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Wu Jun

*Southwestern University of Finance and Economics*

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# *On the Feasibility of the Chinese County-Level Convergence Media Centers in Participating in International Communication: Evidence from CDHT's First-Hand Communication Practice*

Wu Jun\*

Southwestern University of Finance and Economics

**Abstract:** With the advent of new technologies, China is faced with the practical need to enhance its international communication capacity and address reforms in the modes, content, and channels of international communication. Therefore, more efforts should be made to further enrich the participants in international communication by optimizing China's four-level journalism communication system and crafting a "great external publicity pattern." Guiding and promoting county-level convergence media centers to participate in international communication is conducive to promoting the building of a vertical international communication system and a multi-level integrated communication matrix and facilitating the resource alignment and information sharing between domestic and international communication. In practice, some county-level convergence media centers in China have achieved certain results in international communication. A good example is the Chengdu Hi-tech Industrial Development Zone (CDHT), a pioneer in the reform of Chinese county-level convergence media. Therefore, this paper has used CDHT as an example to discuss the reality and basic conditions for Chinese county-level convergence media centers to participate in international communication and put forward general paths for county-level convergence media centers to engage in international communication.

**Keywords:** International communication, county-level convergence media centers, media convergence, Chengdu Hi-tech Industrial Development Zone

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\* Wu Jun, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Wu Jun, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu, Sichuan, 610074, China. Email: 154854344@qq.com

Since the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC), the Party and the state have made a series of top-level designs to enhance its international communication capacity in the new era. The ongoing media convergence reform has created a favorable policy environment for more effective international communication. By promoting the reform in international communication systems, modes, mechanisms, and discourse powers in the new era, we can build a more active international public opinion environment for China's high-quality development and modernization drive. It will provide broader public opinion support and more solid recognition support for China to play a better role on the world stage as a global power and promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

County-level convergence media centers serve as an important part of China's efforts to comprehensively deepen its reforms in publicity and play a crucial role in building a cultural publicity system and a four-level journalism communication system in China. On January 15, 2019, the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the National Radio and Television Administration jointly issued the *Regulations for the Construction of County-level Convergence Media Centers*, proposing to build "a converged media platform to deliver media services, Party building services, government services, public services, and value-added services by integrating county-level radio and television, newspapers, new media, and other resources" (the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, & National Radio and Television Administration, 2019).

As the country is faced with a more urgent need to enhance its international communication capacity, we should pay special attention to the construction of 2,800 or more county-level convergence media centers. The practices of CDHT and other primary-level organizations in exploring and participating in international communication show that some county-level convergence media centers with favorable conditions are totally able to participate in international communication and will play a unique role in China's international communication system in the new era. Guiding and encouraging more qualified county-level convergence media centers to actively participate in China's international communication system is conducive to building a multi-dimensional international communication pattern with multi-level participants in China in which the upstream media centers serve as the mainstay while the downstream media centers remain their extension and supplement, thus further improving the overall effect of China's international communication.

### **Significance of County-level Convergence Media Centers' Participation in International Communication**

#### **Achieving Coordination Between Chinese Upstream and Downstream Media Centers in International Communication**

Promoting media convergence in the new era where new technologies and new media

prevail is an innovative exploration and major practice of the Marxist view of journalism and the theory of socialist journalism communication with Chinese characteristics. Since the holding of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 2013, media convergence, as a strategic task in the Party's ideological publicity, has been extended to the county-level organizations, and a four-level journalism communication system featuring top-down convergence, three-dimensional communication, and integrated development was finally formed in China. Similar to the central, provincial, and municipal convergence media systems, county-level convergence media centers also need to follow the objective law of journalism communication, shoulder the fundamental task of ideological and cultural publicity in the new era, and adapt to the development trend of media convergence brought by new technologies. Therefore, county-level convergence media centers, as an integral part of China's four-level journalism communication system, are not essentially different from the other three-level platforms in these dimensions. However, there are obvious differences in other dimensions. The above-mentioned convergence media platforms generally outperform the county-level platforms in terms of overall communication effect, public opinion guidance, communication influence, factor guarantees, talent attractiveness, news and information resource integration, and management and operational competitiveness. County-level convergence media centers are the "nerve endings" of China's four-level journalism communication system. On the one hand, they can "adapt to the times" and actively cooperate with superior external publicity departments and convergence media institutions to carry out international communication activities; on the other hand, they should take into account their local conditions to actively explore local communication resources and align them with international ones, and independently organize and carry out international communication activities within their capabilities. Effective measures have been taken from top to bottom to accelerate the establishment of an international convergence communication pattern that goes down to the county level. By doing so, we can fully mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of county-level convergence media centers to participate in international communication and promote the vertical integration of media platforms, content, resources, and matrices, thus effectively promoting the resource connectivity and information sharing of internal and external communication.

### **Unleashing the Advantages of County-Level Platforms in Reflecting the Situations of Primary-Level Organizations**

County-level convergence media centers, as the most primary-level professional journalism communication organizations in China, have been adhering to their core mission of "guiding the people and serving the people" (Xi, 2020). In recent years, during the media convergence reform, they have been committed to integrating all kinds of news resources, information resources, and service resources in the county by following the philosophy of "media +

concept,” creating an irreplaceable communication advantage at the primary level. These centers can spread the Party’s voice to the primary level organizations in a more accurate and effective manner and coordinate the journalism communication and information services with the local public as their key audiences. Moreover, they can extend their coverage to the departments, towns (sub-districts), communities, industrial parks, blocks, and numerous local market players and non-governmental organizations within the region. Compared with the other three levels of journalism communication platforms, they boast a small, even microscopic, perspective in news planning and observation. There is no doubt that they do act as certain “nodes” in local news information services. To build an international convergence communication system that goes down to the primary-level organizations is to integrate these thousands of small “nodes” into upper “nodes,” thus eventually forming an international convergence communication system with the characteristics of the network layer where “central node and subordinate node,” and “strong node + weak node” are interconnected. At the same time, some county-level regions rich in international communication resources can be precisely empowered and included in the higher-level international convergence communication system so that they can play a better role in some advantageous and characteristic areas.

### **Promoting the Integration of International Communication and Productivity**

Wilbur Lang Schramm, a famous scholar in mass communication, stressed the economic function of mass communication earlier (Schramm, 2010), which was one of his influential theoretical contributions. Philip Kotler et al. wrote in their book *Marketing Places* that strategic marketing planning is the central link for any place to actively seek self-development (Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 2008). Over the past 40 years, under the promotion of reform and opening up, the agglomeration and flow of capital, technology, and talent at home and abroad have become important factors affecting China’s regional industrial divisions and economic development. With the deepening of opening-up, all parts of China have been connected with international market elements to varying degrees. As China is vigorously implementing the Belt and Road Initiative and building a “dual circulation” development pattern in which the domestic economic cycle plays a leading role while the international economic cycle remains its extension and supplement, local governments are actively seeking ways to connect with international economic, trade, scientific and technological resources. In addition to proactively organizing and participating in international economic and trade activities, local governments are increasingly aware of the role of mass media in building their regional images. Therefore, they are actively integrating regional image communication with local industrial development, investment promotion, and talent attraction. A brand-new relationship has been formed between the media and a certain region in the pseudo-society constructed by mass media. Especially in today’s Internet era, mass media are playing a key intermediary role in regional information communication. County-level convergence media

centers report to the central provincial and municipal publicity departments and mainstream media agencies, and connect the administrative agencies at the county (district) level and many enterprises and public institutions within the jurisdiction in the region. It is a reliable information source for disseminating the policies of the Party committee and the government and also an important intermediary organization for enterprises and public institutions within the jurisdiction to build their brand images. The regional image symbols constructed by the county-level convergence media centers via positive publicity have become a key node bridging the region with the outside world in various aspects such as administration, economy, culture, and life. For many county-level administrative regions, only county-level convergence media centers can carry out such long-term, positive, and “self-centered” multi-dimensional communication on a regular basis. They are not only an intermediary for citizens and residents within the region to communicate with each other but also an intermediary to provide information services for various groups outside the region and even the whole society. Therefore, the county-level convergence media center not only plays an important role in publicity but also serves as a marketer and intermediary for counties in the fierce competition. In fact, the county-level publicity departments and media organizations in China’s economically developed regions or highly opening regions have made abundant exploration in international communication and overseas marketing, which has turned the “word-of-mouth dividend” brought by international communication into the “economic dividend” for regional opening up and development.

### **First-Hand Practice of International convergence Communication in CDHT**

Over the past decade or so, CDHT has been at the forefront of the reform and opening up in western China. The region has been exploring the path for international convergence communication and has achieved rich results in building the regional image and promoting industrial development. CDHT is among the first batch of national high-tech industrial development zones approved by the State Council and is the eighth national independent innovation demonstration zone in China and the first of this kind in western China. It is also the first national pilot zone approved by the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People’s Republic of China to construct a world-class high-tech park and the core place where the comprehensive innovation and reform pilot zone and free trade pilot zone in Sichuan province stand. After more than 30 years of development, it has become the most international and modernized region in western China. In 2021, its regional GDP exceeded RMB 280 billion, with per capita GDP exceeding USD 30,000.

Over the past decade or more, based on the reality that its industrial resources, especially scientific and technological innovation resources, are increasingly participating in the global allocation, CDHT has been actively integrating into the Belt and Road

Initiative. The region clearly proposes to carry out publicity around the industrial development and implement marketing towards the world and transform the “soft environment” into “hard power” in order to build a world-class high-tech park. It has gradually shifted its publicity and promotion focus from the domestic dimension to the global dimension, emphasizing improving its overseas visibility (especially that in its investment destinations and talent sources) through international communication activities to push forward the international and modernized development in the region. In addition to regular publicity, the Management Committee of the Party Working Committee of CDHT has taken regional marketing and international communication as the characteristic indicators to evaluate the performance of its external publicity work for many consecutive years. At the same time, it provides policy support for related departments such as the publicity departments, foreign-related institutions, and enterprises in the region to carry out international marketing activities. CDHT’s efforts in exploring paths for international convergence communication include the following aspects:

### **Building an Overseas Marketing Platform Through Multiple Channels**

First, the region has been an active player in holding and organizing various international economic and trade events by relying on its advantageous hardware and software facilities. This provides an opportunity for more overseas people to experience the development environment in the region at a close or zero range. The region also supports the establishment of various professional international service platforms by holding multi-level international exhibitions and foreign economic and cultural exchanges to provide face-to-face opportunities for overseas people to carry out interpersonal communication and organizational communication. For example, the region has participated in and organized the EU-China Business & Technology Cooperation Fair for 16 consecutive years, and the Chengdu Global Innovation and Entrepreneurship Fair for many consecutive years. In addition, several internationally renowned events, including the Fortune Global Forum Chengdu 2012, the 12th World Chinese Entrepreneurs Conference, and the previous sessions of the Western China International Fair, were also held in the region, providing an important advantage for its accurate international communication. It is worth noting that the organizing committees have provided opportunities for the publicity departments in the region to intervene in the whole process of these events to facilitate its marketing communication activities in terms of soft environment creation, outdoor platform utilization, foreign-related materials distribution, foreign-related video releases, and multi-lingual promotions for foreign guests during conferences and interviews. Second, the region has been carrying out international communication activities via some media agencies at home and abroad, indirectly influencing the overseas public. Through cooperation with PR Newswire, Xinhua News Agency, China News Service, China Daily, and other media agencies, it has successfully delivered many

multi-lingual press releases to overseas news agencies.

### **Creating Social Media Accounts on Overseas New Media Platforms**

In addition to launching its English edition website and displaying its image or attaching links on national foreign-related media platforms, CDHT is also committed to creating an international social media matrix with independent discourse power to establish an overseas “circle of friends” with strong stickiness. In February 2017, CDHT created its official account, “Chengdu Hi-Tech,” on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, aiming to disseminate all kinds of information about Chengdu and Sichuan to international players and show the industrial advantages, entrepreneurial environment, and relevant policies of the region in a flexible manner to attract more overseas people and enterprises to start a business, invest, work, and live there. At the same time, the region continues to spread the historical and cultural symbols of Sichuan and Chengdu, striving to enhance user stickiness with the appeal of culture. Thousands of foreigners in the high-tech park of CDHT are the first batch of target audiences of the above-mentioned platforms. The well-organized online communication and offline activities such as “Teaching Foreigners to Play Sichuan Mahjong,” “Foreigners Experience Sichuan Hotpot,” and “Foreigners’ Spring Festival Gala” not only bring together many foreigners who work, live, and study in the park but also successfully attract the participation of foreign consulates and institutions in Chengdu and foreign-funded enterprises with its creative and meticulous work. In addition, CDHT has supported the establishment of professional foreign-related platforms such as the “EU Project Innovation Centre,” “Pitstop, Jingrong Start-up Hub for Expatriates” and “China (Chengdu) Offshore Innovation & Entrepreneurship Base for Overseas Talent,” which greatly strengthens the daily contact of the region with overseas high-tech innovation and entrepreneurship resources, and further enriches the information sources of the new media platforms. The self-media communication of these institutions and foreigners has significantly improved the international communication effect of CDHT.

### **Attracting Internationally Renowned Media Coverage Through Multiple Channels**

CDHT has made many attempts to facilitate its communication and cooperation with overseas media outlets and expand its overseas publicity and marketing channels. The region also actively participates in foreign communication activities organized by the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, and relevant departments of Sichuan province and Chengdu city, and engages in the “Interview Line Project” to attract foreign media journalists to cover the region. The region has won dozens of opportunities for intensive external communication by organizing special press conferences, holding on-site interviews, and providing press releases or relevant materials. CDHT has published dozens of press releases in English, Japanese,



Korean, German, French, and other languages for several years in cooperation with PR Newswire and other overseas media agencies, including “CDHT to Invest USD 730 million to Attract Global Talent.” The region works with third parties to invite foreign media journalists for on-site interviews and reports by taking advantage of its opportunities to participate in, hold, or undertake international events at home and abroad. According to statistics, the total number of press releases published by CDHT on overseas media platforms exceeded 2,000 per year during the years before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Promoting the Integration of Journalism Communication and Cultural Communication**

CDHT has planned and produced several high-quality creative short films such as “Little Chubby Kid Rides a White Horse to Chengdu,” “Falling in Love with Chengdu in 90 Seconds,” and “9 Minutes to Know about Chengdu,” which have not only gained hundreds of millions of views in China but also have been widely spread among overseas Chinese and international students. With the promotion of various activities such as overseas exhibitions, cultural exchanges, and special marketing events organized by relevant departments of Sichuan province and Chengdu city, the two programs “Little Chubby Kid Rides a White Horse to Chengdu” and “Falling in Love with Chengdu in 90 Seconds” have been frequently released on media platforms. CDHT also actively participates in international communication activities spearheaded by the External Promotion Bureau of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee and produces the short film “Changing China: The Hometown of Pandas Goes Global” (*China Daily* Chinese version). The film, which lasts for about 10 minutes and 30 seconds, is set in CDHT and takes “opening up” as a keyword to show foreigners’ points of view about living and working in Chengdu. In addition, it demonstrates the profound changes brought by China’s reform and opening up from a miniature perspective. The video was viewed more than 50 million times on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, making it a very successful overseas communication event.

### **Exploring and Activating the Non-Governmental Publicity Resources in the Region**

Non-governmental communication plays a special role in international communication and is an important supplement to the official promotion and media communication of a region. CDHT has long been committed to exploring and cultivating non-governmental publicity resources in the region. With the flexible promotion of the publicity department and human resource department of the zone, the “Laowai Here,” a Chinese-foreign joint entrepreneurial team based in CDHT, has voluntarily organized several overseas trips. The team has visited many universities and enterprises in the UK and South Africa and participated in local job fairs and promotional meetings. With the help of foreigners in these intermediary non-governmental foreign-related organizations, postcards printed with CDHT elements were distributed for free to overseas talent, and the regional image and policies in the region

were widely spread via their words. These offline promotional activities have contributed to increased followers of the official account of “Chengdu Hi-Tech” on the above-mentioned three new English media platforms and the enhanced stickiness of the region in attracting overseas talent.

### **Strengthening External Image Displays and Advertising Communication.**

Image advertisements are an effective strategy for the international communication of a region. CDHT has always valued the direct display and face-to-face promotions of regional characteristics to overseas guests and is trying to place regional image advertisements on renowned overseas media and outdoor platforms. Considering the differing needs for communication and marketing in different periods, CDHT has produced many multi-lingual poster foldouts, which were sent to dozens of overseas guests during their visits to China or when relevant departments go abroad for business visits, talent introductions, activity promotions, and cultural exchanges. Efforts are also made to produce multi-lingual promotional videos, which will be played in various foreign exchange activities. In addition, CDHT has also launched short-term image advertisements with themes such as “Chengdu, a Perfect Destination for Outsourcing” and “Chengdu Is More Than the Home of Giant Pandas, But also IT Parks like Silicon Valley” on internationally renowned advertising platforms such as Times Square in New York. At the same time, the region also latched on to opportunities to spread overseas activities in the country, attracting coverage from many domestic media outlets.

### **Cultivating and Introducing Talent Strong in International Communication**

CDHT has always attached great importance to talent training and institutional reform and innovation in the field of publicity, providing professional talent reserve for its multi-theme planning, multi-lingual productions, and multi-channel communication. At present, there are more than 20 people capable of collecting and editing news in English in its external publicity department and convergence media center, which is a rare treasure for a primary-level journalism publicity institution. At the same time, these external publicity staff members and news collecting and editing teams have established a stable and mutually trusting relationship with many foreign-related enterprises and organizations inside and outside the park during years of field interviews and foreign-related activities in the park, which has produced a well-connected network for the continuous development of international communication activities in the region. In addition, CDHT also sends journalists to conduct field interviews in Silicon Valley in the United States, Sophia Antipolis in France, and science parks in Russia, Spain, Italy, and other countries, which not only improves the coverage quality of international economic and scientific exchange activities but also enhances the awareness and capability of front-line reporters and editors in international communication.

## **Paths for County-Level Convergence Media Centers to Participate in International Communication**

Compared with domestic communication, international communication has special requirements for content planning, platform support, channel building, talent guarantee, resource integration, and other aspects. The practical experience of CDHT in participating in international communication shows that the participation of county-level convergence media centers in international communication is affected by various complex factors, including the regional levels of opening up, development levels of the regional export-oriented economy, international development levels, support from the regional Party committee and government, integration with superior publicity agencies and convergence media platforms, guarantees of talent and resources, and experience in the construction and operation of the convergence media centers. In particular, amid the evolving international situation, we should forge greater integration between China's external publicity departments and the four-level convergence media system when conducting international communication. Efforts should also be made to enhance the risk-resistance capacity against external changes through self-reform and enhance the overall external communication capacity by smoothing internal nodes, breaking through obstacles, and tapping potential to achieve better results in this wide-ranging, coordinated, and time-consuming battle. Based on the above discussion, this paper puts forward several paths for China's county-level convergence media centers to participate in international communication.

### **Improving the Linkage Mechanisms and Promoting System Integrations**

First, we should further clarify the positioning of county-level convergence media centers. The reform of Chinese county-level convergence media follows the top-level design tailored for China's top-down media reforms. At present, the mission of county-level convergence media in our country is to guide and serve the people, indicating that their core audiences are the local masses. In view of this, we should enrich our understanding of "the masses" as the object of communication and include parts of foreign audiences in our service scope. On the one hand, many overseas enterprises, institutions, talents, employees, and other personnel who have participated in and supported China's economic and social development with practical actions tend to sympathize with or agree with China's stance, holding a positive or neutral attitude towards Chinese culture and values; on the other hand, we can enhance the stickiness of audiences and implicitly influence the people around them by providing services for them, thus further enlarging our international "circle of friends." Fundamentally, a top-level design is needed for county-level convergence media centers to extend their international communication functions. Such a top-level design needs to clarify the functions, authority,

and responsibilities of these centers during their participation in international communication and provide policy resources necessary for their international communication, such as human, financial, and material resources. Second, publicity authorities at all levels need to promote media reform from top to bottom. Superior publicity authorities and convergence media platforms should further intensify their integration for the purpose of achieving better results in international communication, which is now, and will continue to be, a wide-ranging, coordinated, and time-consuming battle in the new era. Proactive efforts should be made to include qualified county-level convergence media centers in the international communication system, thus creating a new pattern of international convergence communication from both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Third, we should consider the actual situation of various regions to promote media reforms in batches. We should take into account the actual situations of different regions in promoting media reform. An effective approach is to select qualified county-level convergence media centers across the country to extend their international communication functions and then put forward guiding principles on their structure, functions, facilities, platforms, and standards. Fourth, county-level convergence media centers across the country should take the initiative to promote media reform. All county-level convergence media centers should actively seek the support of local Party committees and governments, superior external publicity authorities, and convergence media platforms and take the initiative to communicate with superior external publicity authorities and convergence media systems to intensify their integration based on the existing network-layered integration system. Attempts should also be made to build a county-level external communication matrix to align with foreign-related communication resources to better serve and promote international convergence communication at the primary level.

### **Enriching Communication Content and Promoting Thematic Integration**

On May 31, 2021, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed improving the China's international communication capacity to present a true, multi-dimensional, and panoramic view of China at the 30th Group Study Session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee (Xinhua News Agency, 2021). The key to achieving a true, multi-dimensional, and panoramic communication effect, as mentioned by Xi, is to promote integration through system construction, institutional reform, and content reform. In terms of system construction, we should attract more subjects to engage in China's international communication activities and promote the building of a more multi-dimensional and efficient publicity pattern by developing a top-level design for international communication under the new situation. In terms of mechanism reform, we should further promote the vertical linkage between the external publicity departments at all levels and the four-level convergence media platforms to form an efficient convergence communication pattern that combines horizontal communication and vertical communication to avoid a fragmented situation. In terms of content reform, we

should present a more vivid, multi-dimensional, and panoramic view of China and better interpret the Chinese approach through a multi-form, multi-platform, multi-level, and multi-center way. The participation of county-level convergence media centers in international communication is conducive to providing more focused convergence media products, attracting more differentiated international audiences, and providing materials and cases for China to conduct further theoretical research in this regard. In practice, the 2800 or more county-level convergence media centers, being the “nerve endings” of China’s convergence media system, are a channel for the ordinary people within the county to know about the outside world and accept multiple foreign-related communication resources. In content, compared with the national media platform, county-level convergence media platforms have a more specific and microscopic perspective during international communication. If we compare the international communication platform to the Yangtze River and the Yellow River which flow to the ocean, then county-level convergence media centers are like multiple trickle streams connecting all parts of the country, which finally merge into rivers, lakes, and seas. The increasing integration of the themes and content of international communication will inject new impetus into the discourse construction of China’s convergence media system, which will not only enhance the appeal of China’s international communication but also better align with and serve the development needs of local productivity.

### **Expanding Platform Resources and Promoting Matrix Integration**

Since modern people live in a time-intensive and space-compressed environment, Zygmunt Bauman, one of the most highly esteemed social critics in Europe, proposed the concepts of “Liquid Modernity,” “Liquid Life,” and “Liquid Society.” According to the basic standpoint of Marxist philosophy, history is a process of dialectical change. In the “liquid society,” county-level convergence media centers should also adapt to the practical needs of journalism communication and promote their own “liquid construction” with reform. According to the information aggregation function of modern media, the construction of the county-level convergence media centers is a kind of “liquid construction.” During their construction, we should consider the local situations as far as we can to build a new social network in a dynamic manner, including its overseas communication network matrix. Since different counties are endowed with different international communication resources, there exist certain differences in their communication themes, content, resources, contacts, and activities. In view of this, it is impossible for convergence media platforms at any other level or in other regions to totally cover the special and different situations in a certain county. Although the county-level convergence media centers are positioned to serve the local people, it is inevitable that their service scope will to some extent, break the geographical and administrative boundaries of their territories under such a complex cyber environment. Such situations will lead to a “spillover effect,” making the communication “bounded” in the geographical dimension

while “unbounded” in actual audiences. International communication in the context of the Internet requires county-level convergence media centers to make better use of such “spillover effects” to extend the spatial radius of their services by creating characteristic content. It can even be said that the extent to which county-level convergence media centers can achieve “decentralization” and “re-centralization” depends on their strength in specific “nodes” of the interactive social network. In the new era, the effect of the process of re-engineering and content integration of convergence media comes from, in essence, the local reconstruction way it interacts with the people and society. In the new social relationship of networking, county-level convergence media centers should make concrete efforts to enrich platform resources and promote matrix convergence to give full play to its role as a small and microscopic “node” in international communication. In terms of the actual effect, factors such as abundant resources and strong support from the platforms as well as the construction and operational levels of the convergence matrix, will undoubtedly become the key for county-level convergence media centers to improve their service during their participation in international communication.

### Conclusion

As the world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century and the international environment is becoming increasingly complex and volatile, it is particularly imperative to strengthen international communication and exchanges. In international discursive fields, news media are playing an increasingly crucial role. For a long time, the Western media have dominated the international discursive system. In this context, China’s news media should make all-out efforts to disseminate China’s voice and tell China’s stories in an objective, true and multi-dimensional manner. County-level convergence media centers are an integral part of China’s four-level journalism communication system. Although these media centers may lag in overall communication effect, public opinion guidance, and communication influence compared with the central, provincial, and municipal centers, they boast their unique characteristics such as large numbers, wide distribution, intimacy with the grassroots, and distinctive regional features. Their specific and microscopic perspective in content communication has secured a place for them in China’s international convergence communication system. County-level convergence media centers can serve as information providers, intermediaries, and promoters during international communication. By intensifying the channel and content integration of our four-level journalism communication system, these centers will promote the complementary advantages of the “central node” and “subordinate node,” as well as the “strong node” and “weak node,” and enhance the overall international communication effect of the Chinese news media. CDHT’s first-hand communication practice in international convergence communication shows that county-level convergence media centers do have inherent demands for international communication and are, to some extent,



capable of and experienced in doing so. Considering this, this paper puts forward three feasible paths for county-level convergence centers to participate in international communication based on the actual needs of our country for international communication and the construction progress of our county-level convergence media centers. The specific paths include improving the linkage mechanism and promoting system integration, enriching communication content and promoting thematic integration, and expanding platform resources and promoting matrix integration.

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