

Research on the Iteration of the Underlying Logic of Social Governance from the Perspective of the Media Environment

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[Abstract]

The emotional turn in the media environment is profoundly reshaping the underlying logic of social governance, posing new challenges to traditional rational governance models. Against this backdrop, social governance necessitates a shift towards a new paradigm of emotional governance, the core of which lies in integrating three major elements: first, viewing empathic communication as a key means to establish emotional connection between policy and the public; second, taking affective computing as the technical basis for precisely analyzing the emotional states between society and individuals; and third, considering emotional intelligence as the core orientation to achieve a logical iteration from “discipline” to “empathy”. Therefore, this paper, framed by emotional governance, systematically integrates communication strategies, cutting-edge technologies, and governance concepts to enhance the effectiveness and warmth of social governance in the intelligent era, and promotes the modernization of social governance capabilities and systems centered on “Good governance through technology”.

[Keywords] Social governance; Emotional governance; Empathic Communication; Affective Computing; Emotional Intelligence

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1. The Emotional Turn in Media Environment

In the process of modernizing the national governance system, the modernization and upgrading of social governance have become core issues. Currently, the rapid development of media and information technologies is profoundly altering the communication ecology, with social communication logic exhibiting significant emotional turn. This emotional shift presents a new challenge to the traditional social governance model, which has been primarily based on rationality. Against this backdrop, a deep analysis of The Emotional Turn in the media environment and its specific impact on social governance has become an urgent task to promote the modernization of social governance systems and governance capabilities. Clarifying the central role of emotions in communication is crucial for exploring governance paradigms that adapt to the new media environment.

1.1 Problem Statement and Background

Social governance constitutes a crucial component of the national governance system. With the profound transformation of the global communication ecology, communication dynamics are entering an era characterized by heightened emotionality, posing new requirements for the modernization of national governance systems and capacities. The continuous advancement of information technology is driving the contemporary communication ecology to undergo profound structural transformation. Its core characteristic is manifested as a fundamental shift in communication logic from emphasizing the importance of information to emphasizing the importance of emotions. Emerging media technologies, represented by Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC), Artificial Emotional Intelligence (AEI), and big data analysis, are gradually being widely applied. Media communication is no longer confined to simple one-way information dissemination; instead, through in-depth mining of massive user data and emotional pattern analysis, it achieves precise insight into individual emotional preferences and accurate targeting. This emotion-driven precision communication model has formed a new communication ecology. In the 1990s, Mestrovic proposed the concept of a “postemotional society” to denote a new stage of social development, where emotion becomes the foundation for manipulation by the self, others, and the cultural industry as a whole. Within this new communication ecology and the context of a postemotional society,

emotion itself is no longer merely an appendage of information; rather, it has ascended to become a core symbolic carrier and an influential element, directly driving the breadth of content dissemination and the depth of interaction, thereby constructing a communication ecology based on emotional symbols and oriented toward emotional value. Media technologies, particularly social media platforms and algorithmic recommendation systems, significantly amplify the role of emotion in information dissemination by intervening in and reshaping users' emotional evaluation processes. According to Arnold's classic cognitive theory of emotion, emotion is not a direct passive response to external stimuli but rather the product of an individual's cognitive evaluation process of meaning and value after receiving a stimulus. In other words, the generation of emotion relies on short-term or continuous evaluation of events; an individual's perception, interpretation, and judgment of a particular event are key to determining the type and intensity of emotion produced. The current communication ecology, especially social media, with its massive information, decontextualized content, and fragmented consumption patterns, compresses the time and space for users' deliberate evaluation, prompting them to rely more on rapid, intuitive emotional evaluations. Concurrently, algorithmic design tends to prioritize the distribution of content that elicits strong emotional responses, whether positive or negative, in pursuit of higher user engagement, thus forming the phenomenon of "algorithmic manipulation." Platform technologies do not present information neutrally; instead, they construct a content distribution system centered on "emotionalization." Furthermore, interactive features like likes, shares, and comments on platforms constitute immediate emotional feedback loops, further amplifying and solidifying individual emotional experiences. The technology-driven emotional amplification mechanism has led to a sharp increase in the weight of emotion within the information environment, propelling a general societal emotionalization trend. In this environment, the influence of emotion on information dissemination sometimes even surpasses factual and rational analysis; "emotional facts" can potentially override objective facts. Discussions and expressions of views in the social public sphere are increasingly dominated by emotion. Different emotions are repeatedly stimulated and reinforced by algorithms on online platforms, intensifying the overall societal emotional expression, making the status of emotion in the communication process increasingly crucial. Therefore, the emotional turn in communication ecology poses severe challenges to traditional social governance models, highlighting the necessity and urgency of incorporating emotional elements into governance systems. The key to evaluating governance effectiveness lies in its ability to genuinely respond to and address the actual needs and lived experiences of the people. Currently, the current social environment is increasingly characterized by heightened emotionality, and public emotion plays a significantly enhanced role in contexts such as public opinion formation, social mobilization, and policy responses. The "rational centralism" emphasized in traditional social governance models, which focuses on discipline, faces severe challenges regarding its adaptability in the current highly emotionalized society. Policies formulated or official information released purely based on rational logic may encounter resistance, misunderstanding, or even opposition due to their failure to reach or respond to the public's complex emotional structures, thereby failing to achieve the intended governance outcomes. In current governance practices, "emotional governance"—which involves applying cutting-edge technologies to identify social emotional trajectories, utilizing emotional intelligence for communication, and thoroughly considering emotional factors in policy formulation and implementation—remains relatively absent.

1.2 Literature Review

Against the backdrop of a changing global communication ecology, a review of the current research status reveals a certain lag in studies on social governance systems. Most research continues to focus on rigid governance tools of traditional control models such as judicial, administrative, and institutional approaches, while research on flexible governance tools, exemplified by emotional governance, remains relatively weak. In existing literature, scholars frequently diverge in their understanding of this concept: some interpret it as "governing with emotion," meaning treating emotion as a means and tool for social governance, while others understand it as "governing emotion," meaning treating emotion as the object of governance, leaning toward the control of individual emotions. The frequent confusion in the use of these two interpretations has led to numerous questions and confusions at the foundational logical level of social governance. Scholars such as Howcroft Michael, Marsh Nicky, and Owen Joseph have explored how emotional governance enables British social policies to be re-examined and accepted by the public, explaining the formation and function of emotional governance mechanisms. These studies primarily concentrate on the theoretical framework of emotional governance, lacking empirical analysis of the detailed processes by which emotional governance softens social relations in specific contexts, often simplifying complex emotional phenomena into functional analysis; Scholars Willis Katharine S.

and Nold Christian argues that smart city governance should fully leverage emotional data to create aggregated emotional data sets that can be used for urban planning implementation, thereby maximizing the potential of emotion in urban governance.

This logic of viewing emotional governance as a governance tool is largely policy-oriented, focusing on the construction of governance models rather than the natural flow and irrational characteristics of emotion itself. Scholars Song Lin and Liu Shih-Diing, taking the Chinese COVID-19 response as an example, deeply analyze how the government flexibly utilizes online conditions, creatively guides emotional elements, and employs multi-layered strategies to intervene in emotional interactions among subjects, thereby achieving the objective of emotional governance.

Although these studies provide an operational framework for emotional governance, their dominant approach remains based on institutionalized integration strategies, where emotion is confined within governance tools and operational procedures, making it difficult to genuinely respond to the audience's intrinsic emotional needs in practical scenarios.

At present, with public emotion increasingly becoming a crucial factor affecting social stability and development, the limitations of traditional rational-centralized social governance tools are becoming increasingly prominent.

Conversely, "emotional governance," which can effectively integrate emotional factors, utilize cutting-edge media technologies for communication and interaction, and foster social consensus and conflict resolution, holds irreplaceable importance for enhancing the modernization level of national governance systems and governance capacities. Therefore,

there is an urgent need to deepen the theoretical research on emotional governance within the social governance system and apply it to emotional governance practices, thereby improving the foundational logical construction of social governance and achieving the modernization and upgrading of digital social governance capacity and governance systems led by "Good governance through technology."

1.3 Definition of Core Concepts

The core connotation of emotional governance refers to the systematic consideration of public emotions as a crucial governance element within the modern social governance system, transcending the rational-centralized paradigm that traditionally emphasizes rigid means such as regulations, institutions, and administrative orders.

It emphasizes the soft approach to governance and returns to the fundamental characteristic of "people foremost," recognizing that public emotional needs, emotional expression, and their interactions have a critical influence on social stability, policy implementation, trust building, and consensus formation. By focusing on emotion as a core human attribute, it profoundly addresses and actively responds to the central issue of modern governance—the modernization of human-centric governance.

The effective realization of emotional governance aims to integrate specific communication means, technological foundations, and development directions, thereby guiding the modernization process of digital social governance with the philosophy of "Good governance through technology." Firstly, Empathic Communication constitutes a core means of emotional governance.

Through the effective transmission, dissemination, and sharing of information, it aims to build emotional bridges connecting governors and the public,

fostering emotional resonance within a specific scope,

and thereby forming collective emotions to achieve social governance objectives. Secondly,

Affective Computing provides crucial technological support for emotional governance.

By collecting and analyzing multi-modal data such as voice, video, and text,

Affective Computing can achieve precise identification and data-driven representation of human emotional states, providing a scientific basis for understanding and grasping social emotions. Building upon this, emotional intelligence,

represented by Artificial Emotional Intelligence (AEI), indicates the development direction for emotional governance.

Artificial Emotional Intelligence (AEI)

promotes the evolution of emotional technology toward higher-order intelligence and emotionalization,

enabling machines not only to perceive and understand human emotions but also to generate and regulate emotions,

thereby exerting precise influence on individual and group behaviors and guiding governance practices toward deeper and more human-centered directions.

2. Empathic Communication as a Means

The global communication ecology is undergoing a fundamental shift from emphasizing the importance of information to emphasizing the importance of emotions. Emotion has become a core factor connecting individuals, driving social interaction, and realizing modernized social governance.

As the underlying logic of social governance undergoes iteration, Empathic Communication, as a crucial means, can effectively bridge the shortcomings of traditional governance models in terms of emotional responsiveness, enhancing the effectiveness of policy communication, public opinion resolution, and social negotiation,

thereby strengthening government credibility and social trust, and providing guarantees for mending social divides, fostering mutual understanding and trust, and promoting the benevolent development of society.

2.1 Changes in communication ecology and the Prominence of Empathic Communication

The global communication ecology is evolving from an era emphasizing the importance of information, which focused on the presentation and transmission of objective facts, towards an era emphasizing the importance of emotions, driven by emotional symbols and emotional value, profoundly impacting the interaction patterns of modern society. In the current communication ecology, characterized by information explosion and extreme scarcity of user attention, complex and redundant traditional information dissemination models often struggle to effectively penetrate the information flood and reach audiences. Conversely, content capable of rapidly eliciting individual emotional resonance, due to its powerful appeal and easy-to-digest characteristics, has become key to attracting attention and achieving rapid connections.

Emotion is no longer merely an appendage accompanying information; rather, it has become a constitutive factor for connecting individuals, building group identity, and defining boundaries. Based on their emotional responses to information, individuals in the current communication ecology can quickly find "kindred spirits," forming "emotional communities" based on emotional connections that transcend physical space and traditional social structures.

This emotional "empathy" can efficiently bridge information barriers and cognitive differences, fostering strong group identity and a sense of belonging. Its social mobilization and cohesive power, in certain contexts, even surpasses connections based on shared values or rational stances.

This emotion-driven social interaction model poses challenges to the traditional social governance system. In an environment where public emotional responses are rapid and collective emotional expressions wield significant influence,

traditional governance tools such as rigid regulatory constraints and top-down command dissemination are increasingly ineffective in reaching the public's inner sentiments. Consequently, there has been a clear emotional turn in the logic of social governance, where governors' empathic ability has become crucial for achieving social governance.

The value of Empathic Communication is not merely an expansion of theoretical perspectives but also an indispensable social governance tool in practice. By employing Empathic Communication strategies, governors can effectively narrow the emotional distance with the public, channel negative emotions, and stimulate positive social sentiments, thereby achieving social mobilization based on emotional expression, emotional contagion, and emotional resonance, leading to important governance objectives such as effective information dissemination, smooth policy implementation, and stable social development.

Practical cases demonstrate that desires or demands driven by empathy can rapidly translate into large-scale social mobilization. In June 2017, a catastrophic fire occurred at Grenfell Tower in West London, resulting in 72 fatalities.

When reporting on the fire, British media not only focused on the causes of the accident and government responsibility but also extensively published portraits, lifestories, and tributes from victims and their families, leading many people to express condolences and discontent on social media regarding the event.

The numerous first-person narratives and emotional descriptions on platform effectively called upon society to increase attention to vulnerable groups and resonate with social injustice.

This network of connections and collaborations formed among individuals based on shared emotions and empathic impulses exhibited the characteristics of explosive "swarm-like" mobilization. In recent years, the online attention, discussion intensity, and calls for action for various social events that sparked public debate have largely depended on the public's emotional and empathic engagement.

Against the backdrop of the communication ecology's shift from emphasizing the importance of information to emphasizing the importance of emotions, emotion and empathy are no longer peripheral products of social interaction. Instead, amplified, connected, and organized through network technologies, they have become core drivers for reshaping social connection methods and forming new types of social organizational structures. They can bypass traditional organizational structures and hierarchical limitations, achieving low-cost, high-efficiency social organization and mobilization by leveraging the rapid contagiousness of emotion and empathy-driven willingness to act.

This holds crucial significance for understanding and improving the current social governance system, providing a new practical paradigm for social governance.

2.2 Functions and Value of Empathic Communication in Social Governance

In traditional social governance models, the core logic involves power operating top-down, with information transmitted layer by layer from the government to grassroots levels and the public, focusing on conveying policy intentions, explaining institutional provisions,

and requiring public compliance with regulations.

While this model possesses certain efficiency in information distribution and administrative command dissemination, its limitations are increasingly prominent, and its effectiveness significantly diminishes in the current social environment characterized by media technology empowerment, multi-directional information dissemination, and increasingly active and influential public emotions, due to a lack of reverse communication mechanisms. Communication approaches based purely on rationality, rules, and top-down logic often struggle to reach and effectively respond to the public's diverse, complex, and fluctuating emotional world and deep psychological needs. When public emotions are not recognized, understood, or appropriately addressed, even the most rational policies may encounter resistance, misunderstanding, or even trigger negative public opinion and collective emotional confrontation due to cold, distant, or rigid communication methods, leading to obstructed policy implementation and exacerbated social conflicts. This traditional model has failed to effectively adapt to the demands for emotional connection and responsiveness posed by a society emphasizing the importance of emotion to governors, resulting in diminished governance effectiveness. Against this backdrop, elevating emotional governance, with Empathic Communication as its means, to a core position within the social governance system is an imperative for compensating for the deficiencies of traditional models and enhancing governance effectiveness. In the current communication ecology, empathy, through online and offline, real and virtual interactions, enables society to achieve emotional synchronization. In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the UK launched an initiative called "Clap for Carers/NHS." Every Thursday evening, people would step out of their homes to applaud frontline healthcare workers and essential service providers. This initiative originated from an advocacy on social media and quickly gained traction. People posted videos with hashtags like #ClapForOurCarers on social platforms, expressing gratitude and support for healthcare workers. This online emotional expression directly translated into regular, large-scale offline community actions, conveying collective emotion through applause. Concurrently, videos of the offline applause were uploaded online, further amplifying empathy and forming a powerful emotional feedback loop. This activity quickly led to societal-level emotional synchronization across the UK, becoming a symbol of collective empathy and support during the pandemic. It not only boosted the morale of healthcare workers but also enhanced social cohesion, allowing the public to feel each other's support and connection even in isolation. This is not merely a paradigm improvement but also a concrete manifestation of the governance philosophy shifting towards "people foremost" and pursuing modernized governance. Empathic Communication demonstrates an irreplaceable positive role across several core governance dimensions: in policy interpretation, by explaining policy backgrounds, objectives, and potential impacts on individuals through empathic language and perspectives, it can better connect policy intentions with public vested interests and emotional experiences, achieving emotional resonance and strengthening the basis for policy acceptance; in the resolution and communication of public opinion events, emotional expressions in online public opinion are aggregates of emotions formed in online interactions based on the interplay of personal life experiences and social contexts. Applying empathy theory can acknowledge and respond to public fear, anxiety, and unease when facing uncertainty. Compared to merely stating facts, this approach is more effective in gaining public trust, reducing panic, and encouraging public cooperation, thereby mitigating governance risks; in the process of social negotiation, Empathic Communication helps bridge emotional gaps and cognitive differences between different groups, building an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust, accelerating the effective transmission of information among audiences at different levels, and thereby stimulating overall deep emotional resonance, promoting the formation of more inclusive and sustainable social consensus. Sustained empathic communication, establishing emotional connections with the public, is furthermore an effective way to enhance government credibility and foster the image of a responsible, caring, and trustworthy governing entity, which can increase public trust and support for the government. This trust encompasses not only cognitive trust but also relational trust. In 2019, a major shooting occurred at the Al Noor Mosque Christchurch in New Zealand. Jacinda Ardern, the non-Muslim Prime Minister of New Zealand, wore a headscarf to visit victims' families and the Muslim community. According to New Zealand media "Newshub", a Muslim community leader interviewed praised Ardern as "inspiring," stating that Ardern "understood us, knew what we needed...." Ardern's series of empathy-centered initiatives transcended traditional political statements, directly conveying profound sympathy and solidarity. This communication approach avoided bureaucratic coldness and instead demonstrated an understanding of and shared feeling for the public's plight.

The use of emotional governance with Empathic Communication as its means enables the public to believe that the government genuinely cares about the people's well-being and is willing to listen to their voices. This is crucial for enhancing government credibility, strengthening policy legitimacy, and gaining public support during crises. In bridging complex social divides, fostering understanding and inclusivity, and building a stable and reliable foundation of social trust in the current communication ecology, Empathic Communication plays a core and irreplaceable role in emotional governance.

2.3 Practical Pathways and Challenges of Empathic Communication

In the practice of emotional governance, employing Empathic Communication as a means requires the concerted efforts and collaborative cooperation of diverse entities such as governments and media. Governments, as core governing bodies, should profoundly transform their traditional bureaucratic discourse systems, abandoning cold and rigid expressions in favor of more human narrative approaches that are more likely to elicit public emotional resonance, thereby allowing the public to perceive the sincerity and care of governors.

Mainstream media should assume the role of a "leader" in their reporting, upholding mainstream values and fostering increased social cohesion through reporting with emotional warmth. In 2012, Hurricane Sandy severely impacted the U.S. East Coast, causing immense damage. Initially, mainstream media coverage focused on the disaster itself, rescue progress, and scrutiny of the government's emergency response. Overtime, mainstream media reporting gradually deepened. For instance, The New York Times' special report "Hurricane Sandy:

One Year Later" began extensively showcasing the extraordinary resilience exhibited by ordinary citizens in the face of disaster, inter-community mutual aid efforts, and selfless cross-racial dedication.

The reports no longer solely emphasized the severity of the disaster; instead, through survivors' rebuilding stories, the proactive actions of volunteer groups, and the collaborative efforts of government and communities, they highlighted individual strength in adversity and the power of group cohesion. In presenting this content, the media focused on the authentic expression of emotion, conveying human courage, hope, and solidarity when collectively facing challenges through meticulous narratives and compelling visuals. This type of reporting with emotional warmth both acknowledged the suffering caused by the disaster and skillfully guided the narrative towards reconstruction, mutual aid, and hope, promoting mainstream values such as civic responsibility and collectivism, effectively uniting positive public emotions, and fostering empathy and support among social members.

However, inactively advocating for and practicing Empathic Communication as a social governance tool, numerous challenges and ethical risks that cannot be overlooked are also encountered.

In a communication ecology characterized by rapid information dissemination and easily contagious emotions, some entities may maliciously exploit public empathy to mislead, deceive, or incite, forming what is known as the "weaponization of emotion" phenomenon, guiding specific emotions towards irrational or even harmful collective actions. For instance, a report by Migration Watch UK, "How Mass,

Uncontrolled Immigration Threatens Your Quality Of Life," intentionally emphasizes the negative impacts of immigration on a region to reinforce stereotypes against specific groups, thereby inciting fear and exclusionary sentiments among the audience.

This deliberate emotional guidance causes emotions of different political stances or social groups to be continuously reinforced and pushed to extremes, ultimately leading to emotional polarization and exacerbating social divisions.

Furthermore,

an overemphasis on emotional resonance may lead to "empathy overflow" or "emotional hijacking," causing individuals or groups to become overly immersed in emotional experiences and expressions, suppressing calm analysis of facts and critical thinking, thereby triggering irrational decision-making.

In the process of public affairs discussion and decision-making,

aligning and judging based on instantaneous emotional impulses may overlook the complexity of issues.

Under the stimulation or incitement of opinion leaders, the emotions of some entities become more volatile and impulsive, leading to extremely destructive outcomes. Subsequently, bolstered by the entire emotion-inducing mechanism, online violence can easily arise, and extreme or even illegal speech and behavior also escalate, such as "doxxing" and online defamation. Overtime, these problems can easily lead to a deficit of emotional trust, severely hindering modernized social governance.

Therefore, in the process of utilizing Empathic Communication for emotional governance,

governing entities should adhere to a balance between rationality and emotion, ensuring that Empathic Communication is emotional understanding and communication based on facts, rather than simple emotional catharsis or manipulation; regulate media platforms and technological applications, design platform rules and algorithms that facilitate understanding rather than exacerbate opposition, safeguard information diversity and openness of viewpoints, and ensure that the ethical boundaries of technology are not overstepped;

guarantee the right to emotional expression for all groups and the opportunity to be heard and understood, actively bridge empathy barriers arising from technology, social status, or regional differences, and promote inclusive empathic spaces.

The core of these principles is the recognition that the power of empathy is accompanied by ethical responsibility. Only by confronting these challenges and prudently employing Empathic Communication under the guidance of clear ethical norms can it truly be forged into an effective governance tool and important social adhesive for mending social divides, fostering mutual understanding and trust, and promoting the benevolent development of society.

3. Leveraging Affective Computing

Against the backdrop of the global communication ecology evolving towards an era emphasizing the importance of emotions, social governance necessitates a systematic understanding and scientific grasp of public emotions.

Affective Computing has become a crucial technological reliance for achieving this goal.

This technology encompasses dimensions such as text, speech, physiological signals, and multimodal analysis.

By processing vast amounts of data, it transforms abstract emotions into concrete, analyzable data patterns.

Affective Computing empowers social governance by enabling large-scale, real-time, and dynamic emotion perception and analysis, thus overcoming the limitations of traditional methods.

It provides data support for precise insights into social emotions and identification of risk points, aiding governors in deeply understanding the underlying causes of emotions and supporting the formulation of targeted governance strategies.

3.1 Technical Foundations and Development of Affective Computing

The "emotional turn" observed in social governance against the backdrop of communication ecology changes poses new demands on governance philosophy and practice. However, emotion, as a highly subjective, complex, and variable social phenomenon, cannot be effectively governed merely by intuition or experience.

For emotional governance to be truly effective,

it is crucial to systematically and scientifically understand and grasp public emotion as a core element. To achieve this, scientific analysis methods and visualization techniques are required to transform abstract and diffused emotions into measurable, analyzable, and understandable data patterns and concrete visual representations, providing clear data results for governors.

The foundation and key to realizing such scientific and visual analysis lies in the support of Affective Computing technology.

In 1997, Professor Picard of MIT published the first monograph on Affective Computing, titled "Affective Computing." In the book,

Professor Picard systematically expounded on the theoretical foundations and practical applications of *Affective Computing*,

explicitly stating that the goal of Affective Computing is to enable computers to recognize human emotions and even respond intelligently based on emotional information. In her monograph *Affective Computing*,

Professor Picard explicitly defined the concept of Affective Computing:

Affective Computing refers to computation that arises from, is related to, or influences and determines emotions.

Currently, research on Affective Computing has garnered widespread attention from academia and industry alike.

Internationally renowned companies such as IBM and British Telecom have established dedicated Affective Computing research groups, and prominent universities have also set up Affective Computing research teams.

Domestic and international research institutions,

including Professor Louis-Philippe Morency's team at Carnegie Mellon University,

Professor Hongxun Yao's team at Harbin Institute of Technology,

Southeast University's Emotional Information Processing Laboratory,

and Tsinghua University's Future Human Settlements and Affective Computing Research Group,

are actively exploring directions related to cross-media, cross-scenario, and user emotion association.

Affective Computing technologies currently primarily expand along dimensions of text recognition and analysis,

speech recognition and analysis, physiological signal recognition and analysis,

and multimodal emotion recognition and analysis.

The main objective of text sentiment analysis is to automatically identify emotional tendencies from written texts.

With the popularization of social media and online platforms,

text sentiment analysis has become a key technology for understanding and processing emotional information in large-scale text data.

Text sentiment analysis achieves the determination of emotional tendencies in text data through steps such as data collection, preprocessing, feature extraction, and sentiment classification.

Speech recognition analysis refers to extracting features from speech signals that can reflect emotional states and then classifying or regressing these features using appropriate algorithmic models,

thereby achieving automatic recognition of the speaker's emotions. In terms of emotional feature extraction, prosodic features, spectral features, and voice quality features are currently the three most widely used categories.

Prosodic features include fundamental frequency (Pitch), energy (Energy), duration (Duration), etc.

These features can reflect the intensity of emotion.

Research indicates that changes in fundamental frequency play a significant role in emotion recognition; anger and happiness are typically accompanied by higher fundamental frequencies, while sadness exhibits lower ones. Spectral features such as Mel-frequency cepstral coefficients (MFCC) and linear predictive coding (LPC) are widely applied in emotion recognition tasks, demonstrating strong capabilities particularly in distinguishing emotional states. Furthermore, voice quality features, such as frequency perturbation (Jitter) and amplitude perturbation (Shimmer), are often used to reflect emotional intensity and agitation in speech.

Physiological signals for emotion recognition decode human emotional states by analyzing bioelectrical signals such as electroencephalogram (EEG), electrocardiogram (ECG), and galvanic skin response (GSR).

It can not only capture individual emotional states in the absence of language but also enhance the accuracy and applications of emotion recognition, becoming an important direction in the field of Affective Computing. Scholars such as Baek (2017)

utilized physiological signals like heart rate and galvanic skin response for emotion recognition through machine learning algorithms, proposing an emotion classification method based on Support Vector Machines, which yielded favorable recognition results; Lee and Kim (2018)

further improved the accuracy of emotion recognition by combining electroencephalography with heart rate variability to identify emotional states. Li Wang (2016)

proposed an emotion recognition model combining electroencephalography and galvanic skin response, developing an emotion recognition system based on emotional changes to address the characteristics of different emotional states; As research deepens,

more scholars have also begun to focus on multimodal fusion techniques for physiological signal emotion recognition, exploring how to integrate data from multiple physiological signals to enhance the accuracy and adaptability of emotion recognition systems.

With the rapid development of information technology and artificial intelligence, multimodal Affective Computing, also known as Artificial Emotional Intelligence (AEI),

is gradually gaining widespread application in fields such as education, healthcare, and social interaction.

Affective Computing, through AI technologies,

such as wearable devices and mobile devices with embedded sensors or non-sensor devices, acquires users' emotional states, including facial expressions, body temperature, body movements, language, heart rate, and personality traits, forming large-scale emotional and affective data.

Multimodal Affective Computing comprehensively perceives and analyzes users'

emotional states by integrating information from different modalities (e.g., text, speech, facial expressions, and physiological data), thereby enabling content intervention and information support. In multimodal fusion, common techniques include Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks. CNNs are widely applied in the analysis of visual data (e.g., facial expression recognition), capable of identifying learners' emotional expressions by extracting features from images. Concurrently, speech emotion recognition further reveals learners' emotional states by analyzing their speech features, such as intonation, volume, and speech rate. These data are fused through deep learning models, combining their respective feature information to achieve more precise emotion recognition. Currently, many studies employ a "weighted fusion" approach to integrate data from different modalities, assigning appropriate weights to each modality to enhance the overall Affective Computing performance.

3.2 Mechanisms of Affective Computing Empowerment for Social Governance

Against the broader backdrop of communication ecology transformation, emotional governance,

as a new paradigm adapting to the new media environment,

relies heavily on the empowerment and support of cutting-edge technological means for its effective implementation.

In terms of large-scale social emotion sensing and dynamic analysis,

Affective Computing demonstrates unique advantages unparalleled by traditional social perception methods.

It can transcend the limitations of time and space, enabling large-scale, high-frequency,

and near real-time monitoring and insight into the emotional states of society as a whole and specific groups.

This is achieved through real-time collection and in-depth analysis of diverse emotional expressions from unstructured data sourced from massive social media platforms, online forums, news comments, public video platforms, and other channels, covering a wider range of social groups and various topics. In short,

Affective Computing can integrate the advantages of physiology and technology,

address the problem of missing emotional dimensions in digital governance,

enrich the governance toolset of administrative entities, and promote the efficiency of digital governance activities.

Affective Computing integrates technological rationality and instrumental rationality,

adapting to the upgrading of digital social governance tools and unifying data sources such as text, speech, vision, and physiological signals.

This enables municipal administrative law enforcement personnel to timely capture the internal emotional tendencies and

stances of law enforcement subjects, effectively eliminating interference from other external information. For instance, Nanjing Xink Tech Information Technology Co., Ltd. in China developed the "Ling Shi Multimodal Emotion Judgement System" for interrogation scenarios. Utilizing non-contact video dialogue, it integrates customized algorithms across five modalities—real-time interrogation micro-expressions, micro-movements, sound intensity, heart rate, and temperature—to grasp the psychological and physiological reactions of the interrogated person, which helps to break their psychological defense and obtain genuine confessions. Simultaneously, Affective Computing can replay interrogation information data scenarios, reducing negative emotions and psychological pressure on law enforcement personnel caused by decision-making errors due to high-intensity, long-duration work fatigue, addressing issues of low work efficiency, and achieving high efficiency in municipal rule-of-law social governance. In terms of large-scale social emotions sensing and dynamic analysis, Affective Computing demonstrates advantages unparalleled by traditional methods. By performing real-time collection and in-depth analysis of diverse emotional expressions from unstructured data sources from massive social media platforms, online forums, news comments, etc., Affective Computing technology can overcome the limitations of traditional social perception methods like individual interviews or questionnaires, enabling large-scale, high-frequency monitoring and insight into the emotional states of broad social groups on various issues. For example, Hume AI's score technology engine, Hume API, allows developers to integrate Hume AI's emotional understanding capabilities into their own applications, products, or services. By combining this technology engine with governance tools, it can not only identify static emotional distributions but also capture instantaneous changes, fluctuation trends, propagation paths of social emotions, as well as emotional resonance or polarization phenomena among different groups, providing concrete and visualized emotional data streams. This large-scale, dynamic emotions sensing and analysis capability provides crucial data support and decision-making basis for emotional governance. Governors can rely on Affective Computing technology to establish emotion monitoring and early warning systems, gaining real-time understanding of public sentiments (joys, angers, sorrows, and happiness), precisely identifying potential social emotional risk points or outbreak points, thereby promptly adjusting communication strategies or policy measures. Therefore, Affective Computing technology serves as a bridge connecting abstract emotional concepts with concrete governance practices, and it is the core technological reliance for the effective implementation and scientific, intelligent development of emotional governance, providing strong tool support for achieving high-efficiency social governance in a complex communication ecology. The emotional governance paradigm relying on Affective Computing technology is fundamentally capable of transcending superficial emotional expressions to precisely understand public emotional responses triggered by specific events, policies, or social phenomena, and their underlying deeper causes. This necessitates placing the objective, concrete emotional data provided by Affective Computing within a multidisciplinary theoretical framework for further in-depth analysis. Scholars Zhang Min, Zhang Ke, and Zhang Dongxin proposed to analyze emotional governance, relying on cutting-edge technology, within a psychological theoretical framework and put forward an emotional governance theoretical framework. This theoretical framework draws upon psychological theories such as cognitive psychology and appraisal theories of emotion, elucidating that public emotions are not merely simple reflexes to stimuli but rather the product of an individual's evaluative process of specific events, policies, or social phenomena based on their cognition, values, and experiences. Affective Computing technology, as a crucial technological reliance of this framework, holds core value in its ability to transform public emotions contained within large-scale, multi-sourced data from "subjective abstraction" into "objective concreteness" and quantifiable data. This objective data provides insights into the "what" of public emotions, while in combination with psychological theories, it enables in-depth analysis of the "why" behind these concrete emotional data. For instance, when Affective Computing identifies widespread anger towards a policy, leveraging attribution theory can further analyze whether this anger is attributed to policy-stimulating factors, governmental capacity-stimulating factors during implementation, or user characteristic-stimulating factors of specific groups. Such theoretically guided data analysis enables emotional governance to transcend emotional manifestations, precisely locate emotion triggers, understand the psychological mechanisms of emotion formation, thereby more deeply comprehending public emotional responses and their underlying causes, and providing a scientific basis for formulating targeted social governance strategies.

3.3 Risks and Regulation of Affective Computing Application in Social Governance

It is not worthy that Affective Computing, by its nature as a scientific technology, serves as a double-edged sword, constantly reminding governors to carefully consider potential issues such as moral and ethical controversies, technological logical paradoxes, and the expansion of administrative power. Given its high sensitivity and privacy, emotional data, once extensively collected, stored, and analyzed in emotional governance, is highly susceptible to misuse or leakage, posing a severe threat to citizens' personal privacy and challenging public data privacy and security. Affective Computing models, during their training process, may inherit or even amplify existing social biases within the training data, leading to skewed emotional analysis results for specific groups and consequently generating unfair or discriminatory impacts on governance decisions and service allocation based on emotional data.

Governors or third-party organizations may leverage their precise ability to perceive public emotion to excessively intervene or induce social emotions, or even, through technological means, to directionally shape or suppress the "emotions" of specific groups.

This constitutes potential "weaponization of emotion," which may weaken individual autonomy and restrict freedom of expression.

Therefore,

to effectively address these risks and challenges and build a healthy and sustainable development environment for Affective Computing applications,

there is an urgent need to establish and improve relevant legal regulations and ethical norms systems.

This should include strict regulation of the collection, storage, processing, and use of emotional data,

such as defining data collection boundaries, obtaining fully informed consent,

implementing stringent anonymization and de-identification processes,

setting data access permissions and usage purpose restrictions,

and establishing independent oversight and review mechanisms to ensure that citizens'

digital rights and emotional privacy are genuinely protected. In this regard,

the two informed consent models of the EU and China are two ideal examples. They ensure that citizens'

digital rights and emotional privacy are genuinely protected by clarifying data collection boundaries,

obtaining fully informed consent, implementing strict anonymization and de-identification processes,

setting data access permissions and usage purpose limitations,

and establishing independent oversight and review mechanisms. Furthermore,

the application of Affective Computing technology must emphasize the principle of "Good governance through technology," ensuring that its research and development and application consistently serve the modern governance goals of enhancing overall social well-being, promoting fairness and justice, and fostering social trust and harmony, rather than merely serving as a tool for reinforcing management, consolidating control, or serving specific interests.

4. Guided by Emotional Intelligence

Affective Computing, through the analysis of diversified data, has achieved large-scale,

concrete perception and dynamic monitoring of public emotions,

providing crucial technical means and data support for understanding social sentiments. However,

mere measurement and analysis of emotional data are insufficient for achieving effective emotional governance.

Transforming abstract emotions into actionable governance strategies requires not only precise identification but also deep understanding and wise utilization. Therefore, building upon the technical reliance of Affective Computing,

social governance needs to be further guided by a higher-order "Emotional Intelligence." Emotional Intelligence integrates the technical capabilities of Affective Computing with a profound understanding and strategic application of emotions.

It is key to propelling social governance from data-driven emotion perception towards more humanistic and refined emotional responses and guidance,

leading the emotional governance model towards intelligent and modernized development.

4.1 Core Status of Emotional Intelligence in Social Governance

Against the backdrop of profound changes in the communication ecology,

the significant "emotional turn" observed in social governance implies that emotional governance will assume an important position within modern social governance systems. However, emotional governance,

relying solely on Empathic Communication theory and leveraging Affective Computing as its technical basis,

still lacks a deep "understanding" and effective "wise utilization" of public emotions. Therefore,

emotional governance must be guided by a higher-order "Emotional Intelligence," enabling governors not only to achieve precise quantification of emotions through technological means but also to deeply understand emotions and wisely utilize them through strategies like Empathic Communication.

Emotional Intelligence, also known as emotional quotient (EQ) or emotional literacy in some contexts,

generally comprises four dimensions: the ability of an individual to perceive, understand, use,

and manage their own and others' emotions,

and was proposed in 1990 by Yale University Professors Peter Salovey and Jack Mayer.

With the transformations in the communication ecology and the accelerated iteration of cutting-edge intelligent mediated

hnologies, the connotation of Emotional Intelligence has also evolved in the current social governance context. It now integrates the capabilities of Artificial Emotional Intelligence (AEI) in emotion perception and analysis, and the potential of Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC) in emotional content generation and interaction, among other frontier media intelligence technologies, forming a comprehensive capability system oriented towards society, capable of systematically and intelligently understanding, managing, and guiding public emotions. This concept transcends the narrow scope of Emotional Intelligence technology, aiming to help the global social governance paradigm move towards an emotional governance orientation that is more humanistic and more aligned with the requirements of modernization and intelligence.

4.2 Transformation of Governance Models under the Guidance of Emotional Intelligence

In governance models that highly apply Emotional Intelligence, cutting-edge intelligent technologies such as Artificial Emotional Intelligence (AEI) for emotion perception and analysis, and Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC) for emotional content generation potential, will be systematically utilized to understand, manage, and guide public emotions.

This governance model no longer regards Affective Computing as merely a simple emotional data monitoring tool but elevates it to an intelligent engine for discerning the drivers of social emotions, predicting trends, and assessing risks. Since emotion is a subjective and diverse concept, it may have different interpretations across individuals and contexts. Therefore, when analyzing Affective Computing results, differences in subjective evaluations among individuals and contextual information should be considered.

By combining the in-depth analysis of Artificial Emotional Intelligence (AEI), governors, empowered by Emotional Intelligence, can more precisely identify the complexity of public emotions and understand their underlying deep socio-psychological and contextual factors, thereby enabling Affective Computing results to transcend the data level and possess greater explanatory and predictive power.

Based on the precise emotional profiles and insights provided by Affective Computing, Emotional Intelligence enables governors to design more targeted and emotionally resonant Empathic Communication strategies. The potential of Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC), on the other hand, lies in its ability to assist in generating more humane and emotionally resonant policy interpretations, risk advisories, or interactive models. Kjell explored the prospects of ChatGPT in psychotherapy applications.

Through validation in a series of scenarios, the results indicate that the latest AI technology is expected to transform mental health assessment from traditional ratings scales to approaches that are more aligned with natural language communication. The U.S.

Government Accountability Office (GAO) proposed applying AI in natural disaster models, asserting that AI models can be a powerful tool for automating processes and rapidly analyzing massive datasets.

This combination enables governors not only to meet the traditional demand for natural disaster prediction but also, through Affective Computing technology within AI and AI-generated content, to develop a profound understanding of the emotional needs of the public facing major natural disasters, thereby providing guidance for post-disaster governance efforts.

This technology-driven precise understanding and technology-enabled effective expression collectively construct a governance model distinct from traditional "disciplinary" approaches.

It emphasizes two-way interaction and warm responses based on an understanding of public emotions, transforming the governance process into socially communicative engagement imbued with emotional connections.

Therefore, Emotional Intelligence, by more judiciously utilizing Affective Computing results and more effectively conducting Empathic Communication, shifts the governance logic from a "disciplinary governance" orientation focused on control and regulation towards an "empathic governance" orientation emphasizing emotional understanding and care, thereby significantly enhancing the effectiveness and level of social governance.

In emotional governance guided by Emotional Intelligence, governors must cultivate their own emotional literacy and degree of Emotional Intelligence, enhancing their communication, coordination, and decision-making abilities in complex social emotional environments, thereby "imbuing warmth" into the modernization of social governance.

Social temperature refers to the overall manifestation of the emotional states and collective emotional atmosphere of members within a specific community. It can be used to describe the warmth, amiability, and degree of empathy within society, and it is one of the indispensable elements in the modernization of social governance. The UK National Health Service (NHS), by implementing ambient scribing products based on advanced Automated Voice Technology (AVT), reduced the energy consumption of medical service personnel on redundant tasks, effectively enhancing the service enthusiasm of healthcare institutions towards patients,

providing more empathetic medical services,
and contributing to warming up the collective emotional atmosphere of society.

Focus on social temperature requires that governors'

consideration of emotion should not merely be a lagging crisis response, as traditionally,
but rather integrated throughout the entire process of policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation,
thereby significantly enhancing the "warmth" and effectiveness of policies.

4.3 Towards "Good Governance Through Technology" and "People-Centered Modern Governance"

Emotional governance guided by Emotional Intelligence embodies the governance philosophy of "Good governance through technology," emphasizing that technology should serve governance objectives rather than dominating or replacing the essence of governance.

Emotional Intelligence in the context of the communication ecology serves as a powerful tool and important path for achieving good governance. However,

its ultimate purpose is not merely the simple control of social emotions through cutting-edge intelligent technologies, but rather to serve the fundamental governance objective of promoting the comprehensive development of people and social harmony. Emotional governance guided by Emotional Intelligence,
precisely through its ability to accurately perceive, deeply understand, and constructively guide public emotions,
enables governors to be adept at listening to the voices of the people and to more effectively reach out to and respond to the emotional experiences and psychological needs of the populace in the process of modernization.

This attention to and active response to people's emotional needs can significantly enhance the effectiveness and amiability of governance, promote mutual understanding and trust among social members,

thereby building a deeper and more sustainable foundation for social harmony and development. Looking to the future,
emotional governance guided by Emotional Intelligence will continue to evolve with the rapid iteration of technology.

However, no matter how advanced technology becomes,

it must always uphold the bottom line of humanistic care and strict ethical norms,

guard against the misuse of technology leading to emotional manipulation,

and achieve true "Good governance through technology" and modern governance that is people foremost.

5. Conclusion

The prominence of emotional elements in the current complex communication ecology has become an unavoidable core issue in the global modernization process of social governance. The emotional turn of the communication ecology,
a reality driven by cutting-edge technology and leading to the evolution of communication logic from emphasizing the importance of information to emphasizing the importance of emotions,
poses challenges to global modernized social governance.

The role of public emotions in governance dimensions such as public opinion formation, social mobilization,
and policy response has significantly strengthened,

leading to a marked decline in the efficacy of traditional governance models that emphasize rules and rationality,
and unidirectional indoctrination, within this highly emotional and interactive communication ecology.

This highlights the status of emotion as an important lever for the modernization of social governance.

The key to addressing this challenge lies in the iteration of the underlying logic of social governance,
specifically the construction of a new emotional governance paradigm guided by Emotional Intelligence,
relying on Affective Computing, and employing Empathic Communication as its means.

The inherent logic of this paradigm is collectively constructed by three interconnected and progressively advancing key elements: First, Empathic Communication as a means forms the theoretical foundation of emotional governance.

With its ability to transcend information barriers, foster emotional connections, and build trust,
it becomes the basis for achieving effective government-public interaction and issue communication,

compensating for the shortcomings of traditional unidirectional indoctrination models. Second,

Affective Computing as a reliance provides the technical support for emotional governance.

By transforming abstract public emotions into concrete data,

it offers a scientific basis and technical capability for understanding and grasping large-scale, dynamic social sentiments. Third,

Emotional Intelligence as a guide directs the development orientation and capability objectives of emotional governance.

By integrating technological perception with humanistic understanding, management, and guidance capabilities,
it ensures that Affective Computing data is deeply understood and transformed into effective Empathic Communication strategies.

The organic combination of these three elements jointly promotes the iteration and upgrade of the underlying logic of social governance from a "disciplinary" logic focused on control and regulation to an "empathic" governance logic that is more humanistic and more aligned with the characteristics of modern governance.

Looking ahead, the continuous development of technologies related to emotional governance,
while offering new opportunities, also entails ethical risks and regulatory demands that must be taken seriously.

With the further development of cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Emotional Intelligence (AEI),
the sensing precision and analysis dimensions of Affective Computing will continue to expand,

promising to achieve a more nuanced, dynamic, and comprehensive capture of public emotions, providing governors with unprecedented data insight capabilities. However, emotional governance cannot be separated from the guidance of rule of law and rule of virtue. Should there be a lack of corresponding regulations, it risks deviation, including but not limited to issues such as data privacy leakage, algorithmic bias, weaponization of emotion, and technological abuse. Therefore, future research and practice of emotional governance must place ethical considerations in a prominent position, exploring the establishment of a sound legal and ethical regulatory framework for the strict regulation of emotional data collection, storage, and use.

Fundamentally, the future development of emotional governance must steadfastly anchor itself to a people foremost value orientation, ensuring that technology serves social well-being rather than being alienated into a mere tool of control. Technology should serve to enhance social well-being and promote fairness and justice, rather than dominating governance or intensifying control. Efforts must be made to strongly avoid the risk of "Good governance through technology" sliding into "technological alienation." In the future, research on emotional governance within the social governance system, while exploring technological empowerment, must also constantly focus on how to effectively integrate humanistic care, address people's emotional needs and psychological well-being, and achieve a deep integration of technology and humanities. The ultimate goal is to move towards a higher level, warmer, and wiser modernization of social governance in the current complex global communication ecology, achieving a modern governance that is people foremost.

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