminated by politics will degenerate into "pseudo-dissemination" or even "anti-dissemination". When the medium is controlled by the national government or the communication agencies under its control, their ideological orientation will erode the dissemination and distort the reality of information, and when faced with the controversial issues involving national interests, it will be further intensified, leading to information discredited to the public. "Herbert Marcuse notes: "can people really distinguish a mass media between being a tool for news and entertainment and being instilling and manipulating power?" He hits the nail on the head by pointing out that the state media is ideological and a propaganda tool of the government.

1.2 The difference of strength brings about the imbalance of public opinion between the two sides of the dispute

As early as the 1980s, UNESCO conducted a survey on the global information distribution pattern and resource distribution, and published the *McBride Report*. The survey indicated that the imbalance and inequity of the international communication order has been long-standing. Even to this day, the global information structure imbalance is still the same, and the increasingly fierce wave of media convergence and merger, and the updated new media technology have further deepened the information gap.

Due to historical factors, geographical environment, natural material resources,

economic development and other factors, there are differences between big countries and small countries, powerful countries and weak countries, and poor countries and rich countries. If international controversial issues occur between countries with different strengths, the media machines of big countries, powerful countries and rich countries are usually more powerful, and they have a natural advantage in promoting issues; While the media power of small, weak and poor countries is relatively weak and often at a disadvantage. In today's global communication pattern, the United States, due to its numerous super advantages in economy, culture, politics, military, media, language and other aspects, has the superpower to spread and influence global public opinion. The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, China, India, Japan and other countries are capable of carrying out cross-regional news, culture and media communication in the world, partly influencing international public opinion, which are major cross - regional transmission powers in the global communication pattern. By virtue of specific cultural or linguistic advantages, countries such as Mexico and Brazil in Latin America, Qatar, United Arab Emirates in Arabia and South Korea in Asia, target specific regions and audiences for media communication, are emerging communication countries in the global communication pattern, with the ability to influence local public opinion. It should be noted that in today's world, many countries are still in a passive receiving position in global communication, and some countries even do not have their own professional communication agencies. In short, nowadays, the whole world opinion field is out of balance.

1.3 Paid news giving rise to distortion of information on controversial issues

In the international community, some international media or think tanks sell paid information for economic benefits and disseminate biased information on international controversial issues, which leads to turmoil and even confusing right and wrong of international public opinion on some international controversial issues.

For example, the United States utilizes the "foreign media development" program to subsidize and support agents to influence international opinion. The so-called "foreign media development" project is essentially a project that the quango, in the guise of an NGO, finances a number of foreign media organizations, journalists' associations, university journalism departments, journalistic training institutions and journalists, covering more than 70 countries and regions. Isabelle McDonnell, Director of Communications for "fair and accurate reporting", a press watchdog based in New York, points out, the so-called "foreign media development" program, while claiming to be "adherence to the principle of objectivity," often does anti-democratic things, including "stirring up dissension and helping the U.S. government spread rumors, which is ultimately about serving the goals of American foreign policy. When the diplomatic policy goal of the United States is to subvert the regimes of other countries, these programs become tools for the United States to undermine the elected governments of other countries.

2. UN 's balancing strategy for controversial issues

The United Nations information dissemination system responds to the current situation of international disputes concerning "breach of trust, distortion and imbalance" with the principle of "openness, fairness and justice", committed to the balanced promotion of issues of international controversy, including full disclosure of information of both sides of disputes, balanced expression of views of both sides of disputes, and separation of facts and values.

2.1 Openness: full disclosure of information on both sides of the dispute

Information disclosure provides institutional and policy security for international controversial issues to enter the vision of the international community, which promotes more transparent and smooth communication of information on international controversial issues. Only by publicly disclosing, updating and tracking the background, continuations, changes and status quo of international controversial issues, without interpretation out of context or catching a glimpse, and trying to restore the true face of the disputes, to provide as adequate, complete and truthful information as possible for the resolution of disputes, can the international audience have an overall understanding of these issues. The large amount of raw material retained by the United Nations' Dag Hammarskjold Library and the latest news material provided by the United Nations and its partners provide sufficient preparation for the publicity of information on controversial international issues. The United Nations not only conveys important arguments related to international controversial issues, but also the underlying arguments, reasons and other substantial information to the international public, which is different from seditious or verbal offensive and defensive presentation information. Its purpose is to help the public grasp the reference points for considering issues, to help shape their views. The development of new media provides a new platform for the dissemination of international controversial issues. At present, the new media adopted by the UN information dissemination system include the Internet and mobile phone based on digital technology and network technology. One of the important features of new media is its strong interaction. It is the "person-to-person transmission", which provides a technology convenient platform for the spread of international controversial issues. "New media is a new channel for the dissemination of international controversial issues, with unparalleled speed and scope."

2.2 Fairness: a balanced presentation of both sides of a dispute

All parties to the dispute, big or small, strong or weak, can make equal use of the UN as a public forum to express their opinions and participate in the policy review process related to the topic. The UN does not take sides, thus avoiding a situation in which a minority controls public discourse. Through full communication and active mediation, the conflict between the two parties to the dispute is prevented from escalating, which provides a prerequisite for negotiation and even reconciliation.

The United Nations information dissemination system adopts a "conflict-balanced" mode of communication on international controversial issues, that is, it enumerates the main arguments of the pros and cons in a balanced manner. Neuman, W. Russell, an American communication scholar, stated that "the conflict framework can be regarded as the product of traditional news value judgment and balanced reporting. It is common in controversial public issues and often presents in the form of balanced opposition, which is a convenient method for the media to maintain the objective form". A fair attitude and equal expression of the views of both sides of the dispute are the basis for separating facts from values. However, it is far from enough just to express the views of both sides equally, which is easy to get into a dilemma. It is necessary to complete the conversion from the polarization paradigm highlighting of "de-publicity" to the paradigm of dialogue and consultation, emphasizing the transition of communication from conflict to construction.

2.3 Justice: the separation of facts from values

Controversial public issue is usually an open issue, which does not simply fall into the category of binary moral judgment of "good and bad" or "good and evil", but a question of negotiation and trade-off of multiple values. There are many controversial issues in the international community, which seem to be the two extremes of "black and white" debate, but in fact there are still many possibilities between these two extremes, namely "grey zone". This zone is made up of various possibilities, the combination of which is caused by people with different cultures and values. When people with different values have different imagination about the environment, their imagination content determines the result of the environment being created. The impartial attitude is to carry out the objective information dissemination to the facts and prohibit taking a public position in communication. The separation of facts and values is the trust of facts and the distrust of values, and the commitment to separate them in the process of information dissemination. In modern society, the international public is increasingly dependent on the media information, and the perception of the world and the construction of values are increasingly dependent on the media information window. As the field of meaning construction and competition of the international community, the United Nations' dissemination of international controversial issues is substantially a process of communication, competition and consultation of heterogeneous speech and pluralistic values in this "public domain". In line with the principle of maximizing the global public interest, the United Nations information dissemination system releases the multiple aspects of the intrinsic interests and value orientation of disputes through consultation and dialogue to seek the "broadest possible social consensus".

3. The significance of balancing controversial issues

Disputes and conflicts are inherent in human nature. "Conflict is impossible to

eliminate in human society", which is an unavoidable course in complex society, with both positive and negative functions. Under certain conditions, disputes and conflicts have such positive functions as guaranteeing social continuity, reducing the possibility of polar opposites, preventing the social system from rigidity, enhancing the adaptability of social organizations and facilitating social integration. Conflict and controversy are not in themselves to be feared, the key lies in whether a society has the mechanism and channel to lubricate the conflict and moderate the dispute and conflict. The United Nations has won more than 70 years of relative peace for the world, among which, the United Nations information dissemination system has played an important role in promoting the balanced development of international controversial issues: releasing the anxiety of the international community, resolving the contradictions in the international community, reconstructing pluralistic values, and promoting the harmonious development of the international community.

3.1 Bridging the different ideological divergence

Ideological contradictions can not be completely resolved, which can only be softened. Because ideology itself is elastic, the degree to which it can be resolved is malleable. To further explain it, on a practical level, ideology is actually a systematic assertion of human existence and development. The content of this assertion is vast and complex, covering all aspects of human life. But at the most basic level of values, there is a lot of common ground to be found, with few truly irreconcilable views. At the level of system pattern, since the end of the cold war at the end of last century, the trend of convergence or mixing has become more and more evident, and there is actually a relatively large flexible space. So how can the ideological differences between the two sides of the international dispute be expanded? The open, fair and impartial information intermediary of the United Nations information dissemination system can soften the rigidity of ideology, reduce the intensity of confrontation and conflict, and expand the space of compatibility.

3.2 Balancing differences in the positions of different countries

Even among different countries with the same or similar ideology, there will be differences in national positions. The United Nations is the international organization with the largest number of member states in the world, including 193 countries and regions, which is the largest arena for balancing differences in national positions. With the spirit of turning swords into plowshares, and through the balanced promotion of international controversial issues, the United Nations enables the disputing parties to mitigate the stand-off situation and even win reconciliation. It is the best weapon for conflict prevention.

The balanced way of reporting provides a platform for the audiences for all sides of the dispute to understand the truth in an all-round and multi-perspective way, which is specifically embodied in many aspects, such as the balances of information, views, the strength of the report, and the release time, etc., so as to avoid the error of being blinded by our own perspectives in dissemination. No one is better appropriate

for the role of "explaining the world to the world" than the United Nations information dissemination agency. The United Nations represents a fundamental shift from a war culture to a peace culture: the replacement of bombs and bullets with cooperation and compromise. The United Nations is the most representative international organization in which all nations, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, have the same right to voice and vote. Only in the United Nations, the forum of public opinion, can the voices of nations be heard, and all nations can express their views here, for, against or in the middle.

4. Conclusion

When promoting the issues of international disputes, the United Nations information dissemination system uses three sharp tools of openness, fairness and justice to deal with the three major problems of distortion, dishonesty and imbalance faced by current international disputes. By fully revealing the real intention of both sides of the dispute, equally expressing the views of both sides, separating facts from values and other specific means of communication, the international dispute issues are promoted in a balanced way. It is of great significance to promote international disputes in a balanced way: on one hand, it can bridge different ideological divergences; on the other hand, it can balance the stance difference of different countries

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