

An Analysis on the Cultivation of College Students' Political Identity in the Internet Era

Cui Xiaobin

Northwestern Polytechnical University,
1 Dongxiang Road, Chang'an District, Xi'an Shaanxi, 710129, P.R.China
E-mail: cuixb15842@nwpu.edu.cn

Published: 31 March 2021

Copyright © Xiaobin.

Abstract:

The political identity of college students is not only the combination of self-identity and environmental identity, but also the unity of political psychology and political behavior. The study is aimed at how the development of the Internet information technology has brought both opportunities and challenges to the cultivation of college students' political identity. As for how to foster the talents required by our nation's development, this paper discusses the proper way to seize the opportunity of cultivation and dissolve the challenges brought by the Internet through building a clean political environment, promoting mainstream political culture, and shaping a healthy political psychology of college students.

Key Words: Political Identity; Internet; College Students

The Internet information technology has become an inseparable part of people's lives. As the most profound invention in the contemporary era, the Internet has not only exerted a huge impact on people's study and life, but also gradually become a platform for people of different ages to understand the world information and create advanced culture, which, to a certain extent, influences the formation of individual and collective values. "The Internet has become a social field that cannot be ignored during college students' activities, as it breaks through the traditional way for the college students to get the source of different information"(Shi, Li-hong & Chen, Yi-fan. 2021). College students are still in the immature stage of values, that is, their ability to judge and screen information needs to be further improved. Therefore, with a slight negligent,, they might be misled by some improper values, which is not conducive to the healthy growth and cultivation of their ideological awareness, especially to the stability of their national political identity."Political identity is a prerequisite for national legitimacy"(Tang,Shi-xiu & He,Yun-feng.2010), because political discontent may lead to political crisis. In this context, it is particularly important to cultivate a stable and firm political identity and sentiment among college students.

I. Connotation Elements of Political Identity

The prerequisite of political identity is individual self-identity, which includes the identification of a sense of self-independence and identification of social environment. At the same time, we also need to recognize the innumerable connections between the individual and the environment. On one hand, an individual with a full cognition of himself and an ability to independently complete the process of logical thinking, to perceive the subject based on his own knowledge and to bear the potential consequences caused by his own perception, he is believed to be capable of self-identification. On the other hand, it is far from enough for an individual to only have the ability of self-identification. Humans are the sum of all social relations, and they are always associated with the environment in which they are living. To a large extent, human cognition comes from the influence of the environment. No one could survive without his environment and his group, nor his cognition disconnecting from the environment could be approved by the society. Then, we can say that political identity is the comprehensive expression of people's political psychology and political behavior, that is, the unity of "cognition", "emotion", "consciousness", "belief" and "behavior". These five aspects influence and support each other. Specifically, political cognition is a realistic reflection of political objects, and also a prerequisite for the formation of political identity; political emotion is the improvement of political cognition, which contributes to form a relatively stable political attitude and acts as the glue of political identity; political consciousness is a relatively fixed political view formed by individuals in long-term political practice, and it is also a more important factor affecting political identity; political belief is the internal motivation to stimulate individual political behavior; and political behavior is formed under the joint action of political cognition, political emotion, political consciousness and political belief, which is the external manifestation of individual political identity. Generally speaking, people can form a relatively stable political identity only when they carry out various kinds of political practice under a stable state of political cognition, political emotion, political

consciousness, and political belief.

II. The Positive Role of Internet in Cultivating College Students' Political Identity

2.1 The easy access to Internet ensures the effectiveness of the cultivation of college students' political identity

The easy access to Internet is due to its infinite space and time, which helps make one easy to obtain the latest information so as to satisfy his personalized demand for the information. It is just this special feature that gives the college students a quick access to obtain different political viewpoints and cultures. And these various kinds of information help unfold a rich and colorful world before their eyes. College students, in the course of growing with a strong thirst for knowledge and curiosity, are quite capable to accept and learn new things, thus the Internet has become an important channel for them to explore the world. The discrepancy in political cognition and the political frictions resulted from cultural collision are all effective political materials to cultivate students' ability to obtain information, process information and think independently, and at the same time to guarantee the right of college students to be informed about the world, to expand the scope of their political education and enhance students' sensitivity to their political identity.

2.2 The openness of the Internet highlights the subjectivity of cultivating college students' political identity

In addition to the influence of family values, social media, and their peers, the political identity of college students is more than often derived from mainstream education in the school. This process is largely a one-way output of values, that is, college students as educated are often in a passive state of acceptance, while educators with preconceived notions tend to ignore the subjectivity of college students. The open and shared nature of network resources enables college students to browse and participate in any political topics they are interested in at any time, and to express their opinions on political events at home and abroad. While possessing multiple identities, students can not only be the initiator, organizer and advocate of the topic, but also be the participant and onlooker of the topic. This will provide opportunities for college students to develop their subjective initiative and improve their political participation.

2.3 The diversification of network selection broadens the channels for the college students to express their political thoughts

It will take a long time and a lot of energy to cultivate college students' political identity, which cannot be accomplished overnight. College students with good political cognition, political emotion, political belief and political behavior need different kinds of platforms for practical exercise and emotional expression, while the Internet can just provide such a channel for them, so that their participation in politics is no longer limited by time and space. Compared with the traditional political life, the Internet has the characteristics of low cost, easy organization, high participation and strong accessibility. College students can participate in different political activities according to their own

preferences and express their true feelings, opinions and suggestions without worrying about the exposure of their real identities, which provides a way to relieve their psychological pressure of participating in politics.

2.4 The transparency of the Internet improves improves the cultivation targeted at students' political identity

The transparency of the Internet is reflected in any expression of speech and emotion, which can be noticed and obtained. And meanwhile it is also a manifestation of its openness without age and gender restrictions. The speech itself is an important way for the expression and output of individual emotions and feelings, but the way has changed from the traditional offline to current online, whose purpose is to be understood and listened to by others, and to get feedback on their own demands. Therefore, college students can find the same kind of people who share the same political views with them on the Internet, and of course, they can also be inspired in certain aspects because of the different opinions from others. Through the analysis of online speech, schools and governments can understand the current tendency of college students' political emotion, and then carry out education measures aiming at pertinency and efficiency of cultivating students' political identity.

III. Challenges to the Cultivation of College Students' Political Identity from Internet

3.1 The Internet has brought new changes to the educational environment of political identity

The Internet is a double-edged sword, and its function depends on the individual's will and the influence of the environment. Nowadays, the predominance of traditional media has been gradually replaced by the Internet, without which the publicity of social development would become impossible. At the same time, the Internet, both as a treasure chest and a "Pandora's" box, keeps the whole world bonded together. However, some ill-intentioned governments have intervened in other countries politically by means of cultural export, value influence and historical distortion, so as to achieve their purpose of dominating the world. Faced with such a situation, college students are easy to be disturbed by some negative information while they, lack of common sense, are still in the stage of immature values. It can be seen that the environment for cultivating their political identity is now becoming more and more complex and challenging.

3.2 The Internet has proposed new requirements for the educational subject of political identity

The educational main body plays an important role in cultivating the political identity of college students, which can be divided into four categories: government, social media, college teachers and family. Among them, the government has absolute predominance in overall control and resource optimization while social media plays a supporting role in creating the atmosphere to foster correct views on values, college teachers play a key role in this aspect, directly affecting the trend of college students' values and the role of family is more obvious in the youth period because a good family atmosphere can help students shape their political identity. However, the input of all kinds of information on the Internet has led to the divergence of values among students and made their value

orientations more diversified, which brings challenges to educators in universities. This is why educators ought to learn more new knowledge on the Internet for the purpose of developing a coordinating discourse system with college students, so that they are able to have a dialogue with the students and a correct guidance in fostering their values. Meanwhile, during such a process, educators are also tested for their ability to screen, identify and utilize massive information.

3.3 The Internet has brought new impact on the educational approach of political identity

Before the popularization of the Internet, college students could only obtain information from a single source. The way of obtaining information mainly depends on newspapers, books, radio, interpersonal communication and knowledge transfer from teachers. However, in the Internet era, newspapers and other channels that were once regarded as the main source of information can only satisfy a small number of groups. As all the information disclosure on paper has been computerized, only through connecting with the Internet can students keep track of what is going on in the world. When college students gradually adapt to the convenience brought by the Internet, it is difficult for them to return to the “No Internet” era. That is to say, while students are used to absorbing new knowledge and positive influence through the Internet, educators should be aware of the importance of their teaching reform with the changes of times. Such an educational reformation should be focused on exploring various school activities suitable for and warmly welcomed by the college students for the purpose of stimulating their interests. Only in this way can solid foundation be laid for cultivating students’ qualified political identity.

IV. The Correct Way to Cultivate the Political Identity of College Students in the Internet Era

4.1 Optimize the political environment on the Internet and strengthen the political cognition of college students

The political environment of the Internet is closely related to the formation of college students’ political identity. The influence from the environment on humans is embodied in how humans affect each other and how atmospheres and things exert impact on humans in the same environment. Therefore, reinforcing the management and optimization of the political environment in the Internet will help college students to develop a qualified political identity. First of all, we should improve the relevant network management system, increase the cost of punishing those who violate the rules and disciplines of the Internet, and deal with those who refuse to maintain the harmony and security of the Internet in accordance with the law, so as to nip their bad ideas in the bud. Second, we should use modern information technology to strengthen the control of cyberspace, intercept harmful information, and raise the standards of publishing information on the Internet so as to maintain information security and create a clear cyberspace. Third, we should arrange a manager taking charge of public opinions for the purpose of detecting harmful speeches or views and correct those misleading ones on the Internet, which will help guide college students to develop sound values. Last but not least, the control of school network should be strengthened because students spend most of their time on campus. Meanwhile, college students should also be given chances to exert backbone effects in establishing

peer groups of networks to monitor the online discourse and form the power of language guidance.

4.2 Promote the mainstream political culture on the Internet and cultivate the political emotion of college students

A higher level of education is to make a person change through his own culture and the power of soft culture is not comparable to that of cold legal provisions, fists and violence. Therefore, the true essence of education is to devote quietly to making one change through one's own culture. To keep a firm hand on the Internet, we should keep taking the work of popularizing the network mainstream culture as the main channel of cultivating political values, that is to go to the cyberspace where students are the frequent visitors for the purpose of launching the proper publicity and guidance by means of the language and style that college students enjoy. It is well known that emotion plays a cohesive role in enhancing one's identity. Therefore, first of all, we should cultivate college students' love for our society and country. And then, we should help enlightening students' ability to discriminate and deal with different problems by means of guiding them gradually to transform from sensibility to rationality. Furthermore, we should encourage students, through normal and effective channels and methods, to participate in the administration and discussion of state affairs for the purpose of expressing their different opinions and rationally seeing the differences during the process of development caused by the different national conditions. Only in this way could the implementation of various government measures be promoted, benefits be brought to our people, the sense of ownership be stimulated. Accordingly, the political identity of our country could be deeply rooted in the heart of everyone.

4.3 Improve the psychology of political identity on the Internet and strengthen the political will of college students

We should improve students' healthy political psychology of the Internet, making their "cognition", "emotion", "consciousness", "belief" and "behavior" unified together. On the one hand, the complexity of network groups has brought multiple uncertain factors to the construction of college students' healthy political psychology. On the other hand, the interweaving of domestic and foreign contradictions and the variability of international political environment have brought great challenges to the shaping of college students' political values. Therefore, strengthening the students' sense of political identity is a necessary way for them to carry out effective political practice. Unbiased and reliable information can stand the test of time, which can better improve students' empathy. By means of the Internet, college students could be made to perceive the real world including the unbiased and reliable information about the real state of one's own nation and social conditions as well as the real life and political conditions of the international community and countries around the world. It is believed that cultivating students' political psychology, their pride and confidence in their own nation and developing their sense of superiority and identity to the national political system require joint effort from all walks of life in cooperation with the government. This is how we could create a better political environment for our nation in the future and provide proper platforms for the students to

develop their firm political belief and will. In the end, driven by the healthy political will, college students will be able to externalize their personal political stances into firm and bright political behaviors and to dedicate themselves to the construction of our country.

References

[1] Shi, Li-hong & Chen, Yi-fan. 2021. The connotation and cultivation of college students' political identity in the context of network [J] *The Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools*(03):48-52.

[2]Tang,Shi-xiu & He,Yun-feng.2010.The causes and countermeasures of political discontent from Internet users [J] *Exploration and Free Views*(06):34-38.