

The generative logic and governance path of soft historical nihilism from the perspective of the grand historical view

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Abstract. Soft historical nihilism, as a new variant of historical nihilism, manifests characteristics of entertainment, concealment, and networked dissemination, severely eroding mainstream social values. This paper first defines the connotation of the grand historical view, then analyzes the specific manifestations of soft historical nihilism, including entertainment-oriented narratives, concealed theoretical constructions, and characteristics of online dissemination. Next, it reveals the generative logic of soft historical nihilism from aspects such as the narrative dilemma of historical subjectivity, and the absence of regulatory and educational measures, while exploring dissemination incentives such as curiosity, rebelliousness, and inferiority complex. To address the challenges posed by soft historical nihilism, a threefold strategy is proposed: first, grounding the ideological foundation in the grand historical view to consolidate the materialist conception of history; second, deepening history education to build a correct historical cognition system; third, improving internet governance to establish an ideological security barrier. Finally, the paper anticipates future trends in governing soft historical nihilism, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary research and global governance cooperation, thereby providing theoretical support and practical pathways for effectively resisting the erosion of historical nihilism and safeguarding ideological security.

Keywords: grand historical view, soft historical nihilism, materialist conception of history, ideological security

1. Introduction

In the long course of history, various ideological trends surge, influencing people's understanding of the past and their vision for the future. In recent years, historical nihilism has quietly emerged in a new variant form—soft historical nihilism—which, characterized by entertainment, concealment, and networked dissemination, poses a severe challenge to mainstream social values. Under the dual backdrop of globalization and digitization, soft historical nihilism not only spreads domestically but also attempts to distort historical truths and create ideological confusion on the international stage. Therefore, an in-depth exploration of the generative logic, dissemination mechanisms, and governance paths of soft historical nihilism is of significant importance to maintaining national ideological security and promoting cultural exchange and mutual learning among civilizations.

Based on the broad perspective of the grand historical view, this paper comprehensively analyzes the contemporary manifestations and deep roots of soft historical nihilism in society. It begins by examining the manifestations of soft historical nihilism, analyzing its specific expressions in entertainment-oriented narratives, concealed theoretical constructions, and network dissemination. It then delves into the generative logic and dissemination incentives of soft historical nihilism, revealing the underlying social psychological foundations and cognitive patterns. Finally, the paper proposes strategies and recommendations to counter soft historical nihilism, aiming to jointly build a solid defense against the erosion of historical nihilism through strengthening history education, improving network governance, and deepening interdisciplinary research.

2. Manifestations of the “softening” transformation of historical nihilism from the perspective of the grand historical view

On June 30, 2023, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out during the sixth collective study session of the 20th Central Politburo: "We must firmly establish the grand historical view, grasping the development trajectory and correct direction of world history with a broader perspective and longer-term vision, clearly recognizing the major logic and trends of China's social development and human society's progress [1]." As an important methodological shift in contemporary humanities and social sciences, the

connotation of the grand historical view has evolved alongside the dual processes of paradigm changes in historiography and the reconstruction of knowledge systems.

2.1. Defining the connotation of the grand historical view

The early mechanistic view of history simplified history to a linear sequence of isolated events on a timeline. This fragmented cognitive model has faced fundamental challenges in the 21st century. The concept of "Big History," pioneered by David Christian, examines human civilization within the framework of the 13.8 billion-year evolution of the universe, achieving a cognitive leap from "anthropocentrism" to the "cosmic community of life" [2], thus breaking through the traditional spatial and temporal dimensions of historiography in a groundbreaking way.

Currently, academic definitions of the grand historical view vary theoretically. For instance, Pang Zhuoheng, based on the materialist conception of history, proposes that the grand historical view essentially represents a contemporary development of Marx's theory of "world history," emphasizing how transformations in the modes of material production shape the evolution paths of different civilizations [3]. This framework not only integrates the dialectical relationship between the economic base and superstructure into grand historical analysis but, more importantly, reveals the deep driving mechanisms behind the rise and fall of civilizations. Meanwhile, Zhao Tingyang introduces the concept of "historical grammar," taking a novel approach by analyzing the cognitive differences in time, space, and causality among various civilizations to build a decoding system for understanding diverse civilizational evolution patterns [4]. In summary, despite varied definitions, the grand historical view fundamentally constitutes a cognitive framework and methodology that examines history from a holistic and systematic perspective. Its core lies in viewing the evolution of human society as an organically connected continuous process and emphasizing the uncovering of historical development laws through long-term and multi-dimensional analysis.

2.2. Concrete manifestations of the "softening" of historical nihilism

The grand historical view inspects the overall patterns, laws, and trends of historical development, emphasizing connectivity, development, and integrity. In contrast, historical nihilism interprets historical issues using isolated, static, and partial metaphysical methods. In recent years, historical nihilism has shifted from hard-hitting attacks to soft infiltration, correspondingly changing its narrative approach from direct indoctrination to indirect, guiding storytelling. It has prominently exhibited features of entertainment, concealment, and networked dissemination.

First, interpreting historical topics through entertaining narratives. The "culture industry" predicted by the Frankfurt School [5] has manifested new symptoms in today's algorithm-driven society. Short video platforms employ AI face-swapping technologies to transform historical figures into virtual idols; online literature rewrites revolutionary narratives into anime-style historical fiction; and the film and television industry re-edits major historical events into romanticized "CP-style" storytelling. These cross-media cultural practices collectively construct a carnivalesque spectacle of postmodern historical interpretation, which, in essence, represents the exploitative extraction of collective memory symbols by the logic of capital. From the perspective of media archaeology, this process of historical demystification presents three technical-cultural characteristics: The playful shift of visual rhetoric reduces historical events to collaged visual symbols. For example, the Bilibili platform has reconstructed the revolutionary narrative of The Age of Awakening into a "Republic-era idol drama" through secondary creation. The emotional dilution of narrative structure erodes the solemn foundation of historical discourse. On TikTok, challenges involving historical figures' costume transformations have garnered massive view counts, reducing historical reality to a consumable visual spectacle. The gamified transfer of cognitive schemas gives rise to historical nihilism. For instance, the producers of The Bad Kids launched a "historical mystery-solving game," which distorts rigorous historical inquiry into a scripted entertainment experience akin to a murder mystery party. The deeper mechanism behind this cultural symptom is a cognitive colonization jointly orchestrated by platform capitalism and digital technologies. Jean Baudrillard's concept of the "order of simulacra" [6] is fully realized within algorithmic recommendation systems. Users' interactive behaviors with historical content continuously generate new data trajectories, which in turn reshape the content production mechanisms and ultimately form a "hyperreal" closed loop of historical interpretation. Even more concerning is that this entertaining narrative—under the rhetorical guise of so-called creative freedom—covertly reconstructs the cognitive framework through which history is understood. Michel Foucault's notion of "discursive power" [7] is manifested here as a dual process of alienation: on one hand, users mistake cultural consumption for historical understanding through participatory practices like bullet comments and meme creation; on the other hand, algorithmic systems employ emotional substitution mechanisms to simplify the dialectics of history into binary moral characterizations of good versus evil. As a result, the deep narrative of ideology is displaced and commodified into material for emotional economy consumption.

Second, distorting historical consensus through covert theoretical frameworks. The operational mechanism of soft historical nihilism has surpassed the primitive forms of traditional historical nihilism—such as directly denying the legitimacy of revolutions or simply overturning established historical conclusions. Instead, it now works through the construction of seemingly "scientific" interpretive frameworks and "depoliticized" academic discourse to subtly deconstruct historical consensus. This theoretical transformation aligns with the fundamental paradigm of contemporary cognitive warfare, which seeks to gradually subvert core values through infiltration into knowledge production systems. At the methodological level, this approach first emphasizes "value

neutrality,” replacing the class-based analytical method of historical materialism with technocratic empirical research. Subsequently, it employs interdisciplinary theoretical tools to reconstruct historical events semiotically. At the epistemological level, it ultimately erodes the objectivity of historical development. For example, in studies of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, some scholars—under the banner of “de-nationalization”—deliberately downplay the scale of Japanese military atrocities or exaggerate the conflicting choices of individual historical figures through micro-narratives. While these interpretive strategies claim to “restore historical complexity,” they essentially contribute to the disintegration of collective memory. This theoretical framework exhibits three covert characteristics: Academic packaging of ideological forms of knowledge. It often draws upon postmodern historiographical resources such as “subjectivity dissolution” and “meta-narrative critique” [8], disguising the deconstruction of ideology as a form of academic innovation. Metaphorical expression of value orientations. By constructing alternative analytical frameworks such as “traumatic historical memory” and “cultural identity anxiety” [9], these narratives shift the evaluative criteria of history away from historical materialism and toward the domain of emotional politics. Layered infiltration through specialized discourse. Relying on the discursive authority of academic communities, these interpretations gradually radiate into the public domain. This deconstructive strategy is particularly evident in reinterpretations of the May Fourth Spirit. Some studies intentionally detach the movement from its specific historical context and reduce the New Culture Movement to a unidirectional narrative of “individualist awakening” [10], thereby obscuring its essential role as a pivotal moment in the dissemination of Marxism.

Third, obscuring historical understanding through the lens of networked dissemination. American scholar Alvin Toffler once stated, “Whoever controls information and the network controls the world [11]”. The development of internet technology has not only significantly advanced both material and spiritual production in society, but has also directly promoted the integration of mass culture with networked life. On one hand, the rise and empowerment of internet information technologies have allowed historical nihilism to transcend traditional temporal and spatial constraints of information dissemination, vastly expanding its mediated presence in the real world. On the other hand, the internet has also gradually facilitated the establishment of a new spatiotemporal paradigm defined by digital life. Against the backdrop of increasing immersion in virtual space, historical nihilism—having been forcefully refuted in real-world discourse—has begun to cater more strategically to people’s online behavioral patterns. As a result, soft historical nihilism has rapidly embedded itself into everyday life through its networked modes of transmission. In the context of digital media reshaping the information dissemination ecosystem, soft historical nihilism has gradually evolved into a latent ideological practice that deconstructs historical consensus through non-confrontational discursive strategies, leveraging mechanisms such as algorithmic recommendation, visual symbolism, and emotional mobilization [12]. From the perspective of communication agents, online opinion leaders and self-media platforms employ strategies such as “fragmented archaeology” and “metaphorical reconstruction” to place historical events within decontextualized communication frameworks. For example, short videos may selectively dramatize the daily lives of historical figures, or subcultural symbols such as memes and internet jokes may trivialize significant historical events. These practices use the empowerment provided by new media to selectively encode history, allowing content creators—driven by the logic of the attention economy—to subtly seize the right to interpret history. As for the audience, fragmented reading habits and algorithmic recommendation mechanisms work together to foster a skewed and indoctrinative understanding of history. Members of Generation Z, caught in the “information cocoon effect,” often encounter historical narratives that are algorithmically tailored to their user profiles. This technologically mediated mode of cognition leads audiences into what Emmanuel Levinas refers to as an “ethical dilemma of the Other” [13]: on one hand, they experience a sense of ritual participation in historical interpretation through interactive communication, while on the other, they lose the capacity for critical thinking under data manipulation.

In summary, the entertainment-oriented, covert, and network-driven narrative strategies of soft historical nihilism effectively “cut and collage” the holistic historical process, undermining its integrity; they isolate and evaluate specific historical events under revisionist pretexts—such as so-called “historical reversals”—while disregarding their broader historical context, thereby weakening historical interconnectedness; and through algorithmic control, they erode the objectivity and critical reflection inherent to historical interpretation, damaging the developmental nature of history. From the perspective of the grand historical view, these manifestations of soft historical nihilism clearly represent a profoundly flawed and myopic conception of history.

3. The generative logic and dissemination drivers of soft historical nihilism

As the latest manifestation of historical nihilist thought, soft historical nihilism emerges in response to the evolving socio-political context. On the surface, its formation appears to be a reaction to the intensified efforts by the Party and the state since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China to counter historical nihilism, which has forced proponents to shift their dissemination strategies. However, a deeper analysis reveals that the root causes lie in the challenges of subjectively driven historical narratives and the insufficient supervision and education by relevant authorities, which together provide fertile ground for the generation and proliferation of soft historical nihilism. At the same time, we must also recognize that the spread of contemporary soft historical nihilism is not solely shaped by current social conditions but also rests on deep-seated psychological foundations within society. By disguising its theoretical form, soft historical nihilism exploits various psychological tendencies of the public, thereby embedding itself into everyday discourse and facilitating its dissemination.

3.1. A perspective on its generative logic

First, the dilemma of subjectivity in recording and narrating historical facts. While historical facts—events that have already occurred—possess inherent objectivity, their documentation and expression necessarily require subjective human involvement. In the processes of collecting, selecting, organizing, and narrating historical facts, individuals inevitably exercise agency, embedding subjective perceptions within the framework of objective reality to convey a particular logic of historical understanding. This subjective intervention is, in fact, a critical component in the genesis of soft historical nihilism. Consequently, we observe that some proponents of soft historical nihilist views exhibit a profound lack of respect for modern Chinese history, especially the period following the founding of the Communist Party of China. They frequently attempt to undermine or distort the Party and the state's positive historical roles through covert means such as selective fragmentation and recombination.

Second, the systemic deficiencies in supervision and education. Whether in academic research, celebrity influence, religious infiltration, or artistic performances, the widespread propagation of historical nihilist perspectives within the public sphere is, at its core, attributable to inadequate or absent regulatory oversight by relevant state institutions. Tracing the origins of soft historical nihilist discourse reveals lingering shortcomings in current history education—ranging from textbook content and pedagogical approaches to the construction of qualified teaching teams. These deficiencies are critical and cannot be ignored in explaining the emergence of this phenomenon. In other words, in the face of various new forms of soft historical nihilist expression, there remains a considerable gap in effectively integrating Marxist historical materialism with the realities of contemporary social development, thereby impeding the construction of a cohesive and persuasive narrative framework.

3.2. An analysis of dissemination drivers

First, distorted historical narratives cater to a curiosity-driven mentality. "Curiosity" refers to the psychological impulse of individuals to explore and understand things that are unfamiliar or unknown to them. As a common audience psychology, curiosity reflects the public's desire for a deeper understanding of novel subjects. Among younger audiences whose values are still developing, curiosity can often become a key driver of social behavior. In fact, curiosity and the spread of social ideologies are closely linked. Innate traits like inquisitiveness and a thirst for knowledge not only stimulate exploration of the world but also influence cognitive and ideological development. Driven by the attention economy, soft historical nihilism reconstructs historical details to fabricate "pseudo-legends," deliberately amplifying gossip about historical figures' private lives, conspiracy theories surrounding political struggles, and graphic depictions of warfare. For instance, on short video platforms, "secret history" series may portray Zeng Guofan as a "master of bureaucratic cunning" or reduce the War of Resistance against Japan to a mere power struggle between political factions. These narratives reconstruct the causal chains of historical events to trivialize serious history into curiosity-driven content, catering especially to younger audiences' fascination with the sensational—all in pursuit of greater viewership and engagement.

Second, novel historical interpretations appeal to a contrarian mindset. A contrarian or rebellious mindset typically arises when there is a mismatch between an individual's personal expectations and the external environment. It is often emotionally charged and marked by strong resistance, commonly observed among adolescents. The prevalent anti-authoritarian sentiment in youth subcultures creates fertile ground for unconventional historical interpretations. In online communities, so-called "history inventors" emerge, constructing anti-traditional discourse frameworks—for example, claiming that the Grand Canal project hindered the emergence of capitalism in China, or that the Cold War dynamics determined the trajectory of the Chinese resistance against Japan. These narratives deliberately provoke cognitive dissonance with mainstream historical views. Often cloaked in academic language, they cite out-of-context archival excerpts or selectively chosen foreign literature to create the illusion of "subversive scholarly discovery." Cognitive psychology experiments show that when audiences are confronted with challenges to their existing cognitive frameworks, novel ideas are retained in memory more readily than conventional information. This cognitive dissonance is cleverly leveraged as a force of dissemination. In essence, it works by creating an intergenerational knowledge divide, thereby eroding the collective memory and consensus built by traditional historiography.

Third, erroneous historical values cater to feelings of cultural inferiority. In general terms, inferiority is a negative psychological state characterized by low self-assessment of one's abilities or qualities. From the perspective of soft historical nihilism, inferiority refers specifically to a lack of confidence in one's own culture—an attitude profoundly influenced by Western-centrism. Within the global power structure of knowledge production, the civilizational hierarchy constructed by Western-centric ideologies provides fertile ground for the theoretical deconstruction promoted by soft historical nihilism. Through selective historical interpretations, Western-centric academic discourse has developed an "external origin theory" model to explain the development of non-Western civilizations. Assertions such as the "Western origin of Chinese bronze technology" or the denial of the originality of the Four Great Inventions deliberately ignore archaeological evidence of the endogenous evolution of Chinese civilization, attributing technological progress to accidental transmission from foreign civilizations. This model of knowledge production continues the epistemological traditions of 19th-century colonial historiography. As Frank critiqued in *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*, "Western scholars trace the formation of the world system after 1500 as a result of European expansion, while ignoring the pre-existing economic networks in the East [14]." When such academic views are oversimplified by mass media into a conclusion that "Chinese civilization lacks originality," they exert ongoing pressure that undermines cultural identity. At the same time, soft historical nihilism attacks China's Party history, the history of New China, the history of reform and opening up,

the history of socialist development, and the history of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) with strong ideological bias. It disregards the diversity of global ideologies and cultures, uses Western civilization as a universal yardstick to judge and belittle other cultures, and fabricates fallacies such as "wholesale Westernization." This greatly caters to a sense of cultural inferiority in some individuals. As certain people with blind admiration for the West collude with soft historical nihilist narratives, Western cultural ideologies significantly influence the development and prosperity of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics. This, in turn, continually undermines the confidence in China's path, theory, system, and culture.

Taking a broader view of the three psychological mechanisms discussed above, their synergistic effect forms a comprehensive motivational system for the spread of soft historical nihilism. Curiosity breaks down cognitive defenses, contrarianism generates momentum for dissemination, and inferiority facilitates value transformation—together constructing a closed loop from information exposure to value identification.

4. Approaches to rectifying soft historical nihilism from the perspective of the grand historical view

Combating soft historical nihilism requires a three-pronged strategy: first, employing a grand historical view to refute its idealist essence and systematically dismantle fragmented narratives; second, constructing a multidimensional historical cognition system by integrating education on the "Four Histories" (Party history, history of New China, reform and opening-up history, and socialist development history) with the grand historical view, for example, through longitudinal comparisons between the history of reform and opening up and the Self-Strengthening Movement, or through tracing the trajectory of socialist development to strengthen confidence in China's development path; third, improving comprehensive online governance mechanisms. These three measures work in tandem to unify theoretical critique and practical reconstruction, thereby fortifying the ideological security barrier.

4.1. Grounded in the grand historical view: reinforcing the philosophical foundation of historical materialism

The core problem of soft historical nihilism lies in its subjective deconstruction of historical objectivity—essentially a contemporary manifestation of idealist historiography. For instance, some recent online discourses use "hypothetical reconstructions" to deny the historical necessity of the Chinese revolution, asserting that "had the Qing government succeeded in implementing reforms, there would have been no need for revolution." Such narratives deliberately overlook the irreconcilable social contradictions and class struggles of late Qing society, substituting subjective imagination for historical fact. To counter this ideological trend, it is essential to adopt the grand historical view as a methodological guide and reinforce the foundational role of historical materialism. The grand historical view emphasizes analyzing historical evolution within the "long river of history, great tides of the era, and global transformations" [15], advocating for historical inquiry that situates events within both a longitudinal temporal framework and a horizontal spatial context in order to uncover the inner logic of historical development. As the theoretical foundation of the grand historical view, historical materialism asserts that "people make their own history, but not under circumstances of their own choosing," emphasizing that historical processes are constrained by the dialectical contradiction between productive forces and relations of production, rather than being mere accumulations of random incidents.

Accordingly, confronting soft historical nihilism requires exposing its metaphysical nature—namely, its severing of the dialectical connection between historical necessity and contingency. For example, in rebutting the fallacy of "historical contingency determinism," one can draw upon Engels' "theory of historical synergy" to deepen the critique: historical outcomes result from the interaction of countless individual wills, but are always shaped by specific social conditions [16]. Taking the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression as an example, certain views exaggerate the impact of individual battles on the overall outcome, while ignoring the decisive roles played by the united national front and the strategy of protracted warfare. With the broad perspective afforded by the grand historical view, it becomes possible to systematically reconstruct the complex interrelations among historical events and expose the logical flaws of soft historical nihilism, such as "substituting fragments for the whole" or "using appearances to obscure essence." This, in turn, consolidates the discursive authority of historical materialism at the theoretical level.

4.2. Deepening history education to build a correct historical cognition system

The infiltration of soft historical nihilism is rooted in fragmented and disconnected historical understanding. Currently, some young people's perception of history is limited to "three-minute history lessons" on short video platforms or fictionalized historical dramas, leading to the simplification of historical memory into curiosity-driven plots and entertainment symbols. In response, the grand historical view calls for the construction of a multi-dimensional and comprehensive educational framework.

First, it is essential to deeply integrate education on the "Four Histories" (Party history, the history of New China, reform and opening-up history, and socialist development history) with the grand historical view to uncover the underlying logic of historical development through comparative analysis. For example, when teaching the history of reform and opening up, one can compare China's exploration from the Self-Strengthening Movement to the establishment of the socialist market economy, and contrast it horizontally with the failed neoliberal reforms in Latin American countries, thereby highlighting the historical necessity and uniqueness of the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Likewise, by tracing the evolution of utopian socialism, scientific

socialism, and socialism with Chinese characteristics within the history of socialist development, the theoretical innovations and practical breakthroughs of the Sinicization of Marxism can be clarified, thus counteracting the misleading narrative of the “end of history” [17].

Second, it is necessary to innovate educational mediums and utilize technology to enhance the authenticity and immersive quality of historical perception. For instance, Virtual Reality (VR) technology can be used to reconstruct the original appearance of the Old Summer Palace, enabling audiences to viscerally experience the destruction of cultural heritage and the profound pain of national humiliation. AI-based interactive programs can simulate trade scenes along the Silk Road, allowing young people to appreciate the far-reaching impact of ancient civilizational exchanges through immersive virtual experiences. In addition, interactive history-themed games could be developed, such as strategy games set during the Long March, enabling players to role-play and thereby deepen their empathetic understanding of Party history.

Third, it is vital to strengthen critical thinking training by constructing a cognitive loop of identification–reflection–reconstruction. For example, in response to online rumors claiming “Soviet assistance to China in the War of Resistance Against Japan was merely an exchange of interests,” students can be guided to examine the original text of the Sino-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, compare archival records of strategic cooperation between the two countries, and analyze its historical legitimacy within the context of geopolitical dynamics. Additionally, a “Historical Rumor Debunking Week” could be launched in collaboration with universities, media, and social platforms to host academic dialogues and science communication livestreams, thereby establishing a coordinated governance mechanism involving “expert explanation–public participation–platform collaboration.”

4.3. Improving cyber governance to build a strong ideological security barrier

The dissemination of soft historical nihilism relies heavily on algorithmic recommendations and echo chamber effects within cyberspace. For example, some self-media accounts sensationalize history by employing clickbait headlines that defame historical figures, and then use platform algorithms to precisely target specific groups, creating an “information cocoon” effect. In response, it is necessary to establish a triadic governance system that integrates technological empowerment, institutional regulation, and cultural cultivation.

On the technological front, Natural Language Processing (NLP) and sentiment analysis can be leveraged to develop multimodal detection models for identifying historical nihilist content. For instance, texts that contain semantic features such as “historical hypotheticals” or “fictional reinterpretations,” along with images that distort and vilify historical figures through grayscale tones or twisted collage techniques, can be subject to real-time monitoring and tiered warnings. Additionally, a “Historical Credibility Index” algorithm could be developed to automatically tag online content, helping users assess the reliability of the information they encounter.

At the institutional level, it is essential to refine content classification standards and accountability mechanisms for online information. For example, in line with the Provisions on the Governance of the Online Information Content Ecosystem, soft historical nihilist content can be categorized as “illegal or harmful information,” thereby clearly defining platforms’ review responsibilities. Implementation rules for the Law on the Protection of Heroes and Martyrs should be improved to increase administrative penalties for malicious distortions of revolutionary history. Furthermore, a “Historical Content Creator Certification System” could be established to vet and periodically evaluate the qualifications of accounts engaged in historical education, ensuring the professionalism and accuracy of disseminated content.

From the cultural perspective, efforts should focus on cultivating a “historical consciousness community” within cyberspace. For example, netizens can be encouraged to form “Guardians of Historical Truth” communities, thereby establishing a grassroots force for fact-checking and historical accountability [18]. Universities can be supported in offering public courses on “Digital Historical Literacy” to enhance the public’s ability to critically engage with history-related media. On the international stage, China should actively shape discourse and expose the ideological traps in Western narratives. For instance, in response to the West’s historical nihilist portrayal of the “Xinjiang issue,” co-produced international documentaries and civilizational dialogue forums could be utilized to present empirical evidence of Xinjiang’s multi-ethnic integration, thereby countering the ideological manipulation of “human rights” as a pretext for interference.

5. Conclusion and outlook

Soft historical nihilism represents a new variant of historical nihilism in the digital age. Through entertaining narratives, fragmented dissemination, and covert expression, it seriously erodes mainstream social values. From the broad perspective of the grand historical view (*da lishi guan*), this paper reveals the generative logic of soft historical nihilism—it is both an ideologically idealist reinterpretation enabled by digital technology and a product of ideological contestation in the context of globalization. The study shows that the governance of soft historical nihilism must adhere to a dual strategy of “critique and reconstruction.” The fallacies of this discourse must be exposed through theoretical critique rooted in historical materialism, while historical understanding must be reconstructed through the practical methodology of the grand historical view. Only by incorporating ideological security into the broader framework of national governance modernization can the infiltration of historical nihilism be effectively resisted.

Looking ahead, the governance of soft historical nihilism is expected to develop along two major trajectories. First, the deepening of interdisciplinary research. Advances in fields such as artificial intelligence and cognitive science will offer new tools to detect the patterns and mechanisms behind the spread of historical nihilist content. Second, enhanced global cooperation in ideological governance. As “history wars” become a new focal point in international discursive struggles, building a shared narrative of human civilization will emerge as a key task. In this process, the grand historical view not only embodies China’s unique intellectual response to historical nihilism, but also contributes an Eastern solution to global ideological governance. Only by upholding both foundational principles and innovative thinking can we reinforce the bulwark of historical memory and safeguard the roots of national spirit.

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