Breakthrough of Difficulties and Improvement of Efficiency of Network United Front toward Taiwan in the New Era

Chunxiao Mao*

School of Law, Anhui University of Finance & Economics, Bengbu 233030, Anhui, China
*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

Abstract: *As an important part of the new era of network united front, the network united front toward Taiwan can effectively maintain the security of network ideology, enhance the centripetal force of patriotic united front, build the greatest unity online and offline, and give full play to its advantages and exert its governance effectiveness in promoting the cross-strait peaceful reunification. It is a major issue that the united front must face in the new era. At this stage, the Chinese mainland's network united front toward Taiwan is not only facing the external counter- pressure from the Taiwan authorities' systematic "cognitive warfare", but also facing the internal work dilemma of its own inadequate work. This urgently needs to adapt to the development of the digital age, accurately identify changes, respond scientifically, and actively seek changes. Through technological empowerment and institutional reform, we will comprehensively promote the platform carrier and institutional mechanism innovation of the network united front toward Taiwan, build a full-domain propaganda position, forge a team of compound talents, innovate the network personnel contact mechanism, improve cross-departmental collaborative governance, give full play to the effectiveness of the new era of network united front toward Taiwan, gather the consensus of online and offline unification between the cross-strait, and consolidate the common ideological foundation for the cross-strait peaceful reunification.*

Keywords: Network united front toward Taiwan; Cognitive warfare; Globalized position; Compound talents; Coordination mechanism.

1. Introduction

In the new era when digital technology deeply reshapes the global political ecology and ideological communication pattern, cyberspace has become a strategic high ground for cross-strait. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out profoundly that "if you can't pass the Internet test, you can't pass the long-term governance test." "We must adapt to the development trend of informatization, conduct in-depth research and exploration to carry out network united front, be good at both 'face-to-face' work and 'key-to-key' work, and unite people's hearts through benign online and offline interactions." This assertion has special strategic significance in the work on Taiwan. Faced with the cognitive warfare system systematically constructed by the Taiwan authorities - through the three-link mechanism of organizational control, platform penetration and resource allocation, the Chinese mainland's network united front toward Taiwan is facing unprecedented counter-pressure and identity deconstruction crisis. Current academic research focuses more on the connotation interpretation or technical application level of network united front, and has not yet deeply analyzed its dialectical relationship with cyber cognitive warfare, let alone paid attention to the issue of network united front toward Taiwan. In particular, there is a lack of systematic deconstruction of "taiwan-style" "cognitive warfare" and structural reflection on the effectiveness of the Chinese mainland's network united front toward Taiwan.

Empirical investigations show that the Chinese mainland's united front platforms related to Taiwan have significant coverage blind spots and attenuated communication effectiveness, and the evolving trend of identity recognition among the people in the Taiwan region highlights the continued deepening of the cognitive deficit between the cross-strait. The essence of these dilemmas is the strategic disconnection between the traditional united front model

and the governance needs of the digital age, which is mainly manifested in the structural shortcomings of weak platform radiation, talent supply gap, and ineffective mechanism coordination of the network united front toward Taiwan, which also constitutes the inherent dilemma of the Chinese mainland's network united front toward Taiwan. Based on the urgent need to improve the effectiveness of the network united front toward Taiwan in the new era, this study clarifies the fundamental opposition between the network united front and cognitive warfare in terms of target orientation, behavioral subjects, and operating logic in the theoretical dimension; reveals the mutually constructed contradiction between the "taiwan-style" cognitive warfare operating mechanism and the endogenous shortcomings of the Chinese mainland in the practical dimension; and innovatively proposes a four-dimensional solution for the construction of a global propaganda position for the network united front toward Taiwan, the forging of a composite team, the innovation of the organizational liaison mechanism of network personnel, and the strengthening of cross-departmental collaborative governance in the path dimension. By breaking through the limitations of the "technical tool theory" and regarding network united front as a combination of technological empowerment, institutional innovation and conceptual reconstruction, we will strive to enhance the effectiveness of "taiwan-style" cognitive warfare countermeasures, provide theoretical support and practical paradigms for promoting the transformation of network united front toward Taiwan from passive defense to strategic initiative, thereby improving the governance performance of network united front toward Taiwan, better leveraging the role of network united front in maintaining network ideological security and building a unified consensus online and offline cross-strait in the new era, and consolidating and improving the overall united front work pattern.

2.   Concept and Function of Network United Front

In the new era when the digital revolution deeply reshapes the social structure and ideological communication pattern, the network united front came into being and became the strategic fulcrum for the Communist Party of China to consolidate and develop the broadest patriotic united front. It is not only an innovative upgrade of the traditional united front work methods based on Internet technology, but also a new field of united front work opened up for emerging groups such as new media practitioners and network opinion leaders, and deeply reflects the transformation of the concept of united front work by using network thinking to reconstruct. This section will systematically explain the core connotation, key objects and three irreplaceable core functions of the network united front in the new era, and try to reveal its fundamental opposition and complex interweaving with cyber cognitive warfare in terms of goals, subjects and logic, and lay a theoretical foundation for understanding the strategic value and practical dilemma of the network united front toward Taiwan.

2.1 The Connotation and Characteristics of Network United Front

Regarding the definition of the connotation of network united front, there are currently two main views in the academic community. One view is that network united front is an innovation of the traditional united front work method, and it is to carry out united front work for all united front members based on information technology [1]. Another view is that the Internet is indeed a new way of united front work, but not all united front work carried out through the Internet falls within the scope of network united front, and network united front has its specific targets. "Network united front is united front work in the Internet field rather than united front work mainly carried out through the Internet [2]." This view regards network united front as a new field of united front work, pointing out that network united front is conducted with specific network subjects as its focus, namely new media practitioners and network opinion leaders, and its working method is a combination of online and offline.

These two viewpoints define the network united front from different angles. The main difference lies in the object and purpose of the network united front. The first viewpoint believes that the network united front targets all the united front objects, and its purpose is to achieve innovation in the methods and means of united front work. The second viewpoint believes that the network united front targets the new social classes that have emerged with the development of the Internet, and its purpose is to expand the coverage of united front work. In addition, there is a viewpoint that the network united front is a new concept, "that is, the use of Internet thinking to re-examine and transform a series of constituent elements of united front work, which is an innovation in the basic ideas and development direction of traditional united front work [3]." In summary, the network united front refers to the use of information technology as a means, with new media representatives as the main object, and the use of network thinking to carry out united front work in order to achieve the purpose of consolidating and developing the united front. This is not only an innovation in the way of united front work, but also the development of new areas of united front work, and the transformation of the concept of united front work. It is a combination of technology, system and concept [4].

2.2 Targets of the Network United Front

At the Central United Front Work Conference, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that "We should strengthen and improve the work on representative figures in new media, establish regular contact channels, strengthen online interaction, offline communication, guide their political views, and enhance their political identity" [5]. China has a large number of netizens, and it is impossible and unnecessary to treat all of them as the objects of united front work. Instead, we should take the key representative figures as the key objects of the united front work, that is, take the representative figures in new media as the key objects of the network united front. The representative figures in new media are the main objects of the network united front, also known as network figures, and are mainly divided into two categories, namely network opinion figures and new media practitioners. Specifically, new media practitioners refer to those who engage in production and operation activities in new media enterprises and use them as their main source of income, mainly including investors, management personnel, editors, and technical personnel of new media enterprises [6]. Network opinion figures are active network elements who spread information and express opinions on major issues of national political and economic development and social hot events based on new media platforms [7]. Compared with new media practitioners, online opinion leaders are not an independent class. They include people from all walks of life and have complex political positions. Some are inside the party, some are outside the party, and most are intellectuals outside the party. There are "red" positive energy people, as well as "gray" and "black". However, both have common group characteristics, mainly including that most of them are outside the party, have a high level of knowledge, have a great influence in the online society, have hidden identities, and have a strong sense of self [8].

2.3 The Core Function of Network United Front in the New Era

2.3.1 Building Consensus in the Online Community

The number of Internet users in China has now exceeded 1.1 billion, ranking first in the world. The Internet is deeply reshaping the social form. Internet users are young, highly educated, active in thinking, and have diverse values, and are easily influenced by diverse thoughts. As a key force in cyberspace, they are good at paying attention to social hot spots, setting agendas, and guiding public opinion. They have a large fan base and significant ideological influence. For example, Internet celebrities and opinion leaders often take the lead in exposing social injustice and clarifying the truth of events on social platforms. Their clear positions and sharp words can trigger interactions among hundreds of thousands of netizens, and have unique advantages in promoting positive energy and building consensus. Therefore, strengthening the united front work of Internet users and guiding them to speak positively is the key to consolidating the main position of Internet ideology and expanding the coverage of consensus [9].

2.3.2 Enriching Ways to Participate in Politics

Traditional political participation and consultation are restricted by factors such as time, space, and cost. However, the Internet, with its immediacy and wide coverage, provides non-Party members with new channels to reflect public sentiment and public opinion and conduct democratic supervision through platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and short videos. With the help of the Internet, non-Party members can efficiently collect and identify online public opinion and extract it into political materials. At the same time, the Internet has built a bridge of communication between non-Party members and the Party Committee and the government. Through official channels and government platforms, proposals can be submitted and online consultations can be participated in conveniently, which significantly improves the timeliness and effectiveness of suggestions. It is worth noting that online rumors and false information pose a challenge to political consultation, and it is necessary to simultaneously improve network literacy and information identification capabilities and cooperate with national cyberspace governance. Overall, the Internet United Front has greatly enriched the means of political participation and consultation and optimized the quality of suggestions [10].

2.3.3 Improve the Scientific Level of United Front Work

The network era has profoundly changed the environment, objects and methods of united front work. Although new groups such as new media practitioners and online opinion leaders have strong voice and influence, they are scattered and difficult to organize, and the traditional working model faces challenges. This requires the united front to actively innovate methods, integrate digitalization and new media means, accurately grasp their demands

and ideological trends through normalized network interactions, combine friendship and making friends with solving practical difficulties, and strengthen ideological guidance and political consensus. Specifically, by using the convenience of the network and the ability to analyze big data, it is possible to dynamically obtain and analyze members' ideological information and formulate scientific strategies to optimize propaganda and guidance. The characteristics of network united front that break the limitations of time and space are highly consistent with the work and life characteristics of network people and the new class. It is an inevitable path to adapt to the development of the Internet era and systematically improve the scientific level of [11] united front work.

2.4 The Dialectical Relationship between Network United Front and Cyber Cognitive Warfare

As digital technology sweeps the world, the Internet is no longer just an information carrier, but has become a core battlefield for ideological confrontation and political power integration. As two key political practices, network united front and cyber cognitive warfare are closely intertwined due to the overlap of technical fields, and form a strategic confrontation due to the opposition of fundamental goals. The interactive relationship between the two has a profound impact on the effectiveness of united front work and cyber ideological security.

As mentioned above, network united front is a political integration tool of the Communist Party of China, which aims to unite netizens, new media practitioners, online opinion leaders and other groups through the Internet to build "online and offline concentric circles". Its core logic is to build consensus - through two-way interaction online and offline, multiple social forces are incorporated into the national governance framework and the recognition of mainstream values is strengthened [12]. Cyber cognitive warfare is a hybrid warfare form in the digital age, which is manifested in the use of AI-generated content, algorithm recommendation, deep fake and other technologies by state or non-state actors to systematically manipulate the cognition of the target group. Its essence is cognitive deconstruction - by spreading false information and inciting social confrontation, it destroys the trust foundation and value consensus of the target society, and ultimately achieves the strategic goal of "defeating the enemy without fighting" [13]. The fundamental opposition between the two is specifically reflected in three dimensions. First, the goal orientation is different. Network united front pursues political integration and is committed to consolidating the ruling foundation and social stability, such as enhancing the political identity of young people through "key-to-key&face-to-face" communication; the cyber cognitive warfare promotes cognitive colonization and attempts to create social division and regime change, such as using vaccine conspiracy theories to weaken the government's credibility. Second, the subjects of the behavior are different. Network united front is led by public party and government departments, and platform companies and social organizations form collaborative governance; cyber cognitive warfare relies on hidden foreign forces, such as agents supported by intelligence agencies and foundations, and infiltrates through water armies and disguised Internet celebrities [14]. Third, the operating logic is different. Network united front emphasizes two-way empowerment, absorbing public opinion through online political channels and strengthening consensus through value guidance; cyber cognitive warfare implements one-way manipulation, using algorithm cocoons to solidify prejudices and triggering irrational behavior through emotional content [15].

Despite their opposing natures, the two have formed a complex interaction at the practical level due to their common reliance on digital technology. First, technologies such as big data and algorithm push are common engines for both sides. Network united front leverages online platforms to accurately contact non-party members to achieve ideological guidance and demand response; cyber cognitive warfare abuses the same technology, such as forging leaders' speech videos through AI or using social robots to amplify extreme remarks. Secondly, online opinion leaders have become the focus of competition between the two sides. The United Front Department has included representative figures in the training system to support them in spreading the main theme; cognitive warfare forces have instigated "grey zone" Internet celebrities to spread historical nihilism or incite regional confrontation. This competition is essentially a game of discourse leadership. Finally, network united front constitutes a key barrier to resist cognitive warfare. On the one hand, by purifying the cyberspace to compress the "black zone", such as blocking rumors and exposing false information; on the other hand, by "value united front work", we can win over the middle group, such as enhancing cultural confidence through cultural live broadcasts and intangible cultural heritage inheritance, and blocking the infiltration path of cognitive warfare [16].

3. External Challenges: Taiwan Authorities' Systematic Countermeasures toward the Chinese Mainland's Network United Front

Faced with the Chinese mainland's positive efforts to deepen cross-strait peaceful reunification, the DPP authorities regard cyberspace as the main battlefield to resist the process of national reunification, and systematically launch

the so-called "cognitive warfare" to implement all-round countermeasures against the Chinese mainland's network united front by manipulating the information ecology, distorting the logic of facts, and cultivating oppositional consciousness. The strategy aims to split the public opinion in the Taiwan region, reshape the cognition of cross-strait unification, deepen cross-strait ideological confrontations in cyberspace, and win support from international intervention, forming an information defense system against the Chinese mainland's network united front offensive. The systematization of this strategy can be traced back to the "Countermeasures for the Chinese mainland's Fake Information Psychological Warfare" of the "National Security Bureau" in 2019 [17], but its prototype was already evident during the "Nine-in-One" election in 2018. Faced with an unfavorable election situation, the DPP authorities launched the "Anti - Fake Information Hazard Project Report" in December of the same year under the name of "anti-fake information", proposing four types of means: "identify fake, break fake, suppress fake, and punish fake" [18]. After initial use and correction in 2019, this rhetoric was frequently used in the 2020 "general election" to accuse the Chinese mainland of interfering in the election through "cognitive warfare." After winning the election, the DPP authorities further generalized this concept. In her 2020 inaugural speech, Tsai Ing-wen publicly listed the Chinese mainland's network united front as a "threat" that needs to be addressed for the first time [19], and continued to expand its connotation and extension in subsequent official documents. She also abused this label to divert conflicts by taking advantage of "the out-of-control epidemic" and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and ultimately upgraded the election tool to a normalized political operation to consolidate the ruling party, in order to "counter" the Chinese mainland's network united front toward Taiwan.

3.1 Trinity Operation System

The DPP authorities have built a compatriots in Taiwan cognitive warfare operation system of "organizational control - platform penetration - resource allocation" to ensure the normalization and precision of counter-measures [20]. Specifically, at the organizational control level, they systematically shut down dissident media, such as the forced withdrawal of the license of CTi News, leaving Zhao Shaokang's Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC) as the only public voice platform for the blue camp. At the same time, they strictly censor self-media, ban accounts supporting the reunification of the motherland [21], and implement a green speech iron curtain; they set up a "1450" full-time network force, imitated the "fifth column" operation model, established an intelligence sharing and action coordination mechanism with "Hong Kong independence" forces and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), introduced NED's experience in spreading "color revolutions", and even operated accounts such as "Diba Official Weibo" on the Weibo platform to implement cross-border "cognitive counterattacks" [22]. At the platform penetration level, through interfering with the Golden Horse Film Awards and the license renewal of CTi News, the traditional radio and television platforms are fully controlled; deeply penetrated into subculture fields such as games, animation, and film and television, implanted " anti-China " narratives among young people, and used private "Starlink" technology to expand the physical carrier of cognitive warfare; coordinated with international anti-China media such as "Voice of America" to coordinate the release of content that denigrates the Chinese mainland policies at major event nodes, such as the eve of China's Two Sessions [23]. At the resource allocation level, a special budget was allocated to establish an "Internet Community Organization Center" to provide technical tools and personnel training support [24]; "anti-fake information" was weaponized, and through the "Anti-Fake Information Hazard Project Report" launched by the so-called "Executive Yuan" of the Taiwan authorities in December 2018, four types of means were proposed, including "enhancing the public's ability to identify", "accelerating the efficiency of verification and clarification", "restraining the spread of harm" and "pursuing 'illegal' responsibilities", and public opinion control was packaged as "security defense" [25].

3.2 Four Types of Standard Script Production Models

Relying on the support of the above-mentioned operating system, the DPP authorities have developed four types of standardized speech production models for different scenarios, forming a complete false information assembly line.

3.2.1 Distorting the Chinese Mainland's Well-Intentioned Policies — Stigmatizing United Front Infiltration

The Chinese mainland's preferential measures for Taiwan were reprocessed through the local media, stigmatized as " united front conspiracy ", and the public was incited to reject them. A typical example is that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese mainland's willingness to donate masks, vaccines, rapid screening reagents and other epidemic prevention materials was distorted by the public opinion controlled by the DPP authorities as "demonstrating superiority in fighting the epidemic to buy the hearts of the compatriots in Taiwan " [26], and ECFA and other economic concession policies were slandered as "sugar-coated bullets", claiming that "accepting

them means being united front", causing the lives, health and economic interests of Taiwan compatriots to become political victims [27].

3.2.2 Crafting International News Involving Taiwan — Creating the Illusion of Military Unification Deterrence

They intercept the movements of the United States, Japan and other countries related to Taiwan, process them into "international support for Taiwan", and accurately push them to the Chinese mainland to create the perception that "military reunification is not feasible". For example, during the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the DPP cooperated with Western media to hype the "Ukraine today, Taiwan tomorrow" narrative, exaggerating the military and economic lethality of Western sanctions on Russia; when the US State Department revised its statement on Taiwan's status, it made high-profile propaganda and deliberately created the illusion that "Taiwan has been recognized by the country", attempting to implant the cognitive illusion that "using force will be encircled and suppressed by the international community" among mainland netizens, weakening the determination for reunification [28].

3.2.3 Fabricating Controversial Incidents — Shifting Blame to the Chinese Mainland

They tampered with key facts of controversial events in the Taiwan region or in the international arena, and linked them to "incitement by the Chinese mainland" to shift the blame. For example, in the "US pork referendum", they confused the public's opposition to pork containing ractopamine with "damaging Taiwan-US relations and creating opportunities for the Chinese mainland to alienate Taiwan"; on the issue of Fukushima nuclear wastewater, they deliberately replaced "nuclear contaminated water " with the concept of "cooling water", misleading public opinion and falsely accusing opponents of being "mainland cognitive warfare agents"; they also directed the cyber army to cooperate with foreign forces to launch a "big translation campaign" against some extreme remarks made by mainland Chinese netizens on the Russia-Ukraine crisis, intercepting clips to vilify China's image in the international public opinion field and create a false narrative of "mainland interference in Taiwan region's internal affairs" [29].

3.2.4 Manufacturing Fake News — Inciting Confrontational Sentiments

The Taiwan authorities fabricated the incident and controlled the media to spread it in order to foster irrational cross-strait confrontational sentiments. A typical example is the 2021 pro-green writer Lin Weifeng's self-directed and self-acted "Mainland Internet Army Attacks PTT Forum" incident, disguising his identity to publish "pro-communist" remarks and then exposing himself to create the illusion of "Mainland infiltration"[30]; CTS News published false news such as "New Taipei City was hit by PLA missiles" and "The President issued an emergency order" in rolling subtitles in the morning news in 2022, and later only used "staff error" to prevaricate [31]; it has long advocated the concept of "all people are soldiers" and exaggerated the replication of the "Ukrainian all-people resistance model" in an attempt to weaken the Chinese mainland's strategic will to resolve the Taiwan issue in a non-peaceful way [32].

4. Internal Constraints: Structural Shortcomings of the Chinese Mainland's Network United Front toward Taiwan

In the struggle counter the Taiwan authorities' systematic cognitive warfare counterattack, the Chinese mainland's network united front toward Taiwan has exposed deep structural shortcomings, the essence of which is the strategic disconnection between the traditional governance model and the needs of the united front in the digital era. These shortcomings are mainly manifested in the weak platform radiation of the network united front toward Taiwan, the talent supply gap and the failure of mechanism coordination. Specifically, the network platform for the united front toward Taiwan not only has a large number of spatial coverage blind spots, but also falls into the dilemma of content rigidity and communication aphasia; the talent team faces a generational gap between technical capabilities and political literacy, and the grassroots execution is seriously disembedded from the needs of the target; the cross-departmental rights and responsibilities and the virtualization of the liaison mechanism lead to resource dissipation and delayed response. This section will combine empirical research to analyze how the above shortcomings form a negative cycle that restricts the effectiveness of the network united front toward Taiwan - the absence of the platform accelerates the cognitive deficit between the two sides of the strait, the talent gap weakens the ability to compete for network discourse power, and the mechanism split condones the infiltration of the green camp's rhetoric, which ultimately leads to the Chinese mainland falling into a strategic dilemma of passive defense in the cognitive warfare battlefield, which also proposes a reform target for the path to relieve the dilemma.

4.1 The Governance Capacity for Network United Front Work Concerning Taiwan Needs Improvement.

The ability to govern network united front includes many aspects such as online united front strategies, techniques, public opinion guidance skills and media literacy. The ability to govern network united front requires further improvement is a major problem facing the current network united front toward Taiwan, which is mainly reflected in the deficiencies in the platform and team building dimensions. The two are superimposed on each other to form a double shackle that restricts the penetration of united front information toward Taiwan.

4.1.1 The Construction of the Network Platform for the United Front toward Taiwan is Insufficient and its Comprehensive Influence is Weak

The crisis in the construction of network united front platform for Taiwan is first manifested in the platform coverage level. Not only have the United Front Work Departments at all levels across the country not established a special online united front platform for Taiwan, but other united front systems related to Taiwan have also not achieved comprehensive coverage. Through a survey of the construction of the two mainstream platforms of the official websites and WeChat public accounts of the provincial Taiwan Affairs Offices, the Federation of Taiwan Compatriots and the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, it was found that the Taiwan Affairs Offices, as the backbone of the united front work for Taiwan, have a coverage rate of 67.7% and 64.5% for their official websites and WeChat public accounts respectively. Among them, less than half of the provinces have achieved simultaneous operation of the two platforms, and there are still 5 provinces in a completely blank state; the opening rate of the official website of the provincial Federation of Taiwan Compatriots is as low as 16.1%, and the opening rate of the WeChat public account is barely over half, and as many as 14 provinces have no coverage of both platforms. Even the WeChat public account of the provincial Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, which has the highest coverage rate, has not reached 80%. Compared with its only 14 physical organizations, it is still low in coverage and lacks representativeness. Obviously, there is a large area of spatial blind spots in the information radiation network for the united front toward Taiwan.

Table 1: Statistics on the construction of mainstream online united front platforms of provincial-level Taiwan Affairs Office, Federations of Taiwan Compatriots and Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League

Network platform construction status / Network platforms	Provincial Taiwan Affairs Office (31)		Provincial Federation of Taiwan Compatriots (31)		Provincial Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League (13)	
	Official website	WeChat public account	Official website	WeChat public account	Official website	WeChat public account
Number of built	21	20	5	16	6	10
Coverage	67.7%	64.5%	16.1%	51.6%	42.9%	71.4%
Full coverage	15		5		4	
Full coverage	48.4%		16.1%		30.8%	
Total blanks	5		14		1	
Total blank rate	16.1%		45.2%		7.7%	

There are 31 provincial-level Taiwan Affairs Offices and local organizations of Federation of Taiwan Compatriots, and 14 provincial-level Taiwan Democratic Self-Government Leagues.

Another crisis in platform construction stems from the dual rigidity of content production and dissemination. Existing united front platforms related to Taiwan generally fall into the functional misunderstanding of "focusing on policy advocacy and neglecting audience connection". Through research, it was found that the content level overly relies on programmed work dynamic reports and policy document reprints, and is slow to respond to livelihood issues and sudden public opinions that concern the compatriots in Taiwan , and the proportion of original content is seriously insufficient. As shown in the following table, as the group with the closest contact with Taiwan, the number of original logos on the WeChat public account of the Central Committee of the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League is extremely low. The form level presents characteristics such as simplistic design and lack of interaction. Most platforms are still in the primary form of text and pictures, and have not developed diversified functions such as online consultation and cultural exchange appointments, and have not introduced short videos, live broadcasts, virtual reality and other media forms suitable for Generation Z. This lag in content ecology is cruelly verified by the dissemination data of the public account of the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League in 2024 - its WeChat dissemination index ranks last among the democratic parties, whether it is the total number of readings, the average number of readings per article, or the number of articles entering the

weekly/monthly list, it is almost at the bottom.

Table 2: Big data on the WeChat public accounts of the central committees of the democratic parties in 2024

WeChat public accounts of the central committees of the democratic parties / WeChat Communication Index (WCI) Index System	Total number of published articles	Total number of original logos	Total number of releases	Total Reading	Average number of articles read	Number of articles on the weekly list	Number of articles on the monthly list	WeChat Communication Index WCI Average
Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League	650③	1④	602③	65.1w+ ⑦	1002 ⑧	20⑧	14⑧	575⑧
Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang	492	5	438	148w+	3009	83	40	754
Chinese Democratic League	340	0	327	153.6w+	4517	100	78	789
China Democratic National Construction Association	457	0	357	165.5w+	3620	94	58	765
CAPD Website	784	0	783	210.5w+	2685	113	75	821
Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party	426	0	425	96.1w+	2255	50	twenty three	706
China Zhi Gong	284	185	275	135.6w+	4774	70	43	751
Voice of Jiusan Society	674	10	583	131.2w+	1947	67	36	742
Overall spread data	4107	201	3790	1105.6w+	2692	597	367	738
percentage	15.8%	0.50%	15.9%	5.89%		3.35%	3.81%	

Note: The numbers in the circles represent the overall ranking of each index.

The chain reaction caused by insufficient platform construction eventually manifested itself as a comprehensive lack of ability to deal with "taiwan-style" cognitive operations and a deep decline in the effectiveness of network united front toward Taiwan. Specifically, the weak influence of the platform has accelerated the vicious cycle of cognitive deficits between the cross-strait. The Chinese mainland's interpretation of relevant policies on cross-strait peaceful reunification has been marginalized as united front propaganda in the Taiwan region's information ecology due to its weak dissemination volume, while the DPP has continued to amplify the "anti-China and anti-unification" narrative by relying on global penetration. The more far-reaching impact is that when network united front platform lacks the "breadth" of geographical coverage, the "depth" of content reach, and the "sharpness" of formal innovation, the Chinese mainland's "loss of voice" in the cross-strait public opinion field is no longer a technical setback, but has evolved into a strategic crisis related to the process of national reunification. The result is ultimately reflected in the continued deterioration of the structure of public opinion. The latest "Distribution of Identity Trends in the Taiwan region" survey conducted by the Election Research Center of National Chengchi University in January 2025 showed that "the proportion of people in the Taiwan region who only identify themselves as Chinese is only 2.4%, a record low; the proportion of people who only identify themselves as 'Taiwanese people' is as high as 61.7%, which has shown a stable trend over the past four years, reaching more than 60%" [33].

4.1.2 The Construction of the Network United Front Talent Team for Taiwan is Lagging behind and the Compound Capabilities are Low

the Chinese mainland's insufficient capacity for network united front governance over Taiwan is also reflected in the structural rift between the supply of professional talents and the demand for complex capabilities. This rift is reflected not only in the vertical fault of the talent ecology - the scarcity of technical backbones and the mindset of traditional united front cadres form a generational gap; it is also manifested in the horizontal split of the capability framework - the systematic separation of key elements such as political literacy, network skills, and Taiwan's social situation cognition at the individual and organizational levels. Taking the 2024 public recruitment of directly affiliated institutions of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council as an example, it did not recruit related network technical majors such as cyberspace security, computer science and technology, network engineering, and information security. Almost all of them are "economics, management, law" and "literature, history, and philosophy" majors. The author further conducted an online survey on the recruitment situation of some local Taiwan Affairs Offices and found that this situation is even more serious, and there are even a large

number of positions with no restrictions on majors.

The talent structure fault directly induces the intergenerational gap in counter-attack capabilities. In the current team composition, the proportion of technical personnel who are familiar with algorithm recommendation mechanisms, cross-border public opinion analysis, and immersive content production is significantly lower than the baseline requirement for cognitive confrontation, and compound leaders who have a sense of united front theory, a grasp of the laws of network communication, and a sense of the pulse of compatriots in Taiwan society are even more scarce [34]. This double shortage has led to a general structural fracture in the ability of the grassroots. Traditional united front workers are trapped in the one-way output mode of policy advocacy, and lack essential understanding of the rules of discourse game in cyberspace and the evolutionary logic of the green camp's rhetoric; although new technical personnel have mastered digital technology tools, they are unable to transform technical advantages into united front strategic effectiveness due to insufficient political sensitivity. The capability shortcomings of the network united front team are no longer a local gap, but are evolving into a systematic generational gap in the struggle for network control. The dominance of the cognitive battlefield continues to tilt towards Taiwan, and the Chinese mainland is caught in the strategic passivity of an issue follower.

The disconnection of grassroots implementation has fundamentally undermined the sustainability of identity construction. The decline in capabilities at the end of the team presents a double alienation. On the demand side, grassroots cadres have become blunt in their perception of the pain points of compatriots in Taiwan's livelihood and social anxiety, resulting in a serious time difference between online united front content and hot topics of public opinion in the Taiwan region; on the supply side, the lack of media literacy has reduced policy interpreters to mechanical information carriers, unable to use big data to accurately portray the audience portrait, and even less able to establish value resonance through emotional narratives [35]. This supply and demand rupture has caused official communication to fall into the paradox of "transmission but not communication", ultimately leading to a marginal decrease in communication effectiveness. The attention of compatriots in Taiwan youth groups to the official accounts of the Chinese mainland Taiwan -related platforms has continued to shrink, and the "depoliticization infiltration" led by the Green Camp has continued to harvest the silent majority through life narratives, accelerating the expansion of the cross-strait identity rift in the generational change.

4.2 The Mechanism for Network United Front toward Taiwan is Not Sound

The deep crisis of the Chinese mainland's network united front toward Taiwan lies in the absence of coordination and liaison mechanisms. This mechanism defect is not a technical problem of local dysfunction, but an institutional dilemma related to the overall strategic system of the system. Its essence is the fundamental mismatch between traditional bureaucratic governance and the cross-domain coordination needs of the network era. When the network governance related to Taiwan is deeply trapped in the institutional obstruction of cross-departmental power and responsibility overlap and vacuum, and when the fulcrum of civil discourse continues to be lost due to the absence of organizations, the Chinese mainland has lost the institutional foundation for building resilient defense and active countermeasures in the cognitive warfare battlefield - this has not only magnified the penetration efficiency of "taiwan-style" cognitive warfare, but also disintegrated the sustainability of the united front strategy from the source of the mechanism.

4.2.1 The Coordinated Linkage Mechanism for Network United Front toward Taiwan Has not yet been Established

Taiwan-related network governance involves multiple systems such as the United Front Work Department, Cyberspace Administration of China, Industry and Information Technology, Public Security, Culture, Propaganda, Taiwan Affairs Office, and Foreign Affairs. In terms of functional configuration, it often falls into an institutional paradox where overlapping powers and responsibilities coexist with a vacuum. Although the United Front Work Department and the Taiwan Affairs Office bear the main responsibility and lead policy formulation, they lack the legal authorization to coordinate cross-departmental resources; the Cyberspace Administration of China controls public opinion monitoring but neglects to judge Taiwan's social situation; public security agencies have cross-border strike capabilities but lack understanding of the United Front strategy. The propaganda, culture, industry and information technology, and foreign affairs departments act independently, and due to the fragmentation of the fragmented information islands, it is difficult to build a unified combat map [36]. This fragmented governance has led to a triple vicious cycle. First, the decision-making chain is broken, and departmental parochialism leads to delayed strategic response. Sudden cognitive warfare offensives require lengthy cross-system coordination, missing the key counter- opportunity; second, the resource chain is dissipated, and human resources, technology, data and other resource elements are scattered in different systems, unable to form a joint force to crack the above-

mentioned green camp rhetoric production system; third, the responsibility chain is vague, and multiple management leads to accountability avoidance, making cognitive warfare defense a governance blind spot where "everyone is responsible but no one is responsible". The direct consequence is that the Chinese mainland is trapped in the dilemma of passive response in the Taiwan- related public opinion battlefield. When the DPP relies on the vertical mechanism of "administrative leadership-cyber army execution-international coordination" to launch a cognitive offensive, the Chinese mainland's horizontal coordination shortcomings make it difficult to simultaneously implement information clarification, legal countermeasures and international support for a three-dimensional response, which ultimately leads to internal friction in decision-making and inability to counter.

4.2.2 The Organizational Liaison Mechanism for Taiwan-related Internet Users Needs to be improved Urgently

The institutional lack of a contact mechanism for Taiwan-related Internet users is not a simple technical omission, but a systematic failure of the foundation of the United Front toward Taiwan. Its essence is the fundamental disembedding between the traditional organizational mobilization model and the distributed discourse power structure in the Internet era. When Taiwan-related Internet users, as the key carriers of cross-strait civil discourse, have a serious inversion of their United Front values and mechanism supply, the Chinese mainland has essentially lost its strategic ability to build a resilient fulcrum in the main battlefield of the Internet. A survey of Internet users in Guangzhou showed that nearly 90% of Internet users had not participated in activities organized by the United Front Department, and 87% of Internet users were not members of the Guangzhou New Federation. It can be inferred that the number of Taiwan-related Internet users who enter the vision of the United Front work will be even smaller [37].

Specifically, the lack of an organizational liaison mechanism for Taiwan-related networkers will cause the vast majority of Taiwan-related network representatives to be outside the United Front network, making it easy for their creative momentum to be captured by the Green Camp's systematic funding mechanism, with the direct consequence of the structural transfer of symbol production rights. Even more serious is the continued loss of intergenerational discourse power. In the communication ecology where Generation Z relies on KOLs to establish cognitive coordinates, the Taiwan-related network united front system has failed to include young opinion leaders in the cultivation channel, causing the concept of "a community of shared future cross-strait" to be completely speechless in the new generation's communication chain. Not only that, the lack of an organizational liaison mechanism has also led to the United Front departments at all levels having a serious lack of data and information on the overall number, spatial distribution, professional characteristics, network behavior characteristics, political attitudes, and interest demands of Taiwan-related networkers, resulting in a deep disconnect between the United Front strategy and the needs of the target, and the work deployment has become a mechanical projection of empiricism. It is not only unable to accurately identify the emotional resonance points of audiences in different circles, but also directly hinders the discovery, absorption, and cultivation of networkers, which also greatly weakens the effectiveness of the Taiwan-related network united front [38].

5. Paths to Improve the Effectiveness of Network United Front toward Taiwan in the New Era

In order to break through the dual dilemma of the Taiwan authorities' cognitive blockade and the Chinese mainland's endogenous shortcomings, it is urgent to improve the effectiveness of the network united front toward Taiwan through systematic reforms. This section attempts to break the platform radiation collapse and the "taiwan-style" cognitive warfare offensive by building a global propaganda matrix; forging a compound talent echelon to bridge the generational gap in capabilities; innovating the organizational liaison mechanism for Taiwan-related network personnel to strengthen the united front fulcrum; and improving the cross-departmental collaborative linkage mechanism to integrate resources and break down governance barriers. These paths are based on technology empowerment and institutional rigidity as dual engines, aiming to transform the network united front position from passive defense to an active offensive fulcrum in the cognitive battlefield, and to build an institutional channel to bridge the cross-strait identity gap.

5.1 Building a Global Network United Front toward Taiwan

To solve the dilemma of radiation collapse of network united front platform toward Taiwan, it is necessary to reshape the cross-border communication pattern with technology empowerment. By building a propaganda matrix covering all blind spots, promoting lightweight content and functional service upgrades, and building an intelligent counter-big data platform, the passive defense situation in the cognitive warfare toward Taiwan can be completely

reversed, providing global position support for active offensive.

5.1.1 Create a Full Ccoverage, Multi-level Publicity Matrix

In view of Taiwan's three-in-one countermeasure system of "organization control-platform penetration-resource allocation" and the dual pressures of low coverage and weak communication efficiency of the Chinese mainland's united front platform toward Taiwan, the network united front toward Taiwan urgently needs to build a global propaganda matrix with vertical penetration and horizontal linkage. Specifically, at the vertical level, promote the Taiwan Affairs Office, Federation of Taiwan Compatriots, and Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League below the provincial level to fully establish the "official website + WeChat public account" dual-platform infrastructure, and formulate phased coverage goals, incorporate the operation and maintenance of the platform into the united front work assessment system, and gradually eliminate the platform space coverage blind spots by provinces and cities. At the horizontal expansion level, actively adapt to the media usage habits in the Taiwan region, open short video accounts such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu, and actively establish content synchronization interfaces with mainstream social platforms in the Taiwan region such as Line, Telegram, PTT, and Dcard, forming a cross-border content distribution channel, and creating a multi-dimensional information penetration network of "policy release-people's livelihood services-cultural exchanges" [39]. On this basis, algorithm optimization is used to ensure that content related to Taiwan-related united front work effectively reaches core population aged 18-45 in the Taiwan region, with an average daily push volume of no less than one million, completely breaking through the "green speech iron curtain" constructed by the DPP.

5.1.2 Promote Platform Content Production and Function Upgrades

In terms of platform content production, it is necessary to break the stereotype of formulaic policy advocacy, break through the traditional preaching mode, and use lightweight and fragmented strategies to enhance the affinity of communication. For example, the "31 measures" and "26 measures" to promote cross-strait economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation are transformed into a series of "one picture to understand" comics; a micro-documentary "The Real Record of compatriots in Taiwan Youth Entrepreneurship in the Chinese mainland" is produced to arouse emotional resonance through real stories, etc. In terms of functional design, it is necessary to strengthen interactive attributes, such as adding online service windows to provide convenient services such as application and inquiry of Taiwan Compatriot Certificates and social security inquiry and transfer; opening a Taiwan-related forum column to encourage rational dialogue between netizens cross-strait; developing practical tools such as "convenient inquiry of Taiwan-benefiting policies" and "subsidy calculator" in order to embed the content of the United Front toward Taiwan into daily life scenes, improve the audience connection efficiency, and improve user stickiness through practicality and topicality, thereby continuously improving the effectiveness of communication.

5.1.3 Build a Big Data Platform for "Internet + Network United Front toward Taiwan"

More importantly, it is necessary to build an "Internet + Network United Front toward Taiwan" big data platform, systematically integrate the data resources of the United Front Work Department, Cyberspace Administration of China, Public Security, Culture and other departments, build a dynamic information database of Taiwan-related Internet users, and accurately track their political inclinations and behavior trajectories. The platform needs to be equipped with an AI-driven public opinion monitoring system to identify the DPP authorities' four-dimensional rhetoric chain of "distorted policies - processed news - forged events - fabricated rumors" in real time, and automatically trigger a hierarchical response mechanism - for example, in response to stigmatized vaccine aid, the pro-unification media in the Taiwan region will be linked to release documentary images of the entire donation process within 1 hour; in response to malicious incidents such as the forged missile alert by CTS News, an automated rumor intervention system will be launched to implement cross-border transmission blocking and simultaneous push of the truth [40].

5.2 Cultivating a Team of Compound Talents for the Network United Front toward Taiwan

In order to resolve the dilemma of lagging behind in the construction of the network united front talent team toward Taiwan and the low compound capabilities, it is urgent to build a three-level empowerment system of technical countermeasures, strategic command and grassroots execution. Through the training of backbone personnel, leadership reshaping and Generation Z discourse adaptation, the gap between political literacy and digital skills can be bridged, and the structural capacity reconstruction of the network united front talent team toward Taiwan

can be achieved.

5.2.1 Build a Hierarchical and Classified Professional Training System

The key to solving the dilemma of talent structure discontinuity and lack of professional quality lies in building a hierarchical and classified professional training system with technical backbones, united front command, and grassroots execution as the main contents. Specifically, at the technical countermeasure level, key talents are selected from the Cyberspace Administration and the public security system to go to top Internet companies to carry out special training such as deep fake detection, social robot identification, and cross-border public opinion tracing, with a focus on overcoming the algorithm manipulation technology of the Green Camp cyber army [41]; at the strategic command level, relying on the Central Academy of Socialism and the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, we will set up a "Network United Front Command Special Team" to strengthen the ability of department-level and bureau-level cadres to analyze the evolution of Taiwan's social conditions and the discourse system of subcultural circles, and cultivate compound leaders with both political determination and digital literacy; at the grassroots execution level, we will implement the "Generation Z Discourse Ability Certification" system, requiring city and county United Front cadres to master the expression methods of circles such as the second dimension and e-sports, as well as basic network skills such as short video editing and big data analysis.

5.2.2 Optimize the Supply Ecology of Talent Selection and Training

First, vigorously select compound network united front talents. When recruiting externally, we should select compound talents who have both the qualities of network united front toward Taiwan and the professional knowledge and technical capabilities of information networks according to the needs of the network united front toward Taiwan, and keep a good "entrance gate"; when selecting internally, through political assessment, technical testing, and public opinion handling simulation three-dimensional evaluation, select young backbones who have both united front theory consciousness, network communication skills, and Taiwan social situation awareness, implement the "mentor system" to focus on training, gradually reconstruct the single-type talent structure under the traditional bureaucracy, and fundamentally solve the generational gap in counter-attack capabilities. Second, we should focus on discovery and training, and absorb Taiwan-related "opinion leaders" with high political awareness and strong social identity into the key work arrangements of the united front department. For example, politically reliable Taiwan-related "opinion leaders" (fans> 500,000) can be included in organizations such as the CPPCC, cross-strait think tanks, and the new social strata associations, give play to their advantages, support them in participating in the network united front toward Taiwan, and actively guide them to maintain the consensus on cross-strait reunification [42].

5.3 Innovate the Organizational Liaison Mechanism for Taiwan-related Internet Users

The "Party member leading cadres' contact system" should be fully implemented for the contact with Taiwan-related network people. The United Front Work Departments at all levels should be responsible for the organization and coordination of the relevant units' friendship and communication, and supervise and guide them to do a good job in organizing and contacting. On the one hand, each unit should establish a "two-way communication" system with the contact objects. Each party member leading cadre should contact 2-3 Taiwan-related network representatives and take the initiative to talk with the contact objects at least once a quarter. On the other hand, relying on the "Internet + Network United Front toward Taiwan" big data platform, actively carry out online friendship, so that party member leading cadres can contact and communicate with Taiwan-related network people anytime and anywhere [43]. Specifically, provincial and ministerial cadres will directly contact top opinion leaders (fans > 500,000), hold offline discussions every quarter to solve cross-border communication barriers, such as coordinating Xiaohongshu and Douyin to open green review channels for them; the heads of the prefecture-level United Front Work Departments will be responsible for contacting mid-level creators (50,000-500,000 fans), maintain monthly interactions through WeChat groups, and regularly push policy interpretation materials; for active users of Generation Z, young United Front cadres will be sent to subculture communities such as Bilibili and Twitch to participate in e-sports teams and Cosplay club activities as "insiders", subtly implant cultural identity, and thus form a three-level precise docking system. This mechanism needs to rely on the "Internet + Network United Front toward Taiwan" big data platform for digital management, automatically record indicators such as contact frequency and problem solving rate, incorporate the effectiveness of organizational liaison into cadre assessment, and ensure that the system is implemented from "paper" to "cloud".

5.4 Improve the Cross-departmental Coordination Mechanism for Network United Front toward Taiwan

In order to cure the governance dilemma caused by overlapping powers and responsibilities and delayed response of departments such as the United Front, Cyberspace Administration, and Public Security, it is necessary to build an integrated combat system through institutional innovation and improve the cross-departmental coordination and linkage mechanism. In accordance with General Secretary Xi Jinping's instructions that "United Front work is the work of the whole party, the whole party must pay attention to it, and everyone should work together", based on the "big united front, big network" work pattern, at the central level, a joint meeting system for the network united front toward Taiwan will be established, led by the Central United Front Work Department and the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, and jointly participated by relevant units, to open up the public opinion joint defense system of the United Front, Cyberspace Administration, and Public Security Departments, and realize the closed loop of online information collection and offline analysis and disposal [44]. Specifically, the Joint Conference on the network united front toward Taiwan is the main body, and it is given the right to dispatch resources across systems, and a closed-loop process of "monitoring - judgment - decision - evaluation" is established: the Cyberspace Administration of China submits a heat map of public opinion related to Taiwan every day, the Ministry of Public Security updates the trajectory of overseas cyber army activities every week, and the United Front Work Department holds a joint meeting on a monthly basis to formulate a counter-matrix diagram. In addition, by introducing relevant supporting systems, the functional relationship between departments is straightened out, work responsibilities are clarified, the current management status of each doing its own thing and fragmentation is broken, and all relevant units are urged to work together to do a good job in the network united front toward Taiwan. At the local level, the "90-minute combat closed loop" mechanism is piloted in frontier provinces such as Fujian and Zhejiang. The Cyberspace Administration of China monitors sudden rumors related to Taiwan and completes the source analysis within 30 minutes, the United Front Department formulates a counter-strategy within 45 minutes, the propaganda and cultural system produces rumor-refuting content within 60 minutes, and pushes it to all platforms within 90 minutes, completely reversing the passive acceptance situation.

6. Conclusion

In the new era where digital technology deeply reconstructs the ideological communication pattern, cyberspace has become the strategic frontier of cross-strait. This study reveals that the Taiwan authorities have systematically implemented four-dimensional cognitive operations centered on distorting policy goodwill, processing international news, falsifying controversial events, and fabricating fake news through the three linkage mechanisms of organizational control, platform penetration, and resource allocation, which poses a severe challenge to the Chinese mainland's network united front toward Taiwan. At the same time, the endogenous shortcomings of the Chinese mainland's network united front toward Taiwan are concentrated in the three structural contradictions of platform radiation blind spots, talent and ability faults, and mechanism coordination failure, resulting in the decline of communication effectiveness and the continued deepening of the cross-strait cognitive deficit.

In response to the above dual dilemma, this article innovatively proposes a four-dimensional breakthrough path: breaking the platform coverage dilemma through the construction of a global position, including the establishment of a cross-border propaganda matrix and a big data counter-measure platform; reshaping the capability structure with compound talents, and cultivating technical backbones and strategic command forces in layers; relying on the innovative liaison mechanism of network personnel to activate the effectiveness of the united front, focusing on the implementation of the list of party members and leading cadres Contact system; leveraging cross-departmental collaborative governance to break through departmental barriers and establish joint meetings and closed-loop response mechanisms. These paths not only provide operational solutions to alleviate the current dual dilemma of network united front toward Taiwan, but also systematically deconstruct the dialectical relationship between network united front and cognitive warfare for the first time in theory, and promote network united front toward Taiwan from passive defense to strategic initiative. In the future, it is necessary to deepen the integration of technological empowerment and institutional innovation, build network united front into a strategic fulcrum for resolving cognitive differences between the cross-strait and building consensus on national reunification, and provide key support for consolidating the grand united front pattern in the new era.

Note:

The views, specific content and cited data of this article are analyzed under the framework of the One China Principle

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