

How YouTube Journalism Constructs the “China Threat” in South Korea: An Analysis from the Perspective of Digital Nationalism

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This research aims to analyze the formation of the “China Threat” discourse in YouTube journalism by applying the concept of digital nationalism. For this analysis, it examines the characteristics of news video content produced and distributed by South Korean broadcast news media on the new digital platform of YouTube, with a focus on China-related news cases.

YouTube already holds a central position in the distribution and consumption of news in South Korea. The journalism of YouTube by broadcast news media faces a dual task of distinguishing itself from both traditional news and "YouTuber journalism," which has been criticized for distortion, amplification, polarization, fragmentation, bias, and dissemination of misinformation.

In analyzing the YouTube journalism conducted by traditional news media, this study focuses on China-related news video content. Since the decision to deploy THAAD by the US in South Korea in 2016, Sino-Korean relations have rapidly cooled. Social media and internet culture in both South Korea and China have continuously amplified issues across various domains such as politics, diplomacy, economy, society, popular culture, and history. Consequently, anti-Chinese sentiment has reached its peak within South Korea, particularly through internet culture, including YouTube. In this context, it is meaningful to examine how "news media on YouTube" constructs China's image and the perception of "China threat."

To facilitate such examination and analysis, this study seeks to apply the concept of digital nationalism and contribute to existing nationalism studies. Digital nationalism scrutinizes how digital technology reproduces and strengthens the categories of nation and citizenship. It also investigates how digital platforms and algorithms, based on biased nationalism, incite hate speech and group behaviors. However, previous research has tended to focus on the latter aspect of "hot" nationalism, while neglecting how digital technology operates at everyday level to naturalize and strengthen the categories of nation and citizenship.

This research aims to explore the role played by "YouTube-based news media journalism" in presenting new national imaginaries and reconstructing national identities, amidst the existing assumptions of nation and citizenship in traditional

news media and the fragmented and extreme sentiments expressed in YouTuber journalism. Through this exploration, the study seeks to expand understanding of digital nationalism by investigating its manifestation in current realities in South Korea.