

Study of the National Image Propaganda Film on the Shaping of the National Image in China's Public Diplomacy

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Abstract

With the advent of the era of globalization and the rise of the wave of the information revolution, international public opinion and national image have become necessary considerations for a country to realize its national interests in the international community. The outbreak of the global epidemic in the past two years has pushed China to the center of public opinion again, threatening China's national image. This once again reminds us that we should use public diplomacy to carry out the long-term strategic task of building an excellent national image. My country has used national image propaganda films to shape the image of a peaceful, open, and friendly big country. Some of these experiences are worth learning from, and some problems are worth reflecting on and discussing. Taking the Chinese national image propaganda films "Character" and "Angle" as examples, combined with Lasswell's 5W theory, this paper discusses the advantages and difficulties of using national image propaganda films to shape national image in China's public diplomacy. We provide some constructive solutions to the difficulties and problems encountered by our predecessors, look to the future, and look forward to the development direction of shaping China's national image.

Keywords

China's Public Diplomacy; National Image; Image Building; Laswell's 5W Theory; National Image Propaganda Film.

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of the process of globalization and the rise of the wave of the information revolution, it has become a necessary consideration for a country to achieve faster and better development in the international community, enhance its comprehensive strength, and realize its national interests, international public opinion, and national image. Moreover, public diplomacy can use the media to improve a country's status in public opinion by shaping an excellent national image and then better serve the realization of national interests. In public diplomacy, national image propaganda films, as an intuitive way of film and television, are an excellent way to enhance the national image in contemporary times.

Due to the global epidemic outbreak, China has again fallen into the whirlpool of public opinion. The "Chinese virus theory," "China's redemption theory," and "false propaganda theory" have emerged one after another, seriously threatening my country's peaceful, friendly and open national image, making China's international status weakened. Therefore, my country must revise its national image through public diplomacy and enhance its national image simultaneously.

In the past ten years, China has made many national image propaganda films, such as "Character," which is full of celebrities, and "Angle," which is rich in content. These promotional films have different themes, shooting techniques, content, and effects. By analyzing the achievements of our predecessors, we can gain valuable experience to present a better national image propaganda film to the foreign public to win the people's hearts.

Based on the above research background, the author attempts to discover and explain in this article: (1) In the era of globalization and the information age, the vital role of national image propaganda films in public diplomacy; (2) Combined with the "Laswell 5W theory", Analyze what difficulties China's practice has encountered and the hidden problems behind it; (3) Thirdly, combined with "Laswell's 5W Theory" to analyze how China can improve the quality of national image promotional films in the future, to achieve a better effect of improving national image, to help public diplomacy(Zhao 2011).

2. The Role of National Propaganda Films

With the advent of the era of globalization and informatization, the formation and rapid development of the global village have made public opinion an essential factor in a country's diplomacy. The construction and promotion of a country's image depend on the recognition of its citizens and are influenced by international public opinion. Furthermore, public diplomacy is a country in order to improve its popularity, reputation, and recognition, the central government and other subjects entrust domestic or foreign social actors to conduct two-way communication with the foreign public through communication, public relations, media, and other means to clarify information, A means of disseminating knowledge and shaping value to serve the realization of national interests better. Therefore, building an excellent national image through public diplomacy, enhancing international public opinion, and realizing national interests, has received more and more attention.

Building an excellent national image is the top priority of public diplomacy. Sun Youzhong and Professor Guan Wenhui believe that a country's image is a combination of many factors and is the general understanding and evaluation of a country by the external and internal public. Li Zhengguo scholars believe that the national image consists of three essential aspects: "my image," "another image," and "displaced image." "I imagine" is a self-recognition that a country pursues subjectively and hopes to be recognized internationally; the objective basis of "other image" is the comprehensive national strength, which is influenced by cultural differences and is the image of a country in the hearts of the public in other countries; "Image" refers to the dislocation difference between the above two images due to cultural differences, blocked communication, and different ideologies. It is an obstacle and barrier in public diplomacy and needs to be reduced continuously. Based on the viewpoints of many scholars, this paper believes that the national image is divided in terms of structure, composed of internal and external images and dislocated images, and contains political, economic, social, cultural, and geographical factors in content. Overall impression and evaluation from multiple angles (Wang 2022). Therefore, an excellent national image has great cohesion and influence and can be used as an intangible asset to affect the country's diplomacy for a long time, and its role should not be underestimated. Public diplomacy mainly pays attention to the image of a country in the hearts of foreign publics, constantly narrows the dislocation image, uses media propaganda and other means guided by the needs of the public, and strives to make the internal and external images overlap.

National image propaganda films are one of the important ways to shape an excellent national image in today's era. In increasingly frequent political, economic, and cultural communication and cooperation among countries, national image propaganda films have become essential for countries to build and disseminate national images because of their intuitiveness, extensive

influence, and ability. It can bridge cultural gaps, gain praise and recognition, and is one of the effective means of public diplomacy.

3. Difficulties and Challenges

China once launched the national image propaganda films "Character" and "Angle," which aroused great waves in international public opinion and attracted the attention of many media. It is believed that China has entered the "national public relations era" and is working hard to pass Show a new national image to enhance the international voice. Among them, "Characters" is shorter in length, totaling 30 seconds. 59 Chinese celebrities and elites from all walks of life left the country, showing my country's outstanding achievements in various fields and showing the image of the overall development of a great country. Placed in Times Square, New York, the audience is the general public with the most extensive base. "The Angle Chapter" is a short documentary about 15 minutes long, intended to explain our country's development in multiple dimensions. It is mainly used by Chinese embassies, consulates abroad, and various essential publicity activities. The audience is elite groups and public opinion leaders. However, the unsatisfactory is that despite the Chinese government's efforts in the workforce and material resources, the two national image propaganda films did not achieve the expected results, which can be seen in some public opinion polls and the reports of the American news media at that time.

3.1. Feedback

First of all, from the perspective of foreign media reports. Media coverage in the United States is primarily negative. For example, CNN reported: "Image commercial means China will learn to launch a "soft war," Fox reported: "China is preparing to launch a propaganda "surprise war" against the United States." The "China threat theory" is permeated here, clearly revealing the Dissatisfaction with Chinese propaganda films. It can be seen that it is a friendly public diplomacy activity initiated by the government, but it has been misinterpreted as a malicious threat and provocation.

Secondly, there is the reaction of foreign people. The first is strangeness. Stars such as Yao Ming, Zhang Ziyi, Gong Li, etc. It has long been known to the American public, but other people did not know them before, and they are still very unfamiliar after reading "Character." The second is a sense of confusion. According to the report "How Foreigners View National Image Films" in Nandu Weekly, the foreign public thought that the image of Chinese people conveyed by the film was too vague and "do not know what kind of information they want to convey." The third is the sense of boredom. For example, some American students responded that the arms-folding posture of elites from all walks of life in "Character" shows that they are contemptuous of others, making people feel bored.

The national image propaganda film is intended to be disseminated through the media to change the stereotyped image of China that foreign people have. However, the facts show that this backfired. Not only did the media create adverse reports, it gave foreign society a sense of oppression and tension, and it also made the public feel confused, unfamiliar, and bored. Have to ponder where the problem lies(Hou 2014).

3.2. Challenges

According to Lasswell's 5W theory, the communication process consists of five essential elements: subject, object, content, communication method, and effect. The national image propaganda film uses communication science to construct and disseminate the national image. Therefore, based on the 5W theory, this paper analyzes the problems revealed by the previous propaganda films and proposes targeted solutions.

Firstly, there is the subject matter. The author believes that government leaders should not be everything. The propaganda films created by the government are of high quality and comprehensive content. However, in the public opinion environment of "China threat theory," the official propaganda films are inevitably regarded by foreign people as export of political ideology, causing people's opposition. The country needs more accessible and persuasive communication to supplement government propaganda.

Secondly, there is the subject matter. "Character" was broadcast in Times Square in New York. Although the audience was comprehensive, the variety was also more complex. Most people pass by here, and it is impossible to popularize the public's understanding of China through propaganda films. Although the "Angle" is more meaningful, it is generally only used in foreign affairs activities, the audience is some elites and public opinion leaders, the base is small, and the political position is relatively straightforward. If misunderstandings or stereotypes exist about China, it is difficult to change within quickly (Gao 2021). Therefore, if we do not subdivide the types of publics and carry out public diplomacy for the public with great potential, the Chinese-style "one-to-many" public diplomacy method may be challenging to achieve the expected effect.

In addition, it is a matter of the content. The author thinks that the most prominent problem in "Characters" is "promoting the ideas of internal propaganda," which leads to "chicken and duck talk," and the content is challenging to be accepted by the foreign public. That is, over-focusing on "my image" and ignoring "other image" leads to the generation and solidification of "dislocated image." For example, in "Character," although there are many famous people, a photo cannot be seen by the foreign public to see the achievements or touching deeds behind it, and it is impossible to understand the Chinese spirit. A sense of pride arises spontaneously, and this is the dislocation difference between the two. In "Angle" the most prominent problem is the difficulty in understanding caused by the difference in expression. Chinese artistic expressions tend to be pictorial and use symbols. European and American cultures, on the other hand, focus on words, which will create barriers to understanding cross-cultural communication. In many cases, the foreign public may not understand the profound meaning behind the symbols appearing in Chinese propaganda films. The picture is not thought-provoking.

Meanwhile, there is also a lack of communication methods. At present, the world has entered an era of a comprehensive explosion of information and more and more diverse communication channels. However, Chinese national propaganda films still use outdoor electronic and TV screens for dissemination, which cannot help but appear backward and dull. Public diplomacy focuses on two-way communication and requires timely feedback (Tan 2012).

Finally, in terms of dissemination effects, the role of Chinese national propaganda films in shaping the country's image is not significant due to the reasons mentioned above. There is a big gap between expectations regarding depth and breadth, and it is challenging to help public diplomacy. This makes us think about correcting these problems so that the national image propaganda film is worth the money and lives up to expectations.

4. Discussion

Fu Ying, the Chinese ambassador to the UK, once wrote, "China's integration into the world cannot be done with sincerity. The wall between China and the world is too thick." The cultural gap is difficult to bridge, so China We should constantly reflect on ourselves and build a good image of China one step at a time. For the various difficulties encountered in the national image propaganda film, we propose the following suggestions:

Firstly, expand the scope of creative subjects but do not change the characteristics of government leadership. Similar to the general approach of "the government builds the stage,

and the citizens compete to be the protagonists" during the Olympics, the right to create a national image propaganda film should also be based on the part of the public, making the public an expression of the national image. The government can do an excellent job in gate audit, resource allocation, organizational planning, etc.

Secondly, it is necessary to subdivide the public groups with great potential and carry out targeted publicity. Extensive polling is desirable. At the same time, big data can also be used to free ride on the "customized information dissemination system" and use emerging technologies to help subdivide the public to provide the audience with the most desired information on more dissemination platforms (Gao 2021).

Moreover, it is the content. First, we must end the "indiscriminate internal and external publicity" caused by the government's leadership. Instead of constantly thinking about "what we want to promote," we should think more about "what others want to know" and constantly reduce the size of the "misplaced image." In terms of narrative methods, more traditional Chinese culture is told to foreign audiences in a story-based international narrative method, making information easier to localize and improving the ability to be readily accepted. At the same time, we must constantly examine ourselves and condense the core values of Chinese society, and we should fully present ancient China and modern China to the foreign public (Xu 2020).

In terms of communication methods, it is necessary to keep up with the trend and pay attention to two-way communication. For example, emerging digital high-tech methods such as VR are constantly popularized. China can use this method to enhance the perception and experience of foreign audiences, making them immersive and experiencing what China is like in an interactive experience. Vlogs, micro-films, micro-documentaries, etc. There are constantly developing at a fission-like speed with the help of the power of new media. China should also use new video narrative methods to tell Chinese stories well (Wu 2013). Therefore, China's national image propaganda films should be published in a series, abandoning the gimmicks and using the stories of ordinary people to constantly build a panoramic view of Chinese society for the foreign public. This step-by-step process can lead the foreign public through the gates of China. This step-by-step propaganda approach also helps China promptly adjust its propaganda methods based on feedback.

The outbreak of the global epidemic is both a crisis and an opportunity. In this epidemic, many ordinary individuals, such as delivery boys, couriers, restaurant owners, medical staff, police teachers, etc. They are doing their best to maintain society's regular operation, showing the Chinese people's perseverance and unity. It embodies the Chinese spirit. For the same ordinary foreign public, these ordinary individuals may have a greater appeal and a stronger sense of resonance than celebrity elites (Zhao 2011). Moreover, the global anti-epidemic has brought together people's feelings and experiences, making them more resonant. Therefore, China should seize the opportunity to reverse the passive situation of the right to speak about the epidemic, turn the crisis into an opportunity, record the touching stories of ordinary individuals through documentary anti-epidemic experience, and create a good image of the country, to pave the way for China's public diplomacy future road.

5. Conclusion

The outbreak of the global epidemic has plunged China into the whirlpool of international public opinion, and its national image has been damaged. At this time, we should combine the experience of our predecessors and realize the importance of building an excellent national image with national image propaganda films. According to "Laswell's 5W Theory", starting from the five points of communication subject, object, communication content, communication method, and effect, we can objectively and concretely analyze the problems encountered by

predecessors and solve these problems in a targeted manner. In this way, it is possible to look forward to the direction of building a national image in the future and make China's public diplomacy achieve the desired effect.

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