

## **From "Expanding Government Influence" to "A Digital Community with a Shared Future" - Agenda-setting Strategies for China's Participation in the Construction of International Institutions in the Digital Space**

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International agenda setting is the initial and key stage of the creation of international institutions. This paper constructs an analytical framework that includes three elements: institutional platform, agenda setting, means and capabilities. Using methods such as historical institutionalism, text analysis, institutional comparison, and case study, this paper studies the agenda setting strategies in the four paths of China's participation in the construction of international institutions in the digital space. This paper holds that the agenda setting in the four paths has a relationship of inheritance and development, and the autonomy is gradually improved. Specific means of advancing the agenda are limited by institutional platforms; the effect is still not obvious, so the idea should be further improved and the means optimized.

*Keywords:* digital space governance, agenda setting, network sovereignty, a digital community with a shared future

### **Introduction**

Keohan (1989, p. 3), the founder of neoliberal institutionalism in international relations, believes that international institutions include formal intergovernmental organizations, transnational non-governmental organizations, international mechanisms, international practices and other forms. China's participation in the international institutions of digital space governance can be roughly divided into four types, for which China has adopted different participation paths. Although these four systems were founded at different times, they are now coexisting, so the relationship between China's four paths is not either one or the other, but the relationship of mutual connection and cooperation. The Type 1 institution is the digital space governance system with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) as the core, which the United States built with the help of technology and historical advantages, and China took the path of joining. The second institution of system is the digital space governance system based on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) under the framework of the United Nations. Like other countries, China does not have the ability to change the unreasonable US-led system of

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digital space governance, so it has taken the path of seeking change through the institutional platform under the framework of the United Nations. The third institution of system is the bilateral or multilateral system established between China and a certain country or several countries through negotiations and other means. In this regard, China and relevant countries have adopted the path of joint construction. The fourth institution is independent platforms such as the World Internet Conference (WIC), for which China takes an independently created path to voice its views and voices on the governance of the digital space.

It is necessary to compare these four paths from a global perspective and deeply explore the strategies of the Chinese government, enterprises, scientists and other participants in each path. In addition to the co-construction path, the organizations and meetings involved in the other three paths have official websites, which publish almost all the meeting minutes. This paper uses the historical institutionalism method to identify the key nodes of China's participation in the construction of international internet institutions. On this basis, combining the governance practices in the two fields of China's international and domestic digital space governance, this paper studies the agenda-setting strategies for the construction of international digital space governance institutions in each path through text analysis, institutional comparison, case study and other methods.

### Literature Review

Keohan and Nye (2003, pp. 34–35), the founders of neoliberal institutionalism in international relations, put forward in their book *Power and Interdependence* that "at the international level, states and actors' present their views in various forums' and try to bring their concerns to the fore in international organizations, seeking to maximize their advantages through the expansion or narrowing of agendas." This formulation points to two important aspects of agenda-setting in participating in the construction of international institutions: where and what to say, and indeed, how to say it.

The first problem with setting an agenda in an international setting is "where to say it." Stephen Livingstone proposed the concept of "access points" of the agenda, defining it as a place where actors construct compelling issues, arguing that agenda-setting in international politics is carried out through "agenda entry points and agenda control through entry points". In international politics, there are roughly four types of venues: global knowledge production sites, transnational networks and media, key international organizations or mechanisms, and diplomatic activities such as international conferences or alliances (Livingston, 1992). Keohan and Nye (2003, p. 36) saw the international institutions as helping to set the international agenda, enabling coalitions, and as a forum for political initiatives and engagement strategies by weaker states. These statements are enlightening but too broad, so the framework of this analysis will be based on the actual situation of China's participation in the governance of the international digital space to determine the "place".

The setting of the international agenda is not only the initial stage, but also the crucial stage in the creation of the international institutions. McCombs and Shaw (1972) were the first to put forward and confirm the agenda-setting theory, pointing out that the mass media cannot determine the specific views of people on a certain event or opinion, but it can influence the audience to pay attention to certain facts and opinions and discuss the ranking of these facts and opinions by arranging relevant issues. Earlier, another journalism scholar, Bernard Cohen, had proposed a similar idea: the media may not be successful at telling people what to think, but they are extraordinarily successful at telling them what to think (McCombs, 2008, p. 3). Agenda-setting in mass communication is not much different from the mechanisms of international agenda-setting, as Keohan and Nye (2003, p. 33) point out: In an international community where there is no clear hierarchy of issues, the politics of agenda-shaping and agenda-controlling will become more important. Nye (2011a, p. 18) further points to "the ability of power users to get the results they want through agenda-building, persuasion, and assimilation." However, compared with the agenda setting of mass communication, the agenda setting of China's international digital space governance system is mainly aimed at other countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, and is closely related to the international voice and national interests, which need to be considered.

"Access channel" or "entry point" solves the problem of "where to say", agenda setting solves the problem of "what to say", but the problem of "how to say" is equally important, which concerns the ability or means to set the international agenda. Lan and Hanzhi (2012) of Tsinghua University divides the government's ability to participate in international rule-making into three categories: the government's ability and influence in international organizations, the local policy environment, and the level of coordination and coordination of bureaucracies. Power is a kind of ability. Xiaoyan and Yuanhang (2017) take international network security rules as an example to show that the improvement of a country's network discourse power is guaranteed by technological innovation and development, and its consolidation depends on the strengthening of institutional power and interpretative power. Institutional power refers to whether relevant standards can enter the international agenda and become universal standards, while interpretative power refers to whether a country can effectively promote its own standards and ideas. For the international digital space governance field, unilateral, bilateral and multilateral institutional platforms of different nature have given a limited range of what capabilities and means to use.

### **Analysis Framework**

Different digital space governance systems provide a platform for China to build the right to speak in international internet governance. Setting the international agenda is the initial and key stage of building the right to speak in international institutions, and the ability and means to set the agenda determine the size of a country's right to speak in international institutions. To sum up, this paper constructs

an analytical framework that includes three elements: institutional platform, agenda setting, means and capabilities, and tries to study how to set the agenda in the four paths of China's participation in the construction of the international institutions of digital space governance.

(1) Institutional platform for agenda setting

Different institutional frameworks affect the discourse construction strategies of the actors to a great extent. We can frame the international institutions of digital space governance as a research object by examining the evolution of the concept of international institutions. The study of international institutions starts from the study of formal international organizations, and finally returns to formal international organizations, but this cycle brings about the expansion and extension of conceptual extension (Ye, 2017, p. 27). In Keohan's division of the forms of international institutions, formal intergovernmental organizations and transnational non-governmental organizations together with international mechanisms and international practices constitute international institutions (Keohan, 1989, p. 3). We can divide China's participation in the international digital governance system into four categories: The first type of system is the digital space governance system with ICANN as the core built by the United States with the advantage of technology and history; The second type is the digital space governance system with WSIS and IGF as the core under the framework of the United Nations. The third type of system is the bilateral or multilateral system established by negotiation between China and a certain country or several countries. The fourth type of system is an autonomous system such as the WIC.

(2) Idea-driven agenda setting

Digital space governance encompasses multiple areas, which Kurbalija (2019, p. 3) divides into seven frameworks of infrastructure, security, law, economy, development, socio-cultural and human rights, covering 40-50 relevant issues. Limited by time and other constraints, it is impossible for anyone institutional platform to discuss every topic. The agenda consists of a number of topics arranged in an orderly manner. Whether it can be entered into the agenda determines whether it is discussed, and the priority order on the agenda determines the degree of attention paid to the topic. Nye (1990) argues that "soft power," such as voice, does not depend on command or force, but "derives from setting the agenda and deciding how to frame the debate." The setting of the agenda reflects the philosophy behind it. The specific agenda will be elaborated in the following paragraphs, which will only outline the different but evolving concepts of China in the four paths: Expand the role of governments of sovereign states in international digital space governance, advocate that governments play a leading role in international digital space governance, conduct cyber and digital cooperation with other countries as sovereign states, resolve disputes, respect cyber sovereignty, and build a community of digital destiny.

(c) The ability or means to set the agenda

The agenda is a list of all the issues, and how to get the issues advocated by the country into the agenda, or even to the top, is related to the ability or means of agenda-setting. If the international agenda setting ability is strong, it can create "collective identity" through the public opinion environment formed by the agenda setting, and improve the effectiveness of international discourse in international rule-making. To realize the effective transmission of value in the debate of issues and establish the national value standard in the formulation of international rules (Bin, 2015). During the agenda setting phase of the establishment of the international institutions of digital space governance, China has adopted, within the framework of action of different institutional platforms, such means as submitting technical drafts, addressing conferences, issuing statements and comments, recommending candidates, hosting and holding meetings, lobbying, and launching initiatives. In addition, although the means closely related to discourse are used in the formulation of international rules and have their own particularities, they should also follow the criteria of measuring discourse such as rigorous logical persuasion, fair value concept, and scientific evidence basis.

### **Agenda-setting Strategies in the Participation Path**

The internet was originally born in the United States. With its technological and historical advantages, the United States has gradually formed a governance system with ICANN as the center responsible for internet resource allocation, and Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) and other institutions responsible for standards development. In order for China to catch up in the information age, it is a rational and inevitable choice for China to access the internet and join the US-led international digital space governance system.

(1) Institutional platforms where the role of the government is limited

In 1998, ICANN was established to coordinate the distribution of internet domain names, IP addresses and technical parameters. On the one hand, the United States controls ICANN through contracts, and on the other hand, with its powerful internet companies, scientists and social organizations, the government can achieve national interests without direct intervention. Under ICANN, policies are formed from the bottom up, mainly by organizations such as the private sector and the technical community, while other governments must reach a "majority consensus" (under the old bylaws) or a "consensus of the whole" (under the new bylaws of 2016) in the Government Advisory Committee (GAC) to make recommendations to the ICANN Board—have no real influence. In 2002, ICANN, which had been in operation for three years, was reformed due to problems such as insufficient participation mechanism, lengthy decision-making process, and insufficient funding. GAC insisted that the participation of government and public authorities was an indispensable central element of ICANN's mission, but

ICANN's leadership believed that it was not feasible to replace it with traditional governmental means (ICANN, 2002). ICANN conference was held in Shanghai in 2002. The China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC, 2002) has proposed that ICANN is no longer fit to perform its duties and that it be reformed into an independent international organization with the General Assembly as the highest decision-making body. However, because of its willingness to reform and contract with the US government restrictions, ICANN's reform is not according to the direction of development.

(2) Expanding the role of the government and the Chinese domain name agenda

Efforts to change ICANN internally have been thwarted, but in domain names China has expanded the influence of sovereign governments in the governance of the international digital space. Domain name allocation and use is the basis and premise of network interconnection. Multilingual domain names are proposed and led by ICANN, intended to make it "easier for those who do not use the ASCII character set to use it (the Internet)" (ICANN, 2000). China's decision to make Chinese domain names is not only related to high communication costs, but also related to national sovereignty and information security (Xue, 2004). But the construction of the Chinese domain name agenda is not smooth: On September 25, 2000, the ICANN Board of Directors made a resolution on Internationalized Domain names (IDN), awarding the development of Chinese domain names to Verisign—an American company (ICANN, 2001). The day before the adoption of the resolution China objected by announcing that it would authorize CNNIC to manage the Chinese domain name system in the mainland on behalf of the government, but it did not block the resolution. Through various efforts, China has obtained the right to formulate Chinese domain name standards and defended China's sovereignty.

(3) Various means to promote the Chinese domain name standards agenda

Technical standards are an important part of the digital space governance system with ICANN as the core. Technical personnel mainly draft and evaluate the "Request for Comment Document" (RFC) in IETF, and finally reach a consensus and become a common standard. In March 2001, CNNIC technicians attended and explained the value of Chinese domain names at the IETF meeting for the first time, but no foreign experts were willing to listen (Tingting, 2009). Chinese scientists have made continuous efforts and submitted two drafts of the RFC of the "Conversion of Traditional and Simplified Chinese Names" at the 51st and 53rd sessions of the IETF. The methods of one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many traditional/simplified Chinese conversion are introduced, and the specific methods of one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-one traditional Chinese conversion are discussed (IETF, 2001). Until April 2004, CNNIC jointly with the Internet Information Center of Taiwan, Japan and South Korea to develop the "China, Japan and South Korea Multilingual Domain name Registration Management Guide" was officially issued by the IETF(2004) as RFC3743.

The implementation of Chinese domain names is also inseparable from the following efforts. The first is technology research and development. CNNIC launched the "Chinese Domain Name Registration Trial System" in January 2000. With technical support, it is possible to have the above Chinese domain name RFCS passed in IETF. Second, CNNIC was authorized to manage the Chinese domain name system in the mainland on behalf of the government, and to carry out international cooperation with countries that use Chinese characters, such as Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and expand the voice of Chinese domain names. Third, communicate with ICANN on the management of Chinese domain names and domain name disputes and other issues, and in the process of the formulation of Internet domain name rules, through public statements. Finally, it recommended candidates to serve as members of ICANN's Multilingual Domain Name Committee, effectively expressing their opinions and promoting the implementation of Chinese domain names.

China's efforts on the Chinese domain name agenda have expanded the scope for sovereign states to act in the governance of the digital space and contributed to the subsequent WSIS consensus to include issues related to infrastructure and critical resource management, such as the domain name system, in the domain of public policy. But in general, the role of sovereign states has been marginalized under the ICANN system, especially since the United States handed over governance to the empowered community in October 2016.

### **Agenda-setting Strategies in the Path of Changing**

Under the digital space governance system controlled by the United States and with ICANN at its core, multi-stakeholders such as the internet private sector, technical communities and citizen groups take the lead in formulating policies and forming standards "from the bottom up and driven by consensus", and other countries are basically unable to exert substantial influence. In the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks in 2001, the United States tightened its security measures not only at home, but also in the digital world. As a result, the United Nations, an intergovernmental organization, has gradually become the forum for reforming this irrational system.

#### **(1) The institutional platform that challenges American dominance**

The first two-stage summit, the WSIS was held at the UN level to discuss international governance of the digital space. From the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) action plan for the organization of the Summit in 1998, to the United Nations resolution supporting the framework of the two-stage summit in 2001, to the formal convening of the many years, enough to see the importance of the summit, and the importance of the United Nations to the governance of the digital space. In September 2021, on the basis of the roadmap for digital cooperation (released in June 2020), the United Nations proposed to promote multi-stakeholder negotiations to reach a "Global digital compact". Many

countries hope to bring the digital space governance, which is dominated unilaterally by the US government and marginalized by other governments, back to the traditional model of state-centered global governance, which is also another new opportunity for the international community to establish a New World Information Order.

(2) Setting the agenda for "government-led" digital space governance

From the WSIS to the Global Digital Compact, government-led advocacy has been at the heart of China's agenda. At the preparatory meeting for the first phase of WSIS, Zukang (2002), head of the Chinese delegation, stressed that governments should play a leading role in addressing the "digital divide" brought about by "digital opportunities". In the process of establishing "global digital contract", China believes that "international rules should be formulated under the leadership of the United Nations and on the basis of universal participation of all member states," and that "international organizations, IT enterprises, technical communities, non-governmental organizations and other entities can actively play a role commensurate with their own roles." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China, 2004). Therefore, it is China's consistent position in the field of digital space governance to advocate the role of governments and intergovernmental organizations as the main channels.

(3) Means of implementing the agenda and participating in decision-making

The theme of the preparatory phase of WSIS "is not necessarily highly structured and explicit" (Anderson, 1990, p. 71). This provides an opportunity for "internet governance" to join. Thanks to the efforts of the ITU and many countries, including China, the issue of digital space governance has for the first time received attention at the international level, and it has become a consensus that "countries have the right and responsibility to deal with public policy issues related to the Internet" (WSIS, 2005). China advocates the "government-led" mainly through the convention speeches, statements, review, and international cooperation, etc.

On the institutional platform under the framework of the United Nations, China has evaluated the situation and followed the trend. The government, scientists and social organizations have cooperated with each other and successfully set the agenda of "advocating government-led". Through speeches, statements, reviews and international cooperation, China has promoted the inclusion of "government-led" in the outcome document. But the United States, with its strong hard and soft power, "takes the strategies of other actors off the agenda and makes their options unworkable." (Nye, 2011b, p. 179). However, WSIS and IGF remain an institutional platform for consensus-building.



### **Agenda-setting Strategies in the Co-construction Path**

China's participation in the construction of international digital space governance system under the path of co-construction is mainly manifested in two aspects: the establishment of bilateral dialogue mechanisms with the United States, and the establishment of bilateral or multilateral mechanisms with other countries and international organizations other than the United States. Unlike the former, which focuses more on security issues, the latter focuses more on economic and development issues.

#### **(1) Cyber cooperation and competition between China and the United States**

China and the United States have established a series of institutional platforms, such as the Cyber Security Working Group (June 2013), the Joint High-level Dialogue on Cybercrime and Related Issues (September 2015, hereinafter referred to as the "Dialogue Mechanism on Cybercrime"), and the Law Enforcement and Cyber Security Dialogue (April 2017). However, since the Trump administration, the dialogue mechanism between the two countries has become unstable. In addition, some private sector and civil society organizations are also carrying out activities, such as the China-U.S. Internet Forum.

Judging from the agenda of the dialogue, China and the two countries pay high attention to the issue of cyber security. As can be seen from the names of the dialogue mechanisms, the cyber dialogue between China and the United States focuses on cyber security, especially cybercrime, and maintains a high degree of continuity and focus: The "Cyber Security Working Group" exchanged views on cyber security and the construction of the working group, but was later suspended by China due to the prosecution; The Dialogue Mechanism on Cybercrimes has held three dialogues, which have been continued, implemented and expanded in terms of the types of cybercrimes to be combated jointly and the establishment of supporting mechanisms (Ning and Ping, 2017). "Law Enforcement and Cyber Security Dialogue" and "Anti-Cybercrime Dialogue mechanism" also maintain a high level of continuity at the agenda setting level, mainly involving cooperation in combating various types of cybercrime and establishing hotlines, information resource sharing and other safeguard mechanisms.

In terms of the means to implement the dialogue mechanism, the two countries started from the common concern of cyber security. Choosing cyber security as the entry point not only meets the common concerns of both sides, but also makes it more operational. But what the United States calls "cyber security" focuses on infrastructure security and technical security, while China believes that cyber information security should also be included. The three dialogue mechanisms were all decided to establish by the then heads of state of the two countries when they met, and the level of the mechanisms has been continuously upgraded (the latter two dialogue mechanisms are at the ministerial level), the level of institutionalization has been continuously improved, and the agenda has gradually expanded from easy to difficult.

Exchanges in cyberspace have expanded the dimension and added complexity to China-US relations, and cyber security has become a priority agenda in China-US relations. Various dialogue mechanisms have played a role in easing contradictions and managing differences to a certain extent, but they have failed to fundamentally solve the increasingly complex cyber security issues between the two countries. In particular, since the Sino-US trade friction and the new coronavirus epidemic, the two sides have constantly clashed over chip, 5G, third-generation Internet and other issues. However, as a cyber power, the United States and China depend on each other, and it is the best way out to solve cyber conflicts and enhance mutual trust through establishing dialogue and consultation mechanisms.

## (2) China's network relations with other countries

China, Russia, Brazil, South Africa and other emerging countries, regional organizations, the United Kingdom, France, South Korea and other developed countries through the joint round table, issued joint statements, signed international treaties to discuss the issue of digital space governance.

China has established a series of bilateral and multilateral institutional platforms, such as the Internet Roundtable Forum for Emerging Countries, the China-UK Roundtable (since 2008), the China-South Korea Internet Roundtable (since 2012), as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, China and the League of Arab States. The digital economy is central to the dialogue's agenda. As an increasingly important driver of global economic growth, the digital economy is playing an important role in accelerating economic recovery, improving labor productivity in existing industries, fostering new markets and new industrial growth points, and achieving inclusive and sustainable growth. At the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in October 2023, China and 14 countries jointly issued the Beijing Initiative for International Cooperation on the Belt and Road Digital Economy, from infrastructure and industrial transformation and digital ability, cooperation mechanism, etc. (China's Belt and Road Network, 2023). It also proposed 20 consensus points for further deepening international cooperation in digital economy and promoting multilateral and bilateral international cooperation in digital economy. In terms of the means to implement the dialogue mechanism, relevant Chinese departments have continuously improved policies on cross-border data flows, continued to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of data, jointly established cross-border data flow cooperation mechanisms with major economic and trade partners and regions, and actively participated in the formulation of global data rules.

### **Agenda-Setting Strategies in the Independent Creating Path**

China's autonomy in the above three institutional platforms is more or less limited, and the Snowden incident has exposed the United States abuse of technological and institutional advantages to the global internet caused by the harm. Since 2014, China has continuously hosted the WIC and held special forums to elaborate China's proposals on the governance of the international digital space. Taking this path, China, as the host, has a natural advantage in determining the theme and setting the agenda, and can also be recognized by the international community by providing more "public goods" for international digital space governance. This marks the improvement of China's voice in the international digital space governance.

#### **(1) Institutional platforms led by the Chinese government**

The WIC is a global internet conference led by the Chinese government and co-hosted by the Cyberspace Administration of China and the People's Government of Zhejiang Province. The purpose of the event is to build a "platform for interconnection between China and the world, and a platform for Internet sharing and governance", so as to present China's propositions to the world in a more comprehensive way. This is the largest and highest-level conference held in the internet field in China so far. China has also held a series of conferences to express its views and put forward initiatives, such as the Global Data Security Initiative and the Initiative on Building a Digital Community with a Shared Future released at the International Symposium on "Seizing Digital Opportunities for Cooperative Development" in 2020 and the World Digital Economy Forum in 2021. The WIC and other conferences independently organized by China are the same conferences on global digital space governance as the ICANN Conference of the United States and the IGF of the United Nations, but they are different from the latter two in terms of nature, organization, discussion agenda, etc. From the perspective of participating in international digital space governance, their biggest feature is to build an institutional platform for independent rule-making.

#### **(2) Agenda setting of the "China Solution" for digital space governance**

The WIC has put forward the agenda of "China Solution" on the governance of international digital space, which is used throughout the organization and activities of the conference. The goal of setting up this agenda is to build a "community of shared future in cyberspace", which mainly includes the "four principles" and "five proposals". In 2020, China further proposed to "jointly promote global digital governance and jointly build a community of digital destiny." (Yi, 2020). In "China Solution", "respect for sovereignty" is the first principle and scheme of the core. Digital space sovereignty is a natural extension of national sovereignty in digital space (China Institute of Modern Relations, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, 2019), is the world internally for digital space governance, to conduct the foundation of network relations. China's call for respect

for sovereignty in digital space is a manifestation of a responsible major country upholding the UN Charter and peace and stability of the international institutions. The "digital community of common destiny" is an alternative concept for China to contribute to the current unilaterally-dominated governance of the international digital space, making up for China's weakness in soft power as a digital power. China calls on all countries to build a multilateral, democratic and transparent digital space governance system guided by this belief.

(3) The means to set the agenda and participate in decision-making

The agenda of the "China Solution" for international digital space governance was finally reflected in the outcome document through speeches by leaders, forums of the conference, round tables, expos and outcome presentations, and speeches, explanations and discussions by leaders of participating countries, heads of important international organizations, internet business leaders, technical groups and civil society organizations. These meetings focused on the "China Solution." China believes that digital sovereignty is a widely accepted premise to better protect the digital interests of developing countries, in order to unite the common aspirations of developing countries.

China's establishment of independent platforms such as the WIC is not to replace the role of the United States in international digital space governance. Before the first conference was held in 2014, the then Director of the Cyberspace Administration of China attended the London Conference of ICANN and stated that China wants "one world, one Internet". The purpose of holding the WIC is to promote the development of the international digital space governance system in a fair and reasonable direction, and build a community of shared future in cyberspace.

### **Peroration**

According to the different characteristics of the four institutional platforms, China takes different approaches to participate in the governance of the international digital space, and sets agendas to guide the discussion topics, as shown in Table 1.

*Table 1. Three Elements of China's Four Paths to Participate in the Governance of International Digital Space*

<b>Four paths</b>	<b>Institutional platform</b>	<b>Idea-driven agenda setting</b>	<b>Ability or means</b>
Joining path	US-led governance system with ICANN at its core	Expand government influence with Chinese domain names	Technology research and development, domestic action, international cooperation, communication with ICANN, candidate recommendation, conference presentation
Changing path	Under the framework of the United Nations, WSIS and IGF are the core governance systems	Advocate government-led digital space governance	General assembly speeches, statements, amendments, comments, selection of relevant personnel, united with other countries
Co-construction path	Bilateral or multilateral systems between China and other countries	Bilateral and multilateral negotiations and cyber security as sovereign states	The issue of cyber security started, the two heads of state set the tone, upgraded the level of mechanism, continuously improved the level of institutionalization, gradually expanded the issue, and introduced intellectual support
Independent Creating Path	Independent platforms such as the WIC	Digital Space Community with a Shared Future and the "China Solution"	Leaders' speeches, sub-forum Settings, outcome documents, meeting discussions, and cooperation

(1) There is an evolutionary relationship between the agendas. Compared with the agenda setting of mass communication, which focuses more on how media affect audiences rather than policy making, the international agenda setting of China's digital space governance system is closely related to international discourse power and national interests, mainly targeting other countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, and focusing on promoting institutional construction. In the process of participating in the construction of the international digital space governance system, China's agenda has developed step by step and gradually clarified: From advocating the expansion of the role of the government in the governance of digital space, advocating the government to play a leading role in the governance of digital space, to establishing bilateral or multilateral mechanisms with other countries as sovereign states, until it clearly put forward a new concept and plan for international digital space governance.

(2) The agenda set and the specific means of implementing the agenda are limited by institutional platforms. As a developing country, China's policy making is dominated by the state, and the leading force and composition behind ICANN Conference, WSIS and IGF decide that it cannot meet China's demands, nor is the bilateral and multilateral mechanism that China participates in a comprehensive and systematic way to put forward and demonstrate and take measures to implement China's propositions. Therefore, China has established platforms such as WIC. Advocate a government-led multilateral model. China uses these platforms to build

a global network of contacts and respond to the growing unilateralism in the global digital space with a cooperative posture of multilateralism (Li and Xiuzan, 2019). On this institutional platform, China can comprehensively and clearly put forward its views and propositions on digital space governance and implement them in various ways.

(3) Setting the international agenda is an important embodiment of a country's soft power and international voice. In today's interdependent international community, the direct use of power to safeguard and seize national interests will be met with resistance from many sides. By setting the agenda in different institutional platforms, China has promoted the development of the global digital space governance system in a fair and reasonable direction, which is worthy of recognition and in line with China's national interests. But it has also faced skepticism and misunderstanding. Especially for the WIC, the coverage of mainstream Western countries tends to be negative, *China Aims to Expand Censored Web* (Areddy, 2014), *Facial Recognition of New Ways to Track the Public* (Mozur and Zhang, 2017), *The Official in Charge of Internet Censorship Policy* (Mozur and Perlez, 2014), etc. Foreign scholars believe that China's attitude towards Internet sovereignty reflects a kind of authoritarian informationalism (Jiang, 2010); the Chinese government's attempts to define and disseminate cyber sovereignty as a legal norm risk undermining international commitments to transparency, accountability, and human rights (Mckune and Shazeda, 2018); and research focus on China's emerging campaign against global open Internet, think China a challenge to America's global leadership summit (Dombrowski, 2016).

(4) Further improve China's digital governance propositions and enhance the attractiveness of independent platforms. Although the above misunderstandings and doubts are ideological biases, the shortcomings of China's digital governance ideas and programs in practice and discourse need to be further remedied and improved. We will build a complementary relationship between platforms such as the WIC, ICANN Conference, WSIS and IGF, and various bilateral and multilateral systems to serve the international community's aspirations for development and cooperation in cyberspace. Optimize the institutional platform of the WIC, establish a permanent body, and hold multiple forms of meetings during the conference year, so as to improve the capacity for transnational action, so that the consensus of the conference will truly become the cornerstone of the construction of an international digital governance system.

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