



Localization And Globalization, The Complexities and Strategies of Establishing Local International Communication Centers in China

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Abstract. The global communication strategy has demonstrated a shift towards utilizing local media platforms rather than national-level media, with numerous international communication centers now in operation. The establishment and operation of these centers are considered crucial for bolstering China's overall international communication capabilities. This study concentrates on the construction of local international communication centers in China, with "lobalization" as the research perspective, exploring the diversified paths for local international communication centers to engage in international communication. Additionally, it outlines the practical challenges encountered in local initiatives, aiming to offer valuable insights for the establishment of regional international communication centers.

Keywords: International Communication, Path Innovation, Communication Strategy.

1 Introduction

Currently, the phenomena of globalization and mediation have transcended temporal and spatial boundaries, facilitating diverse interactions among various cultural paradigms, with local entities actively integrating themselves into the global communication framework. In the 1990s, Roland Robertson highlighted the absence of a pure form of globalization, as countries or regions typically adapt and modify foreign cultures and ideas to suit their specific contexts when incorporating them. Consequently, globalization frequently materializes as a type of glocalization (global localization) .^[1] A related notion to glocalization is llobalization, also referred to as "local globalization," which suggests that local possess attributes and possibilities for global recognition and acceptance. This concept represents an advancement from the initial idea of localization, essentially signifying a connection to local while engaging with the global sphere,^[2] promoting the interaction between local and global perspectives in a subject-specific approach, reinvigorating cultural customs through the lens of local subjectivity, and leveraging this as a means to generate and cultivate cultural assets unique to the local region.^[3]According to the theory of "lobalization", the local international

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communication center should adopt an assertive approach towards engaging with the global sphere in international communication efforts. It is imperative for nations characterized by cultural diversity to formulate specific and culturally-sensitive external communication tactics for their interactions with foreign entities. This strategic approach aims to cultivate favorable perceptions among the populace of the target country and foster a constructive and empathetic communication outcome.^[4]

The construction of local international communication centers started in 2018, with the establishment of the Chongqing International Communication Center as a milestone, marking the beginning of the process of local globalization. According to this article, since May 31, 2021, up to December 31, 2023, there have been over 30 local international communication institutions in China named "International Communication Center". Different cities have utilized local media resources and characteristics to carry out communication activities, becoming an indispensable force for the innovative development of international communication in China. The local international communication center is currently confronted with the challenge of effectively preserving indigenous knowledge and culture while also striking a harmonious equilibrium between local distinctiveness and a global outlook. Additionally, there is a need to convert the concept of "glocalization" into "lobalization" and to achieve "lobalization through glocalization," among other pertinent issues.^[5] Consequently, the task at hand is formidable. This article commences by examining the theoretical framework of "glocalization and llobalization" to investigate how the existing local international communication center can navigate the complexities of globalization and local subjectivity. It delves into the genuine communication dilemmas encountered in practice and proposes innovative communication strategies to tackle the practical concern of facilitating the transition of localities towards the global sphere.

2 Departure From the Local Context: Addressing the Local Challenges Encountered by Local International Communication Centers

2.1 Only Integrated Orientation, Inadequate Highlighting of Local Characteristics

International communication in China has undergone a notable shift from a centralized approach to a more decentralized, multi-party collaboration model at the local level. This transition is driven by the country's vast geographical expanse and significant variations in economic policies and cultural practices across different regions. Consequently, there is a pressing need for each region to strike a balance between leveraging its unique local advantages and aligning with the broader national international communication strategy. The establishment of local international communication centers has revealed certain challenges, including a lack of distinct local identity, ambiguous positioning, and difficulties in showcasing regional characteristics. For instance, institutions like the Ou Hai International Communication Center, operating at the county level, often face issues related to limited resources and insufficient experi-

ence, which can hinder their ability to maintain a leading role in collaborations with central-level media outlets. While central-level media possess advanced technological capabilities and extensive coverage, their understanding of local cultures may be lacking, thereby impeding the effective highlighting of regional nuances in communication content.

2.2 Lack of Local Appeal, Lack of Attention to the Overseas Chinese Community

General Secretary Xi Jinping highlighted that the historical prominence of the Chinese nation globally has been attributed not to military conquests or territorial expansions, but rather to the profound allure and influence of Chinese culture.^[6] Recent data indicates that the collective population of overseas Chinese and individuals of Chinese descent worldwide has surpassed 67 million. Overseas Chinese communication plays a significant role in international communication, encompassing various communication recipients such as overseas Chinese individuals, their domestic relatives, and the broader overseas Chinese community.^[7] Hence, it is imperative to incorporate local cultures within the global framework, particularly focusing on the requirements of overseas Chinese and other international audiences. This integration should acknowledge the distinctiveness of local cultures and emphasize their attractiveness. By showcasing public cultural venues and the everyday practices of local residents that embody communal memories, a sense of nostalgia and attachment to their hometown can be evoked. In addition, other international communication audiences are no longer indistinguishable and vague masses, but specific groups with common cultural orientations. How to find the "lowest common denominator" among different users, how to choose a communication style that can convey local culture and be easily accepted, is another challenge for local international communication centers to enhance their local appeal.

3 Local Subjectivity, the Globalization Challenges of Local International Communication Centers

3.1 Focus on Local, Difficulty in Finding Local International Communication Talents

International communication, as an important strategic layout at the national level in China, has seen specific practices decentralized from the central government to local levels, showing a trend of multiple entities working together. However, due to the vast expanse of China and significant differences in economic policies and cultural customs among regions, how local areas can balance their localization advantages with the overall international communication strategy has become a pressing issue that needs to be clarified and addressed. In the construction process of local international communication centers, there are characteristics of both cooperation with central media and political media, but the "local" entity's stance is not clear, its position is not prominent,

and local characteristics are difficult to highlight. Many international communication institutions that have been decentralized to districts and counties, such as the Ou-Hi International Communication Center, have weak foundations and limited experience, making it easy to lose dominance in the process of cooperation with central-level media. Additionally, central-level media have high technological capabilities and a strong presence in communication, but they lack a deep understanding of local cultures, making it challenging to highlight local characteristics in communication content.

3.2 Local Communication Platform, Difficulty in Establishing an International Flow Pool

In the news industry, the concept of a "basic platform" plays a significant role in influencing various aspects of news production, distribution, and commercialization by introducing new data services and associated functionalities. In the field of international communication, the domestication and restriction of content by foreign social media platforms remain a problem. Chinese foreign media accounts have not been able to occupy the most central position in the communication network, and the lack of interaction with other nodes on Twitter has prevented the full transformation of social capital into the field, and the formation of widespread and effective information dissemination.^[8] Studies have identified that local international communication hubs face issues related to platform adaptation, such as the implementation of policies like "tagging" and "flow restriction" by foreign social media platforms for political reasons, which impact the dissemination of content. Additionally, the absence of a dominant communication platform further complicates the ability of local international communication centers to establish a subjective communication standpoint.

4 How to Achieve "Local Globalization"? Future Paths for the Construction of Local International Communication Centers

4.1 Dialogue With Neighbors, Achieving Precise Neighboring Communication

In October 2023, President Xi Jinping delivered a written address during the 10th-anniversary international seminar commemorating the principles of sincerity, real results, affinity, and good faith in China's neighborhood diplomacy. This address serves as a foundational directive for advancing new developments in China's relationships with neighboring nations, regional unity, openness, and advancement, and offers a fundamental framework for our efforts in fostering communication with neighboring countries.^[9] The nearby interactions are rooted in countries and regions that share geographical proximity, cultural similarities, familial ties, common customs, and a shared language, along with natural and intimate historical and contemporary connections between the entities involved.^[10] The International Communication Center engages in peripheral communication efforts aimed at neighboring countries, facilitating the transcending of sovereign boundaries. Communication responsibilities are shared among communication bodies, government agencies, and local communities, effec-

tively utilizing both traditional official channels and various multi-dimensional communication channels involving local logistics and personnel exchanges. This strategy capitalizes on geographical proximity, cultural similarities, racial affinities, shared traditions, and linguistic connections to facilitate direct communication across distances and time with neighboring countries, enabling local regions to actively participate in dialogues with neighboring nations.

4.2 Exploring Local Characteristics, Expanding the Treasure of Chinese Cultural Resources

In order to carry out international communication that showcases local characteristics, we must conduct in-depth study and understanding of the local cultural features. Compared to the overall cultural characteristics of our country, the characteristics of local culture often lie in its primitive nature, deep-rooted connection with the local environment, intergenerational transmission and uniqueness to the region and ethnic group. This type of culture embodies the original and pure cultural essence of the region.^[11] Local international exchange centers are required to engage in thorough investigations of indigenous specialty goods, cultural traditions, and historical narratives. For instance, the Sichuan International Communication Center adeptly leverages its regional cultural resources, such as the natural habitat of giant pandas, to showcase genuine Sichuan narratives through the lens of giant panda culture. Similarly, the Dunhuang International Communication Center actively highlights the cultural attributes of Dunhuang murals, capitalizing on their distinct local characteristics as strategic assets in international communication endeavors.

4.3 Build Local Teams and Emphasize the Training of International Talents

Xi Jinping underscored the imperative of comprehensively improving the efficacy of international communication and establishing a specialized talent pool tailored to the demands of international communication in the contemporary era. The international news communication education model in our country has been structured around four primary modules: "national education, integrated news business, foreign languages, and media internships."^[12] Facing this situation, there is a need to develop a cohort of international communication professionals tailored to local cultural nuances, with a focus on specific countries and regions. The local international communication center can closely cooperate with local universities to cultivate a team like this, where team members not only have a deep understanding of the local history and culture, but also have a comprehensive understanding of international communication policies and a global perspective.

5 Conclusion

The establishment of local international communication centers is a comprehensive endeavor that necessitates coordinated efforts across various dimensions. By engaging in effective communication with neighboring regions, fostering an intelligent ecosystem, leveraging local characteristics, collaborating with foreign entities, and prioritizing the development of international talent, we are poised to address existing challenges and advance the establishment of these centers. This initiative aims to empower local entities to interact with the global community with a unique perspective, facilitating the globalization of local regions. Moving forward, local international communication centers are expected to continue playing a pivotal role in the realm of international communication, contributing significantly to the dissemination of Chinese narratives, amplifying China's voice, and offering an authentic, diverse, and comprehensive portrayal of the country.

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