

Administrative Governance of Public Opinion Reversal Events in the Post-Truth Era

-- Multi-case study on solid promotion of administration in accordance with the law

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Abstract

In the post-truth era, all kinds of rumours keep appearing, reversing, and reversing again. In fact, the emergence of such public opinion events is rooted in the conflict between citizens' vigorous demand for the right to freedom of expression and the stable development of public order. Although it has, to a certain extent, played a role in searching for the truth and exerting the power of citizens' supervision, and promoted the balance between exercising citizens' right to freedom of expression and safeguarding the public interest, the reversal of public opinion has also led to the irreversible damage to citizens' right to privacy, right to reputation, and the credibility of the government, among others. The damage cannot be ignored. Through collating literature and collecting information on the Internet to retrace the process of the incident, we have studied the problems and causes of online public opinion and its governance in China, and explored how public authorities can effectively manage rumours and enhance the credibility of the government.

Keywords

Public opinion reversal event, government credibility, government information disclosure.

1. Formulation of the Problem

In recent years, with the in-depth development of China's Internet socialisation platforms, the current Internet public opinion situation in China has become increasingly complex, with online speculation, cyber-violence, online rumour-mongering, and reversal of online public opinion occurring in an endless stream. "Chengdu No. 7 Middle School's food safety work was questioned," "family members of the affected children refused to testify for the driver," "female drivers travelling against the flow of traffic caused a bus to fall into the water in Chongqing," and "Guangzhou Fangyuan Primary School asthmatic girl was physically punished to vomit blood", have undergone a huge reversal. By comparing the series of events before and after the truth surfaced, it is not difficult to find that, to a certain extent, rumours arise precisely from the exercise of citizens' right to freedom of expression, against these rumours and the introduction and improvement of legal regulation is to better maintain public order and promote social stability. From this, we can see that the rest of the value of the law is based on the value of the order of the law. In order to avoid the excessive and improper administrative enforcement of the law in the process of stifling and clarifying rumours, controlling and guiding online public opinion, which may lead to the "wiping out" of constructive and reasonable speech, the public power must make a trade-off and coordination between the right of freedom of speech, the right of supervision and the right of the public interest. Public power must weigh and coordinate the right to freedom of expression, the right to supervise and the public interest,

with a view to creating a buffer zone and resolving the problem of Internet rumours in a lawful and reasonable manner.

According to article 35 of our Constitution, everyone has the right to freedom of expression, and as a right recognised by the Constitution, legal restrictions on the right to freedom of expression cannot be achieved in one step, but should be explored gradually to find a truly reasonable boundary between multiple parties, rather than using "one-size-fits-all" legal provisions to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate speech. Rather than using "one-size-fits-all" legal provisions to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate speech. In the face of public events that affect every aspect of people's lives, such as education, healthcare, and security, the right to freedom of expression has continued to play a role in uncovering the truth through the Internet, and has played an obvious role in monitoring public opinion of the government. Rumours in some public events have actually pushed the government and other public authorities to respond to people's demands and make timely and appropriate decisions.^[1] Rumours have also expressed the strong will of everyone to participate in public affairs in the post-truth era, where "everyone has a microphone". When well-intentioned speech is radiated and disseminated through the Internet and other communication channels, it often triggers the focus of public opinion, and creates considerable public pressure on unreasonable and illegal events and responsible parties that violate public order and morals, thus providing a weapon for a large number of disadvantaged groups in the society to safeguard their individual legitimate rights and interests, and its positive benefits cannot be ignored. This requires public authorities to carefully delineate the boundaries between public rumours and the right to freedom of expression. Once mishandled, the reversal of public opinion will not only bring great negative impacts on the handling of the incident itself and the parties involved, but will also cause the credibility of the government to decline, leading to a crisis of social trust, and making it more difficult for the government to regulate the online public opinion environment, endangering social harmony and stability.^[2] Therefore, it is important to study how to prevent and control the "Internet Public Opinion". Therefore, it is of great practical significance to study how to prevent and control the reversal of public opinion in the "post-truth era" in order to improve the administrative governance of the online public opinion environment.

2. Literature Review and Institutional Review

2.1. Literature Review

The concept of Post-Truth originated in the political context of the West, but in the Chinese context, it mainly refers to the phenomenon that the public's fervent pursuit of the "truth" is much greater than the truth itself, resulting in the spread of rumours that are more efficient than those that are dispelled. Xiaoan Guo argues that China's "post-truth" is different from that of the West, and that it stems from a national sentimentality that is more emotional than rational.^[3] Guoming Yu argues that China's "post-truth" is different from that of the West. Guoming Yu, on the other hand, through combing through the complete chain of online public opinion events in 2018, reveals that people's pursuit of "truth" in the "post-truth" era has often deviated from the truth.^[4] The truth of the matter is not the same as the truth of the matter.

The phenomenon of reversal of public opinion in cyberspace has been reflected in academic research and attracted the attention of many scholars. Reversal has become the norm in the post-truth era, and the causes of reversal can be deciphered in order to obtain a way of governance. According to the mainstream view, "public opinion reversal" refers to the phenomenon of sudden reversal of reporting tendency and emotional tendency in the process of diffusion of public opinion.^[5] The mainstream view is that "public opinion reversal" refers to the phenomenon of sudden reversal of reporting tendency and emotional tendency during the

diffusion of public opinion. Based on this, many scholars have explored the phenomenon by relying on cases in the life world. For example, Hongyin Bi et al. take "Wanzhou bus crash" as an example.^[6] and Mengxia Liao, who conducted a qualitative comparative analysis of 43 media events with fuzzy sets, pointed out that new media, as an "obscured" technological background, is involved in the evolution and outcome of media events, presenting a "mediatised situation".^[7] It is noted that new media as a "masked" technological context is involved in the evolution and outcome of media events, showing a "mediatised situation". In contrast to the more prominent negative effects of new media or self-media in the evolution of public opinion, some studies advocate the effective use of traditional media, such as Qiang Zhang et al. who take the Yixiao Luo incident as an example and point out that traditional media should not only play the role of fire-fighters, appeasers, and authoritative information disseminators, but also break down the dissemination channels of undesirable information.^[8] The traditional media should not only play the roles of fire-fighters, appeasers and authoritative information distributors, but also break the channels of spreading bad information.

On the issue of how administrative subjects can control rumours in accordance with the law, the mainstream viewpoints of the current academic community can be divided into two schools of thought. One group of scholars believes that the protection of the right to freedom of expression should take precedence over the administrative control of rumours. For example, Zhenliang Zhang believes that it is necessary to make a clear distinction between legitimate acts such as constructive criticism and suggestions and illegal acts such as rumour mongering, and to emphasize guidance and prevention of online rumours rather than just sanctions and punishments.^[9] Weiguo Fan proposes that we should start by improving the mode of network regulation and further building a rights relief system and a legal liability system, so as to achieve an orderly interface between government regulation and industry self-regulation.^[10] Shuqin Zhang proposed from the opposite side. Shuqin Zhang, on the other hand, suggests that there should be a reasonable buffer between the so-called "improper" exercise of freedom of expression and the commission of offences, so as to avoid the "chilling effect" that hinders constructive opinions from knowledgeable people.^[11]

Another group of scholars believe that what is needed to control rumours is to strengthen administrative control. For example, Wang Yong believes that the fundamental solution to the problem of Internet rumours must be through the rule of law, and that rumour-mongers must be severely punished and not tolerated.^[12] Zhongle Zhan and Junjie Gao believe that the governance of Internet rumours should be strengthened by improving legislation to punish rumour-mongers and promoting the real-name system of the Internet.^[13] Zhongle Zhan, Yongjiang Xie and Fang Huang suggest that the idea of "criminalising drunk driving" should be adopted to increase the legal deterrence against online rumour mongers.^[14] In summary, between order and rights. To sum up, in order to achieve a balance between order and rights, and to achieve effective and standardised governance of public risk rumours, it is necessary for the administrative body to uphold the concept of the rule of law. In order to achieve a balance between order and rights, it is necessary for administrative subjects to uphold the concept of the rule of law and administer in accordance with the law, so as to prevent the emergence of the situation where the administration replaces justice.

2.2. Introduction to the System

Internet rumours are a means for rumour mongers to achieve their goals and involve rumour spreaders, aggregators and information network providers, all of whom may be subject to legal regulation for their involvement in rumour mongering.^[15] Rumour mongering is a means for rumour mongers to achieve their goals. The types of damage caused to the legitimate interests of others and the relevant legal provisions vary greatly between different levels of rumour-

mongering and rumour-spreading. It is therefore necessary to summarise the legal provisions that can be used to control online rumours.

For example, Article 51 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China clearly stipulates the right of citizens to freedom of expression; Article 110, Article 194, Article 195 and Article 197 of Part 7 of the Civil Code of the People's Republic of China respectively stipulate the right to publish and the right and obligation to manage online speech of network users and service providers; in addition to this. In addition, Article 25(1) of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Punishment for Public Security Administration and Articles 105(2), 221, 246(1) and 291(2) of the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China define the elements and penalties for Internet rumours. It can be seen that the national level is gradually clarifying the hazards of Internet rumours and the methods of dealing with them, and more and more relevant laws and regulations will be enacted in the future, so as to build a legal system for guiding and regulating Internet public opinion in the post-truth era from the surface to the interior.

3. Case Analysis

3.1. Sample Selection

This study adopts the intentional sampling method to establish the criteria for case selection: first, it meets the definition of public opinion reversal in this study; second, it is included in the annual collection or inventory of public opinion reversal events of Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily Online, and Observer.com; third, the influence index of the event is higher than 65 with the help of "Knowing Weakness and Things to See", a tool for analysing hotspots; fourth, the number of comments on the article is greater than 1,000, and the openness of the comment section is examined in an attempt to truly and comprehensively reflect public opinion and opinion. Fourth, the number of comments on the microblog is greater than 1,000, and the openness of the comment area is examined to reduce the influence of microblog operators on commenting, in an attempt to truly and comprehensively reflect public opinion.^[16]

Table 1 Basic Information of the Cases

Number	Reverse Events	Occurrence Chronology	Reversal Level	Subject under Discussion Directing	Weibo Title
Case 1	Chengdu 7 middle school in the food safety incident	2019	≥2 times	living body of a human being safe	Chengdu No.7 Experimental School to eat moldy food
Case 2	49 middle school students fell to their death in Chengdu	2021	One time	living body of a human being safe	The family members of the dead student responded to Chengdu Education bureau notice: do not agree
Case 3	Wenhong Zhang was spread to academic misconduct	2021	One time	society morals	Fudan University has launched an investigation into Wenhong Zhang's dissertation
Case 4	Yu Zhao Fuzhou good Samaritan event	2019	≥2 times	administration enforce the law	The young man stopped infringing and kicking a strange man was detained for 14 days and may even be sentenced

Case 5	Yingluo Liang champion event	2020	≥ 2 times	Public order Good customs	Event reversal? Luo said Liang was willing to make a public apology
Case 6	Shengbin Lin incident	2021	One time	Public order Good customs	The mayors hotline denied that Lin was taken away for investigation, saying the information was untrue
Case 7	Yuming Bao incident	2020	One time	Public order Good customs	Yuming Bao once again responded to the sexual assault of foster daughter incident: the content of the complaint is not true, will be moderate rights protection

3.2. Case Review and Analysis

In the general social atmosphere of "old disbelief", the mingling of controversial issues and the Internet has fuelled an online frenzy. Whether or not the public trusts the official response, and the level of trust, is directly related to whether the public opinion is reversed or spreads further. Most public controversies in cyberspace rely on official responses to guide public opinion. In real life, the quantity, precision and breadth of official responses more significantly affect the emotional fluctuations of the public in public opinion. [17] In real life, the number, precision and breadth of official responses significantly affect the emotional fluctuations of people in public opinion. Thus, the authoritative characterisation, disclosure of details, and exposure of the truth by the officials often trigger the people's feedback on the comparison of the information before and after the incident, which in turn creates a reversal of public opinion. As a result, people's trust in the official government has become a "high reliance, low trust" dilemma, and the degree of trust in different levels of government is decreasing from top to bottom. A feasible and common solution to the problem of differential trust is the involvement of higher levels of government.

3.2.1. Case Review

Case 1: on March 8, 2019, several students in the fourth year class of Chengdu No. 7 Middle School vomited one after another; on March 10, accompanied by the manager of Deyu and the head chef of the canteen, the parents of six students went into the back kitchen to check the hygiene situation; on March 11, the parents sent photographs, saying that they had found the use of miscellaneous seasonings and that all the tableware had not been specially disinfected; in the early morning hours of the 13th, hundreds of parents were in the entrance of the canteen. In the early hours of the 13th, hundreds of parents gathered in front of the canteen overnight to demand compensation.

At 0:00 on 13 March, the microblogging site "Chengdu This Matter" posted a large number of photos, saying, "This is what the primary school canteen at Chengdu No. 7 Experimental School feeds the children, mouldy meat and expired food." Then a video appeared on the Internet with the title "The police sprayed chilli water on the parents who asked for help!" The title of the video, "government stability" "Chengdu Seven Experimental School parents due to their children long-term diarrhoea, undercover school canteen for a month to shoot pictures" and other news continue to break, many netizens of the school canteen "demonstration effect Many netizens flirted with the "exemplary role" of the school canteen; the company that contracted the canteen was involved in more than 20 schools in Sichuan, which was a huge scope; and a number of mainstream media outlets were involved in reporting the relevant news after the

incident. On the same day, the heat of public opinion climbed rapidly to a peak, and the scope of discussion expanded from Chengdu to the whole country.

At 3:00 on 13 March, Wenjiang District Government Information Office official microblogging "@ Jin Wenjiang" first issued a briefing, said the District Market Supervision Bureau has been sealed food ingredients sent to the inspection, and the person in charge of the investigation. After 12 hours, "@JinWenJiang" and three consecutive briefings, Sichuan Province, a number of government departments are also conducting investigations. However, at this time the public's emotions have been ignited, microblogging comment area visible a large number of accusations against the school, the Authority's remarks: "Cooking chef, transport workers, help workers these people are accomplices!" "Cold, official-like articles!" "Don't issue a circular, okay?" March 13 at 10 pm, Chengdu Municipal Public Security Bureau Wenjiang District Branch official microblogging news that the police use special means for a reason, the Department of Parental Rights Behaviour has exceeded the limits of the police constantly abusive and even assault, has violated the law. 14 March, "Chengdu release" issued an article to dispel rumours, the public opinion gradually cooled down.

March 17, Chengdu Market Supervision Bureau on the release of sampling results statement, the investigation showed that Wen Mou and other three people in the evening of March 12, 10 pm into the primary school to destroy the ingredients, posing for photos and then sent to the Internet. Another inspection report shows that the tested samples of the items examined are in line with the requirements of food safety standards. This report again triggered controversy, some netizens believe that the test report in a number of items and the focus of the case has nothing to do, the official is hiding the truth, divert attention. The official response was, "The first batch of samples tested did not require microbiological testing according to the regulations, and the part that requires microbiological testing is still in the incubation cycle." This incident has come to an end, a large number of mainstream media, self media to "reverse" as the title of the article that the previous false rumours circulating on the Internet has been the authority of the "falsification", the fog is finally layer by layer to uncover the truth to be clear.

Case 2: On 10 May 2021, a student in Chengdu High School 49 fell to his death, and the student's parents sent three consecutive microblogs claiming that the fall was full of suspicions, driving the heat of the incident up on online platforms. The Chengdu Municipal Public Security Bureau issued a circular on 11 May stating that the student's fall was a personal act. To a certain extent, the notice served to guide public opinion and reduce the heat of the incident. On May 13, the continued attention of authoritative central media contributed to the reversal of public opinion on the case. Xinhua News Agency released a microblog article titled "Restore the death of the 49th middle school student", hitting the audience's most concerned issues and releasing a series of surveillance details. A large number of mainstream media outlets such as People's Daily, China Newsweek, and China Youth Net then retweeted the content of the topic, which was quickly passed on to the concerned audience. Positive sentiments in the mainstream media's court of public opinion gradually seeped downward into the microblog's civil court of public opinion, and public opinion changed accordingly. It is clear that the positive response from higher-level officials played a crucial role in the dissipation of the rumour and the reversal of public opinion. Case 3, Wenhong Zhang's rumoured academic misconduct incident and Case 4, Yu Zhao's courageous act of bravery, also created changes in public opinion similar to the previous case. Before the official characterisation, it can be said that there were diverse opinions in the microblogs. However, after the official release of detailed information, there was a clear shift in public opinion.

Similar to the above cases, Case 5, the Yingluo Liang Champion incident, Case 6, the Shengbin Lin incident, and Case 7, the Yuming Bao incident, have similar circumstances, with four reversals in the Yuming Bao incident, namely, the release of news by the Nanfeng Window, the release of a report by Caixin.com, and the release of Yuming Bao's statement of innocence.

Although more and more information "favourable" to Yuming Bao was exposed, netizens did not believe that the high-powered middle-aged man in the incident will be innocent. It was not until the results of the investigation by the Supreme Prosecutor's Office were released on 17 September that there was a clear shift in public opinion.

3.2.2. Case Analysis

Looking back at the development of public opinion on the above incident, after the initial outbreak of the food safety incident in Chengdu No. 7 Middle School, officials chose to delete posts and comments to control the spread of public opinion in an attempt to extinguish the spread of the incident, however, this action has become the netizens believe that there is evidence of "ghosts in the heart", and this official control of public opinion immediately ignited the dissatisfaction of netizens with the government's perfunctory response. This official act of controlling public opinion immediately ignited netizens' dissatisfaction with the government's perfunctory response, which instantly magnified the seriousness of the incident and led to the first widespread dissemination and fermentation of public opinion.

In Chengdu seven in the food safety problems by the national attention, the local government only in the network "wake up", "Jin Wenjiang" information release serious lag and too brief, so that the public mistakenly think that the government does not act, but also let all kinds of more rumours! The rumours are spreading. Wenjiang District Health Bureau through the "Jin Wenjiang" official microblogging a total of six information bulletins, for parents to report, suppliers, responsible persons, working groups, medical diagnosis and other relevant information to respond, but did not achieve the desired effect, the reason for its tone and attitude of the official media response can not be disassociated. In the event before the conclusion, the official media if the first time to a cordial image to appear, express their determination to safeguard the interests of the people, and the people stand in the same position attitude, to win the netizens of the government's confidence, Chengdu seven food safety issues may not attract so much questioning and dissatisfaction, in the follow-up briefing may not produce a public opinion of the second fermentation and reversal. In the eyes of the netizens, who are called "magnifying glass" and "microscope", covering up the facts and being superior can never be the first choice for solving the problem, therefore, the attitude, content and speed of the official media's response should be the first point of reflection on this public opinion issue. Therefore, the attitude, content and speed of the official media's response should be one of the primary reflection points of this public opinion issue.

In addition, one of the major reasons for the reversal of public opinion is that the relevant information on which the audience formed their judgement before the reversal was insufficient and of low quality. The audience obtains information and understands events through various news media, but in fact the world constructed by the media is not the real world, which is the "mimetic environment" proposed by Lippmann. The reversal of public opinion comes from the reversal of information about an event, and in the process of presenting the reversed event, condemnation, denunciation, scandal, crisis and other orientated information is unilaterally shaped based on specific issues, which is obviously one-sided and inaccurate. Except for the official relevant departments, no other subject seems to be able to pursue and present the truth objectively. Coupled with the fact that official responses always come as slowly as squeezing toothpaste, most audiences unthinkingly substitute roles and mixed emotions based on the current information to fuel the fermentation of public opinion. As more and more information is disclosed in the course of subsequent development, the truth emerges little by little. Audiences who were previously preconceived by one-sided information may feel fooled and deceived, and a reversal of the situation will come to fruition.

It can be seen that, firstly, the accuracy of the official response has an important impact on the direction of public opinion. For example, in Case 1, the focus of online public opinion is whether

Wenhong Zhang has committed academic misconduct or not, and how to determine it, and Fudan University's official response reflects obvious pertinence; in Case 3, the local public security department responded in time, but the response was not detailed, and played a very small role, failing to answer questions and solve problems for netizens who have a strong desire for knowledge; and in Case 8, the procuratorate made two decisions of non-prosecution of Yu Zhao, who had seen the righteousness of the people, with significant differences in the impact on the parties and public opinion. In Case 8, the procuratorate's decision not to prosecute Yu Zhao for his courageous actions was made twice in succession, and there was a significant difference in the impact of the decision on the parties involved and public opinion.

Secondly, the official response should also highlight timeliness on the basis of accuracy. Cyberspace is an ocean of information, attention to relevant information is a scarce resource, the audience is easy to form a preconception effect, therefore, also need to pay attention to the timeliness of the response. Such as case 3 in the incident broke out on the 9th day after the Fudan University officials to give the official investigation results, during which a variety of black spots and rumours about Wenhong Zhang in the network and microblogging continue to emerge, the ultra-fast pace of cyberspace for the dissemination of a variety of news inserted wings.

Third, the response of a higher-level official or an authoritative subject beyond the geographical area can accelerate the reversal of public opinion. In reality, the hierarchical effect of trust in different levels of government is also reflected in online public opinion. It is usually difficult for the response of the government and its departments in the place where the incident occurred to achieve immediate results, but it is easier for higher-level governments or authoritative subjects to win the trust of the audience. For example, the entry of the central media in Case 2 and the intervention of the Supreme Prosecutor in Case 4 both contributed to the reversal of the direction of the incident.

4. China's Legal Dilemma in Governing Internet Rumours

4.1. Blurred Boundaries between Freedom of Expression and Rumours on the Internet

Freedom of expression on the Internet, as a way of exercising freedom of expression in the Internet era, has broken the monopoly of the traditional news media on authoritative speech by virtue of the interactivity, timeliness and global nature of its own information network, and has promoted the dissemination of culture and education as well as the development of science and the search for the truth; it has made it easy for people to express their dissatisfaction, alleviate the pressures of life, and channel social contradictions. Because of this, when identifying false and inaccurate news on the Internet, it is important to clarify the boundaries between rumours and normal speech, and to avoid undue restrictions on the freedom of expression on the Internet. However, because of the relatively wide range of behaviours that infringe on the public interest and the flexibility of judicial decisions, once identified, they are more likely to be subject to administrative or criminal sanctions. Therefore, while existing laws clarify the objective aspects of the composition of such offences, they do not provide a clear basis for sentencing, leaving a great deal of room for discretion and blurring the line between normal speech and online rumours.

4.2. Inadequate and Inefficient Disclosure of Government Information

The Regulations on the Disclosure of Government Information, the Law on Response to Emergencies, the Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases, and the Regulations on Emergency Response to Public Health Emergencies have all made provisions for the disclosure of government information, and have established a relatively comprehensive system

for the disclosure of information. However, in terms of the implementation of the system, although many government agencies have established microblogging, weibo and other new media platforms for government affairs, but in many emergencies, such as the cases mentioned earlier, the disclosure of government information is not harmonious, and the phenomenon of concealing and delaying the disclosure of information is very common, which often provokes the anger and dissatisfaction of the public, further intensifies the social conflicts, contributes to the rapid dissemination of rumours, and depletes the credibility of the government. It also undermines the authority, authenticity and accuracy of the information released by the government, and makes it difficult to effectively resolve public doubts, ultimately leading to a crisis of confidence in the local government among citizens.

4.3. Ambiguity in the Rights and Responsibilities of Online Platform Service Providers

Compared with the government's direct supervision of rumour spreaders, platforms have technological and resource advantages that allow them to reach out to rumour mongers and rumour spreaders, and to quickly filter out rumours and other illegal and harmful information through technological means and manual auditing, but the existing system does not clearly define and limit the power of platforms to regulate the content of information. Due to the limitations of the technology and the platform audit to delete the purpose of commercial rather than entirely out of public nature, the platform in order to avoid legal risks, the phenomenon of readily deleting posts, sealing the number is not uncommon, often excessive blockade and restriction of network speech, which not only infringes on the legitimate and reasonable right to expression of the citizenry, but also fails to timely and effectively reflect and disseminate the true information of certain events, and even delays the discovery, prevention, and control of public emergencies, hindering government decision-making and public opinion control. This not only violates citizens' right to legitimate and reasonable expression, but also fails to reflect and disseminate real information about certain events in a timely and effective manner, and even delays the detection, prevention and control of public emergencies, and hinders government decision-making, public opinion guidance, as well as risk identification and response, thereby triggering larger crises.

5. Improvement Path of Legal Governance of Internet Rumours in China

5.1. Increase Public Opinion Monitoring and Improve the Government Regulatory Model

In the post-truth era, people's participation in the discussion of public events is also the pursuit of truth, through the "spectatorship" and thus "forced" the authorities to respond, which precisely proves that the key link to the calming of public opinion is the authoritative voice of government departments, which is the ultimate destination of the people's trust in social events. This proves that the key to calming public opinion is the authoritative voice of government departments, which is the final destination of public trust in social events. Therefore, firstly, the government should do a good job of predicting and monitoring potential public opinion, grasp the key points of public opinion, and respond to events of concern to the public in a timely manner; at the same time, it should strengthen the supervision of mainstream media, improve the authenticity and authority of information, and build up a sense of order and security for the people. Secondly, the government should enrich the carriers and forms of publicity to break the "information cocoon" effect. The government should integrate publicity and popularisation of science and technology into the deployment of "big publicity", and make reasonable use of the advantages of traditional and emerging media, such as WeChat, Weibo, Today's Headlines and other new media, to push relevant popularisation of science and technology information to the

society, to enhance the strength and scope of publicity and popularisation of science and technology, and to avoid the social emotions being blindly ignited. Finally, the government should pay continuous attention to the follow-up response to public opinion. As the saying goes, "sickness comes like a mountain and goes like a thread", the official handling and announcement of the incident may not be able to stop the damage in time and do a good job of cleaning up the incident, but the public opinion may not buy the phenomenon due to "inertia". The government should continue to pay attention to the subsequent reaction of public opinion, settle the subsequent demands that may arise from public opinion in a timely manner, and do a good job of timely tracking and feedback on the handling of the incident, so as to reduce the subsequent backlash of public opinion.

5.2. Strengthening the Management of the Cyber Legal System and Punishing Those who Create Rumours and Create Trouble.

The Internet is a virtual world in which Internet users are immersed and cannot extricate themselves, mistakenly believing that they do not have to be subject to any restriction, that they can enjoy the freedom of disseminating information without any limitations, and that they may not have to bear any legal responsibility. But the reality is not like that, and there are rules in cyberspace. In order to clean up the cyber environment, many western countries have taken different measures to combat the problem, and some even provide free filtering software for searching cyber rumours for use by internet service providers. We should also continue to introduce more laws and regulations targeting the attributes of the internet, which should be different from the existing laws and regulations of the real society, and at the same time maintain a close link with those of the real society, so as to combat cybercrime in a more vigorous manner. In addition, it should further increase the regulation of self media to create a good network atmosphere. Self-media era of a variety of complex and interesting fragmented information continues to change, the need for a correct voice to guide the direction, for example, Chengdu seven in the food safety incident, the parents of the "big psychological" dominated the development of public opinion, this kind of intentional fabrication of the facts, seriously affecting the social stability of the "microphone! This kind of "microphone" that deliberately fabricates facts and seriously affects social stability must be severely punished. Accordingly, the government should do a better job of tracking down rumour spreaders in a timely manner, improve the mechanism for publicizing punishments, and introduce a corresponding corrective mechanism to serve as a warning.

5.3. Strict Identification of Rumour Crimes and Reasonable Scope of Criminal Prosecution

The characteristics of cybercrime determine that it is more difficult to detect and requires a higher level of professionalism. Public prosecutors and law enforcement authorities should carefully understand the facts and familiarise themselves with the relevant legal provisions, and in determining whether a rumour on the Internet has been deliberately fabricated as a criterion, so as not to be blindly pursued and followed up by the "public opinion" represented by public opinion. Secondly, with regard to the series of harmful consequences to individuals and society caused by the spread of rumours, it is also necessary to assess and identify them in an appropriate and scientific way through social investigation, and release the progress of the investigation in a timely manner to respond to the concerns of the society, and grasp the journalistic principles of timeliness and truthfulness, so as to avoid the emergence of secondary public opinion, which would impede the investigation and affect the credibility of the government. Finally, if necessary, third parties, such as talent think tanks and assessment agencies, can be used to assess the adverse consequences of rumours, providing a scientific basis for public prosecutors and law enforcement authorities to pursue prosecution and

sentencing, improving the scientific nature of decision-making, and enhancing the government's credibility in the hearts of the people.

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