

Research on Local Government Online Public Opinion Crisis Response

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Abstract: With the continuous development of network information technology, the number of cyber public opinion crisis events has been increasing. The characteristics of cyber public opinion crisis events such as universal concern, ultra-geographical restriction, wide influence, and destructive impact have put forward higher requirements for the government as an important main body of cyber public opinion crisis response. However, due to the lack of cooperation among the government, media, non-profit organizations and citizens in the process of responding to the special event of online public opinion crisis, there are still deficiencies in the process of responding to online public opinion crisis by local governments, and local governments are not able to solve the online public opinion crisis events effectively and quickly.

Keywords: Network public opinion, Public opinion crisis, Local government, Response to countermeasures

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the main channels for the dissemination of public opinion have changed from traditional newspapers, magazines and television to Internet channels such as microblogs, WeChat, Shutterbugs and Shakeology, and Internet public opinion has also occupied an extremely important position in social opinion. Therefore, the Internet has become a new position for people to express their opinions, and the Internet has provided a gathering place for ideological and cultural information, and has also contributed to the continuous "amplification" of social opinions, and Internet public opinion has become something that cannot be ignored by the government in its management. On the one hand, the government can collect citizens' opinions and attitudes more quickly and conveniently from the Internet channels to provide better services for citizens; on the other hand, the diversified, rapid and decentralized characteristics of the Internet media make it difficult to monitor the Internet information, which leads to the difficulty in distinguishing the truth of the Internet information from the falsehood, the rise of Internet rumors and the emergence of the Internet public opinion crisis.

2. Challenges of Local Government Online Public Opinion Crisis Response

The rapid development of the Internet has made it possible for more people to enter cyberspace, which, while facilitating people's lives, has also brought hidden dangers. First of all, the sinking of cyberspace makes its entry threshold extremely low, which leads to the rise of the trend of following the crowd and blindly following without distinguishing the truth from the falsehood; secondly, rumors and cyber-violence brought about by the low threshold of the network are also increasing the cost of the government's management, and the price of rumor dissemination is extremely low, while rumor clarification needs to spend a certain amount of time and cost; thirdly, the development of online self-media is crowding out the space of the traditional media, and also dissolving the discourse power of the mainstream media, thus leading to the marginalization of the mainstream ideology. Third, the development of online self-media is crowding out the space of traditional media, and is also dissolving the discourse power of mainstream media, which in turn leads to the marginalization of mainstream ideology.

2.1 Citizen level

2.1.1 The scale of Internet users is expanding

Today, Internet penetration is increasing, the overall size of Internet users continues to grow, and the threshold of entry into cyberspace is being lowered year by year. The expanding scale of Internet users enables more people to participate in the process of dealing with emergencies. Citizens change from the traditional passive acceptance of information to the active collection of information, and the subject-object boundary of information dissemination is blurred, so that citizens are both disseminators and receivers [1]. However, in front of the huge amount of information wrapped in the network, netizens do not have the ability to recognize the truth and falsehood. Comments on information that are not recognized as true or false and mixed with tendencies will easily resonate within their own small circles, thus expanding the scope of dissemination and triggering online public opinion.

The group polarization of Internet users is also increasing, in which the emotions of individuals in the group will be more intense and their behaviors will be more stubborn. There is a serious herd phenomenon in the network society, and the existence of the information cocoon will lead to the gathering of netizens holding the same viewpoints, and realize efficient communication in the community, while there are obstacles to the communication between communities, and ultimately form an extreme viewpoint.

2.1.2 Online Opinion Leaders Steer the Course of Public Opinion

Online opinion leaders are one of the forces that cannot be ignored in the process of online public opinion dissemination, and they play the role of "megaphone and wind vane" in the process of dissemination, spreading the information to a wider public. According to the "Spiral of Silence Theory", the voice of the side with a large number of supporters will become louder and louder, while the other side will be the opposite. Online opinion leaders play a great role in the evolution of online public opinion. The opinion of an opinion leader will pre-dispose netizens to share his or her viewpoints, and when the official government news is sent out, once it is inconsistent with the opinion leader's, some netizens will be skeptical and question the government's news, which may even shake the government's credibility.

2.2 Media level

On the one hand, the media can help the government expand the coverage of information so that more members of the public can get authoritative information, reduce the harm of rumors, and weaken the destructiveness of online public opinion crisis events; on the other hand, the media can expand the scope of dissemination of information about online public opinion crisis events and accelerate the evolution of online public opinion crisis events [2]. Unlike the official media, the commercial media is actually a profit-oriented enterprise, and its goal is to make the most profit, which leads some media to deliberately distort the facts or act as a "headline party" in order to pursue profit and gain eyeballs. To gain eyeballs. If the media reports contradict the information announced by the government, netizens will doubt the truthfulness of the government's public information and suspect that the government is intentionally concealing part of the facts, thus undermining the government's authority and hindering the government's handling of online public opinion crises.

2.3 Social organization level

First, non-profit organizations lack long-term cooperation with the government. As one of the main bodies of coordinated governance, non-profit organizations should play to their strengths and make up for the shortcomings of a single government body in responding to online public opinion crises. However, in practice, local governments lack long-term coordination and cooperation with nonprofit organizations, and when facing online public opinion crisis events, nonprofit organizations cannot play their due roles, the crisis governance pattern is chaotic, and multiple governance subjects cannot effectively collaborate to achieve complementary resources and advantages.

Secondly, special interest groups contribute to the problem. Many interest groups participate in public opinion incidents in the name of justice, but in fact they exaggerate the seriousness of the incidents in order to gain fame for themselves or to be utilized by forces outside the country. Some interest groups participate in online public opinion incidents in order to gain more benefits, and they deliberately exaggerate the incidents in order to gain more fame in them.

3. Problems in Local Government's Response to Online Public Opinion Crisis

3.1 Inadequate grasp of the law of evolution of public opinion

An online public opinion crisis can be categorized into a gestation period, an outbreak period, and a resolution period according to the order of development of the matter. The problems faced by the government are different at different stages, and the government has to monitor the development of online public opinion and take different measures at different stages to minimize the influence of online public opinion so as to prevent it from evolving into a crisis of online public opinion. However, in practice, the government does not have a good grasp of the law of public opinion evolution, cannot guide the development of online public opinion based on real-time information, and fails to monitor the evolution of public opinion by professional means. As a result, the actions taken by the government during the evolution of online public opinion not only failed to calm down the online public opinion, but also made the public disappointed with the government.

3.2 Inadequate capacity to handle public opinion

First, the local government to deal with public opinion means rough and simple, the traditional deletion of posts to reduce the heat will only stimulate the anger of netizens, especially when it comes to environmental protection emergencies, the public is concerned about environmental issues, the more the deletion of posts will make the public mind to question.

Second, the information disclosure of online public opinion crises lags behind, and the guidance of public opinion response is imprecise. At the first moment of a crisis, the government should respond in a timely manner to minimize the adverse effects and make good preparations for public opinion response, but many local governments only stop at responding, even until the outbreak of a public opinion crisis, which makes it impossible to satisfy the public's right to know, and makes the public dissatisfied with the government, which makes the online public opinion evolve into an uncontrollable state gradually. The fact that local governments do not have comprehensive data or have inconsistent statistical standards also makes them lack authority when releasing information.

3.3 Inadequate management of media communications

The media, as the mouthpiece of the government, has two sides. On the one hand, it can help the government guide public opinion and clarify the truth, but on the other hand, due to the profit-seeking nature of the media, it may take the government's response out of context or misinterpret it, thus greatly reducing the effectiveness of the government's response. Meanwhile, in the response to public opinion, the lack of communication management of some official media makes it impossible for the public to understand the progress and get relevant information, and they can only understand it through the news released by unofficial media, which, due to their own profit-seeking attributes, will select words of interest to the public for publicity or even distort the facts for the sake of heat, which will lead to the public opinion heating up continuously.

3.4 Insufficient Attention to Long-Tail Public Opinion

The end of a public opinion incident does not mean the end of public opinion crisis response. Local governments need to learn from the experience and continuously improve their own governance ability to deal with the deficiencies in governance ability or the weakening of credibility exposed in the crisis incident. The existence of long-tailed public opinion will leave a mark in the hearts of citizens and become a time bomb, so the solution of long-tailed public opinion should not be neglected, and how to carry out the aftermath work is also a part of public opinion crisis response.

4. Causes of local government online public opinion crisis response problems

4.1 Inadequate capacity for monitoring and early warning of public opinion

Before an online public opinion crisis breaks out, the public opinion monitoring system analyzes the information appearing on the Internet, predicts the direction of the event, and makes a system of precaution in advance. However, there is still a lack of professional staff in the process of monitoring and early warning of online public opinion information, and most local governments appoint people

who are skilled in operating computers to take on this task. The collection of public opinion information is also affected by the judgmental and analytical abilities of the people involved, making it difficult to obtain efficient and accurate public opinion information.

Public opinion analysis and judgment are based on the current state of public opinion, and without accurate information on public opinion dynamics, it is difficult to formulate a correct plan to guide the development of public opinion. In addition, the lack of professional public opinion analysis teams also makes it difficult to grasp the direction of public opinion. Although the government can monitor public opinion through big data technology, it does not mean that it can grasp the direction of public opinion by relying on the big data system alone, and it is still necessary for professional public opinion analysts to intervene and specialize in the development of public opinion.

4.2 Low crisis awareness in the Government

As the core of online public opinion crisis response, the government should guide the positive development of online public opinion when the crisis occurs, and guide and control online public opinion. However, in practice, due to the weak crisis awareness of some local governments, they do not attach enough importance to some social hotspots, and "ignore" and do not guide them, which leads to their departure from the real situation; or they just "block, delete and delay" until the online public opinion evolves into an unmanageable state. In practice, due to the weak crisis awareness of some local governments, they do not pay enough attention to some social hotspots, "ignoring" them and not guiding them, which leads to their deviation from the real situation; or they just "block, delete, and delay" until the online public opinion evolves to an unmanageable state. After the online public opinion crisis subsides, the government does not pay enough attention to "long-tail public opinion", and its response to the online public opinion crisis only stops at the subsiding of the public opinion incident, without being able to find out "the problems of credibility failure and insufficient governance capacity that may be caused or have already been caused by the incident"[3].

4.3 Inadequate mechanisms related to online public opinion crises

First, the information disclosure mechanism for online public opinion crises is not perfect. Local governments do not take the initiative to expand the channels for citizens to obtain information, do not disclose some information related to citizens' interests to citizens, shirk their responsibilities and delay when citizens ask, and fail to protect citizens' right to know. Citizens' insufficient understanding of information about online public opinion crises can lead to the spread of rumors, irrational emotions among citizens, and deterioration of public opinion.

Second, the mechanism for guiding the response to online public opinion crises is not sound. Insufficient occupation of local governments' network positions and deficiencies in authoritative information dissemination mechanisms can lead to the lack of widespread diffusion of government information in the process of responding to online public opinion events, the lack of authoritative information available to netizens, who are held hostage to inaccurate information, and the obsolescence of the government's concepts of responding to the crisis, which can lead to a lack of effectiveness in guiding public opinion and reduce the government's credibility.

4.4 Deficiencies in collaborative governance

After the outbreak of a public opinion crisis on the Internet, the primary responding body of a public opinion crisis is usually a government department involved in the incident. In order to solve the public opinion crisis smoothly and quickly, the government department involved needs multiple departments to work together to solve the problem, and some departments are slow in responding to the crisis, which hinders the rapid solution of the public opinion crisis. In addition, the inadequacy of the legal system related to online public opinion makes it difficult for the government to obtain all the information and accurately judge the development of public opinion, which makes it difficult to control the outbreak of public opinion, because the government only pays attention to its own duties and is unwilling to take on other responsibilities, and it is difficult to communicate with other departments in a timely manner.

In addition, the public, social organizations and other subjects may play an important role in responding to online public opinion crises. When responding to online public opinion crises, it is not enough to rely solely on the government's power, and the media and non-profit organizations cannot be

excluded; it is necessary to bring in subjects such as the media, non-profit organizations, and the public, and to give full play to their respective strengths and resources, so as to realize the model of collaborative governance by multiple subjects.

5. Countermeasures to Improve the Crisis Response Capability of Internet Public Opinion

5.1 Improvement of public opinion early warning and monitoring capacity

5.1.1 Improvement of the early warning and monitoring system for online public opinion

An effective early warning and monitoring system for Internet public opinion can not only identify relevant public opinion and issue an immediate warning, but also collect specific public opinions or views instead of manually and predict the development trend of public opinion events. The improvement of the early warning and monitoring system cannot be separated from the application of advanced technology. It is necessary to make full use of computer or big data technology, etc., and utilize scientific analytical and statistical methods to identify, categorize, and analyze the crisis events of online public opinion, and make early warnings on the development status of online public opinion and the possible consequences. The government can establish its own public opinion monitoring system according to its needs, continuously improve the network public opinion monitoring and analysis system, or directly cooperate with relevant organizations to purchase services, make use of their advanced technology, continuously strengthen its own network public opinion early warning capability, discover and analyze network public opinion events in a timely manner, and judge the urgency of hotspot events, and respond to them to reduce the pressure of public opinion, and seize the initiative of public opinion. We also make responses to reduce the pressure of public opinion and seize the initiative of public opinion.

5.1.2 Establishment of a professional team for responding to online public opinions

At a time when online public opinion incidents occur frequently, online public opinion is becoming normalized and may even become a major part of social public opinion. Therefore, it is urgent for local governments to establish a professional online public opinion response team, which is conducive to improving the efficiency of collecting information, analyzing public opinion, researching and judging public opinion, guiding public opinion, etc., and providing objective bases and effective suggestions for governmental decision-making. Appointing highly specialized and capable personnel to the public opinion monitoring and early warning team will help collect and monitor public opinion information from a professional perspective, so that the information will be more accurate and comprehensive. On the one hand, it is necessary to provide business training and guidance to public opinion information monitoring and early warning personnel, and to improve the efficiency of the team by means of performance appraisal; on the other hand, it is also necessary to introduce a market-oriented mechanism appropriately, so as to involve professional public opinion analysts, and to promote the government's professionals in public opinion analysis to continuously improve their own level of business ability.

5.2 Enhancement of crisis awareness in local governments

In today's self-media development, everyone can be a reporter and everyone is a source of communication, which makes online public opinion spread faster and wider. At present, some local governments still do not pay enough attention to online public opinion and do not have a strong sense of crisis. When dealing with online public opinion crises, they think that by adopting the traditional way of deleting posts, they can prohibit the flow of information and stop the development of online public opinion, but in fact, this way will only aggravate the anger of the group and lead to the deterioration of public opinion.

Therefore, in order to enhance local governments' awareness of online public opinion crises, it is necessary to change the traditional concept of responding to online public opinion crises. When facing an online public opinion crisis, the government should quickly verify the information it has, investigate the whole picture of the incident, use its own online position to announce the latest progress, respond to the public's inquiries, strengthen communication with the media, expand the coverage of the real information about the incident to avoid rumors due to the lack of real information, and announce the results of the process in the first time. According to the theory of "four golden hours", the government should respond to online public opinion in the first time, grasp the "golden four hours" time to

investigate, analyze and announce the time information in the first time, appease the citizens' emotion in time, strengthen communication with the media and the public, and guide the online public opinion correctly. We should also calm citizens' emotions in time, strengthen communication with the media and the public, guide the correct development of online public opinion, and avoid uncontrollable public opinions caused by "procrastination". At the same time, it is necessary to pay attention to the solution of long-tail public opinion to avoid the credibility failure of local government caused by long-tail public opinion.

5.3 Enhancement of online public opinion crisis response strategies

5.3.1 Improving the mechanism for disclosing information on online public opinion crises

It is necessary to establish a platform for information dissemination and exchange, and improve the mechanism for publicizing information on network public opinion crisis events. By continuously improving and broadening diversified information communication channels such as government portals and government microblogs, it meets different types of public information needs, strengthens interaction with the public, unblocks channels for public demands, responds to people's inquiries and questions in a timely manner, satisfies the public's right to know, establishes an information release and exchange platform, guarantees the openness and transparency of government affairs and accepts supervision by the public. Utilizing big data technology to improve the information disclosure mechanism of public opinion events, analyzing and predicting public opinion information, setting up keywords and columns to present information related to hot events, collecting netizen tendencies and comments after the events, analyzing the focus of netizen attention, and releasing information in a targeted manner. It analyzes and presents the whole picture of the incident, avoids netizens' blindness, guides netizens to think rationally, and avoids the deterioration of the public opinion situation.

5.3.2 Improving the mechanism for guiding the government's response to online public opinion

A sound mechanism for guiding online public opinion has an important position in the government's handling of online public opinion crises. In recent years, some governments have failed to avoid the outbreak of online public opinion crises even though they made quick judgments and early warnings when facing the initial stage of online public opinion, which is due to the lack of precision and effectiveness of the government's response and guidance in online public opinion crises. First of all, the government needs to occupy online positions to increase the coverage of government information, establish an authoritative information release mechanism, and deliver information to the public at the first time through authoritative channels, as well as make good use of the traditional media, online new media, opinion leaders, etc., so as to satisfy the people's right to know by unimpeded information channels, avoid the proliferation of rumors, and guide online public opinion to develop positively, and control the development of online public opinion. Secondly, the government should change the traditional concept of online public opinion crisis response and utilize reasonable public opinion guidance methods. Online public opinion is different from offline public opinion, and it is necessary to combine the two in an organic way instead of only adopting a single form of deletion or de-emphasis. On the one hand, the government should promptly and decisively curb online rumors by blocking keywords, deleting false information and other effective means for ill-motivated or maliciously inciting comments, and trace the source and strictly punish the publishers of the rumors; on the other hand, it should also make effective explanations and solutions to the problems through the government and the media's publishing platforms to reduce the negative emotions of netizens [4].

5.3.3 Improving the accountability mechanism for handling online public opinion crises

The government should set up a specialized investigation team at the first time of the crisis to investigate the whole picture of the incident, discover the root causes of the problems and deal with them. The government should release the results of authoritative investigations in the first time, and promptly pursue and punish those who spread rumors among netizens and those who break the law and discipline within the government, so as to build up the image of the government as authoritative, efficient, transparent, and incorruptible. Local governments should clarify the responsibility system for online public opinion crises and improve the accountability procedures to avoid ineffective response to online public opinion crises due to unclear authority and responsibility. At the same time, it is also necessary to establish a fault tolerance mechanism, so as to prevent staff from becoming the target of netizens' criticisms for their inappropriate remarks under great pressure. The establishment of the fault tolerance mechanism is also a way of dispensing with administrative staff's worries and ensuring that they can participate in their work in a good condition. In addition, the government should constantly

reflect on the incident, make timely improvements to the deficiencies exposed in the incident, learn from the experience to improve administrative efficiency, and continuously improve the ability to respond to online public opinion crises.

5.4 Improving synergistic governance systems

5.4.1 Improvement of inter-departmental collaboration mechanism of the Government

After the occurrence of a network public opinion event, the publicity department and the Internet Information Office are generally the leading departments, and various departments participate in concert. Therefore, network public opinion crisis response cannot be accomplished by a single department, but requires multiple departments to perform their respective roles and participate in handling the event together. Each department should have a clear division of labor, clear responsibilities, and do its own part, but also ensure that communication channels between departments are open and unobstructed, so that timely communication can be carried out, barriers between departments can be broken, information and resources can be shared, and the system can become an overall response system with complementary resources, risk sharing, and tacit collaboration, so that it can respond together, provide unified leadership, have clear responsibilities, and respond quickly in the response to online public opinion crises and improve the efficiency of handling online public opinion, reduce negative impacts, and form an organization that can handle online public opinion crises together. In crisis response to online public opinion, they can respond together, provide unified leadership, have clear responsibilities, respond quickly, improve the efficiency of handling online public opinion, reduce negative impacts, and form a coordinated response mechanism for online public opinion that is organized, disciplined, information-sharing, smooth-running, and tacitly cooperative.

5.4.2 Improving the linkage mechanism between the Government and netizens, the media and social organizations

As participants in online public opinion, netizens, media, non-profit organizations and other social entities also play an indispensable and important role in online public opinion crisis response [5]. The power of the people is enormous, and Internet users also play a great role in online public opinion. Netizens have the right to know, and in the case of online public opinion incidents, netizens' questioning and pursuing the government is their due right, which does not mean that they are antagonistic to the government. At the same time, one of the most important factors for the spread of online rumors is that the government fails to respond to them in a timely manner, and netizens are unable to get the information they want to know, which leads to the spreading of rumors. Most of the netizens are not able to know the truth in the case of a small number of rumor makers to fish in the water "rhythm", so the government should be the first time to give a response to guide the netizen public opinion to the positive development of the rumor spreading, clean up cyberspace.

The media is also an important driver of public opinion development. The media has a certain audience range, has an investigation team independent of the government, and the investigation content is generally regarded by the public as relatively objective and truthful. For example, in the case of the protective forest, the different conclusions reached by the reporters of the Beijing News and the JingSen News on the ground made public opinion split into two sides, and netizens no longer questioned the Gansu government. However, the inherent profit-seeking nature of the media may make some of them fabricate false information or distort information for the sake of heat and profit, regardless of the facts. Therefore, when the government promotes the linkage mechanism with the media, it needs to control the chaos in the media industry, standardize the content of media reports, and enhance its sense of responsibility and commitment.

The government should strengthen the linkage mechanism with social organizations, which play an increasingly important role in online public opinion. For example, in the case of environmental emergencies, the participation of non-profit organizations is of great significance to the government's handling of online public opinion crises, as non-profit organizations generally have strong professionalism within their specialties, and because of their nongovernmental nature, their explanations and interpretations are more easily accepted by netizens when online public opinion occurs. Because of their nongovernmental nature, the explanations and clarifications given by non-profit organizations in the event of online public opinion are more easily accepted by netizens.

6. Conclusion

In recent years, local governments have taken the initiative in responding to online crises by strengthening communication with the media, speaking out jointly with the departments involved, and guiding public opinion jointly with online opinion leaders, and have achieved certain results in responding to public opinion. However, due to a variety of reasons such as staff capacity, government response resources, pressure from various parties, and policies from higher levels, despite the fact that local governments are paying more and more attention to online public opinion, the powerlessness of public opinion guidance, the poor state of guidance, and the failure of public opinion guidance are still a major problem. However, due to various reasons, such as staff capacity, government response resources, pressure from various parties, and policies from higher levels, although local governments pay more and more attention to online public opinion, there are often cases of weak public opinion guidance, poor public opinion guidance, and failure of public opinion guidance.

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