

# Policy Information Communication in Shanghai's 15-Minute Community Living Circle--Taking Jing'an District as an Example

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## Abstract:

This paper examines the communication strategies of the “15-minute community life circles” policy in Shanghai Jing'an District. The study highlights the critical role of effective information dissemination in fostering public understanding and engagement with the policy. Analyzing current communication channels, including online platforms such as WeChat and Weibo, the paper identifies key challenges such as inadequate coverage, low public awareness, and insufficient interaction between policy content and residents' daily lives. The paper also critiques the reliance on traditional media, which may not effectively reach younger demographics. Recommendations are provided to enhance the policy's communication, including diversifying media channels, tailoring content to specific audience segments, and integrating more interactive and relatable narratives. By improving these aspects, the policy can better achieve its goal of creating sustainable, well-connected communities that meet the needs of all residents. This study underscores the importance of adaptive and responsive communication strategies in the successful implementation of public policies.

**Keywords:** Community, Shanghai's 15-Minute Community Living Circle, Policy Communication.

## 1. Introduction

In 2014, at the First Shanghai World Cities Day Forum, Zhuang Shaoqin, then Director of the Shanghai Urban Planning and Land Resources Management Bureau, proposed the concept of a 15-minute community life circle. In 2016, Shanghai released the country's first technical document on community life circle planning, titled the *Guidelines for the 15-Minute Community Life Circle Planning in Shanghai*. These guidelines standardize the definition of the 15-minute community life circle, and the overall concept is based on the sociological definition of community, urban planning's understanding of public resource allocation, and the role of the community as a basic unit of urban governance. The goal is to provide citizens with a better living environment, enhancing their sense of belonging and identity.

Research on the 15-minute community life circle, both domestically and internationally, mainly focuses on three aspects: case studies examining the effects of specific projects, urban planning perspectives that critique the macro-level planning of life circles and propose improvements in community construction, and historical development of the life circle concept. For example, Li Minzhi, in her article, uses indicators such as road network density, minimum proximity distance, and comprehensive acces-

sibility to propose urban public green space optimization strategies [1]. From the perspective of urban planning, researchers criticize the planning of life circles at a macro level, and puts forward suggestions for improvement in community construction. Xu Yisong's article discusses how Shanghai's urban master plans, across different periods, have consistently adhered to the spatial layout concept of “organic dispersion and multi-core openness” [2]. In the context of policy communication, research mainly focuses on how information dissemination can attract higher user interaction frequency. For example, Maria E. Grabe & Jessica G. Myrick discussed the need to enhance image information to increase citizen participation. Zeng Runxi and Yang Can, in their work on the “policy cocoon” theory, identified four types of policy cocoons: ignorance, partial understanding, rejection of cognition, and reverse cognition, which hinder the correct dissemination of policies [3,4]. Deserai A. Crow and Andrea Lawlor also highlighted the role of narrative framing in influencing policy-making and public opinion by selectively highlighting public issues and shaping them based on understanding [5].

From the perspective of urban life circle articles, most studies focus on quantitative analysis to examine the implementation of the 15-minute community life circle. However, these facilities ultimately need to be used by

citizens, who will judge whether the construction is reasonable. Currently, academic research lacks studies on this aspect. Moreover, there is a lack of research on the effectiveness of policy communication related to communities. This article aims to explore how to optimize the communication channels of the 15-minute community life circle policy in Jing'an District, using the policy cocoon theory. The policy cocoon theory manifests as selective information exposure and cognitive biases, leading to public misunderstandings and negative attitudes towards policies. Zeng Runxi and Yang Can categorize policy cocoons into four types: ignorance, partial understanding, rejection of cognition, and reverse cognition [4]. They also analyze the mechanisms and influencing factors behind these cocoons, including the political environment of information dissemination and media technology. The reasons for these cognitive issues include limited or inaccurate cognition and negative attitudes caused by selective information exposure. These cognitive biases affect the public's understanding of policy goals, content, and rights, leading to negative emotions and attitudes that ultimately result in policy communication failures.

## 2. Introduction to the 15-Minute Life Circle Policy

Jing'an District ranks third in population density in Shanghai, with 97.6% of its economy based on the tertiary sector. The district is popular among young people due to its long development history and well-liked regional planning. The 15-minute community life circle can effectively improve residents' quality of life and convenience by optimizing community services, further promoting consumption, stimulating market vitality, and driving high-quality economic development [6,7]. In the first batch of pilot planning, Zhijiangxi Road Subdistrict in Jing'an District focused on updating four major areas: elderly care facilities, road networks, street appearances, and green spaces. This provided a model for subsequent community renovations in Jing'an District, considering the characteristics of an aging and densely populated area.

In May 2023, the Jing'an District government summarized citizen feedback, which mainly revolved around three aspects: "location selection for the community life circle," "integration of resources and functional overlap in the community life circle," and "utilization of urban space for embedding public services in the community life circle" [8]. Subsequently, the government connected with streets and various social resources to promote the renovation and construction of old housing, public green spaces, shared street spaces, night markets, and community art corners. The 15-minute community life circle has evolved

from improving the living environment to providing a richer civic life. These developments mark the transition of Shanghai's community construction from "quantitative change" to "qualitative change," reflecting the long-standing demands of citizens for related spaces.

Currently, Jing'an District's "15-minute community life circle" breaks down barriers between streets, building public facilities and services more precisely according to the region. A total of 22 residential life circles, one industrial circle, and two commercial circles have been established, with multiple projects still under construction [9].

## 3. Current Status and Channels of Policy Communication

### 3.1 The Role of Local Government in Policy Communication

In disseminating public policies to local citizens, the local government is the primary entity responsible for ensuring the authority and authenticity of policy content. The local government must further refine, decompose, and grade national-level public policies according to local conditions. After internal dissemination, the government or relevant responsible entities must publicize the policies so that citizens are aware of the highest-level policies. Proper local government communication strategies help citizens correctly understand policies.

Additionally, the local government plays a supervisory role by monitoring media content related to policy execution, outcomes, and social effects, acting as a "reagent" to test the effectiveness of public policy implementation. By analyzing media content, the local government can assess the performance of various execution nodes (including execution units and key executors) in the policy implementation chain and make preliminary predictions about policy effectiveness before data and result reports are generated. Therefore, the local government's "reagent" role is also key to timely grasping public sentiment and guiding the correct dissemination of information.

### 3.2 The Current Policy Dissemination of the 15-minute Community Life Circle

Offline communication channels primarily involve roadshow promotions during events and some spontaneous promotion. However, offline communication is not the focus of promotion, so this article will not elaborate on it further.

#### 3.2.1 Offline transmission channels

The offline communication channels mainly happens at time to time roadshow, as well as some spontaneous publicity. On the whole, the study is not the focus of propaganda.

**3.2.2 Online transmission channels**

To better categorize and summarize the content, this article used “15-minute” and “fifteen-minute” as keywords

to search across Jing’an District’s online media platforms (WeChat public accounts, Weibo, and e-newspapers) from July 31, 2023, to July 31, 2024. Each article was categorized according to its attributes (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Explanation of Article Attributes**

Article Attribute	Explanation
Achievement Display	Summarizing and reviewing past achievements and events
Planning Research	Reporting on site visits and discussions about the 15-minute community life circle by construction units and district government officials
Event Notification	Information about events and facility openings in the 15-minute community life circle
Employment Service	Employment circle activity information
Government Communication	Reports on party supervision and suggestions for community development

**Table 1 categorizes online media content and provides classification criteria to accurately categorize and analyze various articles.**

Currently, WeChat’s media layout is well-established, with the “Shanghai Jing’an” public account serving as the main hub, under which there are 21 committee and bureau public accounts, 14 street public accounts, and 34 important institutions, all of which are regularly updated. Jing’an District has 70 WeChat public accounts, and the “Shanghai Jing’an” account can update about 10 articles per day. Committee and bureau accounts update less frequently but still average about 10 articles per week. Each street’s WeChat public account updates 5-7 articles daily, and important institutions’ WeChat accounts vary in frequency, with an average of 30 articles per month. In total, Jing’an District’s WeChat media platform can produce 57,470 WeChat articles per year. However, only 137 of these articles mention the 15-minute community life circle. Given that the 15-minute community life circle is a key component of Shanghai’s overall urban planning for 2017-2035, its lack of prominence in WeChat communication is clearly unreasonable.

Among the 137 articles, 75 are achievement displays, 15 are planning research articles, 5 are event notifications, 27

are employment services, and 15 are government communication articles. Planning research articles have higher readership and stronger interactivity, reflecting citizens’ concern for the 15-minute community life circle and their desire to engage with the policy. Achievement display articles, on the other hand, perform less well in terms of readership compared to planning research articles. Upon review, these articles mainly summarize specific activities and achievements with a strong informational tone, making it difficult for residents to relate to them. As a result, fewer users actively read these articles. Those who do read these articles are often closely related to the content, which makes them more likely to interact through likes, shares, and comments. Event notifications and employment service articles, which are more closely related to citizens’ daily activities, are more likely to be spread, making the policy more recognizable to community residents. Government communication articles, which are essentially news reports, are less relevant to the general public and therefore perform less well overall.

**Table 2. Performance of Articles on WeChat by Attribute**

Article Type	Average Readership	Average Likes	Average Shares	Average “Watching”	Average Comments
Achievement Display	423.71	2.91	14.19	1.08	0.11
Planning and Research	559.67	1.80	16.20	0.60	0.00
Event Notification	299.60	1.20	19.00	0.60	0.00
Employment Services	318.74	2.15	17.26	0.70	0.00

Government Communication	235.00	1.00	6.53	0.33	0.20
Total	392.72	2.36	14.35	0.85	0.08

**Table 2 provides a clearer understanding of the performance of different article attributes on WeChat and offers insights for optimizing policy communication strategies.**

The Weibo media matrix is set up with “Shanghai Jing’an” as the main account, along with three committee and bureau accounts, five street accounts, and four key institution accounts. Among them, two accounts have been closed, and one account has not been updated since 2022. Besides “Shanghai Jing’an” and “Police-Citizen Direct Line - Jing’an,” other Weibo accounts mainly function as automated reposting platforms for content from higher-level accounts. The account setup on Weibo is not comprehensive, and information about Weibo accounts on WeChat is outdated, failing to provide effective information.

A search for “15-minute community life circle” and “fif-

teen-minute community life circle” on the Weibo shows that “Shanghai Jing’an” has 54 articles, while Tianshan West Road Street has one article. However, most of the 54 articles on “Shanghai Jing’an” are summaries and reposts of WeChat articles, indicating that the Weibo platform’s accounts are not prioritized for detailed urban policy promotion.

On the Weibo platform, there are 31 achievement display articles, 7 planning research articles, 4 event notifications, 12 employment service articles, and 1 government communication article. Overall, user interaction on Weibo is low, and the interaction trends across different types of articles mirror those on WeChat.

**Table 3. Performance of Articles on Weibo by Attribute**

Article Attribute	Avg. Reposts	Avg. Comments	Avg. Likes
Achievement Display	0.35	0.03	0.06
Planning Research	0.29	0.00	0.00
Event Notification	0.25	0.00	0.25
Employment Service	0.92	0.08	0.00
Government Communication	2.00	0.00	0.00

From Table 3, it is evident that articles related to the 15-minute community life circle on Weibo receive very ordinary levels of attention and response. This suggests that there has not been an effort to tailor articles to the unique characteristics of the Weibo platform, resulting in a decline in user engagement.

By 2022, China’s short video user base reached 1.012 billion people, making online social media the primary platform for information dissemination. In contrast, newspapers, as an offline promotion channel, have slower updates, lower transmission efficiency, and a fixed audience. The Jing’an Daily has published a total of 12 news reports related to the 15-minute or fifteen-minute community life circle. Since Jing’an Daily is issued weekly, it is clear that the 15-minute community life circle is not a primary focus of its promotion efforts.

## 4. Analysis of Policy Communication

### Issues

#### 4.1 Unclear Promotion Goals

Each type of public account has its target audience. The “Shanghai Jing’an” account targets all residents and workers in Jing’an District. The committee and bureau accounts serve as promotional platforms for various government departments. The street public accounts connect with the local population in Jing’an District, and the key institution accounts expand coverage to more life scenarios. Currently, while the content on these accounts ensures targeting, it lacks balance in readability. The government aims to create multifunctional communities through the 15-minute community life circle, accommodating more scenarios and alleviating a series of issues caused by the tidal usage of time and space resources across the city. To achieve this, it is essential to encourage community residents to move around in various public spaces [10]. Jing’an District has a large population with a wide age

distribution. If the government's promotional efforts fail to tailor their approach to different demographic groups, community facilities may not align with the needs of the target audience. In this project, many facilities, such as rental housing and administrative services, are in high demand among young people, whose primary source of information is online platforms. Therefore, the writing style of WeChat articles should be more oriented toward young people. As global youth political participation declines, government communication channels need to proactively engage with young people to ensure effective and meaningful interaction [11].

### **4.2 Insufficient Relevance Between Promotional Content and Residents' Lives**

Although Jing'an District's WeChat platform has produced a large amount of content, articles related to the 15-minute community life circle account for a very small proportion. This reflects the lack of continuous and systematic promotion of the 15-minute community life circle, making it difficult for users to encode and store the information in their long-term memory. Especially the achievement display articles, although the most numerous, present content in a highly official manner, making it challenging for users to empathize and actively interpret the content. Government communication articles, often focused on party supervision and suggestions, have the lowest readership and interaction rates, indicating that ordinary residents have little interest in this type of content. The failure to effectively convey information closely related to residents' lives impacts the overall depth of policy communication. In general, the low relevance of the articles to daily life leads to insufficient readership and interaction, failing to effectively attract residents' attention and participation.

### **4.3 Poor Utilization of the Weibo Platform**

There are significant flaws in Jing'an District's new media setup on the Weibo platform. Weibo is an important social media platform with stronger anonymity and lower interaction costs, which can better help the government identify and respond to public needs. However, the account setup on Weibo in Jing'an District is incomplete, and the content published has not been adjusted to suit Weibo's reading habits, merely reposting content from WeChat [12]. This single method of dissemination results in very low interaction on the Weibo platform, negatively affecting the effectiveness of policy communication.

### **4.4 Mismatch Between Content and Platform Characteristics**

Out of 137 articles, 75 are achievement reports, making the content monotonous and reinforcing the serious image of government media, which diminishes audience interest

in government communication. The 15-minute community life circle should be branded as a beneficial initiative and a promotional card for the government. It requires tailored promotion based on the characteristics of different platforms to better capture the attention of citizens [13]. Currently, citizens' awareness of the 15-minute community life circle is too limited and one-sided. The excessive focus on achievement display articles makes it difficult for citizens to develop positive emotions toward the project.

### **4.5 Ineffective Distribution of Attention Resources**

After analysis, WeChat public accounts serve as the primary platforms for streets, committees, bureaus, and key institutions to publish original articles. On the other hand, Weibo and the Shanghai Jing'an District People's Government media platforms mainly repost content from various integrated media and newspapers. In today's information-overloaded environment, users face challenges in interpreting vast amounts of information, leading to scattered attention. The proliferation of social media has made information dissemination faster and broader, but it has also increased the difficulty for users to process information [14].

### **4.6 Neglect of Short Video Platforms and New Media Channels**

In today's era of fragmented information, with the rise of short video platforms, Jing'an District's promotion on emerging media channels is noticeably insufficient. According to QuestMobile TRUTH data, on the Douyin platform, 48% of users are aged 35 and below, and 52% are aged 36 and above, indicating cross-generational influence. Effectively utilizing these platforms could more effectively promote the 15-minute community life circle concept, increasing policy awareness and acceptance.

## **5. Efficiency Issues of Offline Promotion**

As one of the important offline promotion channels in Jing'an District, the Jing'an Daily is published only once a week, and the number of news articles related to the 15-minute community life circle is minimal. This indicates that the promotion of this policy in traditional media needs to be strengthened. The low frequency of newspaper updates and its limited dissemination efficiency make it difficult to meet the demands of modern information dissemination.

## **6. Policy Communication Suggestions**

Currently, there is a problem of excessive content without a clear focus in policy communication. To ensure that the

15-minute community life circle policy truly reaches residents, it is crucial to clarify the communication goals. It is recommended to emphasize the core value of the policy in communications—how it improves residents' lives and brings practical benefits to different groups. This goal-oriented communication strategy helps guide residents to pay attention to and participate in the practical application of the policy.

### **6.1 Strengthen Goal-oriented and Optimize Communication Strategies**

Currently, there is a problem of excessive content without a clear focus in policy communication. To ensure that the 15-minute community life circle policy truly reaches residents, it is crucial to clarify the communication goals. It is recommended to emphasize the core value of the policy in communications—how it improves residents' lives and brings practical benefits to different groups. This goal-oriented communication strategy helps guide residents to pay attention to and participate in the practical application of the policy.

### **6.2 Establishing the 15-Minute Community Life Circle as an Online Branding Effort**

As a long-term community construction project involving resident participation, its promotion should be systematic, logical, and narrative, with a focus on building a sense of citizen engagement. For example, during the project consultation phase, an online feedback channel could be opened, and a series of introductions to the 15-minute life circle facilities within the community could be provided, so that citizens no longer perceive the project as fragmented. Additionally, a dedicated 15-minute community life circle column could be launched on the “Shanghai Jing'an” WeChat public account. This would increase daily exposure and allow for the collection of historical articles for easy reference.

### **6.3 Enhancing Precision Targeting and Differentiated Communication for Specific Groups**

Currently, policy promotion suffers from unclear targeting. Although the target audiences of various public accounts are clearly defined, the content has not been differentiated based on the needs of different groups. It is recommended to tailor the communication content according to the target group or activity. For example, to attract the attention of young people and office workers, the use of youthful language, images, and interactive methods should be emphasized. For different residents' needs, create targeted content, such as activity notifications and convenience facility introductions for young groups, and health and community services for middle-aged and elderly groups.

### **6.4 Enhancing Content Relevance to Foster Public Resonance**

Policy communication content needs to be more closely related to residents' daily lives. Therefore, the communication content should employ more storytelling and interactive expressions, showcasing real-life application scenarios to stimulate residents' interest and resonance. By illustrating actual resident experiences and life changes, the 15-minute community life circle's practical effects can be highlighted, allowing residents to see the tangible benefits brought by the policy.

### **6.5 Optimizing Communication Channels to Enhance Interaction and Coverage**

Although online platforms are the main channels for promoting this policy, the communication results are not ideal. While optimizing the content of online platforms, it is also necessary to develop new communication channels, such as short video platforms. The rapid rise of short video platforms indicates that residents are more likely to accept and spread concise, visually impactful content. Therefore, more investment should be made in short videos and other new media channels, creating more life-oriented content to expand the policy's influence and coverage.

### **6.6 Increasing the Diversity and Frequency of Offline Promotion Channels**

Jing'an District has a significant elderly population that cannot be effectively reached through online policy promotion. To address this, the frequency and coverage of offline promotion should be increased, such as through community events, flyers, posters, and other methods, to ensure more residents are informed about the 15-minute community life circle policy.

### **6.7 Valuing Public Feedback to Promote Continuous Policy Improvement**

In the process of communication, it is not only important to convey policy information but also to value public feedback and opinions. This can be collected through online interactions and by directly listening to residents during community events. By analyzing public feedback, the government can adjust the communication strategy and content in a timely manner, ensuring continuous improvement and optimization of policy communication. This approach will better serve the community and its residents.

## **7. Conclusions**

Shanghai's 15-minute community life circle policy aims to improve residents' quality of life by optimizing community service facilities, enhancing the living environment,

and promoting social interactions. The effectiveness and coverage of policy information dissemination are crucial in the policy's implementation and promotion. Currently, there are issues such as limited information transmission channels, insufficient coverage, and low resident awareness and participation in the policy.

The dissemination of the 15-minute community life circle policy is logically connected to the policy's implementation. First, by diversifying and enhancing the effectiveness of information dissemination channels, policy awareness and resident participation can be improved, thereby enhancing policy implementation. The continuity of policy information dissemination and the establishment of a feedback mechanism are essential guarantees for the smooth and sustainable advancement of the policy.

Enhancing the diversity of policy information dissemination, strengthening residents' policy awareness and participation, and establishing a continuous feedback mechanism are key to the successful implementation of the 15-minute community life circle policy. Through these efforts, Shanghai can further optimize community services, improve residents' quality of life, and achieve sustainable community development.

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