Influences, and Optimization Paths of Online Nationalism in the Era of Self-Media

Based on the Agenda of the Xiaoguo HOUSE Incident

Yijuan Huang [1,*], Xuying Zhang [2]

[1]College of International Law and Sociology, Sichuan International Studies University
[2] School of Journalism and Communication, Sichuan International Studies University
*16623427150@163.com

Abstract. The incident involving the comedian HOUSE (Haoshi Li) under Shanghai Xiaoguo Culture Media Co., Ltd. sparked a concentrated discussion on various online platforms due to his anti-national views during a performance. The rap-id emergence and intense criticism of online nationalism during the incident significantly influenced social sentiment and governmental policy-making. This incident has substantial real-world implications, and its operating paths, impacts, and related optimization methods must be studied. By reviewing and quantitatively analyzing the user comments related to the "Xiaoguo HOUSE" incident, this research taking the Likert scale as the methodology to analyze the sentiment, demonstrating that online nationalism period explosive, viral, and uncritical characteristics. Understanding the transformation of online na-tionalism can help improve the circulation of public opinion dissemination and improve the government's perceptual abilities while addressing issues such as operating the social environment healthily and implementing systematical le-gal framework to establish the regular order of public opinion, which is ex-tremely essential.

Keywords: Internet nationalism, self-media platforms, Xiaoguo HOUSE incident, Likert scale.

1   Introduction

Nationalism is a political identity centered on ethnic identification, involving an entire public period including expressions of opinions, comprehension of interests, and policy implementation, which could directly form nationalized identity-based pressure groups in politics. With the advancement of information technology, the internet has become a timely, convenient, and mass platform, reshaping traditional nationalism into online nationalism with stronger propagation and social impact.[1] The anti-nationalist views from HOUSE, rapidly leading to initial individual online nationalism and evolving into a power of social pressure that influenced govern-ment decisions, ultimately resolving the incident. By reviewing the agenda and analyzing the specific case, we can construct the developmental process of the Xiaoguo HOUSE incident. Utilizing data collection

and Likert scale analysis, we assess the online sentiment related to the incident to understand the impacts of online nationalism in the self-media era and explore methods to optimize the whole mechanism.

2 Current Situation

2.1 Incident Description

On May 13, 2023, comedian HOUSE made inappropriate symbolic metaphors related to the Chinese People's Liberation Army in a talk show. After a netizen exposed this behavior and shared it on various online platforms, it sparked anger among internet users, thus giving rise to the incident. As the incident unfolded, prominent online bloggers such as Tian Haidan and internet commentators like Xijin Hu and Zhengping Jun gathered public sentiment, forming a core topic in online social opinion. They successfully push the information to the official level, leading to the government's final statement and influencing the incident's address. The Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism eventually investigated the Media Ltd and HOUSE, forcing the interdiction of HOUSE and approx. 14.679m's fine of company. Online nationalism could be the main diver of the incident's resolution, which has a rapid and preliminary structure from the public opinion gathering to official policy-making

2.2 Incident Evaluation

The relevant hot search topics related to the HOUSE incident, selecting repre-sentative and critical issues for data collection and analysis, including reading and discussion frequencies, as well as the number of readers were collected. By utiliz-ing Python to crawl the user comments under different topics on Weibo, Likert scale was picked for sentiment analysis.[2] Next, the evaluation of sentiment in different stages was processed by SPSS, in order to define the preliminary features and developmental tendencies of online sentiment.
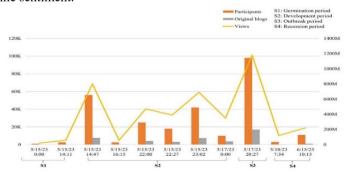

Fig. 1. Key Related Topics and Data (As of July 19, 2023)

Total two reading heights were illustrated in the incident, peaking at highest 1.2 billion, where the main topics were respectively Xiaoguo indefinitely suspends HOUSE's

performing activities and HOUSE is under police investigation (Figure 1). Using the official government notification as a marker, the incident can be di-vided into four pe-riods based on the popularity of related topics at different times: the inception period, development period, outbreak period, and decline period. The inception period (May 13rd, 2023, 21:54 - May 15th, 2023, 14:47) began with netizens posting on Weibo im-mediately after that night's performance. The development period (May 15th, 2023, 14:47 - May 17th, 2023, 20:27) saw participa-tion from various media and internet ce-lebrities. The outbreak period (May 17th, 2023, 20:27 - May 18, 2023, 7:34) occurred with the police investigation of HOUSE. Subsequently, the decline period (May 18th, 2023 7:34 - June 15, 2023 10:15) followed the HOUSE incident.

During these different stages, netizens' sentiments towards the HOUSE incident also exhibited distinct differences. Five different sentiments were defined for analysis: 1 represents support for HOUSE and the expression of extreme opinions against the gov-ernment; 2 represents support for HOUSE, believing it was unintentional, and punish-ing HOUSE is an exaggerated act; 3 represents neutrality; 4 represents the belief that HOUSE's actions were wrong, and his remarks were out-side social norms and im-proper; 5 represents not only condemning HOUSE but also speculating and accusing related companies, regions, backgrounds in a divergent manner. 0 represents comments that are unrelated to the content of the Weibo post. These five sentiments were used to quantify netizens' comments and design the Likert scale. By averaging the data from the Likert scale, the following statistical chart was obtained (Figure 2) (Note: Since the comments of netizens in the incep-tion period have been hidden, their comments were not included in the average analysis):

Statistics		Sina's report on proceedings	Tweet of Z. JUN	Blog from Tian	Tweet of People's Daily	Blogger's Audio Transcription	Official Announcement (Notice)
N	Valid	129	129	130	136	109	139
	Missing	10	10	9	3	30	0
Mean		2.97	3.10	3.18	3.78	3.36	3.73

Fig. 2. Statistics

To conduct a single-sample t-test correlation analysis, we need to have the data with the mean sentiment values for each relevant event and the sentiment values themselves. Additionally, we need the data for the comments under the Weibo post from Sina En-tertainment related to HOUSE's apology and suspension and their corresponding senti-ment values for tonality 2 and tonality 3 (Figure 3).

Sina's report on proceedings	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Test Value = 2	6.120	128	0.000	0.969	0.66	1.28
Test Value = 3	-0.196	128	0.845	-0.031	-0.34	0.28

Fig. 3. One-sample Test

Assuming a significance level of 0.01, the P-values indicate that the comments from netizens under Sina Entertainment's Weibo post about HOUSE's apology and suspension tend to be more neutral. The same analysis was conducted for the comments under other Weibo posts as well (Figure 4).

One-Sample Test							
	Test Value	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Tweet of Z.	2	7.202	128	0	1.101	0.8	1.4
JUN	3	0.659	128	0.511	0.101	-0.2	0.4
Blog from	2	8.45	129	0	1.185	0.91	1.46
Tian	3	1.317	129	0.19	0.185	-0.09	0.46
Tweet of	2	19.219	135	0	1.779	1.6	1.96
People's Daily	3	8.418	135	0	0.779	0.6	0.96
Blogger's	2	12.677	108	0	1.358	1.15	1.57
Audio Transcription	3	3.341	108	0.001	0.358	0.15	0.57
Official	2	18.463	138	0	1.734	1.55	1.92
Announcement (Notice)	3	7.814	138	0	0.734	0.55	0.92

Fig. 4. One-sample Test

It can be observed that in the Weibo comments of Zhengping Jun and blogger Tian Haidan regarding the HOUSE incident, netizens' attitudes tend to be neutral. On the other hand, under the Weibo post by People's Daily about HOUSE offending the Gov., netizens' comments lean towards viewing HOUSE's behavior as deviating from social norms and making inappropriate statements. As for the Weibo posts by Beijing Foodie Diary reposting HOUSE's performance recording and the Weibo posts by the Official Account of Beijing Chaoyang PSB announcing HOUSE being investigated by the police, the netizens' attitudes appear unclear.

The results obtained from the data analysis align well with the different stages of the HOUSE incident's development and outbreak. Netizens' understanding of the HOUSE incident gradually shifted from a neutral standpoint, guided by major me-dia outlets and internet celebrities, towards a perception that HOUSE's behavior was deviating from social norms and his statements were inappropriate. As the discussions intensified during the outbreak period, netizens' attitudes became more divided, oscillating between neutral and opposing viewpoints towards HOUSE.

3   Analysis of Nationals

The HOUSE incident, within a short time, netizens engaged in extensive discussions, demonstrating the rapid spread and dissemination of online nationalism. Based on time and the degree of public participation, the incident can be divided into the inception period, development period, outbreak period, and decline period.

a. Inception Period: On 13th May, when HOUSE made improper remarks during the performance, words like "inappropriate," "defamation," and "offense" were commonly used by netizens to express their viewpoints. However, at the same time, some

netizens expressed a more indifferent attitude. Overall, the public displayed a neutral and scattered ap-proach during this period.

b. Development Period: On 15th May, with the West War Zone Army's statement as a catalyst, internet celebrities like Tian Haidan, Zhengping Jun and official media like People's Daily joined in, leading to a unified sentiment among netizens. During this period, the discussions primarily focused on concepts like "positive values" and "moral boundaries", representing national integrity, and criticizing HOUSE. The public sentiment displayed consistency and convergence, laying the groundwork for the out-break period.

c. Outbreak Period: As the discussions by netizens intensified, on 17th May, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism officially investigated and penalized relevant in-volved companies and HOUSE. The intervention of official authorities re-sulted in a more directive and influential sentiment. The government sent a message, serving as a warning for public performers and affirming the public's awareness of su-per-vision and norms.

d. Decline Period: With official intervention, the Xiaoguo HOUSE incident was resolved reasonably and effectively. Around 15th June, the China-Japan Youth Ex-change Center Cen-tury Theater, where HOUSE performed, was fined 100,000 yuan for failing to take necessary measures to stop the prohibited performance and for not reporting the incident to the relevant authorities. This stage was still dominated by of-ficial in-tervention, with the primary targets of action being the affiliated participants of the HOUSE incident. Subsequently, a series of laws and regulations were gradually improved, such as the enhancement of relevant provisions in the "Public Security Ad-ministration Punishments Law of the People's Republic of China" and the "Regulations on the Management of Commercial Performances," demonstrating a timely and fact-based approach to handling the situation.

4   Impacts

4.1   The Timeliness of Nationalism Transformation

In the HOUSE incident, netizens quickly disseminated information through self-media platforms, triggering widespread public attention and discussions and demonstrating the explosive nature of self-media propagation. This form of dis-semination allowed the public to express their viewpoints more conveniently and freely, accelerating the occurrence of nationalism. Even relatively minor issues can be quickly perceived and responded to by the self-media, providing the government with better perceptiveness to adapt to the development of public opinion, interests, and expressions, opening up new positive paths.

4.2   Visualization of Emotional Cohesion

During the HOUSE incident, netizens expressed their anger and dissatisfaction with inappropriate remarks widely on the internet, forming a strong public senti-ment,

demonstrating the power of the public's supervisory authority. With guidance from official media and celebrities, the public's understanding of the incident be-came more apparent, with their expressions becoming more pronounced compared to the inception period. This showcased the role of self-media platforms in con-solidating emotions and strength. This visualization helped establish a complete network democratic supervision mechanism to ensure the effective resolution of controversial incidents.[3]

5   Conclusion

Starting from HOUSE's inappropriate remarks in a talk show, this incident was analyzed through retrospective and quantitative methods, examining the evolution of public opinion from inception, development, outbreak, and decline stages. The positive impact of online public opinion on nationalism during the self-media era was demonstrated, along with the negative consequences, such as adverse emotional guidance, rumors' spread, and cyberbullying.[4] The magnitude of online nationalist sentiment forms pressure groups, so social relief and policy assistance are necessary. On the one hand, the authorities can establish comprehensive online public opinion management regulations. These regulations provide administrative legitimacy and can regulate disordered or disordered online public opinion, effectively limit the opportunistic behaviors of non-official political entities, eliminate public opinion noise, and optimize the efficiency and accuracy of communication. On the other hand, citizens, as the smallest political unit, exhibit a dispersed and complex nature, making it difficult to apply universal standards to regulate them.[5] Therefore, strengthening citizens' education in quality, general knowledge, and legal awareness, and maximizing the convenience of online democracy, is essential. In the future, further research should delve into the motivations behind citizens' participation in public opinion discussions, establish ideal models, and conduct structural hierarchy analyses to elucidate the operating mechanisms of the democratic public opinion system.[6]

References

1. Peishan Zhao. (2022). Research on the Network Nationalism Discourse in Bilibili's "Awaken Era" Danmu. Shandong Normal University, pp. 1-3.
2. Hongwei Zhan, Baotao Wei. (2021, February). Expressions of Chinese Youth's Nationalism Discourse from the Perspective of China-US Trade Dispute: An Analysis of Related Videos on Bilibili's "News Broadcast" about China-US Trade Dispute. Youth Studies in China, pp. 43-51.
3. Zaidong Qin, Li Tao. (2023). Research on China's Network Nationalism: Current Status and Prospects. Hubei Social Sciences, No. 435(03):38-47.
4. Fangying Li. (2021). Network Nationalism in Cross-Cultural Communication: A Study of Li Ziqi's "Kimchi Dispute." News and Cultural Construction, No. 24(06):160-161.
5. Liting Zheng. (2020). Analysis of Network Nationalism Incidents on social media. Lanzhou University, pp. 28-32.

6. Xiaowen Ding. (2019). Analysis and Guiding Strategies of China's Network Nationalism Development: From "Online Angry Youth" to "Self-Claimed Warriors" and "Little Pink." Beijing Youth Studies, No. 28(03):53-60.