

The Causes, Negative Effects and Guiding Strategies of College Students' Network Group Polarization

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Abstract: College students' network group polarization is an important form of college students' group life in the Internet era. College students in the "jointing booting stage" are prone to fall into the phenomenon of college students' network group polarization without guidance and control due to their closed circle, preference for exclusiveness and communication centrality. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the discourse power of mainstream values, the control power of online public opinion and the guiding power of ideological education in terms of innovating college media, improving public opinion supervision, optimizing ideological and political courses, etc., in order to solve the negative impact of online group polarization of college students.

College students' network group polarization is an important way for college students to exist in the virtual space in the Internet era. Driven by technologies such as big data and algorithm recommendations, they form a network group with high internal consensus and extreme external exclusion due to their consistent preferences, similar values, or similar perspectives on certain issues or events. In this gathering group, when members engage in discussions and exchanges around a hot topic or event, collective opinions will seriously converge towards a similar viewpoint, leading to a phenomenon of "one-sided" until extreme speech and polarized behavior occur. Due to the lack of social experience and incomplete formation of values among college students, they are prone to being "biased" by incorrect concepts and ideas in the internet community, which may affect their physical and mental health development, and may endanger the safety of university network ideology. Therefore, in-depth analysis and exploration of the main causes and negative effects of college students' network group polarization, and further exploration of guidance strategies to crack the negative effects of college students' network group polarization, and to avoid the potential risks of college students' network group polarization, have become an important issue of college network ideology security in the current era.

1. The Main Causes of group polarization of College Students' Network

1.1. Realistic situation: The closed circle creates communication barriers.

Circle level closeness is the reality of college students' network group polarization, which shows

the characteristics of closeness, hierarchy and limitation, and will block the internal information outflow and external information input. Firstly, the closed circle promotes the formation of an "information cocoon". The network circles of college students have clear cultural boundaries, and different circles will form unique circle cultures. The homogeneity and oneness of circle culture easily lead college students to fall into the "information cocoon room". College students in the circle are exposed to fragmentation homogeneous information for a long time, which makes them lose the opportunity to contact diversified information and new things, and gradually change from "comprehensive people" to "one-way people". Secondly, high aggregation triggers the "echo chamber effect". In a closed circle system, a single culture, information, and concept are constantly strengthened and expanded through repeated dissemination, and even distorted and exaggerated, thus forming and strengthening the "Echo Room Effect". Over time, college students in a closed circle are prone to losing their personal thinking ability, forming thinking patterns, becoming complacent, and even experiencing alienation and separation from the real society. Third, the differentiation of spheres led to the "Balkanization" of cyberspace. The interest groups of college students formed in the network society repel other groups while gathering their own groups, which will lead to a "vacuum" situation where multiple college students' online groups coexist but are separated from each other, forming a "Balkanization" segmentation situation in cyberspace. This situation has triggered the disintegration of the cyberspace, seriously isolating the communication and exchange of information among college students. In other words, the closeness of the circle hinders college students from fully understanding the changing society, which easily leads them to fall into a information silo and accelerates the formation of group polarization of the network.[1]

1.2. Value orientation: Preference for exclusivity leads to identification barriers.

Firstly, the network circles are mutually exclusive. The network circle of college students has a high cohesion and centripetal force force inside, but it shows a strong exclusiveness outside. Therefore, the campus cultural circle actively created by colleges and universities may be blocked by the network circle of college students, which ultimately leads to the difficulty of infiltration of mainstream ideology. At the same time, communication and communication between different network circles of college students have been cut off. In order to maintain their own circle culture, college students in different circles often maximize the recognition and discourse power within the circle, infinitely amplifying their exclusion from other circles. And various heterogeneous circles are constantly weakening the discourse consensus and value identification of mainstream ideology. Secondly, the agenda selection is fixed. The education of college students was originally based on the setting of online agendas through topics that have a positive guiding effect from all aspects, such as ideals, beliefs, personality, character, innovation, and dedication, in order to influence the attitudes and views of college students towards educational agenda issues. However, individuals in the online circle of college students selectively receive topics of their own interest based on their "preferences", while selectively ignoring other topics, which creates a rift between the circles from the source of the agenda. Thirdly, the intensification of online conflicts. Network conflict behavior often leads to a network "gap" in the entire process of educating college students, and the network becomes a "gray zone" for regulation. The exclusiveness of group polarization makes college students limited to their own homogenization circle and amuse themselves. It is easy to lead to resistance psychology, differences in positions and even hostility between college students in different circles, and even set off "network abuse" or "group fight". These network conflicts also reverse the trend of group polarization.

1.3. Communication method: Centralization of clusters creates an information gap.

In the era where the Internet empowers individuals, new online media and opinion leaders dominate information dissemination, gradually becoming the discourse center of online communication. They have massive resources and information, and their published content has received continuous attention from college students due to its popularity. Under the influence of centralized information dissemination, the physical and mental health development of college students also faces challenges. One is the simplification of information sources. Based on the admiration and belief in online opinion leaders, college students are accustomed to seeking analysis and interpretation through online opinion leaders in the event of unexpected events or hot issues. Online opinion leaders have become a single channel for college students to obtain information, which will cut off the diversity of information sources received by the college student community. Secondly, opinions tend to converge. The views and opinions of college students' online community on a certain event will gradually converge under the "celebrity effect" of opinion leaders. In this process, individuals with different opinions can only choose to remain silent or echo the phenomenon of "silent spiral", and the group's opinions will gradually become polarized. Ideological and political education for college students is a democratic, proactive, and creative education that aims to enhance their subjectivity and stimulate their subjective initiative to achieve educational goals. Online opinion leaders have to some extent dissolved the bond of two-way communication in college student education, blocking the enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity of college students[2]. Thirdly, the extreme value orientation. At present, the ideological field in our country is still affected and invaded by various erroneous ideas. Through the packaging of "fun oriented" and "entertainment oriented", erroneous ideas have seriously eroded the critical spirit and value judgment of college students. The extreme value orientation will inevitably lead to college students' resistance and rejection of mainstream ideology, which in turn exacerbates the information dissemination and value consumption within their circle. The resulting information gap further solidifies the cognitive boundaries of college students.

2. The Negative Influence of group polarization of College Students' Network

2.1. The loss of media positions in universities.

The true function of university media is to provide objective, fair, and comprehensive information to college students, and to undertake the propaganda work of mainstream ideology. Especially in the new situation of the Internet era, university media plays an important role in the physical and mental health, value guidance, and ideological guidance of college students. However, due to the phenomenon of college students' network group polarization, the role of college media in promoting socialist core values and guiding public opinion has gradually weakened, which is mainly reflected in the following aspects: First, college media has insufficient value guidance for college students' public events, affecting the normal functioning of college media. At present, the phenomenon of college students' network group polarization has made the extreme and distorted values contained in the network media prevail. However, college media's guidance of positive public opinion on public events has a certain delay, failing to assume the main responsibility of restraining the phenomenon of college students' network group polarization. Secondly, compared to online media, university media lacks readability and experiential experience, leading to a loss of attention and discourse power. The media in colleges and universities is too rigid in the way of carrying out policy interpretation and ideological guidance, which is easy to lose the attention of college students due to the lack of practical attention to college students, leaving opportunities for college students' online groups to set issues, expand space, and seek benefits regardless of authenticity and value, and may eventually lose the discourse space to restrain college students'

online group polarization from going to extremes. Thirdly, the accuracy of university media in positioning college students' online groups is not sufficient, and it is unable to comprehensively carry out publicity and guidance work. In the era of all media, due to the decentralization and niche of the online activities of college students, college students' online groups not only gather on traditional social media such as QQ, WeChat, and Tieba, but also occur in niche and micro spaces such as entertainment software and game platforms, which are overlooked by university media. As a result, college media failed to effectively publicize and guide college students' online group polarization behavior in a timely manner.[3]

2.2. The teaching effect of ideological and political education is weakened.

In the current network information age, the network group polarization of college students has a profound impact on the ideological and political education of college students under the effect of multiple factors, which has weakened the teaching effect of ideological and political education in colleges and universities to a certain extent. On the one hand, the ideological and political education teaching failed to grasp the new characteristics of college students' network group polarization. Online socializing has become an important component of college students' extracurricular life, which, together with course education, affects their psychological state and behavioral patterns. However, the attention and influence of ideological and political education teaching on college students' extracurricular life are insufficient, and there is insufficient attention and understanding of the new personalities and characteristics of college students' online community in an open environment. It is difficult for teachers of ideological and political education to grasp the trend and nature of network group polarization of college students in a timely manner. Ideological and political education has failed to effectively connect the classroom with daily life, making it difficult for educators to provide corresponding guidance on the actual situations such as ideological confusion, psychological pressure, and belief crisis faced by college students in the ideological and political classroom. Ideological and political education courses cannot be targeted in positively guided teaching. On the other hand, the synergistic effect of "online" and "offline" ideological and political courses is insufficient. In the era of the Internet, online information dissemination is timely and efficient, and college students can quickly and comprehensively grasp various types of information from multiple angles. Online information has become the main source of opinions for college students. Under the normal teaching mode of "online+offline" ideological and political education in universities, in reality, offline teaching is only moved to online media without any changes, and the teaching content is only a simple repetition of online course teaching and offline physical classroom. This kind of teaching mode cannot meet the needs of college students in an all-round way, leading to weak ability to guide college students' network group polarization intervention. Therefore, ideological and political education failed to respond to the occurrence of college students' network group polarization in a targeted way, and failed to effectively avoid and eliminate the negative impact of college students' network group polarization.

3. Strategies for College Students to Cope with Internet group polarization

3.1. Innovate university media and enhance mainstream value discourse power.

Campus media is an important carrier for universities to strengthen ideological and political education and carry out news propaganda work. Universities should firmly grasp the dissemination position of mainstream ideology and guide correct public opinion. On the one hand, it is necessary to continuously enhance the strength of campus media in disseminating mainstream ideology. The official microblog, official WeChat official account, official Tiktok and other major online social networking platforms of colleges and universities should shoulder the main responsibility of publicizing socialist core values, promoting the main theme of socialism, and guiding the correct

direction of public opinion, provide authoritative and correct information guidance for college students, and prevent college students from being misled by wrong thoughts and bad information. In this process, college students should be imperceptibly educated in the process of understanding social hot events, so as to guide college students to shape correct political psychology and play a role in restricting college students' network group polarization. On the other hand, it is necessary to continuously enhance the participation of college students in campus media. The public opinion field in universities is a "community with a shared future", and college students should not only be passive guides, but also active participants in the construction of online public opinion in universities. College students participating in it are more able to actively spread positive energy content based on socialist core values in a way and form that is popular among college students. By being closer to college students' reality, life, and preferences, the attractiveness of positive content can be strengthened. To make college students consciously become advocates of the main theme of socialism, to some extent, break through the closed state of college student circle culture, and promote the "good voice" and "good story" full of positive energy to the college student community. [4]

3.2. Optimize ideological and political courses to enhance the guidance of ideological education.

In response to the new challenges brought by the network group polarization of college students, we should base on the ideological reality of college students, pay attention to the irreplaceable role of ideological and political education, and consolidate the achievements of ideological and political education "inside and outside the network". On the one hand, strengthen ideological and political education within the network. Continue to carry out broad online ideological and political courses, actively use Marxist theory to arm the minds of college students, enhance their political identity, and guide them to maintain political consciousness in the mixed online information. At the same time, make full use of new media technology to infiltrate the socialist core values into the online community of college students through various forms such as microfilms, short videos, and images, and strive to seize the space for ideological and political education dissemination in the virtual field of the internet as much as possible. By combining education with entertainment, we aim to enhance the subject consciousness and media literacy of college students, thereby enabling them to consciously break through the "filtering bubble" in the network circle, eliminate interference from the group environment on individual rights, and guide them to achieve self-growth and comprehensive development. The effectiveness of promoting ideological and political education in real life is expected to surpass that of the internet. Vocational colleges should continue to enhance the education of socialist core values among college students, so that those in the "value assimilation period" are less prone to worries, confusion, and perplexity when confronted with the impact of various ideological trends in the online society. Vocational colleges should also sustain efforts in moral and legal education for college students, assisting them in establishing correct moral concepts and legal awareness, and guiding them to regulate their online words and actions.

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