

Media Memory Construction and Cultural Sustainability

A Chinese perspective on K-content media and its acceptance in China

Lin Deng

School of Journalism and Communication, Hubei University
hoiveringkiwi@126.com

Shengchao Yuan

University of Sussex
1944782706@qq.com

Zheng Yang

School of Journalism and Communication, Hubei University
zaixiayz@163.com

ABSTRACT: The sustainable development of culture is often regarded as the core of cultural security and uniqueness. The homogenization of culture brought about by globalization poses a threat to cultural diversity and sustainability as well as to the uniqueness of national cultures to varying degrees. In this context, pan-Asian countries have taken various measures to protect their cultural identity and avoid the breaking in cultural intergenerational inheritance. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and South Korea in 1992 and the establishment of South Korea's "Building up the Nation with Culture" strategy in 1998, Korean culture has developed Hallyu, or the "Korean wave", in China and other countries via K-dramas, K-pop, and K-movies, establishing a significant recognition of K-culture worldwide. Although memory can be both personal and

social, shared cultural memory is a core element for integrating individuals. Compared with individual memory, media memory has more advantages in continuity and stability, and is almost naturally endowed with social and cultural significance. Therefore, constructing media memory to achieve sustainable cultural development is a feasible and reasonable method. This paper reviews the influence and evolution of K-culture in China, and takes K-content media and its acceptance in China as an example to explore the logic and significance of media memory construction of culture and enhancement of cultural influence, especially on foreign audiences. In addition, from the perspective of media memory construction, the paper examines the reasons for the gradual decline of K-culture's influence in China, and argues that media memory construction is a practical way to sustain cultural influence, so as to form common experiences that relevant parties can learn from.

KEYWORDS: media memory, K-culture, cultural sustainability, K-content, collective memory

摘要: 文化的可持续发展通常被认为是文化安全和文化独特性的核心。全球化带来的文化同质化在不同程度上威胁到了文化多样性和民族国家文化的可持续性与独特性。在这样的背景下,泛亚洲国家均采取了多种措施以保护自己的文化身份,避免文化代际传承的断裂。自1992年中韩建交以及1998年韩国“文化立国”战略确立以来,韩国文化借助韩剧、韩国流行音乐和韩国电影在中国乃至其他国家形成了声势浩大的韩流,在世界范围内建立了显著的辨识度。虽然记忆既可以是个人的,也可以是社会的,但共享的文化记忆是对个体进行整合的核心要素。与个体记忆相比,媒介记忆在连续性、稳定性方面更具优势,几乎自然地具有社会文化意义。因此,通过媒介记忆构建,实现文化可持续性发展是一种切实可行、合理的方法。本论文回顾了韩国文化在中国的影响流变,以K-content媒介及其在中国的接受为例,探讨了文化借助媒介记忆建构增强影响力尤其是对他国受众影响力的逻辑及意义。同时,从媒介记忆断裂的角度分析了韩国文化在中国的影响力逐渐式微的原因,并从媒介记忆建构的角度提出了建议,以期形成相关各方可以借鉴的共同经验。

关键词: 媒介记忆, 韩国文化, 文化可持续性, K-content, 集体记忆

1. Research Origins

With the continuous development of society and the deep-seated development of international communication, globalization impacts local culture, and the change of local context has also resulted in the reconstruction of local culture. Although “glocalization” is characterized by two-way interaction between globalization and localization in the process of cultural interaction, it is difficult to deny that dominant American popular culture has impacted the cultures of pan-Asian countries including China and Korea, and the security and sustainable development of local culture have become issues that cannot be ignored. Therefore, on the basis of peace and common prosperity, how to enhance the international influence of national culture and ensure cultural security is a field worthy of academic attention.

Although the improvement of transportation technology has made cross-border travel increasingly convenient, due to the objective existence of space, the cross-border communication of national culture still requires the use of media to overcome the limitations of geographical distance in most cases and reach more foreign audiences. On the one hand, as an individual audience, in order to avoid the physiological overload of brain information storage, they usually choose to actively reduce the reception of information and selectively forget the information with less contact, thus causing the rupture of cultural memory; on the other hand, the cross-border transmission and reception of media content is often influenced by politics (especially diplomacy), economy and national psychology. If the media content as the external storage medium of memory cannot be effectively received by the cross-border audience, and the cross-border audience cannot complete the construction and bridging of cultural memory through the media, it will be more difficult to enhance the cross-border influence of a given national culture.

As neighbors, South Korea and China are closely connected in culture, politics, and economy, so they have a more direct influence on each other in the cross-border communication of cultural content. Promoting cultural exchanges between China and South Korea and deepening mutual understanding are of great significance to the prosperity of East Asian culture and the promotion of regional cultural prosperity.

The communication of culture is fluid. In cross-border communication, it is even more necessary to use media to record the present, integrate the past, and integrate cultural experience into the future. For the cross-border

communication of national culture, improving the visibility in the target country and building the memory of the given culture among audiences in other countries are one of the important ways for a country's culture to enhance its international influence and promote cultural inheritance. But the preservation and operation of memory, especially collective memory, requires the help of some kind of carrier. French historian Pierre Nora calls this carrier the “field of memory”, which can be either an abstract object such as a concept, or a very specific, geographically spatial place (Nora, 1989).

In August 1992, when China and South Korea established diplomatic relations, they began close cultural interaction. In 1993, the Korean TV drama *Jealousy* (*Jiltu*, 1992) was broadcast on CCTV—China's top state media, marking the beginning of the spread of K-content in China. In 1997, CCTV1 introduced and broadcast the Korean family ethics drama *What is Love* (*Sarang-i Mwo-gillae*, 1991), setting a record high of 4.3% in foreign TV series ratings at that time (Wei, 2009, p. 181), becoming a landmark event for *Hallyu*, also known as the Korean Wave, to enter China. It is worth mentioning that after the establishment of South Korea's “Building up the Nation with Culture” strategy in 1998, K-content, represented by K-pop, K-drama, and others, quickly sparked a wave in East Asia, becoming the main source for audiences to construct memories of Korean culture through audiovisual media. During this period, China introduced Korean TV dramas such as *Autumn Fairy Tale* (*Gaewoldonghwa*, 2000) and *Jewel in the Palace* (*Daejanggeum*, 2003). In 2002 alone, mainland Chinese television stations broadcast 67 South Korean TV dramas, with playbacks reaching 316 times (Yao, 2020, p. 11). At the same time, singing and dancing groups such as CLON, H.O.T, Shinhwa and NRG have also begun to march into the Chinese Mainland, triggering the pursuit and imitation of a large number of young people. This popular trend has also created a star-chasing group known as *Koreaphiles*, becoming the starting point for the climax of *Hallyu*.

However, from the perspective of consumer characteristics, a popular culture will not occupy the center of public attention permanently. From the late 1990s to 2005, *Hallyu*, sparked by South Korean audiovisual media (K-drama, K-pop, K-films) went through a transitioning from frenzy and restlessness to mild calmness. With the gradual tightening of the importation of overseas TV dramas by the State Administration of Radio and Television of China, and Korean dramas showing signs of stagnation in innovation, the frequency of Korean dramas on Chinese TV screens has been decreasing

year by year since 2006. According to data from the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television of China, out of a total of 211 overseas TV dramas imported in 2006, Korean dramas constituted only 13, forming a huge contrast with 2005, when 13 Korean dramas were imported in the first quarter alone (China National Radio and Television Administration, 2007). In other words, the influence of K-drama has declined since 2006. Yet, although *Hallyu* has cooled down, its residual heat continued, and even began to reappear in a new form in 2010.

After 2010, thanks to social media, K-content once again became popular in China. Less than two months after the release of PSY's "Gangnam Style" MV, it reached 615 million views on YouTube. CCTV's *News 30* introduced this globally popular song in its news broadcast, and Jiangsu Provincial TV Station even invited PSY to perform at the 2016 Spring Festival Gala (Liu, 2013). *Hallyu*, represented by K-pop, once again was celebrated in China. In 2016, KBS's *Descendants of the Sun* (*Taeyangui Huye*, 2016) became the first Korean drama to be updated and broadcast simultaneously on Korean and Chinese video websites. As of July 10, 2016, the Chinese region had 4.012 billion online views, 14.7 billion Sina Weibo reads, 812 sub-topics, and 3.48 million mentions, making it the Korean drama with the highest data in China's major social website *Sina Weibo* (Yao, 2020, pp. 13-14). In 2020, the influence of K-culture reached a new height with the local film *Parasite* (*Gisaengchung*, 2019), winning four awards including the 2020 Academy Award for Best Picture. The *Oxford English Dictionary* specifically included 26 words from Korean in September 2021, including Korean culture and fashion-related words such as *K-drama* and *Hallyu* (Salazar, 2021). This not only acknowledged the language change demands of English users, but also proved that Korean culture has established significant recognition worldwide.

Korean culture has a history of thousands of years. From the perspective of cultural memory, there are both spatial places such as Seoul Tower and Gyeongbok-gung (Gyeongbok Palace), as well as intangible conceptual abstractions such as K-pop, *hanbok*, and Korean movies, which provide rich resources for the international communication of K-content-based Korean culture. This article uses K-content as a research case, focusing on the "representativeness of case characteristics" and trying to understand "how those micro situations are affected by macro situations" in the current era and cultural scene where the globalization process is further accelerating and cultural factors of various countries are interpenetrating each other. "Shaped

by the structure of expression, it explains how general social forces shape and produce results in specific environments” (Lu & Li, 2007, p. 128), and understand the factors and mechanisms that influence the external impact of a given culture. The article mainly focuses on the practice of K-content mediated-memory construction, hoping to follow the research path of media practice and connection turn by paying attention to the media as an intermediary mechanism of cultural memory and the positive impact of the mediated-memory construction on the sustainable development of culture, in order to provide some theoretical insights for the development of cultural diversity.

2. Logic and Meaning: Media Records, Continuation and Dissemination of Culture

As a concept, memory has appeared in many academic fields such as psychology, communication studies, sociology, and ethnology. Although “even the most cursory survey of memory research reveals that the definition and function of memory is polymorphic both within and between academic disciplines, cultural institutions, and memory practitioners” (Brown et al., 2009, p. 119), the mainstream academic viewpoint generally believes that memory is both individual and social. The individuality of memory is manifested in the fact that the generation of memory requires the human brain as the basic physiological basis. In the process of encoding and storing memory by the human brain, humans become the subject and creator of memory. Meanwhile, memory can also be social, as people live in society, and the content of their memory is closely related to social life, forming connections with other social members through specific connection points, which would ultimately lead to the forming of collective memory, including national memory.

The development of media technology has greatly changed the form and storage mechanism of memory, to the extent that our understanding of daily life is symbolized by media. With the connection turn brought by media, the memory of culture also needs to rely on the storage and reproduction of media, including the Internet, has already “subverted the memory ecology originally composed by the state and society (or the folk) from the subject of memory (the masses) to the object (information), the way (electronic reading and

cultural habits) and the representation (diverse memory), thus creating more possibilities of memory and even group memory” (Zhao, 2021, p. 41). Perhaps, “it is practical to assume that personal cultural memory is generated by what we call ‘home media’ (family photography, home videos, and tape recorders), whereas collective cultural memory gets produced by ‘mass media’ (television, CDs, DVDs, and professional photography)” (Van Dijck, 2008, p. 74). In other words, in a deeply mediated world, media technology not only enriches the representation forms of national cultural memory, but also activates national cultural memory through the public’s media-using and participation in the construction of media memory. Therefore, as the “agent” of shared collective memory, the recording and dissemination via media are of great significance for the sustainable development and inheritance of culture, as they can transform static remains into a culture that can be narrated and inherited, and thus guiding the past into the present and bridging the gap.

Lasswell, the founder of communication studies, once pointed out that one of the functions of mass media is cultural inheritance. And the construction of cultural media memory refers to the systematic collection, encoding and output, recording, preservation, and dissemination of cultural information in the form of image, sound, or text through media. The process of dissemination appeals to the decoding and memorization of the public, therefore the construction of shared memories related to specific cultures can be achieved by repeatedly embedding cultural elements and experiences into daily life, awakening and activating the audience’s awareness and cultural identity, so as to realize the sustainable inheritance of culture. Therefore, from this perspective, the media, as a collective memory agent, can systematically organize and construct shared memories related to a given culture. Media memory is therefore an important form of writing and recording for the sustainability and inheritance of cultures.

When discussing cultural memory, Jan Assmann (2015) mentioned that in order to preserve and shape the gradually forgotten past as much as possible, people use fixed and standardized forms of memory to replace the ever-changing ways of reconstruction. But “no memory can exist independently outside the memory framework” (Halbwachs, 2016); memory needs to have a certain framework, within which individuals in social life can store, search for, and strengthen memory. The media memory framework uses media and audience as carriers, and constructs connections with the current social environment and spiritual world through media content

generation practice. And media memory can rely on its own influence on the public to obtain a wider range of information resources. By combining and arranging elements such as characters, events, time and place or ceremonial representation, memory can be engraved, reshaped, and activated, providing a framework for cultural inheritance.

The emergence of audiovisual media such as movies and television has officially shifted the way media represents information from simple words and sounds to images. From the perspective of constructing cultural memory, audiovisual media has incomparable advantages over words and sounds alone; for people who lack personal direct experience, their understanding of other countries' cultures mainly comes from the indirect experience provided by the media. Audiovisual media always represent information in a more intuitive and vivid way. As early effects research has discovered, people's collective memory of things is more often derived from media, especially audiovisual media, rather than "reality itself". In other words, this is not only because the number of people who can actually experience the local customs of other countries is far less than that of the viewers of the media content that represent these customs, but also because representation through audiovisual media is always designed to be impressive. Therefore, for the cross-border communication of culture, in today's socialized media world, audiovisual media that integrate social interaction and viewing can shape collective memories, which are consumable and modeled, and provides an explanatory framework and practical direction for the effective transmission of a given culture in other countries.

It is true that audio-visual media is not always an objective portrayal of reality, as filtration and exaggeration exist. In some cases, it even makes up reality. But it is indeed an important way to construct people's imagination about other countries and their cultures. Currently, various short video platforms are deeply embedded in the daily lives of ordinary people. K-content audiovisual media can provide media memory materials for people from other countries to understand Korea and its culture. In fact, audiovisual media is not only popular and entertaining, but also informative. By representing Korean culture to the public, K-content media provides a more concrete memory carrier and domain for audiences, especially those from other countries, to understand Korea.

However, the production, dissemination and consumption of audiovisual media information do not take place in a vacuum, but are continuously

affected by other factors. Therefore, using audiovisual media to construct memories of a specific culture to ensure its sustainable influence in other countries requires consideration of political, economic and cross-cultural factors.

Taking China as an example, Korean culture was popular in China in the mid-to-late 1990s, and even formed the so-called *Hallyu*. But around 2005, its influence in China began to decline, and fell to its lowest point after 2016. Exploring the beginning and end of the phenomenon from the perspective of media memory construction may provide some experience for the current international communication of K-content-based Korean culture.

3. Breaking: The Collective Amnesia of Korean Culture

From the mid-1990s to the early 20th century, with the popularity of K-pop in China and the release of film and television works such as *Jealousy (Jiltu, 1992)*, *Autumn Fairy Tale (Gaeul Donghwa, 2000)* and *Jewel in the Palace (Daejanggeum, 2003)* in China, Korean culture once became a collective memory point of the Chinese audience. However, in recent years, China's film and television industry has shown a stable growth momentum, and the continuous development of local content in China has directly squeezed the survival space of K-content. According to data (shown in Tables 1 and 2), from 2008 to 2018, China's public television time, film and TV drama production remained at a high level. Since 2008, the annual production of domestically produced TV dramas in China has been maintained at over 12,000 episodes, while the production of feature films has maintained a relatively stable growth. In 2018, the production of feature films even doubled compared to 2008, providing the Chinese public with more diverse choices with cultural similarity.

Table 1: Number of China TV series licensed for distribution from 2008 to 2018

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of series	502	402	436	469	506	441	429	394	334	314	323
Number of episodes	14498	12910	14685	14942	17703	15770	15983	16540	14912	13470	13726

(Data retrieved from the official website of the National Radio and Television Administration)

Table 2: Number of Chinese feature films from 2008 to 2018

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of series	406	456	526	558	745	638	618	686	772	798	902

(Data retrieved from the official website of the National Bureau of Statistics)

In addition, with the ups and downs of Sino-Korean diplomatic relations, the influence of Korean culture in China gradually declined, and was even absent from the collective memory of the Chinese public. From the perspective of media memory construction, this article argues that the two following aspects are worth attention:

3.1 Limited Constructive Subject: Selective Forgetting

It is generally believed that before the digital age, the main constructors of media memory were official media dominated by mainstream ideologies. However, in the context of the Internet, non-official media written by the public can also play a very important role in improving the social visibility of related topics. Therefore, in the process of constructing media memories of K-content-based Korean culture, in addition to mainstream news media, audiovisual media (movies, TV, short videos, etc.) are also important in the field of leisure life. However, judging from the current spread of Korean culture in China, the main constructor of media memory is a single entity, thus resulted in the selective forgetting by the public.

First of all, in modern society, the media, as part of a larger system, is a subsystem of the entire social system. Although the media has the responsibility to meet the public's information needs, public interest is not the goal that the media, especially the media under market economy conditions, consciously pursues. Therefore, content that does not conform to the commercial and political logic is often excluded from the content framework of media representation and is more likely to be forgotten. In addition, under the technical background of mass production of media content, users' attention has become a scarce resource. Moreover, content in the same media niche is often highly homogenized and templated, which makes it difficult to display a given culture in multiple dimensions.

Secondly, media memory construction will inevitably be affected by stereotypes and fragmentation. Modern communication studies on media

effects have confirmed that the media has a strong impact on strengthening the audience's existing cognition. However, as a carrier of cultural content, the media can hardly introduce a given culture completely and profoundly in a systematic way. This means that when foreign audiences come into contact with K-content culture, they often receive fragmented information filtered and interpreted by the media, which can only form a short-term memory of Korean culture, and it is difficult to effectively influence the cognition of Korean culture, especially that of foreign audiences.

A more specific example is that when talking about South Korea and its culture, most Chinese people can think of some representative elements or characters, most of which enjoyed high media exposure (such as Korean TV series or Korean stars), but it is difficult for them to describe Korean culture in a systematic and in-depth manner. In other words, when it comes to changing foreign audiences' cognition of South Korea in fundamental ways, shallow media memory is hardly reliable, and its role of sustaining cultural influences is limited.

3.2 Indifferent Cognitive Subject: Lack of Favorability and Interest

If the role of history is to provide a frame of reference for the current existence and to understand the present through comparison, then the transnational exchange of culture is to provide a frame of reference for nations living in the same historical period and to better understand each other through parallel comparisons. Although the predictions of globalization and global village have been continuously verified today, it is undeniable that nation-states are still the most important subjects of current international exchanges. Diplomatic relations between countries can have an important impact on the cultural output of nation-states and their acceptance in other countries, which is particularly reflected in the civil relations between two countries. In the cross-border communication of cultures, the people of other countries are the important cognitive subjects.

China and South Korea officially established diplomatic relations in 1992, and the overall development trend is good. However, affected by the "THAAD incident"¹ in 2016, relations between the two countries fell to a freezing point.

1 On September 30, 2016, the South Korean Ministry of Defense announced its decision to use Lotte Group's Skyhill Country Club golf course as the final deployment site for the US Terminal High

It is worth noting that the popularity and disesteem of K-content media in China clearly overlapped with the trend of Sino-Korean relations at the time point, which was not entirely a coincidence. In fact, studies have shown that the academic, political and media attention of China and South Korea on Sino-US relations and Sino-Korean relations has had an almost inevitable impact on civil exchanges between the two countries: On the one hand, the deterioration of diplomatic relations between the two countries has directly impacted cultural policies, making it difficult for cultural interaction and exchanges; on the other hand, with the intensifying influence of social media on public opinion perception, the direction of the two countries' diplomatic relations is bound to affect the national psychology of the people (Ge, 2023).

From the perspective of cultural media memory construction, this may result in foreign cognitive subjects being indifferent to Korean culture, diminishing the interest and favorability of foreign public towards Korean culture, and further affecting their memory construction of Korean culture. First of all, from a national level, the continued deterioration in diplomatic relations is bound to impact policies in areas such as culture and economy. In extreme cases, it may even trigger cultural sanctions against a specific country, resulting in the absence of media representation of its culture. For example, after the "THAAD incident", film and television cooperation with South Korea has been subject to more stringent scrutiny, and the broadcast of Korean dramas on various platforms in China has also been significantly affected. In response to the suspension of Korean dramas on domestic video websites in China, and some TV stations in China no longer inviting Korean artists to participate in variety shows or TV dramas, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang stated at a regular press conference on the March 1, 2017 that China's stance against the deployment of the THAAD system by the United States and South Korea in South Korea is clear and consistent, and its will is firm, that China has always maintained a positive and open attitude towards exchanges and cooperation between China and South Korea, but this requires a public opinion foundation and atmosphere (CRI Online, 2017). The incident has marginalized the audiovisual media content that should have served as a window for the Chinese people to understand Korean culture, and

Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile system. On February 27, 2017, the board of directors of Lotte Group decided to provide land for the deployment of THAAD. This triggered strong objection from China, resulting in diplomatic friction between China and South Korea.

the construction of media memory of Korean culture thus lacks necessary memory content. Secondly, although there are Chinese audiences who have high loyalty and recognition towards Korean culture, such as K-pop and K-drama fans, once the relationship between the two countries continues to decline, along with the influence of nationalism, especially online nationalism, it is prone to collective resistance against Korean culture in China. As a result, mediated memory information about Korean culture will deviate from the original context, leading to misunderstandings among the public about Korean culture, and further reducing the favorability and interest of Chinese audiences towards Korean culture. For example, China and South Korea had conflicts over the historical ownership of Goguryeo, with South Korea criticizing China's "cultural imperialism". Some important websites in China were also affected by the "e-click movement" and were attacked by Korean hackers. As a result of the "Goguryeo controversy", Korean historical television dramas, such as *Jumong* (2006), *Dae Jo-yeong* (2006) and *The Legend* (*Taewangsasingi*, 2007), aroused resentment among some Chinese netizens.

In summary, due to the relatively single construction subject, the Chinese public's collective memory of K-content is relatively shallow, and it is difficult to promote cultural exchanges between the two countries on a deeper level. Due to political factors, K-content media content had a certain gap in promoting the dissemination of Korean culture in China. It is thus highly likely that the Chinese public, as cognitive subjects, reduced their favorability of K-content as well as Korean culture. From the perspective of media memory construction, there is a possibility of disruption in the spread and continuity of Korean culture's influence in China.

4. Bridging: K-content Media Memory Construction as a Catalyst

The core of media memory and its construction is to mobilize the public's social emotions and cultural recognition. It needs to gather more social consensus, to strengthen dialogue and understanding, and to reduce the differentiation and fragmentation of different memories (Wang, 2018, p. 42). Korean culture has a history of thousands of years, but static culture is difficult to inherit and spread, even though the Korean media and entertainment industry is very developed. Therefore, how to utilize media

to construct media memories related to K-content and promote the understanding of a more authentic South Korea by foreign citizens, which contributes to maintaining regional international security, holds significant practical significance and academic value.

4.1 Carry Out and Promote Public Diplomacy

As mentioned above, the construction of cross-border media memory is only a small component of human society and inter-country behavior, and the transnational dissemination of media content will inevitably be affected by more macro factors. From a historical and long-term perspective, the cross-border spread of culture should be a two-way interactive process and should not be limited to the stereotypes of cultural imperialism. Therefore, in order to achieve the purpose of media memory construction and promote cultural exchanges between China and South Korea, efforts at all levels are needed from both China and South Korea. First, the news media of both China and South Korea should prioritize the long-term interests of their respective countries and report on Sino-Korean relation issues in a more rational and objective manner instead of spreading topics that stir up national emotions without verification just to attract attention, and thereby indirectly worsen the relationship between the two countries. Second, strengthening the cultural ties between China and South Korea requires the joint efforts of the people of both countries. Currently, the Internet has become an important forum for public opinion. People in China and South Korea need to express patriotic sentiments rationally and put an end to online nationalism. When it comes to K-content and C-content, they must not resort to irrational emotions and inherent prejudices, and restrain their “anti-Korean” and the “anti-Chinese” sentiments. Media should be used as a platform for the people of both countries to express cultural and political mutual trust, and the media’s role as a recorder of Sino-Korean friendship and a builder of collective memory can thus be truly realized. Third, by exchanging programs and hosting Sino-Korean film festivals, the advantages of audiovisual media to vividly showcase each other’s cultural characteristics can be fully leveraged, thereby promoting Sino-Korean cultural exchanges.

4.2 Promote Public Participation in Media Memory

The famous Chinese scholar Ju Yan'an once said, "We cannot see the world itself, what we see is the world selected and interpreted by the mass media" (Ju, 1987, p. 192). From the perspective of international exchanges and communication, media should be used to help audiences scattered in different countries to better understand each other, so that a given culture can be extended in the horizontal spatial dimension and continued in the vertical time dimension. No matter how the social environment and media technology change and develop, people have always been and should be at the center of all cultural activities, and their role in the construction of shared cultural memory is still important.

The external dissemination of culture cannot be supported and fulfilled by only a few elites. Only with extensive participation of the people can the purpose of cultural exchanges be truly realized. Therefore, public participation in the writing of media memories is an important way to deal with the dislocation of identities between ordinary people and government authorities in cultural activities, and the disruption of the logic of cultural exchanges. The process of public participation in media memory writing is a process in which the public actively recognizes and remembers specific issues or content, making it easier to evoke their own deep memories and form memory symbols and emotional resonance. Therefore, only if the Chinese people, not the government or a few individuals, truly accept and like Korean culture can the spread of Korean culture in China be realized and the in-depth cultural interaction and exchanges between China and South Korea be promoted.

As a carrier of K-content, audiovisual media is inherently connected with public participation in memory writing. Films, TV dramas, and short videos have the potential to demonstrate Korean culture in a multidimensional and memorable way. With the help of social media, audiovisual media can create hot topics related to Korean culture, establishing memory nodes for Chinese people's connection to Korean culture, and promoting cultural interaction and communication between the two countries.

5. Conclusion

Media is only a subsystem of human society and cultural activities and cannot fulfill cultural sustainability and development alone. However, compared with personal memory, media memory is characterized by continuity, stability, and socio-cultural significance. The construction of media memory grants practical possibilities and rationality for the dissemination of culture, providing important channels for promoting cross-border cultural dissemination. Both having long historical traditions and rich resources, the cultures of China and South Korea are independent but interrelated. However, how to transform relatively static cultural elements into dynamic and vivid cultural content with the help of media, so as to build a bridge for civil exchanges and to form a connection point for cultural interaction between China and South Korea, is the value and significance of the construction of media memory.

Under the technical background of image-turning, audiovisual media is an excellent carrier and channel of cultural communication, an important “writer” of media memory and an agent of collective media memory. However, due to the inevitable influence of political, economic, and cultural factors, K-content media memory may be selectively forgotten in China. Under certain conditions, the Chinese public’s interpretation of K-content and recognition of Korean culture may also be biased.

Therefore, by carrying out public diplomacy a good public opinion environment can be provided to the media to play its role as a collective memory builder. Meanwhile, by encouraging the public to participate in the media memory writing of K-content, the Chinese public may understand and enjoy Korean culture to the greatest extent possible, thus promoting the benign interaction and exchange between the two cultures and enhancing cultural mutual trust and the international influence of East Asian culture.

The cross-border spread of culture is a magnificent act in which culture needs to transcend narrow nationalism and misunderstanding. However, the construction of media memory is only a small piece of the puzzle in this complicated cultural act. The further development of Sino-Korean relations requires efforts from many aspects. This article only selects a Chinese perspective and discusses K-content media, particularly audiovisual media memory practice and cross-border communication. Therefore, the article has obvious limitations and may only reveal the tip of the iceberg in research on

media memory and cross-border cultural communication. But it is not to be denied that as a research object, this topic offers great potential for further exploration which will have practical significance.

Funding

This research was funded by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China grant No. 23YJC760014.

References

- Assmann, Jan. (2015). *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* [Cultural memory: Text, memory, and political identity in early advanced culture] (Shoufu Jin & Xiaochen Huang, Trans.). Peking University Press. (Original work published 1992)
- Brown, Adam D., Yifat Gutman, Lindsey Freeman, Amy Sodaro and Alin Coman. (2009). Introduction: Is an interdisciplinary field of memory studies possible? *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 22(2), 117-124. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-009-9051-2>
- China National Radio and Television Administration. (2007, February 13). *Guang dian zong ju guan yu 2006 nian di si ji du quan guo yin jin ju fa xing xu ke zheng qing kuang de tong gao* [Announcement on the Distribution License of Imported Dramas by the National Radio and Television Administration of China]. Retrieved November 12, 2023 from http://www.nrta.gov.cn/art/2007/2/13/art_39_1226.html
- CRI Online. (2017, March 2). *Wai jiao bu hui ying guo nei han ju ting bo: Jiao liu he zuo xu min yi ji chu* [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs responds to the suspension of domestic Korean dramas: Exchange and cooperation require a public opinion foundation]. *CRI Online*. <https://news.cri.cn/baidunews-eco/20170302/3fce2457-e376-94f4-6c25-a6fa55268545.html>
- Ge, Xiaohui. (2023). Zhong mei guan xi jin zhang tai shi xia han guo yu lun dao xiang de te zheng fen xi [Analysis of the characteristics of South Korean public opinion orientation under tension in Sino-US relations]. *Journal of Strategy and Decision-Making*, 3, 85-104.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. (2016). *On Collective Memory* (Ran Bi & Jinhua Guo, Trans.). Shanghai People's Publishing House. (Original work published 1992)
- Ju, Yan'an. (1987). *Duan lie yu ji cheng* [Frustration and inheritance]. Shanghai People's

Publishing House.

- Liu, Fenfen. (2013). Xian qi han liu 3.0 shi dai you yi lang chao de ‘Gangnam Style’ [“Gangnam Style”: Another wave of Korean Wave 3.0 era]. *Movie Review*, 3, 100-102.
- Lu, Huilin and Xue Li. (2007). Ru he zou chu ge an—Cong ge an yan jiu dao kuo zhan ge an yan jiu [How can we go beyond the case? From the case study to the extended case study]. *Social Sciences in China*, 1, 118-130.
- Nora, Pierre. (1989). Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire. *Representations*, 26, 7-24.
- Salazar, Danica. (2021, September 6). *Daebak! The OED Gets a K-Update*. Oxford English Dictionary. Retrieved November 12, 2023 from <https://www.oed.com/discover/daebak-a-k-update/>
- Van Dijck, José. (2008). Mediated memories: A snapshot of remembered experience. In Jaap Kooijman, Patricia Pisters & Wanda Strauven (Eds.), *Mind the Screen: Media Concepts According to Thomas Elsaesser* (pp. 71-81). Amsterdam University Press.
- Wang, Run. (2018). Ge ren fen dou yu shi dai bian ge: Hui fu gao kao 40 zhou nian de wen hua ji yi yu chan shi she qun jian gou [Individual striving and changes of an era: The cultural memory and interpretive community for the 40th anniversary of the resumption of the college entrance exam]. *Journalism & Communication*, 11, 27-44.
- Wei, Zhijiang. (2009). “Leng zhan” hou zhong han guan xi yan jiu [Research on Sino-Korean relations after the Cold War]. Sun Yat-sen University Press.
- Yao, Yuge. (2020). *She jiao mei ti shi yu xia han guo dian shi ju de chuan bo te zheng yan jiu—Yi KBS han ju wei li* [Research on the communication of Korean drama series in the social media era—A case study of KBS]. Dalian University of Technology.
- Zhao, Jingrong. (2021). The crisis and future of national memory in the digital age. *Theoretical Studies in Literature and Art*, 41(3), 34-43.

Professional Profiles

Lin Deng migrated from English language and literature to journalism and communication after working in China Central Television as a news editor for two years. He holds a PhD from Tsinghua University and is now an associate professor at Hubei University, Wuhan. He has traveled widely and is the author of more than ten publications.

Shengchao Yuan has a multidisciplinary background and has completed an MSc in Project Management at the University of Sussex, UK. He has worked in media arts, communication, and cinematography. He has published papers based on geopolitical cultures and game ideologies.

Yang Zheng is enrolled in the MA program in Journalism and Communication at Hubei University. Due to her strong interest in film and television communication, she crossed into the field of journalism and communication.