

Coping Strategies of Network Nationalism Under Major Emergencies

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ABSTRACT

Major emergencies will trigger social thoughts. Given the pandemic this year, network nationalism ushered in a booming phase. Rational nationalism can promote national consensus, and stimulate the Chinese nation's sense of community. However, radical development also happens to network nationalism, and as it mixes with all types of social thoughts, impacts can be incurred to the mainstream ideology of socialism. It's essential to strengthen the guidance of public opinions online, establish law-based network, carry out media quality education for the youth online, etc., and promote network nationalism to develop rationally.

Keywords: *Major emergencies, network nationalism, radical nationalism, and law-based network construction*

1. INTRODUCTION

The value reflected by various social thoughts incurred upon major emergencies can always confuse the public, and intensify the crisis of identity for the mainstream ideology, so does the pandemic. Comparing the attitude and achievements made by all countries across the globe in the face of the pandemic, the huge victory of China over the pandemic has no doubt further affirmed the sense of national identity, which can be reflected by the emotions expressed by Chinese netizens online. With the internet, people are empowered with a wider right of speech, and based on the direct expression and virtual space of the network, it provides technical support to express nationalism, and we have seen an increasing growth in network nationalism since the pandemic this year. Nationalism serves as a "double-bladed sword", and as economics, policy, culture and technology are developing on a constant basis, network nationalism will gradually be empowered with new connotations of the era, and it is the logical necessity to take an active lead and remove the sundries, so that the network nationalism can promote national consensus.

2. PRESENTATION OF NETWORK NATIONALISM UNDER THE PANDEMIC

Internet is characterized by concealment and latency, and as netizens are awakening their subject consciousness, the internet becomes a place gathering various thoughts. Given the differentiation in the anti-pandemic achievements between China and America, the highly effective anti-pandemic achievements have arouse strong national pride and the sense of national identity, and lots of

netizens took this opportunity to express their personal appeals and feelings, promoting new expression characteristics of nationalism on the internet.

2.1. New Audiences for the Transmission of Network Nationalism

Network can stimulate the subjectivity of the user deeply, and netizens often start with their personal experience during the pandemic, and then express their thoughts online, while advocating Chinese development system, roads and modes under the booming network nationalism background, making the transmission of nationalism wider. Nationalism-inclined personnel transmitting on the internet showed new characteristics during the pandemic: As online teaching was implemented during the pandemic, lots of young students centered on school students and high graduates become the main force to transmit nationalism, but they have less social experience^[1]; Meanwhile, young netizens who are fond of expressing feelings are short of political sensitivity and corresponding knowledge reserves. In the face of huge network information about the pandemic, they can easily get anxious, terrified, resistant and facetious. They get used to handling group conflicts with group actions, in terms of different groups with sharp opinions. Generally, they prefer radical opinions, and often deny others arbitrarily, abuse and taunt others, making nationalism more radical.

2.2. Sharp Increase in Economic and Political Topics

The national people experienced about two months of abnormal life during the pandemic prevention and control, so it's unavoidable for them to have all kinds of emotions, and the internet has therefore become one of the main channels for them to express their feelings. A constant increase has been observed in the number of infected people in America, and with the political turmoil incurred by Freud Event, economic recovery in America is facing huge difficulties, and the unemployment of workers is also getting worse[2]. Given these phenomena, partial radical nationalist thought that, in the trade war between China and America, China should stay out of the world trade system, close the gate to isolate the virus and develop economics by itself, to prevent the pandemic, and "trade protectionism is essential". Meanwhile, bellicose complex started online, and netizens were in constant discussion about the war via various public forums, including Beijing Guoan Tieba, and the topics can cover the unification of Taiwan by force, conquer of the Southeast Asia, which are inconsistent with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in China, and can be easily used by people spreading "China Threat Theory" internationally.

2.3. Mix of Nationalism with Various Social Thoughts

We are now experiencing the major strategic opportunity phase of development, and the integration of social class since the reform and opening-up as well as the challenges of the pandemic have caused subtle changes in the ideology of our country, and as nationalism thoughts are highly promoted during the pandemic, they are also blended with other social thoughts, and showed a new trend of development. Nationalism and populism are intertwined during the pandemic^[3], and nationalists should mobilize with populism, while populists are pleased to label themselves with "patriotism", showing anti-elitism, and anti-intellectualism. These irrational emotions are constantly activated, impacting the mainstream ideology and the current system. Based on new media platforms, nationalism was blended with liberalism, nihilism and other thoughts fast, making these social thoughts more radical. Network nationalism includes plain patriotism thoughts, so narrow, radical and irrational nationalism factors can be easily mixed, and trigger emotional and radical characteristics based on the internet.

3. GAIN AND LOSS OF NETWORK NATIONALISM UNDER THE PANDEMIC

As a "double-bladed sword", rational nationalism can promote national consensus, stimulate the Chinese nation's sense of community. During the pandemic, people of all ethnic groups of the country have fought together, which

can be said as one of the reflections of rational nationalism. However, it should be noticed that, without guidance, nationalism will develop radically, and even become fascism[4], and will cause severe damages to the transmission of socialism mainstream ideology and the construction of socialism.

3.1. Rational Nationalism can Solve Conflicts during the Pandemic

As China has won a periodic victory over the pandemic, some people have strengthened their national confidence, and promoted the rise of nationalism with new characteristics of the era. First of all, nationalism is essential to cope with the hegemonism of America. Western countries led by America have stigmatized COVID-19 during the pandemic, and adopted a series of measures to discriminate Chinese and condemn Chinese protests, in an attempt to slander and provoke China. In that case, nationalism is the emotional counterattack for American behaviors. In addition, nationalism can also ease conflicts inside Chinese society during the pandemic. People in China have done their best to control the spread of the pandemic at all costs, but in partial regions, there are still excessive pandemic prevention and control, delayed release of information and operational difficulties in enterprises. All these have made people feel confused, but nationalism can help conclude national consensus and solve conflicts based on mainstream values. The objection against fawning on foreign powers and opposing everything foreign as well as solidarity reflected by nationalism during the pandemic can not only promote the Chinese position in the world and the national consensus, but also solve social conflicts at certain extent and make the society more peaceful and stable.

3.2. Radical Network Nationalism Spreads National Anxiety and can Cause Social Panic

Under the influence of the pandemic, the western hegemonism and the trade war, radical nationalism rose again, showing the characteristics of lower populism, i.e., "arrogant, exclusive, blind and bellicose". According to statistics, after differentiations are found in the anti-pandemic achievements between China and America, "China is a winner, while America is a loser" has become popular throughout the internet. Some people exaggerated the domestic anti-pandemic achievements, and teased foreign countries for "failing to copy homework"; Some people intended to belittle other countries' endeavors made in pandemic prevention and control, made a fuss about the weakness of other countries in pandemic prevention and control, to meet their "national pride"; Some people are passionate and bellicose, hoping to "establish their position as a world leader" during the pandemic by point out that China should prepare for a multinational war, and build up troops abroad. These opinions go against the era, but win

responses on the internet, making the network group centered on young people who are less knowledgeable and weak in identification feel confused. In addition, these opinions are even against the community with shared future for mankind advocated by our country.

4. SUPERVISING COUNTERMEASURES FOR PUBLIC OPINIONS ABOUT NETWORK NATIONALISM

Given all aspects of influence at home and abroad during the pandemic, network nationalism in China started another craze, showing the affirmation on the pride for "standing up, getting richer and becoming stronger". In addition, this is also a folk response to international voices. In short, nationalism should draw on the advantages and avoid disadvantages, and exert its role in building a community with a shared future for mankind; otherwise, nationalism will damage the mainstream value of socialism recklessly.

4.1. Strengthening the Guidance for Public Opinions

With the sudden outbreak of the pandemic, a huge challenge was posed to our governance system and capacity. Although we rank top in pandemic prevention and control, quite a few people were affected by western opinions in the early phase of the pandemic, and had an unrealistic cognition on Chinese government, so in case of failing to provide guidance properly, this may make the government less credible, and cause radical nationalism events. In that case, it's essential to give full play to the leading role of party media in public opinions, focus on the approaches for network transmission, make major data about the pandemic more transparent and open, ensure that information can be released timely and fast via standard and professional platforms, interpret pandemic prevention and control policies based on actual conditions, timely entrust authoritative media to refute a rumor, change the officially narrative style of the party media, especially the new media, hold a sincere attitude, assume responsibilities, reflect humanistic care, exert the due media effect of government affair videos, let netizens know about the pandemic prevention and control process and policies, and avoid the alternation of nationalism incurred by unsmooth information and communication.

4.2. Assurance can be made by Strengthening the Construction of the Legal System of Network

To focus on network nationalism, we should not only focus on dredging the guidance of public opinions, but also using the legal system to prevent illegal approaches.

Network gathers all types of social thoughts, and instructed by western hostile forces, some netizens have slandered China on the internet recklessly, and released many illegal opinions against the government, in terms of the pandemic prevention and control policies. In case that such phenomena are ignored, nationalism will face lesion and get more radical. Therefore, we should adhere to the ten-word policy of "peace, security, openness, cooperation and orderliness" advocated in *Cyberspace Security Strategy*, and make cyberspace more legal. It's also requested to improve corresponding laws and regulations about network rumors, especially about the pandemic, improve the law enforcement, and eliminate "secondary disasters" incurred by network rumors. Relevant responsible platforms should also strengthen the review and correction mechanism for the release of opinions via the platform, strengthen big data algorithm, and cooperate relevant departments to find and punish illegal messages and opinions. The construction of legal network should give full play to the roles of the government and all types of network subjects, integrate patriotism and other spirits into nationalism, and create a benign network atmosphere for promoting social consensus and strengthening four confidences.

4.3. Strengthening the Education of Young Netizens about Network Media

Media quality refers to the comprehensive capacity of an individual to interpret, criticize and make use of media information resources[5]. Young netizens are the main audiences of nationalism, but they cannot master network information accurately, and can act offensively under the impact of radical opinions during the pandemic, so it's essential to cultivate the media quality of these people. On one hand, media quality education courses should be opened by grades in primary schools, middle schools and high schools respectively, while the government publicity institutions should also set up corresponding courses based on new media, and the internet industry should also improve their user access threshold for the education of media quality, for instance, users of Bilibili website cannot release their opinions, in case of failing to pass the test centered on media quality. On the other hand, media quality should be strengthened on the basis of the education about relevant laws and regulations, so that the educated can set up a highline in mind. It's essential to lead the youth online, strengthen the legal education of the network, and cultivate the legal thoughts of internet. Active measures should be taken to enlighten network users' master consciousness, encourage them to condemn wrong thoughts and opinions actively, and report illegal videos and comments bravely.

5. CONCLUSION

The impact of COVID-19 can cover all aspects, and special attention should be paid to the nationalism thoughts representing plain patriotism of vast netizens during the pandemic. Rational nationalism can enhance solidarity and national confidence, and make people experience the governance in China, and condemn absurd opinions of the west. However, as nationalism audiences are getting younger and less aimlessly, nationalism is facing a risk of lesion. In that case, the government should strengthen the lead and communication of public opinions, avoid intensification and misunderstanding incurred by unsmooth information, focus on legislation, and promote network nationalism develop rationally by focusing on the radical nationalism incurred by difficulties in law enforcement online and strengthening media quality education for youth online.

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