

AWARENESS OF NATIONALISM IN MILLENNIALS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

The role of the internet in shaping nationalist sentiments among millennials in the digital era is multifaceted. This technological progress brings challenges, with younger generations experiencing an erosion of national identity due to unfiltered exposure to foreign values. However, the internet has also facilitated cyber-nationalism and government propaganda. The study emphasizes the need to understand the level of nationalism among millennials and how the internet influences nationalist sentiments, considering both its positive and negative consequences for society and policy decisions. This study is based on secondary data. This study primarily relies on secondary data obtained from a diverse range of academic journals, articles, reports, and news articles. In conclusion, the study found that while globalization and digital media provide unprecedented opportunities for cultural exchange and information sharing, they also pose significant threats to local culture and national identity. As such, fostering cultural awareness emerges as a critical task in nurturing a sense of pride in one's national heritage. On the other hand, addressing the impact of digital media on 'new' nationalism is also important so that things remain balanced. Understanding and appreciating one's cultural roots can while fighting the divisive forces of 'new' nationalism be the equilibrium that the societies should strive for. There is a critical need to strike a balance between global influences and the preservation of national identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

There is a complex and multifaceted perspective on the role of the internet in shaping nationalist sentiments among millennials in the digital era. On one hand, the internet has undeniably revolutionized communication and information dissemination, providing new platforms for individuals to express their opinions and ideas. It offers unparalleled advantages in terms of awareness and ease of organizing activities, thereby facilitating cyber-nationalism in some countries (Lamensch, 2021). This digital landscape allows governments to harness it as a tool for propaganda, thereby influencing public sentiment.

However, this technological development is a double-edged sword (Hafnidar et al., 2021), as it introduces new challenges and difficulties that warrant a closer examination (Natalia, 2020). One major worry is that young people nowadays are becoming less patriotic as a result of the

ease with which they can absorb foreign values through technology (Aswasulasikin et al., 2020). The easy access to global cultures, especially those from the Western world, intensifies exposure among young individuals (Agus & Zulfahmi, 2021), leading to an erosion of their national identity (Azima et al., 2021). The selective adoption of foreign values without proper discernment has given rise to a dilemma among the younger generation, who must choose between imitating certain values and abandoning others. This unfiltered assimilation of Western values, deemed progressive, has contributed to the acceptance of antisocial practices including hedonism, excessive consumption, and a focus on one's own needs (Irmania et al., 2021).

In essence, the digital era presents both opportunities and challenges concerning the preservation and propagation of nationalism among millennials. The internet's potential to encourage and improve nationalism is juxtaposed with its role in promoting the erosion of national identity through the unfiltered acceptance of foreign cultures. This nuanced backdrop underscores the importance of understanding how the internet shapes nationalist sentiments, which is the central focus of this research. It acknowledges the profound impact of digital technology on modern society, emphasizing the need to explore its consequences, whether positive or negative, to inform both academic discussions and policy decisions.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this paper are as follows:

- 1) To assess the level of nationalism awareness among millennials.
- 2) To examine the impact of digital media on shaping nationalist sentiment.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study, focusing on the "Awareness of Nationalism in Millennials in the Digital Era," lies in its potential to shed light on a critical and timely intersection of societal forces. Understanding the level of nationalism awareness among millennials is of paramount importance, given that this generation comprises a substantial portion of the global population and is a key demographic in shaping the future. With the rise of digital media as a dominant source of information and influence, the study has the potential to unveil how these platforms shape nationalist sentiments. By bridging the gap in existing research, this study can offer insights into how the digital landscape contributes to the formation of national identities and perspectives among millennials. The implications extend to social cohesion, as heightened nationalism can influence perceptions of "otherness" and political dynamics. Therefore, the study also holds the promise of informing policy-making, fostering social cohesion, and promoting a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between technology, identity, and ideology in contemporary society. In essence, this research offers valuable insights into the dynamics of modern nationalism, providing a basis for informed discussions and decision-making in the digital age.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mohan, S. (2015) intended to provide insight into the politics and presence of India's increasingly visible, informal online political formation, known as the Internet Hindus. Used to characterize young, generally urban, middle-class/upper-middle-class Hindus residing in India (and beyond), the phrase has come to be linked almost exclusively with people who aggressively promote their right-wing political ideas and support for Narendra Modi on social media platforms. The essay investigated the politics of some of these "Internet Hindus" and contextualized them in light of the bigger themes overlooked by the electoral win of the Hindu nationalist political outfit, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). In doing so, the study strives to identify "Internet Hindus" in a democracy with the world's third-largest Internet user base and deconstructs their ethno-nationalistic online posturing, while also pondering on what this may signify for the online collective itself.

Joshi, R. N., & Joshi, Y. C. (2018) The study sought to investigate the impact of several aspects of economic nationalism on the behavioural intentions of millennials. A primary research study was conducted in South Gujarat among consumers belonging to the millennial age group. The study aimed to evaluate the expectations model of economic nationalism and its impact on their behavioural intention. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The study's findings indicate that the behavioral intention of millennials to avoid and disfavor foreign items is significantly influenced by their expectations regarding Indian enterprises and the general public. The study deepens our comprehension of the expectations held by individuals regarding the Indian government, Indian companies, and the general public in terms of their responsibility to limit the extent of foreign operations in host countries. The research offers valuable insights to marketers and researchers worldwide, shedding light on the correlation between the elements of the expectations model of economic nationalism and the behavioral intentions of millennials.

Udupa, S., Venkatraman, S., & Khan, A. (2020) Explored the growth of digital media in India over a period of twenty years, focusing on its status as the second-largest Internet user base globally, and introduced the concept of "millennial India." Millennial India examines the impact of digitalization as a unique sociopolitical period that brings forth new forms of communication. It explores the significance of "millennials" who utilize digital media to express their political concerns. According to the authors, these processes have resulted in the democratization of public engagement by empowering internet users to engage in self-activity. The authors demonstrated that the idea that involvement leads to empowerment is not always valid. They found that a politics of civic action has emerged alongside violent exclusions facilitated by digital circulation. Millennial India acknowledges the importance of adopting a contextual perspective towards global digital politics and acknowledges the consistencies in the frameworks of political engagement, as well as the disruptions caused by digital infrastructures.

Stolarski, P. (2021) According to the paper, Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" continues to be one of the most influential works in the study of nationalism, even after almost 40 years since its publication. Although his theory remains highly relevant, the progress of the digital era appears to be introducing even more variety to current forms of

nationalism, raising doubts about whether nations align with Anderson's original vision. Ultimately, communities are differentiated not by their truth or authenticity, but by how they are conceived and envisioned" (Anderson, 2006), this style is certainly quite different in the internet-dominated days. The essay posited that digitally envisioned communities diverge from Anderson's conceptualization of modern country imagining, which is primarily marked by its "banality" and purportedly apolitical nature. Moreover, the entity responsible for the actions of imagination is situated within a somewhat greater range of individuals than indicated by Anderson. The initial segment, examining the current body of literature, explores the extent to which digital communication delivers on its potential and promotes the democratization of the processes related to envisioning nations. The subsequent section elucidates the significance of contemporary, digital manifestations of "banal nationalism" in shaping the conception of communities. The second portion will thoroughly analyze a case study involving memes from a Facebook profile that specifically focuses on Slavic cultures, namely Slavorum. The study discovered that the widespread use of digital communication greatly expanded the availability of discussions that contribute to the formation of national perceptions. However, it had minimal impact on promoting equality and democracy within these perceptions. In addition, nationalistic sentiments continue to be expressed in mundane forms, as noted by Michael Billig. However, this now encompasses not only symbols like national flags, sports teams, or the categorization of news as domestic or foreign in daily newspapers but also user-generated content such as memes. Upon examining the case study of the Facebook profile "Slavorum," it was discovered that digital banal nationalism may not possess substantial political influence, but it can contribute to rendering national imaginings more tolerable.

Shabrilia, F. F., Maheswari, N. E., Adhiatma, T. B., Tanaya, M. A. W. E., & Pandin, M. G. R. (2022) According to their findings, intensive modernization causes the younger generation to be uninformed that the status of local culture is under jeopardy. The goal of this paper was to investigate the cultural awareness of the younger generation and its impact on the nationalism crisis, as well as to identify potential techniques to increasing cultural awareness among the younger generation in the digital age. Researchers conducted qualitative research, including a literature review and online interviews. As a result, a lack of understanding of the country's culture has exacerbated the issue of nationalism among the younger generation. Western society has led the younger generation to forget and not understand their home culture. As a result, there is a reluctance to conserve the culture due to a lack of cultural identity. This suggests a rising crisis in nationalism.

Fadhila, N., & Pandin, M. G. R. (2021) This study's authors argue that rapid globalisation is giving rise to a new idea of a "World Without Borders" by eradicating geographical barriers. The millennial generation's moral fiber is at stake; hence this issue must be resolved. Given these factors, the study's author wonders: How can civic education shape the personalities of millennials in this era of globalisation? Researchers tried to put a number on the impacts of modern globalisation to comprehend the role of civic education in shaping millennials' identities and the societal impacts of this phenomenon. This study employed a literature review as its research strategy. A search for journals was carried out in the Google Scholar database using the phrases "citizenship education," "millennial generation," and "globalisation." To

assess a feasibility study, one looks at its title, abstract, and full text. Using qualitative analysis based on research findings to evaluate data. The study's results, which indicate the influence of globalisation, show that character issues among millennials are increasing. A combination of extreme individualism, consumerism, and Westernisation caused Indonesian characteristics to gradually disappear and eventually cause moral harm. Consequently, prevention must prioritise Pancasila-based character formation through citizenship education.

Anoraga, B., & Sakai, M. (2022) investigated the perceptions and actions of civic nationalism among Indonesia's youth in the present day. According to scholars, civic nationalism is a nationalist ideology that prioritises community ties to ensure equity for people of all faiths and ethnicities. After the New Order, religious nationalism, promoted by groups like Laskar Jihad, Front Pembela Islam (HTI), and the Islamic Defence Front (FPI), began to confront Indonesian civic nationalism. Despite this, we argue that civic nationalism in Indonesia has been strongly resurrected, with today's millennials at the forefront, in contrast to the results of numerous studies that portray them as politically apathetic remaja (young people focused on consumer goods). To further understand the dissemination of civic nationalist narratives, researchers examined youth organisations such as Sabang Merauke and Nusantara Run. The researchers went on to say that the neoliberal post-New Order Indonesia is a good fit for civic nationalism in their view because it encourages people of different faiths to participate in consumer culture, self-development, and volunteerism. We will add to what is known about how various generations of Indonesians show their patriotism through the findings of interviews and analysis of their online speech.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study is based on secondary data but adopts a mixed-methods research approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative elements to provide a comprehensive understanding of the awareness of nationalism among millennials in the digital era. This approach allows for the triangulation of data from various sources and enhances the robustness of the research.

Data Sources

This study primarily relies on secondary data obtained from a diverse range of academic journals, articles, reports and news articles. The selection of data sources follows a systematic approach to ensure the relevance and credibility of the information used in the analysis.

Data Collection

A comprehensive search of relevant content was conducted on platforms such as PubMed, JSTOR, Google Scholar, relevant institutional libraries, and reliable news websites was conducted. The search primarily targeted pieces related to "millennials," "nationalism," "digital media," "social media," "propaganda," and related phrases. Non-English sources were excluded due to language limitations.

Data Analysis

The collected data underwent a rigorous process of content analysis and thematic coding to identify key findings and patterns related to the awareness of nationalism among millennials in the digital era.

Ethical Considerations

This research adheres to ethical principles, ensuring that all data sources are properly cited and referenced. The author has made efforts to avoid any form of plagiarism, and the paper respects copyright laws and intellectual property rights.

4. CULTURAL INVASION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

The advent of globalisation has brought about massive societal shifts. Borders between countries are becoming less important thanks to the internet, which is speeding up the process of cultural diffusion. Here, contemporary culture emerged from the massive digitalization process. The younger, more tech-savvy members of the community, in particular, take in and adopt aspects of popular culture from the most populous countries in the world. Keeping the patriotism alive among the youth of today is crucial in this respect (Putri et al., 2020).

The food industry is a good example of this phenomenon of cultural invasion from other countries. There is a wide variety of traditional Western cuisines offered by various types of fast-food restaurants. Because it's convenient and tastes good, fast food is preferred over more conventional meals. The future generation will not learn about the diverse culinary traditions of the nation's regions unless traditional cuisines are included.

There has been a recent infusion of people from different cultural backgrounds into the entertainment industry as well as the cuisine industry. The food, clothing, language, and small daily routines of different cultures are subtly shown in the various foreign films and dramas that many young people today watch. Some members of the millennial generation are so interested in that culture and its practices that they want to study the language. As a result, it shows how, when given the opportunity, people from different cultural backgrounds may alter people's perspectives and behaviours.

Without understanding it, the rise of modern culture in society appears to threaten national identity (Siswantara, 2021). In other words, parts of global culture can be spread to local communities through globalisation (Hidayat & Bedin, 2021). It is common for cultures that are seen as less powerful to be the ones invaded. When people in this situation don't see traditional culture as soon as they can, it can be oppressed. The spread of global culture is eroding the variety of traditional cultures due to its homogeneity. As a result, individuals will become disoriented.

5. CULTURAL AWARENESS AND NATIONALISM CRISIS

To preserve local traditions in the digital era, cultural awareness must be nurtured in the hearts and minds of all young people (Pramitasari, 2021). To be culturally conscious is to be well-

versed in the traditions and customs of a certain place and to understand that these things constitute the very essence of that group. Culture is an integral part of who we are as a people. The detrimental currents of globalization will be more difficult to overcome if this consciousness is deeply ingrained. As we approach the age of disruption, there are three essential points that everyone must remember. All three stem from a strong sense of national pride: knowing, understanding, and being aware (Candra & Suryadi, 2020).

It is deeply concerning that younger generations are becoming more cognizant of traditional traditions. Their duty to protect their own culture, which is being progressively undermined by the advent of other civilizations, is being neglected as a result of their unfiltered exposure to other cultures. So many of today's youth are too embarrassed to do what's necessary to keep their heritage alive for fear of looking old. Contrarily, they take great pride in adopting Western cultural practices since they are seen as more in tune with modern times. Few individuals today are concerned about maintaining long-established ways of life.

An extreme fanaticism for all foreign cultural items is inevitable in the absence of a balanced moral and multicultural education system. The fundamental capital to cultivate a feeling of love for the homeland is unity and diversity, and multicultural education aims to inculcate this mindset (Prakasih et al., 2021). Having a soft spot for foreign cuisine, ways of life, and the entertainment industry is completely acceptable. But as decent citizens, we shouldn't let our awe for other cultures trump our devotion to our own country's illustrious heritage.

Young people now are the country's future leaders. Preserving national traditions is an admirable objective. Because they don't know much about other cultures, today's youth have exacerbated the nationalism problem. A reasonable level of loyalty to one's country is the most basic definition of patriotism (Suyatno, 2021). One sign of not being patriotic is not caring about or understanding one's own culture. One reason for this reluctance is the general dearth of social interaction among residents. Because of how it makes them feel, they don't feel any obligation to do their part to preserve the local culture. When directed correctly, a people's cultural sensitivity can be a driving force for national progress.

People who don't value traditional culture are just as dangerous to national sovereignty as those who do not value traditional culture. This kind of person usually doesn't care about what's happening in their country, even if, as they might realize, a lack of knowledge about national culture can lead to societal problems based on SARA (Setyaningsih, 2021). Hence, it is crucial to step up efforts to increase cultural awareness and promote a sense of nationalism among the younger generation. This can be achieved, for instance, by implementing citizenship and intercultural education programs (Fauziah&Dewi, 2021).

One strategy for capturing the interest of the younger generation is to incorporate elements of local culture while making subtle adjustments to bring them into the current day (Wulandari et al., 2021). In this regard, the state can also intervene. By distributing information on social media, the government can create captivating content that explains many indigenous customs that the public is unfamiliar with (Candra et al., 2021).

A synthesis of traditional and modern values is necessary. Because of their eagerness to learn and discover more about the local culture, the younger generation will develop a stronger love for their nation.

Similar to the old adage "do not know then do not love," passing on knowledge of one's country to one's children and grandchildren can instill a sense of "owning" and inspire a desire to protect it. Inspiring a strong sense of nationalism can be achieved through a solid grasp of cultural awareness. In spite of setbacks, the community will stick together to protect its multicultural identity and ensure its further integration (Irawan, 2020). Cultural awareness can do more than only foster patriotism; it can also inspire people to take part in movements to keep their own traditions alive. That can happen if they feel a growing sense of national pride, which makes them want to do their share to keep the local culture alive so that future generations can enjoy it.

6. DIGITAL MEDIA AND THE RISE OF 'NEW' NATIONALISM

All things considered, current research presents a variety of reasons for the resurgence of nationalism and the corresponding decline of liberalism. These include changes in demographics, economic instability caused by anti-austerity politics and recession, a sharp ideological divide between those who benefited from economic and cultural openness and those who did not, and the consequent "cultural backlash" among increasing portions of the population (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). Though they have had various effects, these shifts have laid the groundwork for growing fears of foreign interference, anti-immigrant sentiment, and the "Our Nation First" movement, all of which promise to keep the peace. In tandem with these shifts, scholars are devoting a great deal of attention to the role of communications and media in the rise and popularity of right-wing populism and nationalist rhetoric. Several writers have pointed out that algorithm-driven "filter bubbles" have been created by digital media, especially social networking platforms, which has reportedly contributed to the fragmentation of public discourse (Cardenal, Aguilar-Paredes, Galais, & Pérez-Montoro, 2019) and 'echo chambers' (Dubois & Blank, 2018), in which individuals are shown just those perspectives that support their preexisting worldview. Some outsiders see this as having caused the public sphere to become more fragmented than before (Bennett & Pfetsch, 2018) however, it also fostered an increasing intolerance of diverse viewpoints, a tolerance for exclusive nationalist language and hate speech in general, and an inclination towards extremism (Sunstein, 2017). At the same time, the participatory nature of social media, combined with the lack of editorial oversight and fact-checking procedures on social media platforms, has made it easier for individuals and groups to communicate extremist views and misinformation that 'support the spreading of far-right nationalist ideology online' (Fuchs, 2020).

These ideas will be familiar to academics of nationalism and those who have studied media and communication from a historical perspective. Almost two decades ago, Halavais (2000) proved that national boundaries still exist on the Internet, demonstrating that most US websites link to other US websites instead of crossing borders. The non-territorial nature of the internet, according to Eriksen (2007), makes it impossible for nations to have a shared sense of identity. However, he cites evidence from many different nations, including the Tamils of Sri Lanka and

nations with large diasporas overseas, that "the Internet has in the space of only a few years become a key technology for keeping nations (and other abstract communities) together." He writes about this in this journal *Conversi* (2012) extended this argument by highlighting the many ways in which the internet may be used, such as promoting strong nationalism and xenophobia, creating new barriers between communities, and facilitating unprecedented levels of global connectivity. The many uses of social media have been brought to light in works on media and nationalism, which have also drawn attention to the digital world's persistent national architecture. These uses range from very inclusive, cross-cultural engagement and the resurgence of minority languages to interventions that are far more exclusive, aggressive, and viciously nationalist (Mihelj, 2011).

The rise of right-wing populism and nationalist rhetoric globally has propelled nationalism from the political periphery to the very centre of our societies, cultures, and politics. This has prompted significant debate about the existence of digital nationalism, which has been recognised by communication scholars and mainstream media. The phenomenon is also relevant to major Western powers due to the triumph of the Leave campaign in the UK's EU referendum and the US presidential election. A common approach to explaining this seemingly renewed nationalist movement has been to characterise it as "new" and radically distinct from previous nationalist movements, for example, because it places more value on cultural rather than biological indicators of national identity or because anti-immigrant and anti-globalization rhetoric plays such a pivotal role (Fuchs, 2020). Yet, as Malešević (2019) contends the mistaken belief that nationalism is a fad that will fade away is at the root of explanations that focus on the "new" aspects of nationalism rather than its long-term historical processes. That nationalism is ephemeral is an old story, it should be noted. As Chernilo (2007) showed, Karl Marx had already theorized that nation-states were nothing more than a capitalist fad. The term "new nationalism" "does not stand for a novel phenomenon but for the analyst's surprise that nationalism has not gone away," in other words (Malešević, 2019). Scholars of communication and media may share this misunderstanding and be astounded by the unexpected development of nationalism, which may explain why there has been such a dramatic uptick in research on the topic. Not that 'new' nationalism is completely devoid of innovation; rather, discussions of novelty must be better contextualized in light of broader historical trends.

7. CONCLUSION

This study culminates in a multifaceted examination of the intertwining factors that have shaped the awareness of nationalism and the role of digital media in the contemporary context. This conclusion, drawing upon the themes of cultural invasion, cultural awareness, and the rise of 'new' nationalism, provides insights into the complex dynamics of contemporary nationalism.

In the digital era, the relentless march of globalization has accelerated cultural exchanges and the diffusion of modern culture from major nations worldwide. As young, technologically literate generations enthusiastically adopt these global cultural influences, the maintenance of national identity becomes a pressing challenge. The erosion of traditional cultural elements,

such as local cuisines and indigenous practices, is evident. Foreign cultures are readily embraced, while traditional values face vulnerability.

Cultural awareness emerges as a pivotal factor in preserving local culture in the digital age. It necessitates a deep understanding that culture forms the soul of a community and the importance of safeguarding it against the encroachments of globalized influences. However, the younger generation's awareness of their cultural heritage is diminishing, as they increasingly emulate Western culture, often perceived as more in tune with the times. This shift in cultural preferences raises concerns about the dilution of national identity and the potential loss of local culture.

Simultaneously, what some academics term "new" nationalism has its roots in the digital media ecosystem. The 'filter bubbles' and 'echo chambers' created by algorithms that characterise most social media usage are strongly associated with the growth of right-wing populism and nationalist rhetoric. These digitally facilitated environments foster selective exposure to views and information that align with pre-existing beliefs. As a result, radical ideas, hate speech, and nationalist rhetoric that excludes certain groups become more commonplace and split the public discourse. The lack of editorial control and the interactive character of social media platforms make them fertile ground for the propagation of false information and extreme ideologies, which in turn fuels the rise of nationalist sentiments.

In conclusion, this study underscores the challenges and complexities surrounding nationalism awareness among millennials in the digital era. While globalization and digital media provide unprecedented opportunities for cultural exchange and information sharing, they also pose significant threats to local culture and national identity. As such, fostering cultural awareness emerges as a critical task in nurturing a sense of pride in one's national heritage. On the other hand, addressing the impact of digital media on 'new' nationalism is also important so that things remain balanced. Understanding and appreciating one's cultural roots can while fighting the divisive forces of 'new' nationalism is the equilibrium that the societies should strive for. This research contributes to the on-going dialogue on the evolving nature of nationalism in our digitally connected world and the critical need to strike a balance between global influences and the preservation of national identity.

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