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中國民族主義之話語：內容與方向
Chinese Nationalist Discourse: Contents and Orientations

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Abstract

What kind of nationalism exists in contemporary China, and how does that nationalism imagine the Chinese nation? Has the rhetoric of nationalism in mainland China changed since the ascent of Xi Jinping to the position of General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)? This thesis seeks to address these questions by analyzing theories of nations and nationalisms, secondary literature on Chinese nationalism, and a volume of primary sources representative of Chinese nationalist discourse with an emphasis on the Xi Jinping era.

Methodologically, this study presents a dichotomy of nations as either ethno-cultural or civic-territorial in content and nationalisms as either polity-seeking (state-seeking and revisionist) or polity-based (nationalizing and status-quo reinforcing) in orientation. These distinctions are then applied to reinterpret the content and orientation of official nationalism across generations of Chinese political leadership. This study therefore generates a dialogue between theories, narratives, and “social realities” that illuminates a critical aspect of Chinese politics: the ongoing redefinition of “China” as a nation. Discovering the nature of Chinese nationalism in this context is crucial not only for an understanding of politics in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), but indeed for greater clarity on a key social and political issue throughout “Greater China.” Furthermore, the approach embodied herein can be applied to other cases to bring greater consistency to the literature of nationalism studies.

摘要

何謂現當代中國之民族主義？此種民族主義如何想像出「中華民族」這個共同體？中國民族主義之話語是否在習近平擔任中共中央總書記以來有所變化？本論文試圖通過有關民族主義之理論，中國研究文獻與中國民族主義話語之分析來探討以上幾個問題。方法論上，本論文提供兩種二分法：其一為民族主義話語「公民－領土」與「族裔－文化」之不同內容，其二為民族主義「尋求建立政體」與「維護既有政體」之不同方向。本作者適用此兩種二分法來重新解釋幾代中國政治領導層之人物所講出來的民族主義話語之內容與方向。因此，此篇論文將打造理論，敘述與「社會現實」之間的對話來闡明中國政治至關重要方面之一：即「中華民族」持續不斷的再定義。了解到現當代中國民族主義之內容與方向在很大程度上有助於我們對中國人民共和國政治之認識，更能夠讓我們進一步地理解在「大中華」所存在的政治與社會問題之一。不僅如此，本論文所體現之學習方式具有延伸性，而因此能夠適用在其他個案上，使民族主義學之文獻變得更為一致。

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Towards the end of a lifetime of observing China, Lucian Pye wrote in 1996, “The content of contemporary Chinese nationalism... appears to be exceedingly thin... without a substantive core which can be readily articulated.”¹ Now, over 20 years since Pye’s observation, the contents and orientations of Chinese nationalism merit reconsideration. This thesis seeks to do so, methodically, over several sections. First, this introduction presents several key disagreements in the English-language literature on Chinese nationalism, brief theoretical considerations relating to nationalism studies and comparative politics, key definitions, and a general conceptualization of the theoretical relationship between national identity, the nation as an imagined community, and nationalism as a form of politics.

1.1: Why Study Chinese Nationalism?

Many questions are considered over the following pages. One question that must be addressed at the outset, however, is the *why* of this study: why study Chinese nationalism? Why choose to view Chinese politics through a notoriously difficult lens, one with decades of theoretical disagreements and seemingly unresolvable disputes? And why study a Chinese political phenomenon through a theoretical lens that has been highly influenced by the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of its mostly non-Chinese theorists? I raise these points up front, not to elicit the reader’s sympathy for the difficulties inherent in this study, but rather to offer some thoughts on the vital importance of the subject matter at hand.

A significant body of evidence suggests that nationhood is unusually salient in Chinese society. Surveys conducted in the PRC in 2010 and 2014 showed that over 80 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “When other people criticize China, it is as though they are criticizing me.”² As Dickson writes, “This is a clear indicator that the self-identity of many Chinese is intimately tied to their country.”³ A 2008 survey showed that 84.3 percent of Chinese respondents agreed, “Your country should pursue its national interest even if it could harm the

¹ Lucian W. Pye, “How China’s Nationalism Was Shanghaied,” in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 106.

² Bruce J. Dickson, *The Dictator’s Dilemma: The Chinese Communist Party’s Strategy for Survival* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 235.

³ *Ibid.*, 235.

interests of another.”⁴ This is not typical; as Linley notes, only about 40 percent of Japanese affirm such an “unconditional support” for their national interest.⁵ Surveys conducted from 2005 to 2010 by Asian Barometer showed that the Chinese public had the most positive feelings about their nation among the publics of thirteen Asian countries.⁶ Each of these findings, of course, portrays no more than a particular facet of the sentiments that connect individual Chinese to the Chinese nation. Nonetheless, a variety of metrics support the argument that “The Chinese today possess a strong sense of nationhood.”⁷

It would be a mistake, of course, to assume that nationalist sentiments at the social level are deterministic of policy choices at the state level. At the same time, however, we dare not pretend that phenomena at the social level are irrelevant to policy formulated at the state level, or that state actors are fully in control of changes in the salience of nationalism within society. How then can nationalism be situated in the state-society relationship? Although seldom mentioned in studies of nationalism, political regime theory offers a way to conceptualize the state-society relationship that is particularly instructive here. As Macridis and Burg write, political regime theory emphasizes the state’s imperative to “Generate commonly shared goals... commonly shared ideas or... a prevailing ideology.”⁸ Often accomplished by socialization, this is said to be the first “major function” of all political systems.⁹ Is state-led nationalism the “prevailing ideology” that China’s political system seeks to generate?

A number of scholars present essentially this argument. Some, stressing Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, argue that official nationalism seeks a position of ‘Gramscian’ hegemony within Chinese society. Gramsci theorized that power must be understood as a combination of consent and coercion, and used the concept of *hegemony* to discuss the interplay of consent and coercion within the state-society relationship.¹⁰ Jones notes that Gramsci’s notion

⁴ Findings quoted in Matthew Linley, “Nationalist Attitudes among mass publics in East Asia,” in *Asian Nationalisms Reconsidered*, ed. Jeff Kingston (London: Routledge, 2016), 126.

⁵ Linley, “Nationalist Attitudes,” 126.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 118

⁷ Henry S. Rowen, “When Will the Chinese People Be Free?” *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 3, July 2007.

⁸ Roy C. Macridis and Steven L. Burg, *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 2nd ed. (Moosic, PA: HarperCollins, 1991), 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Originally formulated as an explanation of the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in European polities, Gramsci’s theory has been applied to a diverse set of questions far removed from his original Marxist framework. Its

of hegemony allows us to analyze the relationship of a ruling group to power in terms of “expansive hegemony” and “limited hegemony.”¹¹ Expansive hegemony is achieved when (in theory) coercion and repression are no longer necessary; the social and political status quo is fully consensual and the cultural production of power at the state level and social level are mutually compatible. Then, the “multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, on the basis of an equal and common conception of the world.”¹² (In later sections, this study considers rhetoric of Chinese leaders and intellectuals since Sun Yat-sen that bears a remarkable similarity to the above quote.) Limited hegemony, on the other hand, characterizes the much more common situation in which a ruling group has not genuinely adopted “the interest of the popular classes,” but has rather “neutralized or ‘decapitated’ them through depriving them of their leadership.”¹³

It is in the interest of political elites to seek expansive hegemony. After all, coercion tends to be comparatively messy and expensive, and is sometimes self-defeating; consent is harmonious and “civilized.” Certainly the CCP, like other ruling groups, prefers the later to the former, and the CCP’s monopoly over the mechanisms of the state provides it with the means necessary to pursue expansive hegemony. Analyzing contemporary state media in the PRC, Yong concludes, “Party-led nationalism in China should be understood as a hegemonic ideology.”¹⁴ We can understand that to mean the following: the CCP instrumentalizes Chinese nationalism at the state level in order to construct and shape national identity at the social level such that social interests become more compatible with the goals of the party-state.

Indeed, state-led nationalism appears to play a particularly clear role in the (attempted) generation of a “prevailing ideology” since the implementation of the 1990’s Patriotic Education Campaign, a development explored briefly in Chapter five. Although the larger picture of

applicability to the Chinese state-society relationship is proposed in Yong Cao, “From Communism to Nationalism: China’s Press in the Transition of Dominant Ideology,” *Global Media Journal* 4, no. 6 (June 2005), <http://www.globalmediajournal.com/open-access/from-communism-to-nationalism-chinas-press-in-the-transition-of-dominant-ideology.php?aid=35104>. Also discussed in Xueli Zhang, “Redefining Chinese Nationalism: State-Society Relations and China’s Modernization in the Era of Globalization” (PhD diss., Northern Arizona University, 2007).

¹¹ Steve Jones, *Antonio Gramsci* (Routledge: New York, 2006), 52.

¹² C. Mercer, “Generating Consent,” *Ten*, 1984, 9. Quoted in Jones, *Antonio Gramsci*, 53.

¹³ Jones, *Antonio Gramsci*, 52.

¹⁴ Yong Cao, “From Communism to Nationalism,” n.p.

Chinese nationalism as a contested political discourse – and “China” as a putative nation – is far too complex to be reduced to the state-led perspective alone, neither can that perspective be overlooked. As explored below, nationalism certainly functions bi-directionally; it occurs in both top-down (state-led) and bottom up (society-driven) forms. It will be seen, moreover, that these two forms of nationalism are mutually influencing. But if Hobsbawm, Wang, and others are correct, then it is the state, first and foremost, that creates the nation – and it does so via nationalism.¹⁵

An abundance of secondary literature contends that the CCP has a powerful incentive to encourage the nationalization of Chinese society. English-language discussions of the PRC’s political regime politics published in the last two decades present a near-consensus that nationalism constitutes one of two primary pillars legitimating the PRC’s political regime. (The other pillar is typically called “economic growth,” although Dickson has convincingly argued that rising individual income is far more important than aggregate growth for CCP legitimacy.¹⁶) Christensen writes, “Since jettisoning Maoist Communist ideology in the reform period, the nominally Communist CCP has legitimized itself through fast-paced economic growth and by nationalism. It portrays itself as an increasingly capable protector of Chinese interests and national honor.”¹⁷ Shambaugh concurs, “Chinese nationalism continues to be a key anchor of the regime’s legitimacy.”¹⁸

Nor are Western academics alone in adhering to the “two pillar” interpretation of CCP legitimacy in post-Maoist China. An unnamed leader of the 1989 pro-Democracy movement is said to have reflected, after his release from prison in 1996, “People are more **nationalistic**

¹⁵ Hobsbawm writes, “it is pointless to discuss nation and nationality except insofar as both relate to... [the] modern territorial state... Nations do not make states and nationalisms, but the other way round.” Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 9-10. Gellner additionally discusses the nation as a product of nationalism, writing, “it is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round.” Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 55.

¹⁶ Dickson’s survey data demonstrates that “neither levels of per capita GD nor rates of growth increase trust and support in China’s main political institutions – the Party, the government, and the people’s congress (China’s legislature) – at either the central or local level. However, individuals who have seen their incomes rise in recent years and believe they will continue to grow in the years ahead are more likely to support the regime.” This finding is key because it suggests that “Slower economic growth is not a threat to [the Party’s] popular support so long as incomes continue to rise.” Bruce J. Dickson, *The Dictator’s Dilemma*, 9.

¹⁷ Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015), 109.

¹⁸ David Shambaugh, *China’s Future* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 170.

[now], and because of **economic growth** they have more personal space and freedom and money, so it makes it easier to accept the government's line."¹⁹ The argument that nationalism and economic growth constitute the two primary sources of CCP legitimacy, in fact, has become commonplace in university and graduate-level coursework in Chinese politics.²⁰

Despite this near-consensus on national identity's salience in Chinese society and nationalism's importance for the CCP, there is considerable disagreement about the effects that nationalism has or could have on the PRC's future political development and foreign relations. The most common treatment views Chinese nationalism as "a double edged sword": a phenomenon that ordinarily generates unity, shared identity, and support for the party-state, yet also increases the potential for public rage should the government prove insufficiently "nationalist" on issues of concern to the Chinese people.²¹ Chen apparently views Chinese nationalism as equally likely to threaten as to strengthen regime security, thus "explaining the state's ambivalence toward the phenomenon... While state-nurtured patriotism provides a much-needed sense of collective identity and solidarity," she postulates, "the CCP faces the dilemma of containing expressions of popular anger targeting foreign countries without sacrificing the nationalist credentials on which its legitimacy is based."²² Zhao writes plainly, "nationalism... is a value that both the regime and its critics share [but also] a two-edged sword: It mobilizes people behind the state, but it also gives them a ground on which to judge the state's performance."²³ The double-edged sword concept is frequently raised in Western media as well. In but one example, Kristof writes that nationalism is "a particularly interesting force in China, given its potential not just for conferring legitimacy on the government but also for taking it away."²⁴

Shambaugh presents a somewhat more controversial – although not unreasonable – view,

¹⁹ Emphasis Added. Thomas L. Friedman, "Foreign Affairs; China's Nationalist Tide," *The New York Times*, March 13, 1996, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/03/13/opinion/foreign-affairs-china-s-nationalist-tide.html>.

²⁰ This observation comes from the author's coursework in the United States and Taiwan between 2013 and 2016.

²¹ This view of Chinese nationalism is summarized in Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 232-233.

²² Chen Chunhua, "Nationalism and its political implications in contemporary China," in *Asian Nationalisms Reconsidered*, ed. Jeff Kingston (London: Routledge, 2016), 148.

²³ Suisheng Zhao, "Xi Jinping's Maoist Revival," *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 3 (July 2016): 83.

²⁴ Nicholas D. Kristof, "The World: Fruits of Democracy; Guess who's a Chinese Nationalist Now?" *The New York Times*, April 22, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/22/weekinreview/the-world-fruits-of-democracy-guess-who-s-a-chinese-nationalist-now.html>.

writing that Chinese nationalism drives the PRC “in a more assertive direction” vis-à-vis its neighboring states,²⁵ and could trigger “aggressive moves against Japan and other neighbors.”²⁶ Apparently viewing Chinese nationalism primarily as a latent public sentiment to which CCP leaders are beholden, Shambaugh suggests that in a context of “already hyper Chinese nationalism,” the CCP could turn to a “diversionary war” if faced with a legitimacy crisis.²⁷ The implication to this claim is that China’s leaders are somewhat at the mercy of a highly nationalistic population. Johnston notes that a similar interpretation is held within the U.S. defense establishment. “Senior U.S. military officers,” to whom he spoke in 2015 and 2016, expressed a “worry that the Chinese leadership will engage in diversionary conflict when China’s economic growth slows.”²⁸ Shirk similarly sees China’s leaders somewhat at the mercy of a nationalistic population, writing, “The worst nightmare of China’s leaders is a national protest movement of discontented groups... united against the regime by the shared fervor of nationalism”²⁹

Thus these scholars share a presumption that latently powerful Chinese nationalism is intimately connected with potential violence that could either manifest as an eruption of public discontent towards the party-state, or in a war pursued by the party-state in order to mitigate that risk. These concerns cannot be lightly dismissed. According to anonymous sources who attended the November 2016 meeting between Xi Jinping and Hong Hsiu-chu, chairwoman and leader of the KMT at the time, Xi offered a frank summary the relationship between nationalism and regime security in a cross-strait relations context: “From the position of Chinese people’s nationalism, 1.3 billion people on the mainland would not agree to Taiwan’s formal independence... The Communist Party would be overthrown by the people if the pro-independence issue was not dealt with.”³⁰ In this context, any war initiated by the PRC in

²⁵ Shambaugh, *China’s Future*, 170.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

²⁸ Alastair Iain Johnston, “Is Chinese Nationalism Rising? Evidence from Beijing,” *International Security* 41, no. 3 (Winter 2016/2017): 8.

²⁹ Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 7.

³⁰ Zhang Pinghui, “Xi Jinping warns Communist Party would be ‘overthrown’ if Taiwan’s independence push left unchecked.” *South China Morning Post*, November 4, 2016, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2042784/xi-jinping-warns-communist-party-would-be-overthrown-if>.

accordance with the 2005 Anti-Secession law³¹ would be presented as a defense of “China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,” but conducted for the deeper purposes of protecting the party-state’s regime security from the threat of domestic insurrection of the kind described by Shirk.

Yet a number of scholars take a firmly opposing view regarding Chinese nationalism’s salience and likely effects. Kuo argues that “the appeal of nationalism in China appears to be dwindling.”³² A recent study by Johnston uses surveys conducted in Beijing to demonstrate declining “levels of nationalism since around 2009.” Johnston additionally finds that, “contrary to the conventional wisdom...it is China’s older generations that are more nationalistic than its youth.” Thus, “rising Chinese nationalism,” though a highly visible meme in Western media, “may not be a critically important variable constraining Chinese foreign policy.”³³ Li similarly argues that the common description of a surge in Chinese nationalism exaggerates the nationalistic sentiments of Chinese youth. He sees, on the contrary, a Chinese youth relatively disengaged from the ideas of nation and nationalism.³⁴

Indeed, reviewing the scholarly literature on Chinese nationalism reveals major disagreements on the impact of nationalism on Chinese politics and foreign relations. In light of these conflicting arguments, neither the popular “double-edged sword” interpretation, nor the aggressive nationalism or dwindling nationalism hypotheses are overly persuasive. Indeed, as Carlson observes, “neither those who have argued that nationalism is pushing China towards confrontational positions in the international arena, nor those who have disputed that position have supported their respective arguments in a compelling fashion.” Perhaps, he reasons, “we still have little agreement over what Chinese nationalism is,” and “a contested object” cannot

³¹ Article 8 of the law states, “In the event that the ‘Taiwan independence’ secessionist forces should act under any name or by any means to cause the fact of Taiwan’s secession from China, or that major incidents entailing Taiwan’s secession from China should occur, or that possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted, the state shall employ nonpeaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.” Andrew J. Nathan and Andrew Scobell, “Problems of Stateness: Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan,” in *China’s Search for Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 219.

³² Kaiser Kuo, “Do we really need to worry so much about Chinese nationalism?” *SupChina*, February 2017, <http://supchina.com/2017/02/24/really-need-worry-much-chinese-nationalism/>.

³³ Johnston, “Is Chinese Nationalism Rising,” 9.

³⁴ Liqing Li, “China’s Rising Nationalism and Its Forefront: Politically Apathetic Youth,” *China Report* 51, no. 4 (November 2015), 311-326.

readily explain or predict other phenomena.³⁵ Enthusiastically agreeing with Carlson’s prognosis, this study aims to add clarity to the discussion of Chinese nationalism by interpreting its related discourses through an important but underutilized theoretical lens. To do so, we must first consider the conceptual distinction between “categories of practice” and “categories of analysis” in relation to Chinese nationalism.

1.2: Chinese Nationalism in Theory and in Practice

There are important constraints and implications generated by any given theoretical approach to nationalism. Carlson has noted that “in framing the study of identity in China primarily within the paradigm of nationalism, scholars have tended to reify the categories of nation, state, and identity that they are ostensibly examining.”³⁶ Callahan likewise expresses concern that many treatments of “Chinese-ness” frame the object of their study as a kind of identity implicitly “limited to nation and state.” These studies therefore “[risk] further naturalizing the link between nation, security and identity in the service of the nation.”³⁷ By “tethering the study of identity in China to the intellectual research tradition of nationalism,” in other words, scholars inadvertently demonstrate the existence of a “Chinese nation” by virtue of their theoretical approach.³⁸ “Such definitional exercises become self-fulfilling prophecies, overlooking the degree to which the practice of individual agents/actors shapes the structure of social constructs” such as national identity.³⁹

Is there no dispositive approach to studying the nation? In other words, how can we study Chinese nationalism without merely reproducing the Chinese nationalist claim that there is a particular kind of Chinese nation? We may begin by taking seriously Brubaker’s admonition to “decouple categories of analysis from categories of practice, retaining as analytically indispensable the notions of nation as practical category, nationhood as institutionalized form,

³⁵ Allen Carlson, “A Flawed Perspective: the Limitations Inherent within the Study of Chinese Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (January 2009): 26.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁷ William A. Callahan, “Nationalism, Civilization, and Transnational Relations: The Discourse of Greater China,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 14, no. 43 (January 2005): 5-6. Quoted in *Ibid.*

³⁸ Carlson, “A Flawed Perspective,” 27.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

and nationness as event, but leaving ‘the nation’ as enduring community to nationalists.”⁴⁰ Brubaker carefully distinguishes between the “*putative* nation” – the nation claimed by nationalists – and the concept of *nation* addressed in the theoretical literature.⁴¹ Moreover, Brubaker treats “‘nation’ as contingent event” rather than “substantial entity.”⁴² In following these distinctions, we aim to study Chinese nationalism without merely stating positions in favor of or against it.

Distinguishing between theoretical and practical, between “contingent” and “substantial,” does not imply a particular stance with regard to the perennialist versus modernist debate within nationalism theory, nor does it mean that the insights gleaned from the theoretical literature are inapplicable to our understanding of the putative nation. But as this study considers both nationalism in the theoretical literature and the “Chinese nation” as presented in discourse of Chinese nationalists, it must apply the insights of theory without *implying* that the contents of the putative nation are determined by such theory.

Nor should such distinctions lead us to the argument that nationhood is a “false consciousness.” Rather, as this is a study of discourse, the duality of “true” and “false” as usually employed is of little use here. Any characterization of the Chinese nation presumably communicates either “reality” as understood by the speaker, or demonstrates the speaker’s attempt to persuasively reshape “reality.” Nor must we distinguish between these two forms of speech; from a Foucauldian perspective, in fact, all discourse (re)produces both power and knowledge simultaneously.⁴³ This is not a normative study on the truths and falsehoods of Chinese nationalist discourse, and so it can make no claims as to the “fakeness” or “reality” of China as an imagined political community.

We can, in fact, predict that an impartial examination of *any* nationalism would yield enough dubious distortions of fact to give the reader pause. As Hobsbawm famously writes, “Nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so... ‘Getting its history wrong is

⁴⁰ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 22.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴³ Pat Thomson, “A Foucauldian Approach to Discourse Analysis,” July 10, 2011, <https://patthomson.net/2011/07/10/a-foucauldian-approach-to-discourse-analysis/>.

part of being a nation.”⁴⁴ It goes without saying that Chinese nationalism is no exception, especially when a primary aspect of that nationalism is sponsored by a self-interested actor – in this case, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As declared in a 2016 policy paper, the CCP expressly intends to utilize compulsory education to promote patriotism at home as well as to “gather the broad numbers of students abroad as a patriotic energy” that radiates pro-China sentiments throughout the world.⁴⁵ The public arguments of Chinese nationalists – whether in the domestic arena or an international setting, and whether they align with or run counter to the official state-sponsored narrative – are *not* value-neutral, objective examinations of a social reality. They presume the value of such a “nation,” and we may assume that their characterizations of said nation are deliberately made to support positions of self-interest.

Thus it would be banal to approach a scholarly study of Chinese nationalism with the intent to “disprove” the territorial or historical claims of Chinese nationalists, such as the historical validity of the “Nine Dashed Line” in the South China Sea or the nature of the historical relationship between past Chinese dynasties and the Tibetan Kingdom. Those debates belong to the field of history, and in a nationalist context have little power to change opinions. In fact, as something that is implicitly given tremendous *moral value*, a “nation” can neither be understood nor contested on rational grounds. As Haidt convincingly argues, statements that seem to support or assault our moral worldview are judged via intuition and emotion rather than dispassionate reason.⁴⁶ Since nationhood is psychologically grounded in a Durkheimian

⁴⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 12. In the second clause, Hobsbawm quotes Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?” 7-8.

⁴⁵ In addition to the relatively unremarkable proposal to “make patriotic education the perpetual theme that promotes (a spirit of) patriotism and pervades the entirety of public education” (把愛國主義教育作為弘揚愛國主義精神的永恆主題，貫穿國民教育全過程) the 2016 Ministry of Education policy document also declares the need to “gather the broad numbers of students abroad as a patriotic energy, establish an overseas propaganda model with people as the medium and real words and thoughts as the method of dissemination, and develop an effect in which everyone radiates and strives to be a public ambassador, and every sentence easily reaches hearts and minds.” (聚集廣大海外留學人員愛國能量，確立以人為媒介、以心口相傳為手段的海外宣傳模式，形成人人發揮輻射作用、個個爭做民間大使、句句易於入腦入心的宣傳效應)。中共教育部黨組，〈中共教育部黨組關於教育系統深入開展愛國主義教育的實施意見〉，《中華人民共和國教育部》，2016年1月26日，http://www.moe.edu.cn/srcsite/A13/s7061/201601/t20160129_229131.html.

⁴⁶ Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Random House, 2012), 32-110.

morality⁴⁷ – a point elaborated in the next chapter – an outsider to the national community has little power to meaningfully contest its distortions of history or praise its moral value.

Rather, this study endeavors to follow in the example of Wang Horng-luen's research by treating nation, nationness, and nationalism as *phenomena*. Wang describes nationalism phenomenologically as an attitude or disposition that arises naturally as populations confront the broader world.⁴⁸ Rather than criticizing nationalism as a “false consciousness,” Wang stresses the reality of the sentiments embodied in nationalism, and therefore seeks to understand the nationalist world view, its associated cognitive frames, and the institutions that shape and support it.⁴⁹ In investigating the content of contemporary Chinese nationalism, we likewise treat that content as a phenomenon and a “social reality” rather than a delusion that needs to be dispelled.

Even so, a question is begged within this approach, as perhaps in any study on the content of a particular nationalism or the nature of an imagined nation: what condition of modernity and/or human psychology explains the *why* of the nation? Why should the nation come to be imagined? As the following literature review will demonstrate, a variety of theoretical and historical approaches to nationalism offer vastly differing answers to this question. Examining the literature broadly, we may simply conclude that various kinds of values, ideologies, cultural institutions, ethnic bonds and socioeconomic transformations have provided a basis for the “deep, horizontal comradeship” that we find in the world's many nations. Staying mindful of Brubaker's crucial distinction between “categories of analysis” – in this case, nationalism or the nation as a field of study – and “categories of practice,” – in this case, existing phenomena that we call nationalism and “nations,” we may be driven to the conclusion that *there is no single phenomenon* called nationalism that exists across the world's many diverse social and political contexts. In other words, “nation” and “nationalism,” as a category of analysis, may constitute an inadequate lens through which we study the diverse set of phenomena and practices commonly subsumed under “nationalism.”

⁴⁷ Durkheim wrote, “What is moral is everything that is a source of solidarity, everything that forces man to ... regulate his actions by something other than ... his own egoism.” The nation is therefore functionally moral in a Durkheimian sense. See Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, 314.

⁴⁸ This is a loose paraphrasing of Wang's somewhat more succinct description: 「用現象學的概念來說，民族主義可說是一種面對世界的『自然態度』」。汪宏倫，〈理解當代中國民族主義：制度、情感結構與認識框架〉，《文化研究》第 19 期，197。

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 197.

Pursuing that line of thought further, why study nationalism comparatively at all, or why call the object of this study “nationalism?” Pre-emptively defending his choice of classification of nationalism in history, Breuille notes “Classifications are simply sets of interrelated definitions. Empirically they are not right or wrong; rather they are either helpful or unhelpful.”⁵⁰ Although Breuille refers to classifications *within* nationalism rather than the choice of considering nationalism as a classification of political phenomena, we can easily broaden his logic in defense of studying nationalism as a phenomenon. If doing so is helpful to an understanding of Chinese politics, than the choice is justified. As will be illustrated in later chapters, Chinese scholars and political leaders use the language of nationalism very liberally. We ought not, therefore, discount “nationalism” as a theoretical lens when approaching Chinese politics.

1.3: Uniqueness versus Comparative Study

An examination of nationalism must thoughtfully engage with the issue of *uniqueness*, including the assertion that all nations – or at least the putative nation in question – are special, morally important, and distinct. Theorists of nationhood have variously emphasized the uniqueness of “national character,”⁵¹ “the people” as “the natural repository of authentic experience,”⁵² and the “individuality... of the community.”⁵³ Indeed, a view of the nation as a primarily cultural entity, one with a “common symbolic system,” including language, philosophy, and social mores that are said to grown out of “unique national history,”⁵⁴ – as well as a “homogenous conception of time, space, number and cause, which makes it possible for [members of the in-group] to reach agreement or consensus on the immediate meaning of the

⁵⁰ John Breuille, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 9.

⁵¹ Rousseau wrote in 1914, “The first rule that we must follow is that of national character. Every people has, or must have, a character; if it lacks one, we must begin by endowing it with one.” Quoted in Anthony Smith, *The Nation in History* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000), 8.

⁵² Smith attributes this “cultural populism” to J. G. Herder. See Smith, *The Nation in History*, 9.

⁵³ Max Weber, 1968. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵⁴ Pang Qin, “The Rise of Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China: The Main Content and Causes,” *Elixir International Journal* 36 (2011): 3361, [http://www.elixirpublishers.com/articles/1350542599_36%20\(2011\)%203361-3365.pdf](http://www.elixirpublishers.com/articles/1350542599_36%20(2011)%203361-3365.pdf), 3361.

world”⁵⁵ – would suggest a significant degree of *uniqueness* that makes comparative study problematic.

These epistemic challenges are compounded by concrete issues related to language. There is, at a minimum, a set of problems related to the application of the term “nation” outside of the Romance languages to which it is indigenous. Hobsbawm notes that even among the languages which contain a version of the original Latin *natio*, definitions changed dramatically in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.⁵⁶ Other languages take a form of *natio* as a loanword, but the Chinese case is even more complicated. A common interpretation says that the modern Chinese term *minzu* (民族, ‘people-clan’) was translated from the Japanese *minzoku* (also written 民族 in *kanji*), which likely originated as a translation of the German term *Volk*.⁵⁷ Thus there is no original connection between the Latin-inspired English term *nation* and the German-via-Japanese inspired Chinese term *minzu*.

If *minzu* has come to mean “nation” at all, it is because scholars writing in Chinese have read the English-language theoretical literature and borrowed from its descriptions. But a recent trend shows the opposite occurring. In November 2008, the official English name of the Central University for Nationalities (中央民族大學) was changed to “Minzu University of China,” apparently signaling an official decision that the Chinese term *minzu* (民族) cannot and should not be translated into a single English term. The problem of picking a single English term for *minzu* is noted by Leibold: “The Chinese term *minzu* is exceptionally polysemic and has been used to gloss over a wide range of concepts that are largely distinct in English.” Thus in his study, Leibold variously translates *minzu* as “ethnicity,” “ethnic group,” “nation,” “race,” or “nationalities” depending on the context in which it appears.⁵⁸ From the perspective of Chinese nationalism, however, the “Minzu University” name change has a deeper implication. It asserts that China is neither a multi-ethnic nor a multi-national state, but rather a multi-*minzu* state: a linguistically-bound and politically unique phenomenon that defies explanation in a foreign language. Thus *minzu*, the term most central to a discussion of nationalism in Chinese language,

⁵⁵ Bourdieu, 1991, quoted in Pang, “The Rise of Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China,” 3361.

⁵⁶ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, Kindle Loc. 325 – 832.

⁵⁷ Tomoko Hamada, “Social and Cultural Development of Human Resources,” in *Religion, Culture and Sustainable Development*, vol. 3, ed. Roberto Blancarte Pimentel et al (Oxford: Eolss Publishers, 2010), 23.

⁵⁸ James Leibold, “Ethnic Policy in China: Is Reform Inevitable?” (Honolulu: East-West Center, 2013), 53.

joins the list of words like *guoqing* (國情) that imply China's national uniqueness at the epistemic level.

Challenges related to terminology, translation, and meaning are complimented by equally significant cultural challenges, which, though cliché, are nonetheless relevant in a study on nationalism. “Chinese culture”⁵⁹ has been portrayed in the West as dense, subtle, deep, pervasive: inscrutable, in other words, to outsiders. This is especially the case in discussions of the rhetoric of Chinese speakers.⁶⁰ These portrayals imply that an outsider – in this case, a culturally American, white male – should be unable to overcome the inter-civilizational cultural chasm that exists between him and the object of his study. As Gries notes, “Chinese cultural nationalists and postcolonial theorists” join forces to reinforce this concept of inscrutability, as in Wang Xiaodong's assertion that observers from the West are fundamentally incapable of understanding China.⁶¹ Wang writes, “Firstly, Western scholars have views stemming from their interests, which often differ from the interests of China; Secondly, Westerners do not fully understand China...; Thirdly, methods developed due to the evolution of Western historical reality are not necessarily suited to China [as an object of study].”⁶² In this declaration, of course, Wang refutes not only the value of “Western scholarship” on China, but indeed the applicability of the comparative method and the use of generalized theory in understanding China. This argument of Chinese inscrutability is thus at odds with the spirit of social science as it is typically understood.

Thus a set of linguistic, political, and cultural issues, both at the epistemic level and within the claims of Chinese nationalists, assert uniqueness and problematize a comparative or

⁵⁹ Here we must briefly overlook problems associated with subsuming all of the various cultures that are described as “Chinese” under the singular term “culture.”

⁶⁰ In but one example, Young notes how Kissinger fawned over Mao's conversational style, describing it “like the courtyards in the Forbidden City, each leading to a deeper recess distinguished from the others only by slight changes of proportion, with the ultimate meaning residing in a totality that only long reflection could grasp.” Linda W. L. Young, “The Ps and cues of Chinese inscrutability,” in *Crosstalk and Culture in Sino-American Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1-2.

⁶¹ Peter Hayes Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 10.

⁶² 「第一，西方学者有其基于自己利益的立场，这个利益与中国的利益有时并不完全一致；第二，西方人并不完全了解中国（读了白杰明先生以及其他一些西方学者的文章后，我更坚信这两点）；第三，基于西方历史演进现实而发展起来的方法，未必完全适用于中国。」王小东，〈西方人眼中的「中国民族主义」〉，载于《全球化阴影下的中国之路》，宋强主编（北京：中国社会科学出版社，1999年）。Also referenced in Gries, *China's New Nationalism*, 10.

theory-based study of Chinese nationalism. But *only* through comparative and theory-based study can we gain a richer understanding of China's place in the broader subfield of nationalism studies.⁶³ As Shambaugh has argued, it is "imperative for analysts of China to view the CCP through comparative and historical lenses... China may be distinct, but it is not unique."⁶⁴ Unless we begin by rejecting the intellectually unhelpful "Chinese uniqueness" or "China is China is China" theorem, then there is simply no hope for generalizable and comparable findings upon which to generate better theory.

1.4: Approach

If the content that makes up the nationalism of a given "nation" is self-evidently unique, then on what basis may we compare nationalisms? In this case, we do so by analyzing, or "filtering" the nationalist discourse that describes the contents of the "Chinese nation" through a theoretical lens that connects the various discursive elements of the putative nation to concepts of the theoretical nation. This study identifies *ethnic*, *cultural*, *civic/political*⁶⁵, and *territorial* as four discursive elements that are employed to imagine a "nation" and communicate it as a social and political idea. Discussed more fully in Chapter Three, this approach allows for comparison between the "Chinese nation" as a phenomenon reflected in political discourse and nations in theory. When and where is the "Chinese nation" imagined as a civic-territorial or ethno-cultural community? Or is the "Chinese nation" conceived as an alternate combination of these elements of identity, such as a civic-cultural, or ethno-territorial community? Seeking an answer to these questions should also yield a deeper understanding of how nationalism interrelates with the construction of Chinese identity and the articulation of state interests.

⁶³ One possibility for comparison is found in the former Soviet Union, which had, like the PRC, a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural population and a Leninist party-state that institutionalized "nations" within its borders. Of course differences also abound, and such comparisons are fraught with difficulty. But unless we allow for comparison and generalization, theory and case study remain perpetually isolated from one another, and we are none the wiser.

⁶⁴ David Shambaugh, "Writing China: David Shambaugh, 'China's Future'," *Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 2016, <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2016/03/14/writing-china-david-shambaugh-chinas-future/>.

⁶⁵ This study uses the term "civic" rather than "political" in order to avoid confusion between nationalism itself, which is *always and inherently political*, and the specifically civic/political kind of nationalism, which imagines or argues that those who share citizenship, common political institutions, a political culture, a set of political values, or a desire to participate in the activities of the state *are or ought to be a nation*. Thus, in a sense, civic nationalism is a form of politics *based on political identity*, while other kinds of nationalism are forms of politics based on other dimensions of identity. If the reader can keep this distinction in mind, then, "civic" may be read as "political" throughout this study.

At the same time, this study distinguishes between two very different orientations of nationalism in theory as well as Chinese political history. The first kind seeks to nationalize a population (to *create* a nation) within the existing state. The second kind encourages mobilization to create or reform a state in order to suit the needs of an allegedly pre-existing nation. The former, while “revisionist” at the society level, reinforces the status quo at the state level. The latter aims to inspire reform, separatism, annexation, or revolution at the state level, but presumes that the societal level (the nation) is already a “social fact.” This part of the methodology is developed in Chapter Four. Though this is not a comparative study, it deliberately uses methods that can be applied to the study of other nationalisms outside of China.

1.5: Definitions

Perhaps owing to the excessive broadness of its related theoretical literature, nationalism suffers from a degree of “definitional haze.” Like *terrorism* or *democracy*, in other words, nationalism is invoked in so many contexts and fields that its definition is easily obscured. Barrington offers a relatively un-hazy definition of nationalism that serves as a useful starting point in this study: nationalism “combines the political notion of territorial self-determination, the cultural notion of the nation as one’s primary identity, and a moral idea of justification of action to protect the rights of the nation against the other.”⁶⁶ Embedded within Barrington’s definition of nationalism is “the nation” as a “cultural notion,” as “one’s primary identity,” and as a collective entity (with *rights*) that exists in relationship to other nations. Although Breuille argues that nations and nationalism ought to be studied as separate phenomena,⁶⁷ the simplicity of Barrington’s definition recommends that we follow suit, embedding the definition of “the nation” within that of “nationalism.” Additionally, the close connection between these two terms helps explain how Chapters Three and Four of this study must be considered in relation to one another.

Thus a working definition of nationalism requires a definition of the nation. A popular and appealing conception is offered by Anderson: “the nation... is an imagined political

⁶⁶ Lowell W. Barrington, “‘Nation’ and ‘Nationalism’: The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science.” *PS: Political Science & Politics*, December 1997, 713.

⁶⁷ Don H. Doyle, “H-Nationalism Interview with John Breuille,” *H-Nationalism*, March 29, 2006, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/3911/pages/5917/h-nationalism-interview-john-breuille>.

community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”⁶⁸ The nation, in other words, is a mutually imagined connection between cognitive participants, made possible by shared identity. Anderson’s use of “imagined” stresses, in his words, that the nation is “both real and fictional at the same time:” although we cannot experience it, or even describe it with any great precision, “it’s actually understood to be real.... but, on the other hand, the only way you can approach it is through the imagination.”⁶⁹ Thus Anderson does not argue that nations are by nature illegitimate, fake, or *imaginary*, but rather, that their existence in people’s collective imagination precedes and gives rise to the *reality* of the nation – which is to say, a population with a shared national identity. In a similar vein, Emerson concedes to the impossibility of a definition of the nation that exceeds national consciousness based on national identity: “the simplest statement that can be made about a nation is that it is a body of people who feel that they are a nation; and it may be that when all the fine-spun analysis is concluded, this will be the ultimate statement as well.”⁷⁰

The *feeling* that one belongs to a nation is certainly nothing other than awareness, or “consciousness” of one’s national identity in relation to the national identity of others. When an awareness of others’ *differing* national identity highlights the reality of one’s nationality, then Emerson’s “feeling” is clarified by contrast. When an awareness of others’ *same* national identity highlights the qualities of one’s own nationality, then Emerson’s “feeling” is magnified and legitimized. Thus national identity, though it may be at first intuitive rather than rationally derived, must take on contents through this unavoidable process of colliding - and thus comparing and contrasting – with other national identities.

What, then, fills the content of national identity? Dittmer offers a useful two-level perspective that greatly clarifies this question. Dittmer sees identity functioning in “two broad dimensions: the first is characteristics of the individual constituents of the group, such as shared language, culture, or ethnicity... the second is characteristics of the group itself, such as a founding, a narrative history, and a role in international society, leading to a sense of shared interest in the fate of the whole.”⁷¹ Evidently, some of these characteristics arise through

⁶⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

⁶⁹ Benedict Anderson, “Benedict Anderson About Nationalism - Interview with Anil Ramdas,” *Anthropology Online*, 1994, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNJUL-Ewp-A>.

⁷⁰ Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 101.

⁷¹ Lowell Dittmer, “Taiwan and the Issue of National Identity,” *Asian Survey* 44, no. 4 (July 2004): 476.

informal socialization, some through formal, mandated education, and others still by serendipitous interpersonal relations and friendships. Finally, some are largely bestowed, or “given,” by accidents of geography and birth. By combining socialized elements with “given” traits, Dittmer’s approach to identity contains both constructed and primordial elements. It is therefore suitable for this study, which combines both constructivist and primordialist insights regarding the nation.

The above three paragraphs reveal a seemingly inevitable logical progression: in the process of defining nationalism we must invoke the nation; in the definition of the nation, we must reference national identity. Proceeding from the definitions offered by Barrington, to Anderson and Emerson, to Dittmer, one could conclude that nationalism is a political, moral, and cultural concept held by a group of people who share a common national identity (a nation). Defined as such, we see that if nationalism has particular contents, those contents are determined by the nation, whose view of itself stems from national identity. Based on the above definitions, the three terms appear to have a relationship as shown below:



Figure 1.5.1: National Identity, The Nation, and Nationalism by Definition

However, the insight that *nationalism creates nations* is perhaps the second most widespread point of consensus among historians and scholars of nationalism (second only to the essential modernity of nations). Thus Kunovich offers a definition of national identity that directly contradicts the above description, writing that national identity is a “socially constructed sameness *resulting from* nationalism.”⁷² So are the definitions and relationships depicted above backwards and incorrect? Reconciling these two different views requires a more precise understanding of national identity: is it at all generative of nationalism (as the above description suggests) or is entirely an *object*, whose contents come from nationalism?

The first possibility, in which national identity has stable contents, is a plausible independent variable, and is not *exclusively* an object of nationalism, is indeed found in the secondary literature. In an authoritative study on Chinese historical consciousness, Zheng Wang maintains that “national interests are constructed by national identity, and national interests in

⁷² Emphasis added. Robert M. Kunovich, “The Sources and Consequences of National Identification,” *American Sociological Review* 74, no. 4 (August 2009): 574.

turn determine foreign policy and state action”⁷³. Wang thus posits a causal relationship between national identity and state policy, with national interests as the intervening variable. Also situated between identity and policy are “national ideas,” namely, “the collective beliefs of societies and organizations about how to act.”⁷⁴ In short, “who we think we are defines what we think we want.”⁷⁵ If, as Wang maintains, people view the world through the prism of national identity, then identity is generative of interests and actions, including actions and rhetoric that can be subsumed under the term “nationalism.”

Alternatively, a number of theorists view identity as an object rather than a source of politics, and national identity as an object rather than source of nationalism. Brubaker states, “nationalism is not engendered by nations. It is produced – or better, it is induced – by political fields of particular kinds.”⁷⁶ Likewise, “identity should be understood as a ‘changeable product of collective action,’ not as its stable underlying cause. Much the same thing could be said about nationness.”⁷⁷ Indeed, for which of Dittmer’s characteristics of identity are immune to the salinizing or de-salinizing effects of political mobilization and rhetoric? Is the political salience of language, culture and ethnicity (at the individual level) or mythologized founding, history and international role (at the collective level) determined *a priori*? Certainly not. Going a step further, Hobsbawm argues that the definition of “nation” changes not only cross-culturally but even cross-temporally, such that the meaning of a given “nation” has little if any stable, generationally-inheritable meaning or content.⁷⁸ A nation is thus a contextually defined event rather than an existing entity. The more mainstream view expressed by Hobsbawm and Brubaker can be represented as follows:



Figure 1.5.2: National Identity as an Object of Nationalism

Brubaker, in fact, offers a more practical definition of nationalism as “a form of remedial

⁷³ Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), xiii.

⁷⁴ Jeffrey Legro, “What China Will Want: The Future Intentions of a Rising Power,” *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 3 (September 2007): 515. Quoted in *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 11.

⁷⁶ Breuilly, *Nationalism Reconsidered*, 17.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷⁸ This is a theme developed throughout Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, especially in chapters three through six.

political action” that “addresses an allegedly deficient... condition and proposes to remedy it.”⁷⁹ This definition of nationalism as a form of politics, rather than Barrington’s more conceptual definition, occupies a central place in the logic of this study.

Nonetheless, the two approaches described above should be understood as complementary rather than contradictory. Nations are indeed created by nationalism, which, as a form of politics, constructs “sameness” and “otherness” by manipulating the political salience of particular elements of identity. This can be termed the “top-down” flow of nationalism, as we expect it to proceed from the actions and rhetoric of elites and political entrepreneurs. However, to the extent that national identity – once engendered by nationalism – either impacts the further production of nationalism, or incorporates ideational elements of a proto-national community such as an ethnic group, we can speak of a “bottom-up” flow of nationalism. Because national identity is likely a meaningless concept in the absence of nationalism, the “top-down” flow should be deemed the essential precondition to the “bottom-up” flow, and the more influential of the two in general. But only by considering both flows of nationalism together can we get a sense for the overall dynamic as well as the tremendous importance that nationalist rhetoric plays in structuring politics. Our understanding of the relationship among these three concepts can therefore be represented by a “feedback loop,” by which nationalism originally creates – and continuously re-shapes – national identity, and national identity informs – to a more limited extent – the contents of the nation and nationalism:

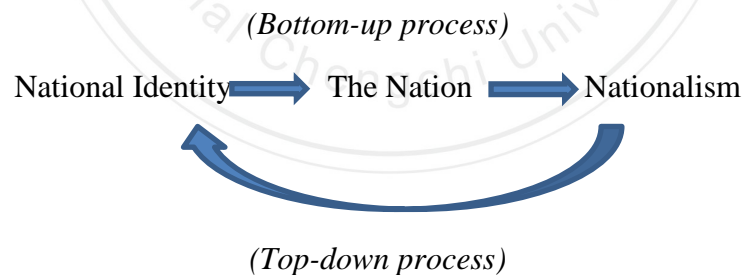


Figure 1.5.3: Bi-directional Relationship between Identity and Nationalism

Wang’s research on historical memory and Chinese national identity corroborates with this feedback loop model. Wang writes, “There is actually a feedback loop in today’s China whereby the nationalistic history education stimulates the rise of nationalism, and the rise of

⁷⁹ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 79.

nationalism provides a bigger market for nationalistic messages.”⁸⁰ Wang’s terminology here is somewhat different from that in this study. What he describes as “nationalistic history education” is, in the present terminology, a particular kind of nationalism: a form of politics designed to manipulate the salience of national identity. Meanwhile, the “rise of nationalism” which Wang observes – clearly a phenomenon occurring at the social level – is in fact an increasing salience of national identity. The fact that, as Wang describes, a change in the salience of national identity *has effects* on society’s demand for or acceptance of further nationalism serves to corroborate the bi-directional nature of the relationship between identity and nationalism.

Thus, though the state is primarily responsible for the “nationalization” of identity in the first place, once a population considers itself a (particular kind of) nation, its appetite for and expression of nationalism need not be attributed entirely to the state. Thus we may not discount the role of society hovering within the statement, “national interests are constructed by national identity, and national interests in turn determine foreign policy and state action.”⁸¹ Nor should we dismiss the reality that public opinion among the Chinese people, partly shaped by elite-led patriotic education programs and media, constrains Beijing’s freedom of action on issues that touch on nationalist sentiment.⁸² After all, as Breuilly notes, “Nationalist ideology matters, not so much because it directly motivates most supporters of a nationalist movement, but rather because it provides a conceptual map which enables people to relate their particular material and moral interests to a broader terrain of action.”⁸³

As this introduction has explained, despite evidence pointing to the extraordinary salience of nationhood within Chinese society and a near-consensus on the importance of state-led nationalism to the PRC’s legitimacy and regime-security, disagreements abound regarding Chinese nationalism’s precise impact on China’s politics and foreign relations. This may be due to the fact that a lack of agreement regarding the contents and orientation of Chinese nationalism renders it a “contested object” which must be more fully explored before we have any hope of discussing its likely “effects.” This study thus aims to develop a perhaps under-utilized theoretical approach to re-interpret the content and orientation of particular strands of Chinese

⁸⁰ Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 9.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁸² This logical argument is presented in, and central to, Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁸³ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 13.

nationalism within modern and contemporary Chinese history,⁸⁴ with particular focus on the current Xi Jinping era. In doing so, this study places an emphasis on the official nationalism as formulated by agents of the party-state, although the nationalisms of intellectuals and competing voices from outside of the CCP are considered where appropriate. Unfortunately, the precise sentiments that exist across a population of over one billion independently thinking individuals are exceedingly hard to discover with any certainty.⁸⁵ But the words of leaders are clearly recorded; in seeking to understand the complex bi-directional flow of Chinese nationalism, we can begin by closely analyzing what has been said. In doing so we can gain a greater understanding of how the Chinese nation has been imagined and how the politics of nationalism are likely to impact Greater China.

1.6: Thesis Structure

This introduction has considered several key disagreements in the English-language literature on Chinese nationalism, brief theoretical considerations relating to nationalism studies and comparative politics, key definitions, and a general conceptualization of the theoretical relationship between national identity, the nation as an imagined community, and nationalism as a form of politics. Chapter two will follow with a literature review examining four approaches to the theoretical study of nations and nationalism. Overall, these four approaches, herein termed culturalist, sociological, political-historical, and ethno-symbolist, focus more on the nature of the nation in theory – and how it is that we came to live in “world of nations” – and less on the methodology of nationalism studies. Nonetheless, an understanding of the broad theoretical contestations relating to nationalism is essential in order to relate the findings of this study back to theory.

⁸⁴ Following historian Hu Sheng, this study considers “modern Chinese history” (中國近代史) as the period of 110 years between the beginning of the First Opium War and the founding of the PRC (1839-1949), and “contemporary Chinese history” (中國現代史) as the period from 1949 to the present. This study examines Chinese nationalism both prior to and after the founding of the PRC, but with extra emphasis on more recent periods. See Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 17.

⁸⁵ Hobsbawm writes, “That view from below, i.e. the nation as seen not by governments and the spokesmen and activists of nationalist (or non-nationalist) movements, but by the ordinary persons who are the objects of their action and propaganda, is exceedingly difficult to discover... official ideologies of states and movements are not guides to what it is in the minds of even the most loyal citizens or supporters.” Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, 11.

Chapter three presents a methodology in two parts. First, a dichotomy of idealized forms of the nation – specifically, as an ethno-cultural or civic-territorial community – as well as potential problems arising from the application of this dichotomy to the Chinese case. In addition to well-established theory, this section also lays out the author’s personal hypotheses on the sociology undergirding ethno-cultural communities as well as the potential for civic nationalism in non-democracies. Next, this chapter presents a dichotomy of polity-seeking (state-seeking) and polity-based (nationalizing) orientations of nationalisms inspired by Brubaker and Wang. Finally chapter three offers a visual representation of both dimensions of this study’s methodology in Figure 3.3: Possible Contents and Orientations of Chinese Nationalism.

Chapter four reconsiders the historical development of Chinese nationalism and the Chinese “nation” in terms of the framework presented in Chapter Three.⁸⁶ Specifically, this section reinterprets examples of Chinese nationalist rhetoric in terms of civic, territorial, ethnic, and cultural content, and the orientation of such rhetoric vis-à-vis the state and society. This section aims primarily to demonstrate the utility of the methodology presented herein, and secondarily to set the context for the more detailed consideration of nationalism under Xi Jinping in the following chapter.

Chapter five, indeed, follows with an analysis of a sample of nationalist discourse intended to represent the broader dialogue currently evolving during Xi Jinping’s tenure as General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (November 2012 – present). Once again using *ethnic, cultural, civic* and *territorial* as an index of content analysis and *polity-based (nationalizing)* versus *polity-seeking (revisionist)* as a dichotomy of nationalism’s orientations, this section seeks to understand three issues: First, what is the orientation of nationalism as expressed by official state organs and intellectuals under Xi Jinping? Second, what kind of “Chinese nation” is imagined in these discourses? Third, to what extent do these discourses differ from those of the recent past?

⁸⁶ Following Brubaker, this study places “nation” in quotation marks to refer to “practices and discourses oriented to a *putative* nation... and to refrain from treating the putative nation of nationalist practice and discourse as a real entity, a substantial collectivity.” However, *nation* (without quotation marks; italicized here for clarity) is used to refer to the concept in political theory of the nation or nations. Except when quoting other authors, this study treats “nation” as the imagined community to which nationalists suppose they belong, (the) nation as a political theory concept, and nationalism as a form of politics. This approach comes partially from Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 10.

Finally, a concluding chapter offers comments on the implications of contemporary Chinese nationalism for political and social relations in the PRC and in Greater China, directions for future study, and theoretical implications for nationalism studies. Collectively, Chapters four through six aim to answer the foundational questions of this study: First, what kind of nationalism exists in contemporary China, and how does that nationalism imagine the Chinese nation? Second, has the rhetoric of nationalism in mainland China changed since the ascent of Xi Jinping to the position of General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)?



Chapter 2: Literature Review

With the fundamental terminology defined and placed in a conceptual context, we now turn to examine the relevant literature. This literature can be divided between four separate understandings of nationalism: the sociological, culturalist, political-historical, and ethno-symbolist approaches. After considering the secondary literature relevant to each approach, this section briefly discusses key studies that apply the assumptions of each approach to Chinese nationalism. Ultimately, this study aims to synthesize the insights of each approach into an operational typology that can be used to interpret the implications of differing contents and orientations in Chinese nationalism.

First, Gellner's sociological approach views nationalism as the creation of industrial society, in which economic specialization meets state-sponsored education, manufacturing a shared culture at the national scale that allows for, and demands, "context-free" "social communication" among all co-nationals. By arguing that the nation is modern and a product of nationalism, and by developing the concept of social communication in relation to nationhood, Gellner's approach justifies this study's use of textbooks as a source material and provides a foundational underpinning to the logic of studying nationalism in order to understand the likely future of the nation.

Next, Anderson's culturalist approach views the advent of nations in the context of the decline of multiethnic empires and sacred script, understanding nationalism as a construction – though not a delusion – related to a population's concept of experiencing time, as well as history and death, together. This approach has interesting commonalities with the moral world view found in the writings of Emile Durkheim, a point that is explored below. Elements of the culturalist approach are applied to Chinese nationalism in Levenson, Pye, and Chow et al.. These works justify the inclusion of cultural nationalism in the typology applied in this study.

Third, the political-historical perspective developed by Breuilly views nationalism instrumentally, as a form of mass politics with no inherent connection to the cultural and sociological characteristics discussed in the above to approaches. Breuilly's approach is mirrored in Zhao's authoritative treatment of Chinese nationalism, and both works justify the use of a typology in analyzing the content of nationalism.

The sociological, cultural, and political-historical approaches each share a view of the

nation as a product of modernity. In the famous “Warwick Debate” between Gellner and Smith, the former humorously states, “modernists like myself believe that the world was created round about the end of the eighteenth century.”⁸⁷ Although the explanations for the advent and spread of the nation in the 18th century differ among various theorists, they nonetheless maintain a general consensus that enlightenment-secularism, industrialization, mass literacy, and the consumption of vernacular media have transformed the way populations imagine themselves. For the modernists, then, the world of nations is starkly modern, and peering back into the pre-modern world gives us little new information on the nature of nations.

On the contrary, the perennialist perspective concedes that some nations are wholly modern, but argues that all nations contain an ethno-symbolist core, and thus bear some similarity to earlier proto-national communities in history. Since those communities are logically and historically antecedent to the nation and continue to inform the character of nationalism, perennialists stress the importance of a variety of primordial factors that modernists tend to dismiss. Represented here by Smith, the ethno-symbolist perspective develops the concept of *ethnie* and gives us a lens through which to examine ethnic nationalism.

Before examining each of these four approaches in detail, we must develop a working understanding of primordial and constructed elements that relate to the nation. If we understand “constructed” (socialized) and “given” (bestowed by chance; primordial) to be opposite ends of a spectrum upon which individual and group characteristics may be placed, we see that Dittmer’s concept of identity covers much of the spectrum. While group-level characteristics such as role in society, mythologized founding and narrative history are largely constructed, Dittmer’s individual level characteristics, especially language, ethnicity, and – to some degree – culture, are bestowed upon the individual by “accidents of geography,” which is to say, chance. These elements are therefore “given,” and their relationship to nationalism functions according to the logic of primordialism. Geertz discusses how “givenness” gives rises to primordial attachments as follows:

Being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have **an ineffable, and at times overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves**. One is bound to one’s kinsman, one’s neighbor, one’s

⁸⁷ Ernest Gellner, “The Warwick Debates,”
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/researchAndExpertise/units/gellner/Warwick2.html>.

fellow believer, ipso facto: as the result not merely of personal affection, common practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of **some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself**.⁸⁸

If nationhood is mutually imagined by co-nationals who share a partly constructed, partly “given” identity, then it stands to reason that both scholars who emphasize the nation’s modern, constructed nature and those who see it as a continuation of “perennial” ethno-symbolist communities each have a valuable perspective on the nation. In the primordialist sense, we can concur with Sluga, “man cannot in fact exist apart from his fellow men, the nation is just the society by which the individual is *involuntarily* determined – it is a larger self”.⁸⁹ However, not all elements of identity are involuntarily determined, and not all models of nationhood subordinate the individual to the collective. In considering the following four approaches to nationalism, we can gain a clearer understanding of the breadth and diversity of theory in nationalism studies and begin to piece together a methodology that makes use of past work.

2.1: Sociological Approach

Developed in Gellner’s *Thought and Change* and *Nations and Nationalism*, the sociological perspective argues that nationhood grew out of the socioeconomic transformation inherent in industrialization. Gellner draws heavily on Deutsch’s broad concept of “social communication.” Deutsch wrote, “the essential aspect of the unity of a people ... is the complementarity or relative efficiency of communication among individuals... people are held together ‘from within’ by this communicative efficiency, the complementarity of the communicative facilities acquired by their members.”⁹⁰ Deutsch theorized that social communication, “both from the past to the present and between contemporaries,” allows for “the relatively coherent and stable structure of memories, habits and values” which give rise to nationhood.⁹¹ Thus for Deutsch, as for modernist theories of the nation in general, mass literacy

⁸⁸ Clifford Geertz, *New Societies, Old States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (London, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 109. *Quoted in* 高格孚, 《風和日暖: 台灣外省人與國家認同的轉變》(臺北: 允晨文化, 2004年), 61.

⁸⁹ Glenda Sluga, *The Nation, Psychology, and International Politics: 1870-1919* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2006), 14.

⁹⁰ Karl Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government: Political Communication and Control* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1966), 98. See also Philip Schlesinger, “Communication Theories of Nationalism,” in *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, ed. Athena S. Leoussi (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2001), 26.

⁹¹ Deutsch, *Nerves of Government*, 75.

in a vernacular language is a necessary prerequisite to nationhood. More than literacy in a common tongue, however, Deutsch's theory emphasizes a cultural commonality that allows for genuine understanding beyond simply communicability. Isaiah Berlin famously wrote that among members of his "own group... they understand me, as I understand them; and this understanding creates within me the sense of being somebody in the world."⁹² By that logic, national cohesion, whether at the formative stage or as an enduring social reality, depends upon substantive interaction among members belonging to a shared national culture and a shared national dialogue.

Gellner argues that the social effects of industrialization and the advent of state-sponsored education allowed, for the first time, Deutsch's "context-free" social communication at the national level. Before industrialization, Gellner argues, agricultural empires witnessed social consciousness and loyalty structured and localized along vertical lines; the notion of an all-encompassing "society," as we tend to understand it today, would have seemed entirely foreign in the pre-industrial world. The organizing social bonds existed between ruler and subject, not among the agricultural masses. Literacy and most of what we now call "culture" was limited to political and religious elites. Industrialization transformed that world by incentivizing specialization, and in a specialized society, "social communication" is a prerequisite to participation. As a result, populations became self-aware; linguistic and cultural boundaries became politicized as national boundaries, and the populations within those boundaries became nations.⁹³ Below, Figure 2.1 shows the author's understanding of Gellner's model of industrial transformation:

⁹² Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 23, https://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/fileadmin/wiso_vwl/johannes/Ankuendigungen/Berlin_twoconceptsofliberty.pdf.

⁹³ This is but a brief summary of the detailed and influential argument made by Gellner in *Nations and Nationalism*.

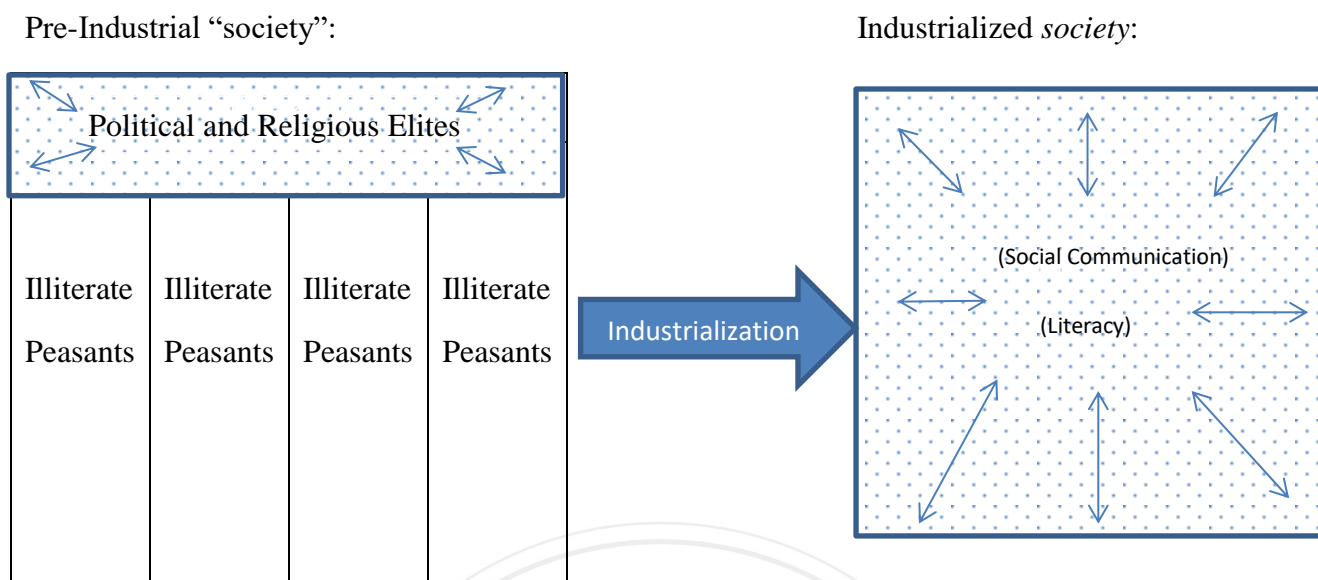


Figure 2.1: Social Communication in Pre-Industrial “Society” and Industrial *Society*

As the figure depicts, pre-industrial “society” is really no society at all. Social communication (represented by the bi-direction arrows) occurs among the literate political and religious elite, but the illiterate and comparatively immobile population has neither the means nor incentive to engage in the communicative processes that constitute a true society. After industrialization has transformed economic and social life – especially through the introduction of universal basic education and specialization – social communication, the prerequisite to participation in society becomes accessible to the entire population. There are powerful political implications to this sociological transformation. Gellner writes that in an industrial society “in which everyone is a specialist... one’s prime loyalty is to the medium of our literacy, and to its political protector.”⁹⁴ Perpetuating the societal basis for industrial capitalism, with its “mobile division of labor, and sustained, frequent and precise communication between strangers” requires a state-run education system which, for Gellner, is central to the nation.⁹⁵ “The monopoly of legitimate education is now more important,” he writes, “more central than the monopoly of legitimate violence.”⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 136.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 33

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Crucially, Gellner maintains that nationalism precedes the nation. He argues vigorously that “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.”⁹⁷ Interestingly, scholars such as James Townsend, who follow in Deutsch’s understanding of social communication and Gellner’s concept of industrial modernity, estimate that genuine national consciousness likely did not spread through most of China until the 1950’s.⁹⁸

Following the logic of Gellner and Deutsch, some studies have examined the content of education pertaining to civic values and responsibilities on opposite sides of the Taiwan strait. Lien points to a widening gap in how civic values are taught within the two societies, especially since Taiwan’s 2001 introduction of a curriculum that sought to explicitly link citizenship to democratic values. The curriculum is said to stress “the essence of democracy... participation in the democratic process, the right of dissent, checks and balances, and democratic decision-making” as well as “individualism, social diversity... minority rights” and “the distinctiveness of Taiwan.”⁹⁹ Later in this study we will consider the possibility that a very different kind of civic nation has been and is being engendering in authoritarian China.

2.2: Culturalist Approach

Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* offers what Breuilly has termed a “culturalist approach” to the origin of the nation.¹⁰⁰ Anderson views the arrival of nationalism onto humanity’s consciousness in the context of the disappearance of previous cultural conceptions including sacred script, the divine right of kings, and multi-ethnic religious communities.¹⁰¹ Anderson argues that as these cultural values receded, humanity found nationalism amidst the search for “a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together.”¹⁰² As such,

⁹⁷ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 169.

⁹⁸ James Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism,” in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 20.

⁹⁹ Pei-te Lien, “Comparing Political Socialization in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan: Perspectives on the Teaching and Learning of Citizenship,” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 11, no. 2 (2015): 121.

¹⁰⁰ Don H. Doyle, “H-Nationalism Interview with John Breuilly,” *H-Nationalism*, March 29, 2006, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/3911/pages/5917/h-nationalism-interview-john-breuilly>.

¹⁰¹ The enduring appeal of a pan-Islamic Caliphate as a political-religious ideal for some Muslims is a counterpoint, demonstrating that some communities remain committed to systems of organization that Anderson ascribes to the past. Yet Anderson’s broader argument holds true, as nationalism has clearly been more influential than pan-Islamism in shaping the state boundaries and state politics of the contemporary Muslim world.

¹⁰² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 236.

Anderson presents the compelling perspective that the “nation has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against it – it came into being.”¹⁰³ These cultural systems include “the great sacral cultures” such as Roman Catholic Christendom, the Islamic Ummah, and the Middle Kingdom, all of which claimed universality and possessed a sacred script.¹⁰⁴

For Anderson, a market of print media, especially newspapers with their unique capacity to narrate a mutual, language-bound experience of time and place, revolutionized political consciousness in Europe and the New World at a time when multi-linguistic empires and High Church religiosity lost their expansive, binding influence. Thus while nationhood is implicitly a product of industrialization, as Gellner convincingly argues, Anderson’s causal link has to do with vernacular print media in a capitalist market as opposed to state-sponsored education.

Anderson’s account also endows the nation with considerable psychological gravity. The nation, after all, appeals to humanity’s deepest moral sentiments, generating something like “sacredness” as described by Durkheim.¹⁰⁵ Following Durkheim, Nisbet defines “the sacred” as including “the mores, the non-rational, the religious and ritualistic ways of behavior that are valued beyond whatever utility they may possess.”¹⁰⁶ Tetlock renders “the sacred” as “any value that a moral community implicitly or explicitly treats as possessing infinite or transcendental significance.”¹⁰⁷ Thus whereas the community described by Deutsch is made possible by an objective sociological phenomenon – the degree of intercommunicability among a population – a Durkheimian community is enabled by a common morality, in which the moral domain embodies “everything that is a source of solidarity, everything that forces man to... regulate his

¹⁰³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 12.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹⁰⁵ Durkheim’s sociology focused in part on the duality between “the sacred” and “the profane.” One can experientially relate to Durkheim’s notion of sacredness by visiting a war memorial, participating in a religious ritual, or simply being in a location of tremendous natural beauty. In the soul-arresting sense of collectiveness, the temporary loss of one’s individuality in the face of something greater, one finds a kind of ecstasy. The underlying psychological and sociological realities that account for this experience are, for Durkheim, the foundation of a distinct type of morality, which, as I argue here, is implicit within Anderson’s account of the rise of nationhood in our world.

¹⁰⁶ Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1993), 6. Quoted in Jonathan Haidt and Jesse Graham, “Planet of the Durkheimians: Where Community, Authority, and Sacredness are Foundations of Morality,” December 11, 2006, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=980844>.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Lisa Tessman, *Moral Failure: On the Impossible Demands of Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 94.

actions by something other than... his own egoism.”¹⁰⁸ Durkheimian morality, then, functions to preserve the collective, to maintain authority and protect ‘culture,’ that gravitational force which keeps individuals in orbit around the common values that have been endowed with sacredness. Understood as a cultural-psychological phenomenon, the nation is indeed not far from religion in this respect.

Things that are sacred surpass utilitarian consideration and allow for *Gemeinschaft*, a form of community in which individuals are subordinated to the collective.¹⁰⁹ Sacred values and institutions, such as loyalty and nationhood, justify non-rational individual self-sacrifice, or even acts that would otherwise be positively immoral, such as killing. Though Anderson does not address Durkheim in his text, *Imagined Communities* begins with a reference that begs a comparison to Durkheim’s view of sacredness. The book begins by discussing tombs dedicated to the Unknown Soldier, which, empty of any human remains, we fill with “ghostly *national* imaginings... what else could they be *but* Germans, Americans, Argentinians...?”¹¹⁰ The viewer of these tombs has no rationally or “profanely” explicable relationship to the Unknown Soldier – nor can the viewer know for certain that the deceased, those intended to be honored, saw themselves as participants in the same imagined nation as that imagined by the viewer in the present. But the image evokes in all of us the overwhelming consciousness of subordination to a distinctly national collective, one that stretches both forward to the grave and backward into immemorial time. Nationalists, indeed, inject such transcendent value into their nation that they must project their current nation into the past, as though “Taiwan” or “Indonesia” were *present* as a historical subject to experience colonization, for example. The same trick of nationalist imaginings allows present day Chinese nationalists to a-historically project *nationhood* back upon the millennia of Chinese civilization.

Though Anderson’s account is sometimes carelessly cited as a liberal critique of nationalism, in fact he places the phenomenon in the context of “‘kinship’ and ‘religion’” (social and cultural realities) as opposed to ideologies such as “‘liberalism’ or ‘fascism.’”¹¹¹ Indeed,

¹⁰⁸ Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984/1893), 331. Quoted in Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, 270.

¹⁰⁹ Bernard Yack, *Nationalism and the Moral Psychology of Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 3.

¹¹⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9-10.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

nationalism easily transcends materialism, perhaps helping to explain why Marx, a philosophical materialist, largely ignored the nation.¹¹²

Understood in terms of its cultural roots, it is easy to understand how pervasive nationalism is in the modern world. Even Barack Obama, who was repeatedly criticized by American right-wing commentators for supposedly being insufficiently patriotic, nonetheless appealed directly to a Durkheimian sense of nationalism when, at the climax of the 2004 Democratic National Convention speech that began his political celebrity, he shouted, “I am my brother’s keeper! I am my sister’s keeper!”¹¹³ A Durkheimian worship of the collective is so evident in nationalism, that even in a society as individualistic as 21st century America, candidates for the Presidency must constantly reaffirm that they, too, take part in the worship.

The culturalist approach likewise emphasizes nationalism’s dynamism. Croucher asserts “that if nations are constructs, then they are by definition malleable, contextual, and capable of persistence and reconfiguration amidst socioeconomic and political change.”¹¹⁴ Thus the national image is subject to generational change, at the very least, and may in fact evolve in even less time. Finally, a given narration or imposition of a particular interpretation of the nation is, by necessity, repressive of other national possibilities. Duara explains how “a specific mobilization toward a particular source of [national] identification” inherently comes “at the expense of others.”¹¹⁵ Patriotic Chinese netizens certainly felt as much, when, in response to Tsai Ing-wen’s election to the office of President of the ROC (Taiwan), they declared a “sacred war,” assaulting Taiwanese facebook pages with pro-China propaganda.¹¹⁶

Anderson’s culturalist approach is mirrored in Levenson’s famous work on Chinese nationalism, in which he proposes what is often called the “culturalism to nationalism thesis.” As Anderson views the arrival of nationalism as a form of political consciousness in the context of the decline of super-national cultural institutions, Levenson interprets the rise of Chinese

¹¹² Ibid., 3-4.

¹¹³ David Jackson, “Ten Years Ago: Obama Makes National Debut,” *USA Today*, July 27, 2014, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/theoval/2014/07/27/barack-obama-2004-democratic-convention-john-kerry-john-edwards/13236077/>.

¹¹⁴ Sheila Croucher, “Perpetual Imagining: Nationhood in a Global Era,” *International Studies Review* 5, no. 1, (March 2003): 14.

¹¹⁵ Prasenjit Duara, “De-Constructing the Chinese Nation,” in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (New York: Armonk, 1996), 55.

¹¹⁶ Lucy Hornby, “China battles to control growing online nationalism,” *Financial Times*, January 9, 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/5ae7b358-ce3c-11e6-864f-20dcb35cede2>.

nationalism as a transformation from the historically dominant Chinese “culturalism.” As Levenson writes, “in adopting the nation as the proper object of Chinese loyalty, the nationalist rejected the historical alternative, the ‘culturalistic’ reverence for the ‘Chinese way of life’.”¹¹⁷ Culturalism was closely connected to political orthodoxy in dynastic China; with the proper mastery of Chinese customs, even Mongols and Manchu were at times seen as the legitimate “Son of Heaven.” Chinese historiography continues to view culture as the uniting force that gives coherence to China’s millennia of history. Indeed, only through a cultural perspective is it even possible to view the 5000 years of civilization in the Yellow River Valley as “Chinese history” at all.

Reflecting this line of thinking, Lucian Pye famously wrote:

China is not just another nation-state in the family of nations. China is a civilization pretending to be a state. The story of modern China could be described as the effort by both Chinese and foreigners to squeeze a civilization into the arbitrary, constraining framework of the modern state.¹¹⁸

If that is the case, then we must suspect that the culturalism that united dynastic China – across both tremendous spatial and temporal distance – may be present in contemporary Chinese nationalism. Chow et al. articulate a similar approach in which they view nationalism as proceeding from how a society understands its own uniqueness and the values which it self-consciously upholds. The nation, in their approach, is very much a product of cultural identity:

To understand the politics in the cultural production of a nation, we need to understand the values and ideals that various groups hold up as representing what is most important to them... nations are chimeric and rest more on those ideas and values that convince people that they are one... a more sustained reflection on the multiple dimensions of cultural identity [is needed to] uncover the complexity and heterogeneity of nationalism and nationhood in East Asia.¹¹⁹

Thus there are distinct compatibilities between Anderson’s hypothesis on the nation; the understanding of morality offered in Durkheim; select observations of Croucher, Duara, Levenson, and Pye; and key aspects of Chinese dynastic history to substantiate a culturalist

¹¹⁷ Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 1958), 95.

¹¹⁸ Lucian Pye, “China: Erratic State, Frustrated Society,” *Foreign Affairs* 69, no. 4 (1990), <http://nfgworld.com/files/China-ErraticState.pdf>.

¹¹⁹ Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Poshek Fu, *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 1.

approach to the study of Chinese nationalism, and that approach can be found in the secondary literature. Based on this observation, this thesis presumes to find “culture” as a prominent rhetorical element in Chinese nationalism. But as the following sections demonstrate, there is far more to nationalism than culture alone.

2.3: Political-Historical Approach

Breuilly’s *Nationalism and the State* conceptualizes nationalism in explicitly political and instrumental terms. For Breuilly, “nationalism is, above and beyond all else, about politics and... politics is about power.”¹²⁰ Furthermore, “power, in the modern world, is principally about control of the state.”¹²¹ Breuilly admits the existence of the nation as a cultural phenomenon, but insists that *that phenomenon it is irrelevant to nationalism*. “Nationalist ideology never makes a rational connection between the cultural and the political concept of the nation,” he writes, “because no such connection is possible.”¹²² Rather, nationalism must be understood in relation “to the objectives of obtaining and using state power.”¹²³

As a scholar of German history, Breuilly’s theory is informed by the observation of distinct strands of nationalism – including an explicitly racial variety, a liberal constitutionalist type, and language/national values-centered ideology – present in 19th century German politics.¹²⁴ The holistic phenomenon known as German nationalism, for Breuilly, has particular modalities shaped by the political objectives of those who instrumentalize it. And as it is in the German case, so it is in nationalism writ-large. Breuilly notes that “Although one or other of these ideas has more centrality at a particular phase, most broad nationalist movements contain doctrinal mixtures at any one time. What is more, **changes in the political situation can bring about rapid shifts in the balance of doctrines and languages employed in a nationalist movement.**”¹²⁵ The second question posed by this thesis – whether the contents of nationalist discourse have changed since Xi Jinping’s ascent to power – takes inspiration in part from Breuilly’s observation noted here. Furthermore, given that nationalism exists as a complex and

¹²⁰ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 12-13.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 62.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

internally varied phenomenon, Breuilly maintains that “internal variations within nationalism” are significant enough to require the analyst to employ a typology.¹²⁶

Breuilly’s general approach is largely adopted in perhaps the most complete historical account of modern Chinese nationalism in English: Zhao’s *A Nation-State by Construction*. Zhao takes a “historical approach... that tempers primordialism with a careful measure of instrumentalism.”¹²⁷ Consistent with Breuilly, Zhao maintains, “the construction of a nation and consequent nationalism is a rational choice of political entrepreneurs in response to specific circumstances.”¹²⁸ Zhao therefore writes that Chinese nationalism’s “content has not been eternal but situational and in a state of flux.”¹²⁹

For Zhao, “liberal nationalism, ethnic nationalism, and state nationalism,” each “grounded on distinctive political values” and historical forces, “have competed in the political marketplace of modern Chinese history.”¹³⁰ Broadly speaking, Zhao identifies and distinguishes these competing nationalisms by the political values they prize most highly: citizen participation in the case of liberal nationalism, ethno-cultural identity in the case of ethnic nationalism, and political unity and territorial integrity in the case of state nationalism.¹³¹ Zhao’s work thus informs the approach undertaken in this thesis by demonstrating the usefulness of Breuilly’s conception of nationalism – as thoroughly political, instrumental, modal, and varied – to the Chinese case. However, as the following chapters will illuminate, state (or Party) nationalism clearly embodies elements beyond political unity and territorial integrity. In this sense, the analysis presented in thesis demonstrates that it is highly problematic to make a sharp distinction between “ethnic nationalism” and “state nationalism,” as much of the nationalist discourse articulated by Chinese leaders includes ethno-cultural elements. Nonetheless, Zhao’s approach provides a strong foundational understanding from which this study branches out.

2.4: Ethno-Symbolist Approach

While the above three theories of nationalism all share the assumption that pre-national

¹²⁶ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2.

¹²⁷ Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction*, 7.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

forms of political community are of little relevance to the modern existence of nations, the perennialist approach explicitly rejects that assumption. Rather, Smith asserts “modern political nationalisms cannot be understood without reference to... earlier ethnic ties and memories, and, in some cases, to pre-modern ethnic identities and communities.”¹³² Smith uses the French term *ethnie*, meaning ethnic community, to refer to “named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity.”¹³³ For Smith, the “cultural differences” between various *ethnie* inform a “sense of an historical community... which differentiates populations from each other and which endows a given population with a definite identity, both in their own eyes and in those of outsiders.”¹³⁴ Additionally, *ethnie* tend to mythologize their origins, history, and destiny according to the following elements:

- a myth of origins in time; i.e. when the community was ‘born’;
- a myth of origins in space; i.e. where the community was ‘born’;
- a myth of ancestry; i.e. who bore us, and how we descend from him/her;
- a myth of migration; i.e. whither we wandered;
- a myth of liberation; i.e. how we were freed;
- a myth of the golden age; i.e. how we became great and heroic;
- a myth of decline; i.e. how we decayed and were conquered/exiled;
- a myth of rebirth; i.e. how we shall be restored to our former glory.¹³⁵

If these are the markers of an ethnic narrative, then when these elements appear in discourse related to the nation, we can be confident that there is a degree of ethnic nationalism present. In the Chinese case, Zhao, Chow, Doak and Fu all note the role that ethnic nationalism played among late Qing anti-Manchu intellectuals. The famous slogan “Drive out the Tartars, revive China” (驅除韃虜,恢復中華) embodies exactly the ethnic/racist type of nationalism deployed in opposition to the Manchu government. Zhang Binglin, for example, employed a Han-centric historiography to subsume China’s complex ethno-political history into a story of two homogenous groups: the *Hanzu* (漢族), those that descend from the Yellow Emperor, and

¹³² Anthony D. Smith, “Nation and Their Pasts: The Warwick Debates,” <http://www.lse.ac.uk/researchAndExpertise/units/gellner/Warwick.html>.

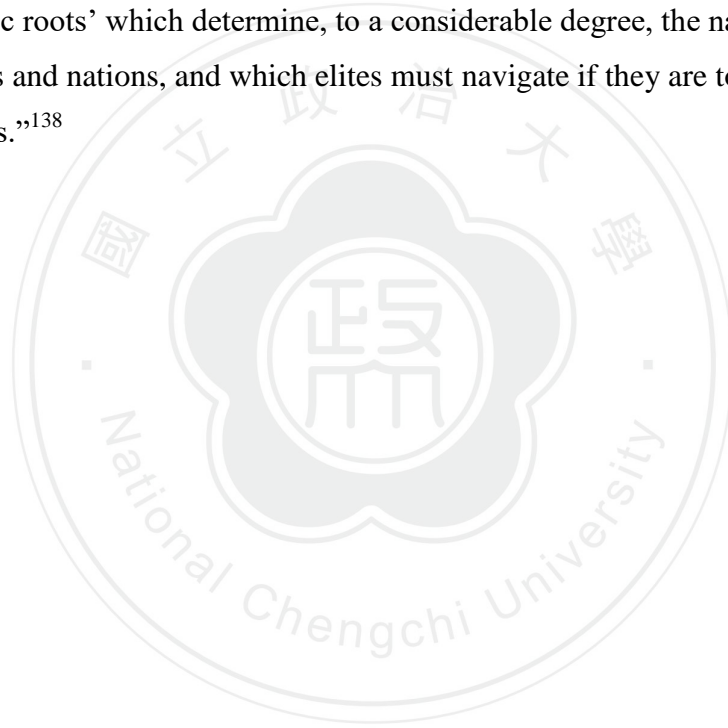
¹³³ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 32.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹³⁵ This list is reproduced from *Ibid.*, 192.

the non-Han barbarians.¹³⁶ In the geopolitical context of increasing Western encroachment on a weakening Qing dynasty, “Han nationalists... not only regarded the Manchu government as alien but also as the ‘running dog’ of the white imperialists and therefore the enemy of the Han Chinese.”¹³⁷

For nationalist revolutionaries like Zhang, the political struggle of an increasingly embarrassed empire became inseparable from the ethnic struggle of a Han majority living under the rule of the alien “Banner People” (旗人). Thus national revival of the core Han nation required overthrow of the empire and its institutionalization of Manchu rule. This is a strong example from modern Chinese history of the relevance of Smith’s perennialist position, namely, that “there are ‘ethnic roots’ which determine, to a considerable degree, the nature and limits of modern nationalisms and nations, and which elites must navigate if they are to achieve their short-term objectives.”¹³⁸



¹³⁶ Chow et al., *Constructing Nationhood*, 2.

¹³⁷ Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction*, 64.

¹³⁸ Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations*, 18.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1: The Nation's Civic-Territorial and Ethno-Cultural Contents

There is something of a tradition in nationalism studies to distinguish between ethno-cultural and civic-territorial nations. Beginning with Hans Kohn, scholars theorized that the nation could be categorized as one of these two types. Kohn in particular viewed the “civic nation” as a product of 17th Century English liberalism. As the original and ideal type, according to Kohn, the civic nation supposedly grew out of the enlightenment rationality, individual liberty and middle class autonomy found first in England. Kohn saw the civic nation become dominant in Europe west of the Rhine in the 18th century.¹³⁹ In contrast, Kohn viewed nations east of the Rhine as an ethno-centric corruption of the original civic model.¹⁴⁰ The alleged duality between these two types of the nation has since generated a theoretical debate in which a number of scholars have eagerly criticized Kohn's dichotomy as improperly normative and essentialist, and thus a questionable starting point for further research.¹⁴¹ Dungaciu describes the essential difference articulated by Kohn, as well as its problematic rise to prominence:

Essentially, the Western type is a "voluntarist" type of nationalism which regards the nation as **a free association of rational human beings entered into voluntarily on an individual basis**, while the Eastern is an "organic" type which views the nation as **an organism, as a fixed and indelible character which was "stamped" on its members at birth and from which they can never free themselves**. Kohn's approach and perspective are an attempt to separate the good from the bad, the normal type from the deviant type, by using geographical criteria... This distinction in all its variants – Western nationalism versus Eastern nationalism, civic nationalism versus ethnic nationalism, voluntaristic nationalism versus organic nationalism – was well-entrenched in post-World War II literature, and made quite a climb again in the 1990s. The distinction was not, even in the beginning, only an analytical distinction; it was also a normative one. And this last aspect was emphasized and has become prevalent today. From a hypothesis, it gradually turned into a premise, into an axiom; it became a starting point for the research, not – possibly – a conclusion.

¹³⁹ Dan Dungaciu, “East and West and the ‘Mirror of Nature’: Nationalism in West and East Europe – Essentially Different?” Paper presented at *A Decade of Transformation, IWM Junior Visiting Fellows Conferences*, Vienna, 1991, 5.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Dungaciu quotes Nietzsche, who criticizes humanity's “bad habit” of seeing “everywhere in nature opposites (as, for example, ‘warm and cold’) where there are not opposites, but differences in degree.” For Dungaciu, the Eastern versus Western, or ethnic versus civic nationalism trope is an essentialist framework that has become a “standard... axiomatic starting point” despite being highly dubious. See Ibid., 1-2, 11.

Despite this and many similar criticisms, Kohn's thesis remains fascinating as a fundamental theoretical distinction, if not a useful interpretation of history. Echoes of Kohn's thesis are visible in later works as well. Hobsbawm's work, as Smith rightly notes, aligns with Kohn in its distinction between two broad types of nationalism: the "mass, civic and democratic political nationalism, modelled on the kind of citizen nation created by the French Revolution" and prominent from 1830-1870, and an "ethno-linguistic nationalism" which "prevailed in Eastern Europe from 1870-1914, and resurfaced in the 1970s and 1980s... in Asia and Africa."¹⁴²

We need neither to agree with nor to discount Hobsbawm's reading of history, however, to see the appeal in Smith's more practical and useful stance: "Every nationalism contains civic and ethnic elements in varying degrees and different forms."¹⁴³ In other words, "the nation has come to blend two sets of dimensions, the one civic and territorial, the other ethnic and genealogical, in varying proportions in particular cases."¹⁴⁴ If every nationalism and every putative nation can be described as having a particular proportion of civic-territorial and ethnic or ethno-linguistic elements, then it makes sense to first elucidate what these two forms of the nation look like in theory and in practice.

3.1.1: The Civic-Territorial Nation

One prominent theorist of civic nationalism, Michael Ignatieff, writes that civic nationalism "envisages' the nation as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values."¹⁴⁵ As is commonly the case, Ignatieff defines civic nationalism in direct opposition to ethnic nationalism, stressing that the former is a kind of "rational attachment," in which a society binds itself together through a shared, self-conscious commitment to certain values and a certain way of doing politics. Ignatieff sees civic nationalism as a viable option only in democracies, but only because he defines it in the language of the Western post-enlightenment norms of democracy and human rights. (Is it not possible for citizens of a non-democracy to patriotically identify with one

¹⁴² Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 121. See also Dungaciu, "East and West," 7.

¹⁴³ Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 13.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁴⁵ Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (London: BBC Books, 1993), 6.

another and with their state on the basis of shared political practices and values? More importantly, if elites and political entrepreneurs in a non-democracy seek to promote that kind of identification, can we call their form of politics anything other than civic nationalism?)

In his study on civic and ethnic national identity in Ukraine, Shulman offers a somewhat similar definition, though it is less exclusive to non-democracies:

With civic nationalism, people in a nation-state think that what can, does or should unite and distinguish all or most members of the nation are such features as living on a common territory, belief in common political principles, possessions of state citizenship, representation by a common set of political institutions and desire or consent to be part of the nation.¹⁴⁶

As suggested in his mentioning of “common territory” within the definition of civic nationalism, Shulman uses the civic nation as shorthand for a nation “conceived in political and territorial terms,” and idea that we can more fully term the *civic-territorial* nation.¹⁴⁷ His survey tests the salience of this form of national identity by asking whether respondents believe that “Common political principle and ideas” and the “Coexistence and equal rights in the framework of one state (Ukraine)” unites or could unite the people of Ukraine “into a single community.”¹⁴⁸ Shulman’s data reveals that civic-territorial factors outweigh ethno-cultural factors in Ukrainians’ perception of their own national community.¹⁴⁹ Indeed far from an empty, theoretical concept, civic-territorial identity can be the more salient part of the overall imagining of particular “nations.”

As referenced at the outset, Pye argued that mid-1990’s China featured a notorious lack of “collective ideals and shared inspirations” capable of generated nationalism. Nonetheless, recent polling demonstrates that “self-identity of many Chinese is intimately tied to their country,” and that “the vast majority of Chinese take pride in their country’s place in the world.”¹⁵⁰ Indeed we may have witnessed, in the past 70 years, a transition from a Maoist, ideology-based nationalism to a prestige-based political nationalism in the PRC. (This and related issues are explored in the following chapter). According to polling conducted by international experts in

¹⁴⁶ Stephen Shulman, “The Contours of Civic and Ethnic National Identification in Ukraine,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, no. 1 (January 2004): 35.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁵⁰ Dickson, *The Dictator’s Dilemma*, 235.

2014, 84.9 percent of PRC citizens strongly agreed or agreed, “Even if I could pick any country in the world, I still want to be a Chinese citizen.”¹⁵¹ This implies exactly the “rational attachment” described by Ignatieff and the “desire or consent” noted by Shulman. Why should the Chinese feel a desire to be PRC citizens? 80.4 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that, “Generally speaking, China is better than most other countries.”¹⁵² Both percentages noted above increased over the already high figures observed in 2010.¹⁵³ So a civic attachment to the nation, far from an impossibility, is probably quite present in contemporary China. The following two chapters investigate the civic-territorial elements in Chinese nationalist discourse that, presumably, reinforce the sentiments implied in the survey findings noted above.

3.1.2: The Ethno-Cultural Nation

Ethno-cultural nationalism, on the other hand, can be understood to arise from Geertz’s “givenness:” the “congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on” with their “ineffable, and at times overpowering coerciveness.”¹⁵⁴ Even though ethnic nationalism claims that “an individual’s deepest attachments are inherited, not chosen,”¹⁵⁵ the determination of which attachments are politically salient occurs through politics. Ethnicity, after all, is “a classification that can potentially draw on social, cultural, political, or economic characteristics of the individual or group, but that is rooted in *the belief* in shared kinship and descent among the members of the ethnic group.”¹⁵⁶ The question of which ethnic markers become salient parts of identity is fully contextual and constructed, as a change in social, economic, or political reality necessarily shifts the markers that are endowed with *ethnic* significance.

Shulman defines ethno-cultural nationalism as the concept that “what can, does or should unite and distinguish [a nation] are such features as common ancestry, culture, language, religion, traditions, and race.”¹⁵⁷ In proposing that a cultural community ought to *become* a nation, ethno-cultural nationalists combine a kernel of “sociological fact” with a mythologized, ethno-centric

¹⁵¹ Dickson, *The Dictator’s Dilemma*, 236.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Geertz, *New Societies, Old States*, 109. Quoted in 高格孚, 《風和日暖》, 61.

¹⁵⁵ Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*, 7.

¹⁵⁶ Emphasis added. Abramson, Marc S., *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 9.

¹⁵⁷ Shulman, “Contours of Civic and Ethnic,” 35.

worldview and interpretation of history. The “sociological fact” includes the observable realities of intercommunicability of the group and a degree of Durkheimian “logical conformism,” i.e., “a homogenous conception” of time and space “which makes it possible for different people [within the ethno-cultural community] to reach agreement or consensus on the immediate meaning of the world.”¹⁵⁸ Both of these facets of the “sociological fact” of cultural commonality stem primarily from the symbolism of language, a fact that helps explain why scholars of nationalism have devoted particular attention to this most fundamental aspect of social behavior. In fact, some ethno-cultural nationalists deterministically equate differences in language with differences in essential nature. As German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher wrote, “Every language is a particular mode of thought, and what is cogitated in one language can never be repeated in the same way in another.”¹⁵⁹ How, after all, can humans of different languages share a social and political experience if *meaning* itself is linguistically-bound?¹⁶⁰

Yet ethno-cultural nationalism translates the “fact” of cultural commonality within a given “in-group” into a political imperative: the nationalization of either the state or the people (this distinction is explored in section 3.2). In doing so it inevitably exceeds the objectively “true,” and moves into mythologies of history and concepts of destiny that devalue out-groups and contribute to identity of the in-group. Smith’s eight-part myth of *ethnie*, discussed in section 2.4, provide the community with its subjective sense of self and, and by giving it a relatively stable, inheritable source of identity, the *ethnie* myth further reinforcing the objective “logical conformism” of the community. In other words, communities with intercommunicability and some degree of latent “logical conformism” by virtue of shared symbolism – an objective “sociological reality” – must also receive (and accept) a subjective identity that allows “in-groupness” to translate into particular political imperatives. Below, figure 3.1.2 presents the author’s conception of the objective and subjective dimensions of ethno-cultural communities.

¹⁵⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 166. Quoted in Pang Qin, “The Rise of Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China: The Main Content and Causes,” *Elixir International Journal* 36 (2011): 3361, [http://www.elixirpublishers.com/articles/1350542599_36%20\(2011\)%203361-3365.pdf](http://www.elixirpublishers.com/articles/1350542599_36%20(2011)%203361-3365.pdf).

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Eugene Kamenka, “Political Nationalism – The Evolution of the Idea,” in *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, ed. Eugene Kamenka (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1976), 11.

¹⁶⁰ It is worth noting, of course, that multi-lingual nations exist. Switzerland is a frequently mentioned example.

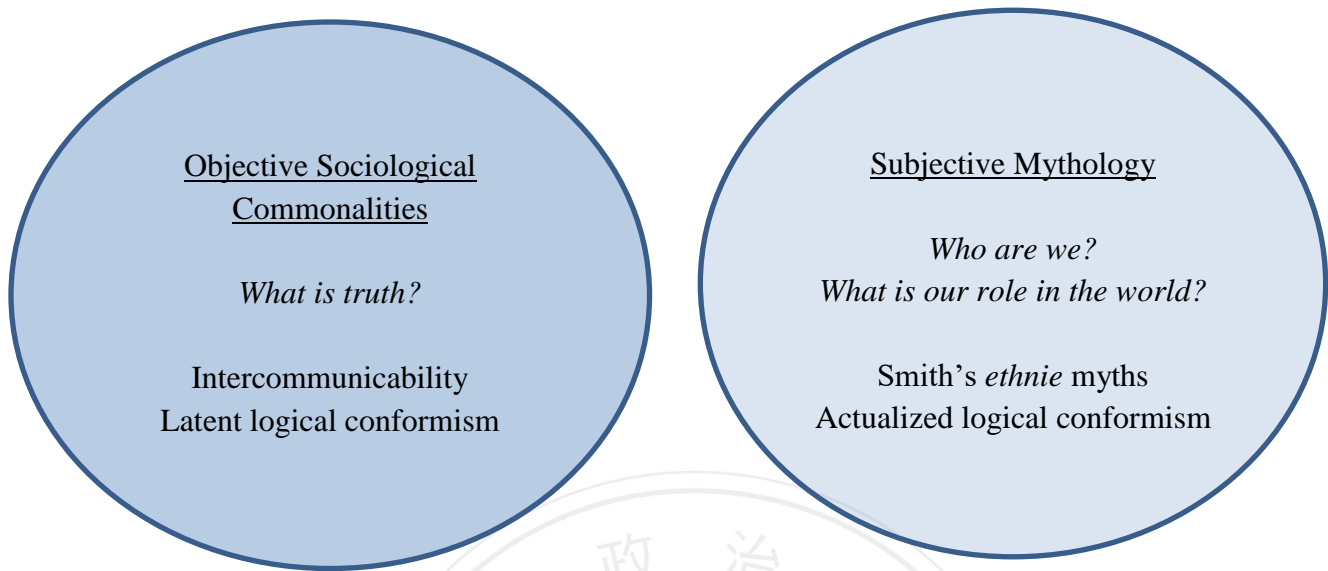


Figure 3.1.2: Logical Conformism of Ethno-Cultural Communities

Because the ethno-cultural nation requires both the existence of objective sociological commonality and a broad consensus on mythology and identity, we can expect ethno-cultural nationalist rhetoric to function on both levels. Gellner's correct emphasis on the revolutionary effects of industrial modernity and universal education on communication and Anderson's correct emphasis on print-media in a common vernacular both highlight the necessity of objective sociological commonalities as a precondition to the self-conscious community that is the nation. Yet as we have seen in Smith, nations have – or take on – 'ethnic roots' above and beyond the objective criteria emphasized by Gellner and Anderson. The engendering of a subjective mythology typically requires not only the *existence* of intercommunicability (including widespread literacy) in a common vernacular, but also the *activation* of that common symbolic system to create a dominant interpretation of events in which the nation is imagined as the subject of history, as a coherent actor in the present, and as an object of destiny. In that sense, a fully developed ethno-cultural nation has not only *latent* logical conformism, but also *actualized* logical conformism. We can thus expect the rhetoric of ethno-cultural nationalism to employ the former to promote and pursue the latter.

The state is ideally suited to create, enforce, and maintain the logical conformism that undergirds the ethno-cultural community. As Yack contends, all states are culturally situated,

and “bound, to a certain extent, to take on the form of inherited cultural artifacts.”¹⁶¹ Unlike religion, which the state may fully adopt (theocracy), fully reject (institutionalized atheism) or ignore (separation of church and state), culture is inherent in all that the state does. All states are cultural, in other words, as they “must use cultural tools and symbols to organize, exercise, and communicate political authority.”¹⁶² There is no “separation of state and culture;” perhaps the closest example, progressive multi-culturalism, is still *cultural* as such. This illuminates a key aspect of the nationalizing tendencies of the state, that is, the state’s tendency to engage in the polity-based (nationalizing) nationalism discussed below in section 3.2. Thus conceptualizing the CCP as an actor which employs the mechanisms of the state to pursue this kind of nationalism not only fits with the logic of ‘Gramscian’ expansive hegemony presented in the introduction, but also reflects the reality of what makes an ethno-cultural community.

3.1.3: Issues in the Civic-Territorial, Ethno-Cultural Duality

The distinctions laid out above are important as a foundational typology, but when applied as a rigid, dichotomous lens through which the content of a putative nation is viewed, it may obscure more than clarify. Particularly in the Chinese case, this author finds potential issues. First, combining the ethnic and the cultural into a single national type confuses two rather different articulations of China found in both modern and classical Chinese history. Chang’s study on orthodoxy in Chinese dynastic history finds that since the Han Dynasty, three distinct meanings of “China,” i.e., three distinct kinds of Chinese-ness are present in Chinese political writings. Specifically, they are a geographical China, a cultural China, and an ethnic China.¹⁶³ Both China as a concept and Chinese identity were thus variously grounded in culturalism, “geographism,” and “ethnicism,” as disparate states attempted to legitimize their relationship to the orthodox (正統) dynastic succession reaching back to the Qin dynasty.¹⁶⁴

Indeed, despite the attractiveness of Kohn’s dichotomy at the theoretical level, historical discourse on Chinese-ness appears to pair cultural identity with civic identity as much as or more

¹⁶¹ Yack, *Nationalism and the Moral Psychology of Community*, 28.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ 「從漢代以降，中國思想界已經形成地理意義的，文化意義的和族裔意義的三種『中國』概念，亦即三種『中國性』」。張其賢，〈正統論，中國性與中國認同〉，《政治科學論叢》第 64 期 (2015 年 6 月): 3.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 6.

than with ethnic identity.¹⁶⁵ In particular, Ming scholar Fang Xiaoru (方孝孺) wrote, “that which makes China noble is the hierarchy of king and subjects, the teaching of rites and righteousness, distinguishing [China] from the barbarians. Without [the ethics of] king and subjects, one is barbarian, and if barbarian, hardly more than beast.”¹⁶⁶ This conception of Chinese-ness embodies both civic or civilizational and cultural attributes while rejecting an ethnic distinction between Chinese and barbarian. Barbarians (夷狄), according to Fang, are not people who descend from different ancestors, but rather those who do not adhere to China’s Confucian value system. Although this example greatly precedes the arrival of *nationalism* in China, it nonetheless demonstrates that rigidly combining ethnicity and culture as one type of identity in opposition to civic and territorial attributes may be at odds with China’s historical discourse on identity. Indeed, in the case of pre-modern China, one wonders whether a trichotomy of “civilizational-cultural,” “ethno-centric,” and “territorial” would more accurately depict the various dimensions of discourse on Chinese-ness.

The tendency to group “culture” with “ethnicity” in current English may reflect the values of social scientists more than the actual perceptions and experience of human societies. In particular, there appears to be a deeply-ingrained taboo within English-language social science against assertions that different groups of people have different essential characteristics. “Ethnicity,” therefore, simply *cannot* be taken to mean anything more than a modular social construction, lest we return to the social-Darwinism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This line of thinking, though perfectly understandable, nonetheless leads English-language social science to overlook the *slightly* more essentialist conception of ethnicity suggested by evolutionary biology. From a purely biological perspective, “micro-evolution” has had undeniable effects on different ethnic groups, especially through the process of co-evolution, in which “genes and cultural elements change over time and mutually influence each other.”¹⁶⁷ This

¹⁶⁵ The author recognizes that extending “civic identity” back before the modern concept of citizenship is problematic by definition. Nonetheless, China’s civilizational identity, centered in particular on a Confucian value system, seems not entirely different from “civic identity” as it is broadly employed in this study. The author thanks professor Chang Chishen (張其賢) for pointing out that the identity in question here is really civilizational identity, rather than “civic” in the modern sense. Crucially, however, whether “civic” or “civilizational,” this identity is indeed *non-ethnic*, and yet very closely tied to culture.

¹⁶⁶ 「夫中國之為貴者，以有君臣之等，禮義之教，異乎夷狄也。無君臣則入於夷狄，入夷狄則與禽獸幾矣。」方孝孺，〈後正統論〉，載氏著，徐光大校點：《遜志齋集》（寧波：寧波出版社，2000年），卷2，57。

¹⁶⁷ Jonathan Haidt, “Faster Evolution Means More Ethnic Differences,” *Edge* (2009), <https://www.edge.org/response-detail/10376>.

reality is demonstrable in the observation that the genetic ability to digest lactose is only prevalent among those of us whose ancestors domesticated cattle,¹⁶⁸ and typical dental morphology varies between ethnic groups as a result of generationally-consistent differences in past diets.¹⁶⁹ This is merely to say that, without reverting to a full-blown biological definition of ethnicity, we can conclude that it is at least *possible* to consider ethnicity independently of culture – as it perhaps should be in the context of discourse on Chinese identity.

Nonetheless, only by carefully analyzing the discourse of Chinese nationalism can we discover how these different dimensions of identity have been grouped together and contested since the arrival of nationalist politics in China. The following two chapters aim to do exactly that. We can thus gain greater clarity as to whether Chinese nationalism negotiates between civic-territorial and ethno-cultural imaginings of the community, or among different possibilities altogether. Thus each of the four elements in the index of analysis shown in Figure 3.1 will be examined independently before a judgement is made as to what kind of national community is being imagined. First, however, the possible orientations of nationalism must be explored.

3.2: Polity-Seeking and Polity-Based Orientations of Nationalism

Having explored the possible contents of nationalist discourse above, we may now turn to nationalism's possible orientations. We have previously noted Brubaker's definition of nationalism: "a form of remedial political action" that "addresses an allegedly deficient... condition and proposes to remedy it."¹⁷⁰ At this point we must understand the distinction that Brubaker develops between the two possible deficient conditions to which nationalism can be addressed, as well as the two corresponding orientations of nationalism as a remedy to those deficiencies. Brubaker explains:

This allegedly deficient condition comes in two basic forms: a nation may be held to lack an adequate polity, or a polity may be held to lack an adequate national base. Two corresponding types of nationalism may be distinguished: *polity-seeking* or *polity-upgrading* nationalisms that aim to establish or upgrade an autonomous national polity; and *polity-based, nation-shaping (or nation-promoting)* nationalisms that aim to

¹⁶⁸ Haidt, "Faster Evolution Means More Ethnic Differences."

¹⁶⁹ The academic journal *Dental Anthropology* publishes studies in this field.

¹⁷⁰ Given that this is primarily a study of discourse, we may simply include discourse as a form of action in order to apply Brubaker's definition here. See Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 79.

nationalize an existing polity.¹⁷¹

Put a bit more simply, nationalism may either aim to reform/create a state that suits the putative nation, or it may aim to nationalize the population of an existing state or states. In the first case, in which its rhetoric is “directed *against* the framework of existing states,” we call it polity-seeking nationalism.¹⁷² In the second case, in which its rhetoric promotes the nationalization of a population “within the framework of [an] existing [state],” we term it polity-based or nationalizing nationalism.¹⁷³

If state and society (or state and nation) are understood to be the two possible objects upon which nationalism seeks to act, then we can conceptualize two forms of nationalism in terms of that which they seek to revise and that which they seek to maintain. At the state level, polity-based (nationalizing) nationalism reinforces the status quo by engendering a nation within the state – and forming a “state-nation,” as it were. At the society/nation level, however, it is revisionist: it seeks to reform whatever deficiency prevents the engendering of a proper nation, most likely by manipulating and altering the salience of particular elements of national or proto-national identity. This kind of nationalism is presumably promoted by elites and political entrepreneurs with an interest in the political status quo, and likely operates hand-in-hand with the socialization mechanism described by Gellner.

Breuilly largely dismisses polity-based nationalism as having a limited and potentially counter-productive effect on national identity. He writes, “I am led to the tentative conclusion that... the politics of cultural engineering will have very little effect on the population.” And, “In the case of promoting a sense of national identity it is probably overvalued by nationalist regimes. Its effects in this area are probably confined to reinforcing an existing sense of national solidarity.” Rather, he writes, “A sense of national solidarity is more likely to be promoted by processes beyond the control or even the understanding of nationalists. He thus additionally separates “nation-building” as “policies deliberately pursued by governments,” from “national integration” as “processes in which deliberate government policy may play little or no part,” noting that the former should be especially ineffective.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 79.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Each quote in the above paragraph comes from Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 277-278.

Because this study deals primarily with discourse, processes of “national integration” are outside of our immediate scope of concern. Should we then follow Breuille in dismissing “nation-building,” or government-led nationalization of the polity as a limited, peripheral phenomenon? The following chapter will demonstrate that, contrary to Breuille’s warnings, this kind of polity-based nationalism is critical to contextualizing and understanding much of Chinese nationalist rhetoric. The Chinese nationalists who espouse a nationalizing nationalism *could* be unaware of the ineffectiveness of their rhetoric. It seems equally likely, however, that the Chinese case provides a counter example to Breuille.

Conversely, **polity-seeking (state-building)** nationalism arises from actors who view the status quo political order as insufficient for the needs of a putative nation. It is thus typically *status-quo maintaining* at the society or nation-level, but revisionist at the state level. In fact the polity-seeking variety is what we generally think of as “nationalism,” and because it holds the nation as a preexisting entity, it is more comprehensible within the worldview of nationalists. Breuille implicitly subsumes most nationalism within this category when he identifies three sub-varieties of nationalist movements. He writes, “nationalist opposition [to the status-quo state] can seek to break away from the present state (separation), to reform it in a nationalist direction (reform), or to unite it with other states (unification).”¹⁷⁵ In any of these three cases, the deficiency in question is at the state level. Polity-seeking nationalism is thus reformist whether in terms of the domestic state or the international (*interstate*) system.

3.3: Overall Methodology

The two orientations of nationalism discussed in section 3.2 can pair with any of the contents of the putative nation discussed in section 3.1. In other words, the discursive content of a polity-based nationalism may attempt to remedy the deficient nation by stressing any combination of civic, territorial, ethnic, or cultural identity; likewise, the discursive content of a polity-seeking nationalism may stress any combination of these contents of the putative nation as a justification to promote revisionism at the state-level. Both aspects of the methodology can be represented together, as in Figure 3.3 below. While this figure has been designed with the Chinese case in mind, it is generalizable and has potential use in a number of cases.

¹⁷⁵ Breuille, *Nationalism and the State*, 9.

Chinese Nationalist Discourse 中國民族主義之話語					
<i>Contents</i> 內容	<i>Who are we?</i>		<i>Orientations</i> 方向	<i>What must we do?</i>	
	The Chinese Nation 中華民族			Nationalism 民族主義	
	<i>Theoretical Dichotomy</i>			<i>Theoretical Dichotomy</i>	
	ethno-cultural	civic-territorial		polity-based (nationalizing)	polity-seeking (state-building)
<i>Index of Analysis</i>	ethnic	civic	<i>Deficient Condition</i>	deficient nation	deficient state
	cultural	territorial	<i>Remedial Action</i>	nationalization	reform, revolution, separation, unification
			<i>State-Level</i>	status-quo	revisionist
			<i>Society-Level (Nation-Level)</i>	revisionist	status-quo

Figure 3:3: Possible Contents and Orientations of Chinese Nationalist Discourse

Chapter 4: Stages of Chinese Nationalism

In the analytical context of this study, there are at least two logical time-periods from which to begin an overview of Chinese nationalist rhetoric in history. The first possibility, in keeping with much of the secondary literature, is to set the birth date of Chinese nationalism sometime in the late 19th century,¹⁷⁶ when a weakening Qing empire confronted Japan and “the West”¹⁷⁷ from a position of bureaucratic, scientific, and military weakness. According to this narrative, the psychologically violent collision of dynastic China’s “grand imperial pretension”¹⁷⁸ with – for the first time – jarringly obvious foreign political, technological, and military superiority, set a generation of anti-Qing revolutionaries on a quest to “save the nation” by creating a nation-state. The rhetorical contestation between these revolutionaries and the more conservative reformists is then presented as the “formative stage” of Chinese nationalist discourse.¹⁷⁹ As Mohanty writes,

The themes of nationalism, modernization and democracy have dominated Chinese intellectual discourse for a century since the reform debates of the [1890s]. How to unite China, liberate it from colonial domination, build a strong and prosperous country to cope with Western challenged and eradicate poverty have been the common threads connecting Sun Yatsen, Mao Zedong and Den Xiaoping and their respective generations of leaders.¹⁸⁰

The second possibility involves making a clear distinction between nationalism before and after the founding of the PRC. Citing Chatterjee’s distinction between nationalism’s “moment of departure, moment of maneuver, and moment of arrival,” in India’s colonial and

¹⁷⁶ Viewing the late 19th century as the beginning of nationalism in China is consistent with the approaches developed in Zhao, Schell and Delury, and Chu and Zarrow – each work is cited below.

¹⁷⁷ A conception of “the West” (西方) as a coherent civilization seems foundational to the cognitive frame of Chinese nationalism. The discourse resulting from this cognitive frame typically presents “the West” as China’s foil, implicitly elevating “China” to a position of equivalence or comparability with a rhetorical entity that spans three to four continents, depending on definition. There is a powerful but often overlooked subtext to the Chinese nationalist conception of “East” and “West;” very often, such nationalist discourse privileges China with the right to speak for the “East,” that is, for Asia and Asians. This cultural dichotomy goes hand-in-hand with the reverse-Orientalism described in John Timothy Wixted, “Reverse Orientalism,” *Sino-Japanese Studies* 2, no. 1 (December 1989), <http://chinajapan.org/articles/02.1/02.1.17-27wixted.pdf>.

¹⁷⁸ Orville Schell and John Delury, *Wealth and Power: China’s Long March to the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Random House, 2013), 119.

¹⁷⁹ Hong-yuan Chu and Peter Zarrow, “Modern Chinese Nationalism: The Formative Stage,” in *Exploring Nationalisms of China: Themes and Conflicts*, ed. George C. Wei and Xiaoyuan Liu (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 3-26.

¹⁸⁰ Manoranjan Mohanty, *Ideology Matters: China from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2014), 93.

post-colonial history¹⁸¹, Wang marks the 1949 founding of the PRC and Mao's famous declaration that "The Chinese people have stood up!" (中國人民站起來了!) as nationalism's "moment of arrival" in China. As George describes, after nationalism's "moment of arrival," "nationalist discourse utters its own life history. It is in this period of time, in the literary productions of the society, that one finds even the most banal event to be overdetermined by the dominant politics of nationalism."¹⁸² In other words, nationalism's arrival marks the point at which "the nation" has been successfully engendered as the rightful subject of history and the legitimate object of political discourse. Such a transition in the relationship between "nation" and political consciousness should dramatically alter the form of nationalism occurring in political discourse. Thus it is reasonable to limit an analysis of Chinese nationalist rhetoric to the post-1949 era on the basis that pre-PRC Chinese nationalism is simply a different topic. Renowned Chinese historian Hu Sheng (胡繩), in fact, argues for the differentiation of not just nationalism, but all of Chinese history, between the "modern" and "contemporary" eras, with 1949 as the boundary between these two periods.¹⁸³

This chapter attempts to compromise between these two approaches by first considering the discourse of nationalism prior to the PRC's founding, but devoting greater attention to more recent periods. Throughout the following analysis, the actual words of Chinese speakers and the actual contexts in which they were acting are prioritized above abstract theoretical questions. This is especially important because although many aspects of modern Chinese politics can be explained with reference to models introduced from the outside (the CCP's democratic centralism, for example, is an adaptation of Leninism), and although nationalism as a doctrine was originally imported from the outside, the putative "Chinese nation," or *Zhonghua Minzu* (中華民族), differs in key respects from seemingly similar models outside of China. Leibold notes that while a *Zhonghua Minzu* has figured centrally in Chinese nationalist discourse from the time of Sun and Liang, to the Mao era, and now in the present day, it has at no time resembled

¹⁸¹ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, 1986), 50-51. Discussed in 汪宏倫, 〈理解當代中國民族主義〉, 192.

¹⁸² Rosemary Marangoly George, "Nostalgic Theorizing: at Home in 'Third World Fictions'," in *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 117.

¹⁸³ Discussed in Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction*, 17.

Stalin's famous four-part definition of "nation."¹⁸⁴ Chinese-ness, likewise, has embodied ethnic, cultural, civic and territorial characteristics, each of which has a potential to become a *nationalized* element of identity. To understand what makes up Chinese nationalism at present, therefore, we must begin by retracing the contents and orientations of Chinese nationalism historically. The following section does so while demonstrating the applicability of the model laid out in chapter three to the study of Chinese nationalism through time.

4.1: Nationalism Before the PRC

4.1.1: Late Qing Nationalism

In the competing discourses of late Qing intellectuals, we can find both polity-based and polity-seeking nationalism and both ethno-cultural and civic-territorial imaginations of the Chinese nation. This section briefly discusses the discourse and stances of Liang Qichao, Chen Duxiu, the Empress Dowager Cixi, Sun Yat-sen and Zhang Binglin to highlight the various ethnic, cultural, civic, and territorial contents and status quo-reinforcing and revisionist orientations of these multi-faceted nationalisms in the late Qing era.

Chu and Zarrow offer a relatively mainstream characterization of late Qing intellectuals as belonging to one of two broad camps: reformers who aimed to modernize China's government, bureaucracy, and military while preserving the Qing government or gradually transitioning to a more democratic system, and revolutionaries who called for the immediate overthrow of the existing system. These authors describe how differing stances as to the status of ethnic Manchus in relation to the Chinese nation mark a central difference between the nationalism of reformers and revolutionaries in this era:

Reformers like Liang argued, using a more civic definition of 'national,' that the Manchu were certainly members of the Chinese political community. Revolutionaries argued, using a more ethnic definition, that the Manchu were certainly not legitimate members of the political community but usurpers and the enemies of the true Chinese (the 'Han').¹⁸⁵

The ensuing discussion will reveal a degree of truth in this broad characterization of the more civic-territorial nation of the reformers in comparison to the more ethno-cultural nation of the

¹⁸⁴ James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and its Indigenous Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 51-109.

¹⁸⁵ Chu and Zarrow, "Modern Chinese Nationalism," 7.

revolutionaries. However, a careful examination of specific nationalist discourse representative of this era reveals a more complex mixture of civic, territorial, ethnic, and cultural dimensions of the nationalism in both camps. In fact, as the following analysis demonstrates, viewed through the lens of nationalism, it is in some cases rather problematic to characterize individual figures of the era as either “reformist” or “revolutionary” at all.

Liang Qichao’s thought seems to straddle between the ethno-cultural and civic-territorial nation. His nationalism, however, is clearly polity-based (nationalizing). Schell and Delury note that while in exile in Japan, Liang realized that the source of China’s weakness was its lack of “national consciousness” (國家思想): the inability of the Chinese people “to imagine themselves as active participants, as *guomin* (國民), ‘citizens’ of a modern nation-state.”¹⁸⁶ (Chu and Zarrow argue that Liang’s *guomin* should rather be translated “national.”¹⁸⁷) According to Chu and Zarrow, “Liang argued that China needed to end the subordination of ‘subjects’ to the emperor and create ‘nationals’ who would feel that they were members of the state. Monarchical states were weak, while states composed of nationals were strong.”¹⁸⁸ As he wrote in 1899, “‘Citizens’ is the term for the people who collectively own the nation. A nation is the accumulation of its people’s achievements, without whom there would be no nation.”¹⁸⁹

Turning subjects into citizens and thus co-equal nationals who would be active participants in their nation-state, Liang’s version of the nation has distinct civic qualities. His nationalism was therefore aimed at the transformation of China as both a people and a state. “Liang warned that unless China reinvented itself as a modern nation soon, it faced the real prospect of political extinction, of becoming a *wangguo* (亡國), ‘lost country.’”¹⁹⁰ According to Zhao, Liang regarded the Han-dominant China-proper as “but a region” within the multi-ethnic and multi-regional Chinese nation-state that should include Manchuria, Mongolia, Turkestan and Tibet.¹⁹¹ In a sense, his nationalism elevated territoriality above ethnicity.¹⁹² On the whole,

¹⁸⁶ Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 101.

¹⁸⁷ Chu and Zarrow, “Modern Chinese Nationalism,” 5, 22.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁸⁹ This is the translation provided in Michael, Gow, “The Core Socialist Values of the Chinese Dream: Towards a Chinese Integral State,” *Critical Asian Studies* 49, no. 1 (2017): 92. “Nation” here could also be translated as state or country, as the original suggests: 國民者，以國為人民公產之稱也。國者積民而成，捨民之外，則無有國。

¹⁹⁰ Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 101.

¹⁹¹ Zhao, *A Nation by Construction*, 66.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

Liang called for “a fundament change in China’s identity, a change in the core of what it meant to be Chinese, in order to save its existence as a people and a state.”¹⁹³ A “nationalizing” nationalism, in so many words.

Chu and Zarrow argue that the aftermath of the failed 1898 reform movement witnessed the rise of “a version of nationalism firmly rooted in the Romantic tradition,” combining “a notion of ethnic purity around the Han people (*hanzu*) with two more notions imported from the West: revolution and democracy.”¹⁹⁴ As part of this transition, Liang’s post-1898 nationalism edged closer to J. G. Herder’s romantic nationalism, including the concept of a unique national spirit and an immutable community.¹⁹⁵ His advocacy of a nationalization of Chinese historiography embodied the ethno-cultural dimensions of the nation in addition to his well-documented civic-territorial stances. Liang declared that China needed a new historiography, “one that would take the *minzu* (民族 race/nation) and its *guomin* (國民 citizens) as the subjects of historical development rather than the genealogies of individual families contained in the biographies (*liezhuan* 列傳) and chronicles (*nianbiao* 年表) of the twenty-four standard histories.”¹⁹⁶ In doing so, Liang and his contemporaries chose to begin this “new type of history with the Yellow Emperor (*huangdi* 黃帝), the ‘first ancestor’ (*chuzu* 初祖) of the Chinese people.”¹⁹⁷ In this respect, Liang’s polity-based (nationalizing) nationalism represented an attempt to create an ethno-cultural as well as civic nation out of the Qing empire. But the civic-territorial and ethno-cultural dimensions of Liang’s nationalism were compatible under his advocacy of “state nationalism” (國家主義), articulated through the logic that the Chinese nation, under threat from imperialist outsiders, needed a strong state.¹⁹⁸ Seeking to reform the state rather than abolish the Qing dynasty, Liang proposed “equality of the Manchu and Han people under a constitutional monarchy.”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹³ Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 101.

¹⁹⁴ Chu and Zarrow, “Modern Chinese Nationalism,” 5.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁹⁶ James Leibold, “Filling in the Nation: The Spatial Trajectory of Prehistoric Archaeology in Twentieth-Century China,” in *Transforming History: The Making of a Modern Academic Discipline in Twentieth Century China*, ed. Brian Moloughney and Peter Zarrow (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press), 335.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Zhao, *A Nation by Construction*, 66.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

Liang's late-Qing polity-based nationalism, of course, differed sharply from the polity-seeking nationalism of Sun Yat-sen and Zhang Binglin. These anti-Qing revolutionaries utilized the doctrine of nationalism in defense of the Han ethno-nation. Sun, in fact, viewed "foreign imperialist powers as lesser evils compared to the Manchu government," who, as the "running dog" of the white imperialists, were the more immediate and detestable enemy of the Han ethno-nation.²⁰⁰ Regenerating China (振興中華) required first and foremost a return of China's sovereignty to the Han majority. Zhang espoused a "national essence" (國粹) view of the national question, rhetorically asking, "is the Chinese nation (民族) really an empty frame which we can fill with foreigners?"²⁰¹ His Han-centric historiography subsumed China's complex ethno-political history into a story of two homogenous groups: the Hanzu (漢族), those that descend from the Yellow Emperor, and the non-Han barbarians.²⁰²

Territorial themes are clear in statements from Chen Duxiu, whose admiration of Woodrow Wilson's anti-colonialist stance in "Fourteen Points" led him to call the American president "the number one good man in the world."²⁰³ The constitution of the Anhui Patriotic Society, written in part by Chen, declared an intent to "unite the masses into an organization that will develop patriotic thought and stir up a martial spirit, so people will grab their weapons to protect their country and restore our **basic national sovereignty**."²⁰⁴ At the society's founding in 1903, Chen delivered a speech decrying impending concessions of Manchurian land to Russia. Chen said, "If our government allows this treaty, every nation will moisten its lips and help itself to a part of China," to the end that the country would lack even "**one foot or inch of clean land**."²⁰⁵ Chen desperately urged his fellow Chinese to "take the responsibility of struggling to the death to **protect our land**."²⁰⁶ Yet he notably rejected narrow ethnic markers of Chinese-

²⁰⁰ Zhao, *A Nation by Construction*, 64.

²⁰¹ Quoted in Timothy Cheek, "Reform: making China fit the world (1895-1915)," in *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2015), 50.

²⁰² Chow et al., *Constructing Nationhood*, 2.

²⁰³ Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 162.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

ness. Chen's refusal to join Sun's *Tongmenghui* (同盟會) apparently resulted from his distaste for "the narrowly racist base of Sun Yat-sen's views."²⁰⁷

Japan's shocking victory over Russia in 1905 convinced Qing reformists of the urgency of learning from Japan's successful political model. Weatherley notes that the Empress Dowager referred especially to Japan when she wrote in 1906, "the wealth and strength of other countries are due to their practice of constitutional government, in which public questions are determined by consultation with the people. The ruler and his people are **as one body animated by one spirit.**"²⁰⁸ In essence, Cixi had joined Yan Fu (嚴復), Kang Youwei (康有為), and Liang Qichao in noting that China's weakness stemmed in part from the lack of participatory politics. Weatherley explains the logic of these reformers who advocated a transition to constitutional monarchy. They believed that if Qing subjects were able to vote, stand for election, and exercise "basic civil freedoms of speech and association," then they would have greater support for the government which not only granted them such rights and freedoms, but also encouraged their active participation in the affairs of the state.

This loyalty could then be channeled by the Qing regime into its broader nation saving objectives so that China would not perish in the international struggle amongst nations. Crucially, although it was now recognized that individuals as well as nations had rights, the long-term goal remained exactly the same – to make China strong.²⁰⁹

In the final years before the Qing's collapse in late 1911, the deficiency of a civic "spirit," the lack of consultation between the rulers and the ruled, and the nonexistence of democratic rights and freedoms was thus recognized as a principle source of China's weakness. The Qing government took action with the drafting of the 1908 Principles of the Constitution, then China's first ever constitutional document, which stipulated a nine year transition into constitutional monarchy.²¹⁰ The document included aspects of local self-government recommended by Kang Youwei, specified both "negative" and "positive" rights of citizens, "implied the existence of a

²⁰⁷ David Scott, "China's Further Humiliations," in *China and the International System, 1840-1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliation* (Albany: State University of New York Press: 2008), 170.

²⁰⁸ Maribeth Elliot Cameron, *The Reform Movement in China* (New York: Octagon Books, 1963), 103. Quoted in Robert Weatherley, *Making China Strong: The Role of Nationalism in Chinese Thinking on Democracy and Human Rights* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 53.

²⁰⁹ Weatherley, *Making China Strong*, 3.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

right to vote and stand for election,” and laid out particular civic duties expected of citizens.²¹¹ Weatherly notes, “Although the Principles was the first document in China to specify that individuals had rights,” it did so with an explicitly “nation-first approach,” demonstrating a clear link to China’s nation-building project. “With the nation’s interests at the very fore, the objective of bequeathing rights to the people was to facilitate the rise of a strong and unified ‘China.’” The Principles thus aimed to create a civic/political loyalty to the nation, binding “ruler and ruled closer together in a unified pact,” rather than to create free citizens as an end in themselves.²¹²

Thus nationalist discourses of late Qing reformists embody territorial, civic, ethnic, and cultural elements of the nation and a clear push for polity-based (nationalizing) nationalism. Descriptions of late-Qing nationalism as merely a pursuit of wealth and power (富強), or, “prosperity and strength,”²¹³ while not incorrect, miss the complexity of ideas invoked to substantiate the nation, as well as the central divide between polity-based and polity-seeking nationalism of the period. By carefully differentiating between these strands within the period’s very heterogeneous nationalisms, we understand that the period’s relationship to Chinese nationalism cannot be reduced to a single movement or group. Sun Yat-sen’s famous declaration, “If we do not earnestly promote nationalism and weld together our four hundred million into a strong nation, we face a tragedy – the loss of our country and the destruction of our race,” is thus but one of many conceptualizations of Qing China’s “deficient condition” and the related “remedial political action” which it required.²¹⁴ Indeed, Wei and Liu describe a complexity and diversity not only of nationalist rhetoric, but even of new terminology characterizing the period:

“In the early twentieth century, Chinese nationalism took a variety of forms and reflected different concerns... The concept of **the new national**, introduced through Japan, could be understood in terms of **citizenship**, that is, as participating in (future) **civic and democratic institutions** as a member of the national community. The new national was also thought to have emotional ties, often based on anti-imperialist resentment, to the national community. This national community, in turn, was **variously conceived in ethnic and multiethnic civic terms**. This complexity was reflected in an unstable terminology that could signify a range of connotations... As many concepts were translated from

²¹¹ Weatherly, *Making China Strong*, 53-55.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 55-56.

²¹³ Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 6.

²¹⁴ Sun Yat-sen, *The Three Principles of the People*, vii. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 131.

Western works, often through the Japanese, **new terms variously connoted the ethnic nation, the civic nation, and the state.**²¹⁵

A 1903 journal article entitled “Nationalism” (民族主義) offered little in the way of ideology, but discussed (mostly essentialist) definitions of “nation” (民族), possible relationships between nation and state, and the conclusion that “China’s position in the world arena was so poor because the Chinese were ‘not only a nation without a state, but also a people without a nation.’”²¹⁶ The article also advocated a *nationalizing first, polity-seeking second* approach to nationalism, declaring, “If a movement for a perfect state is to be taken, then without doubt the nation must be constructed beforehand.”²¹⁷ Nonetheless, the following sections illustrate that major changes in the contents and orientations of Chinese nationalism are observable after the “formative stage” discussed above.

4.1.2: Republican Nationalism

With the end of Qing rule and the founding of the Republic of China, the victorious revolutionaries led by Sun Yat-sen encountered a brand new set of challenges. Thus the KMT’s relationship to nationalism faced a transition not altogether different from that faced by the CCP after its victory in 1949. In both cases, flirtations with ethnic self-determination had to be abandoned in favor of unity under the multi-*minzu* state. As Zhao notes, once representing rather than resisting the state, Sun dropped the “view of China as caught in a struggle between the two subraces of Han and Manchu” and adopted “the concept of the five nationalities indentified by the Qianlong emperor about two hundred years earlier.”²¹⁸ It was now disunity between China’s “five nationalities”²¹⁹ rather than “alien” Manchu rule that represented the “deficient condition” threatening the “Chinese nation.” Thus Sun stated in 1912, “should all ethnic groups be unified, China may rise as a great power.”²²⁰ This represents a position of polity-based nationalism, the desire to unite an insufficiently nationalized population within the framework of the state. Prior to the mid-1920s, Sun also shared the understanding of the late Qing reformers discussed above,

²¹⁵ Chu and Zarrow, “Modern Chinese Nationalism,” 4.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

²¹⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 11.

²¹⁸ Zhao, *A Nation by Construction*, 68.

²¹⁹ Namely, Han, Manchus, Mongols, Hui, and Tibetans, then institutionalized within the ROC as China’s five nationalities/races.

²²⁰ Sun Yet-sen, *Sun Zhongshan quanji*, 319. Quoted in Zhao, *A Nation by Construction*, 68.

namely that “greater democracy would lead to greater public loyalty towards China’s rulers,” and that such loyalty “could be directed towards the patriotic struggle to rebut the foreign menace.”²²¹ Thus the engendering of a civic nation represented a key part of Sun’s polity-based nationalism.

An opposing dimension of nationalism in the Republican Period can be seen in the 1919 May Fourth Movement (五四運動). At the peak of the broader New Culture Movement (新文化運動), during which Beijing-based intellectuals began publically questioning Confucian values, popularizing Marxism among China’s rising political activists, and eagerly embracing Wilsonianism,²²² students and intellectuals in Beijing set off a protest movement after it became publically known that China’s delegates to the Paris Peace Conference failed to secure the return of defeated Germany’s concessions in Shandong (山東) to China. On May Fourth, a “Manifesto of All Students of Beijing” circulated at Tiananmen Square, proclaiming the student’s passion for protecting China’s territorial integrity:

Once the integrity of her territory is destroyed, China will soon be annihilated... This is the last chance for China in her life and death struggle. Today we swear two solemn oaths: 1. China’s territory may be conquered, but it cannot be given away. 2. The Chinese people may be massacred, but they will not surrender!²²³

Viewing the May Fourth Movement in terms of its nationalist rhetoric thus illustrates the centrality of territory to the nation. The Chinese public’s outrage to the terms of the Paris Peace Conference was so intense that many of China’s cities descended into utter disorder over the following month, prompting Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀) to reflect, “Should we in the end love our country (我們究竟應不應該愛國)?”²²⁴ Chen settled on a conditional patriotism, expressing a clear endorsement of a voluntarist, civic nation, but an implicit rejection of primordialism:

²²¹ Weatherley, *Making China Strong*, 3.

²²² Manela notes that the principles embodied in Wilson’s “Fourteen Points,” especially the doctrine that all nations, weak or strong, should equally enjoy national sovereignty, seemed to offer China an escape from the “Darwinian logic that had dictated China’s relationship with the world in the previous decades,” namely, that national survival was a contest in which the strong would dominate the weak. Manela quotes Paul Reinsch, then U.S. Minister to China, as writing that Wilson’s principles had “found a deep response throughout China,” entering “deeply and directly into the hearts of the Chinese people.” Erez Manela, “China’s Place among Nations,” in *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 110-111.

²²³ Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 163.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

“What we [should] love is a country where the people use patriotism to resist oppression, not a country that uses patriotism to oppress... What we [should] love is a country that seeks happiness for the people, not a country for which the people sacrifice themselves.”²²⁵

The discourse of territoriality is equally present in the words of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) who in 1927 established “National Humiliation Day” with the now-famous slogan, “Never Forget National Humiliation” (勿忘國恥).²²⁶ In his 1943 book *China’s Destiny* (中國之命運) Chiang extolled the primordial nation, calling nationalism “the most meritorious of all human emotions, because a nation is formed by natural forces, and the consolidation of a nation must depend on the instinctive emotions of man.”²²⁷ The first page of the book, which a U.S. Foreign Service officer in “Vinegar Joe” Stillwell’s China mission called “Chiang’s *Mein Kampf*,” included this call to arms:

Whenever any foreign aggressor has forcibly broken through the defense lines of our state and occupied territory needed for our nation’s existence, the Chinese nation, impelled by a sense of humiliation and the need for survival, has had no alternative but to rise and fight until that territory was restored to us.²²⁸

The book goes on, “And not until all lost territories have been recovered can we relax our efforts to wipe out this humiliation and save ourselves from destruction.”²²⁹ As the leader of a KMT government exercising control over but a fraction of territorial China, Chiang articulated a territorial nationalism that was both polity-based and polity-seeking. In the former sense, he appealed to a wartime Chinese nation to unite in struggle against the Japanese – “to rise and fight.” In the latter sense, the object of that nationalist struggle was to re-secure the state’s sovereignty, and thus, to regain the former polity.

Besides the aforementioned territoriality, Chiang’s nationalism also stressed cultural identity within a polity-based nationalism. The 1930’s New Life Movement (新生活運動) championed by the Generalissimo and “Madame Chiang” (Song Meiling 宋美齡), though failing to reach China’s masses in any meaningful way, nevertheless embodied in its neo-Confucian

²²⁵ Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 164.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 189-190.

²²⁷ Chiang Kai-shek, *China’s Destiny*, 208. Quoted in Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 190.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 29. Quoted in Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 189.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 34. Quoted in Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 189.

morality a desire to reshape China's polity upon on the model of a Confucian family.²³⁰ Chiang wholeheartedly agreed with Sun's characterization of China's deficient condition, writing, "Loose grains of sand cannot be tolerated."²³¹ In a clearly neo-Confucian fashion, he saw "paternal state authority" as "a benevolent moral force," and searched for a nationalizing ideology and culture to unite China's inadequately nationalized population under the Republican state. The Generalissimo's desperation to promote a unifying national identity drove him to flirt with ideologies such as German Nazism and Italian Fascism; he welcomed two of Hitler's generals as advisors in 1934.²³² In the words of two historians, Chiang

was attracted to aspects of those authoritarian systems that fit in with his own nostalgic version of Confucian traditionalism. Just as fascists in German and Italy had welded traditional patriarchal cultural elements in onto their new ideology to give them more appeal, so Chiang saw a congruency between fascism and his own desire to emphasize national culture, order, hierarchy, and orthodoxy.²³³

This section has presented a brief overview of the nationalist rhetoric offered by Sun, Chen, Chiang, and the student-protestors of the 1919 May Fourth Movement in order to demonstrate that a focus on ethnic, cultural, civic, and territorial contents of the putative nation, as well as the polity-based and polity-seeking orientations of nationalism, reveals a greater clarity of the ideas embodied in Chinese nationalism of the Republican era. The following sections consider Chinese nationalism since 1949. Proceeding to nationalism since the founding of the PRC – Chinese nationalism's "moment of arrival" – we may follow in Wang's identification of three periods or stages: the Mao period (1949-1978), the Deng period (1978-1991), and the globalization period (1991 to 2012).²³⁴ Below is a consideration of the contents and orientations of Chinese nationalism under the leadership of Mao, Deng, Jiang, and Hu.

²³⁰ Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 192.

²³¹ Chiang, *China's Destiny*, 201. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 194.

²³² Schell and Delury write, "At one point, [Chiang] was even reported to have spoken of china's need to *nacuihua* (納粹化), or 'Nazify' itself." Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 193-194.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 193.

²³⁴ Wang actually denotes the "globalization period" as lasting up to the time of his writing ("迄今") in 2013. However, since this study devotes a separate section to nationalism under Xi Jinping, the "globalization period" will be used to refer specifically to the tenure of Jiang and Hu. Placing Xi's tenure after the "globalization period" is purely organizational and need not imply that the dynamics described by Wang are no longer in effect under Xi. 汪宏倫, 〈理解當代中國民族主義〉, 208.

4.2: Nationalism in the PRC

4.2.1: The Mao Period

Any assertion about the role of nationalism in Mao's China is contentious. One cannot help but pause at the hostility between doctrinaire Marxism's rational-scientific cosmopolitanism and Hegelian view of history, on the one hand, and nationalism's celebration of cultural uniqueness and mythologized pasts on the other. Indeed, the apparent contradictions between Marxism and nationalism, when treated as pure doctrines, seem almost irreconcilable. Yet however much contempt Marxism has for nationhood as a product of Bourgeois consciousness, Marx and Engels recognized that the proletariat would have to engage in "national struggle... [if] not in substance, yet in form."²³⁵ Furthermore, a popular reinterpretation of Marx and Engel's approach to the "national question" demonstrates the inevitability that the proletariat should *become* national, and class politics should *become* nationalist politics. As Cunow writes:

Today [at the time *Manifesto* was written] the worker has no country, he does not take part in the life of the nation, has no share in its material and spiritual wealth. But one of these days the workers will win political power and take a dominant position in state and nation and then, when so to speak they will have constituted themselves the nation, **they will also be national and feel national, even though their nationalism will be of a different kind than that of the bourgeoisie.**²³⁶

Furthermore, in this analysis we must take care to distinguish, as Brubaker does, between "categories of analysis" (such as nationalism and Marxism as doctrines) and "categories of practice" (such as the actual nationalist politics practiced under Mao). Thus Marx's declaration that "the workingmen have no country,"²³⁷ while a fact of Marxist doctrine, is not a fact of Chinese history. The complex relationship between doctrinaire Marxism and nationalism should not inhibit our understanding of *actual* nationalism in the Mao era, a topic which we can understand by directly consulting the rhetoric of Chinese speakers, including Mao, rather than the texts of European theorists.

One can see in the Mao era, first and foremost, a polity-based (nationalizing) nationalism,

²³⁵ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: International Publishers, 1948), 27.

²³⁶ H. Cunow, *Die Marxsche Geschichts-, Gesellschafts- und Staatatheorie* 2nd vol., 30. Quoted in Roman Rosdolsky, "The Workers and the Fatherland: A Note on a Passage in the 'Communist Manifesto'," *International* 4, no. 2 (Winter 1977): 15, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/rosdolsky/1965/workers.htm>.

²³⁷ Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 28.

seeking to create a new nation within the existing PRC state. In 1965 Mao expressed, in no uncertain terms, his desire to engender a new cultural nation by creating a proletarian culture out of the ashes of traditional China. “The thought, culture, and customs which brought China to where we found her must disappear,” Mao declared, “and **the thought, customs, and culture of proletarian China, which does not yet exist, must appear...** Thought, culture, customs must be born of struggle.”²³⁸ Mao conceived of the Chinese nation’s recreation through a revolutionary ideology of destruction. In a particularly telling quote, Mao declared, “our nation is like an atom... When this atom’s nucleus is smashed the thermal energy released will have really tremendous power. We shall be able to do things which we could not do before.”²³⁹ The tens of millions of preventable deaths and unspeakable destruction which occurred under Mao’s command certainly make problematic any assertion that China’s working people achieved “a dominant position in state and nation” in this era. Nonetheless, Mao’s nationalist rhetoric was clearly oriented to the engendering of a proletarian nation like that described by Cunow.

Incorporating Judith Butler’s “frames of war” concept to the phenomenological approach embodied in Max Scheler’s work, Wang re-conceptualizes the social and political transformation wrought by Mao’s continuous revolution in terms of “transvaluation” (價值顛覆).²⁴⁰ Wang demonstrates that by subverting (or inverting) the natural (or traditional) value system embedded in Chinese culture, a value system that included such basic attitudes such as familial love, the condemning of unnecessary violence, and a respect for authority, the Maoist reconstruction of “the people” (人民) included a reconstruction of cognitive frames and a “transvaluation” that glorified violence and dehumanized those identified as public enemies.²⁴¹ Mao’s collected works infamously begins: “Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution.”²⁴² In a particularly telling passage, Wang interprets the socio-psychological reality of this period as follows:

The Mao Zedong period, via successive [political and social] movements, transformed man and society, established “struggle culture” and a martial spirit, viewed the world through a

²³⁸ Emphasis added. Quoted in Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 93.

²³⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 94.

²⁴⁰ 汪宏倫, 〈理解當代中國民族主義〉, 202-216.

²⁴¹ This is a loose paraphrasing of an intricate argument made in *Ibid.*, 206-2016.

²⁴² Ian Johnson, *The Souls of China: The Return of Religion after Mao* (New York: Pantheon, 2017), Kindle Loc. 1575.

“frame of war”/“frame of struggle,” and rationalized violence. Conducted as it was through violent struggle, [Mao’s continuous] revolution established a “logic/order of love” that **inverted human nature [or humanity], elevated love of party-state above the love of [one’s own] parents, and viewed the enemy-self relationship as critical above all else.** The Cultural Revolution, in fact, openly encouraged seizing power in revolt and thoroughly inverted [the existing] value-order; it brought about uncontrollable violence leading to widespread enmity... This value-inverted “order/logic of love” and militarism did not, in fact, disappear with the end of the Mao period, but rather produced a profound and lasting influence on the ensuing development of China’s politics, society, and culture. Even more importantly, the various subversions, distortions, destructions and persecutions brought about by the Mao period created new emotional trauma, [which] became a new variable that would influence the future emotional structure [of Chinese nationalism].²⁴³

We can thus agree with Wang in noting that Mao’s continuous revolution and enemy-self duality constituted elements of a powerful polity-based (nationalizing) nationalism. Kissinger likewise notes the “unprecedented militarization of Chinese life” and toppling of the traditional Chinese respect for virtuous, compassionate leaders and refined literary culture that Mao deliberately wrought.²⁴⁴ This “transvaluation” infused a distinctly national quality to what was otherwise revolutionary ideology, ensuring that Maoist politics occurred within, rather than outside of, the framework of Chinese nationalism.

As for the ethno-cultural versus civic-territorial imagining of the nation under Mao, the “Great Helmsman” spoke quite directly about the former. In a 1956 speech to the Politburo, Mao declared: “We put the emphasis on opposing Han chauvinism. Local nationality chauvinism must be opposed too, but generally that is not where our emphasis lies... The minority nationalities have all contributed to the making of China’s history.”²⁴⁵ In an essay written the following year, Mohanty notes, Mao criticizes both Han chauvinism and “local nationality chauvinism,” as constituting a non-antagonistic “contradiction among people.”²⁴⁶ So-

²⁴³ Emphasis added. The original is as follows: 「毛澤東時期透過一連串的运动來改造人與社會，確立了鬥爭文化與尚武精神，以戰爭之框／鬥爭之框來看待世界，合理化暴力。透過暴力鬥爭進行的革命建立了一套顛倒人性的『愛的秩序』，把對黨國的愛置於對父母的愛之上，把敵我關係看得比什麼都重要。文革則是公開鼓勵奪權造反，全面顛倒價值秩序，其結果是導致暴力失控，造成普遍的怨毒...這些顛覆價值的『愛的秩序』與尚武精神，並沒有隨著毛時代的結束而消失，而是對往後的中國政治與社會、文化的發展，產生深遠的影響，包括 1990 年代之後浮現的『新民族主義』。更重要的是，毛澤東時期所帶來的種種顛覆、扭曲、破壞與迫害，造成了新的情感創傷（詳如下述），成為影響往後情感結構變化的新變數。」汪宏倫，〈理解當代中國民族主義〉，215-216.

²⁴⁴ Kissinger, *On China*, 94.

²⁴⁵ Quoted in Mohanty, *Ideology Matters*, 14.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

called “local nationality chauvinism” is precisely the polity-seeking, “separatist” nationalism of an ethno-cultural minority. Mao did not oppose an ethno-cultural Chinese nationalism in principle, but rather opposed so-called “narrow” nationalisms that do not align with the borders of the state.

Mao’s relationship to the civic-territorial nation is less clear and more contentious. There are serious philosophical incompatibilities between the value system typically ascribed to civic-territorial nationhood and the value system inherent in Mao’s continuous revolution, most clearly typified by the inversion of human nature described by Wang. Yet memoirs of Chinese who lived under Mao describe times of intense patriotism based on the political ideals embodied in Maoism. A former Red Guard described the political consciousness of her generation as “a Marxist idealism and a sense of social responsibility and mission centered upon the theory of class struggle.”²⁴⁷ She saw in her generation “a grandiose political zeal” and a strong “sense of political participation and... intervention in social life.”²⁴⁸ As Yang notes, this generation was educated to see itself as “revolutionary successors” with a “historical mission” in a political climate defined by “revolutionary violence, struggle, martyrdom, and heroism.”²⁴⁹

Lest we misidentify these attitudes as a kind of cosmopolitanism, we must remember that for this politically zealous generation, China was to play a special role as the first true communist system. Just as some American nationalists historically viewed their nation as a special people with a “Manifest Destiny,” and later as a nation with a responsibility to spread its advanced values (such as bringing Christian civilization to the Philippines), China’s Red Guard generation saw their nation leading the world into “the final destiny of humankind – communism.”²⁵⁰ In fact, ever since the Mao era, the rhetoric of Chinese nationalism has included the argument that to be Chinese is to have a special relationship to the most evolved or advanced form of politics.²⁵¹

There is an observable parallel between this romanticized and absolutist political identity

²⁴⁷ Goubin Yang, *The Red Guard Generation and Political Activism in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 49.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁵¹ This element of Chinese nationalist rhetoric will be increasingly clear toward the end of this chapter and throughout the following.

and the concept of the “chosen people” which historians such as Hastings argue was central to the initial imagining of Britain as a nation.²⁵² In fact, Apter and Saich identify ‘chosenness’ as a major component of Chinese Communist identity arising from the Yan’an (延安) period:

Yan’an was a center, a sanctuary, a mobilization space, a simulacrum of a utopic community... Those setting out for the first time for the city did not ‘go to Yan’an’ (*qu Yan’an*), [but rather] they ‘returned to Yan’an’ (*hui Yan’an*), as if it were their ‘spiritual home.’ For many, Yan’an was the home of the revolution, its moral center, giving it the quality of a New Jerusalem, its inhabitants a ‘chosen people.’²⁵³

In the discourse of Maoism, one’s identification with Yan’an allowed for a special relationship to the truth.²⁵⁴ The Party thus became a “party of truth,”²⁵⁵ its adherents a special people, and its methods justified *a priori*.

Having emerged from the very center of this constellation of truth and power, Mao came to embody all that was special, unique, and righteous about Communist China. This is especially visible after the Great Helmsman gave tacit approval to his growing personality cult in 1958.²⁵⁶ Soon Mao himself came to be the truth that set apart Chinese Communism as a special ideology and Chinese Communists as a chosen people. As a party document later stated, “Following Mao Zedong from the bottom of our hearts is not worship of the individual or superstitious belief in the individual but the worship of truth; the decades of revolution and construction have proven that Chairman Mao is the representative of truth.”²⁵⁷

Loyalty to Mao and Maoism became the highest good and the absolute, correct morality

²⁵² Hastings argues that prior to industrial modernity, national identity arose in England via a particular way of reading the Hebrew Bible into English political life. According to Hastings, God’s chosen people – the nation of Israel – became a prototype inspiring the English sense of nationhood. Reading it in various early English translations, the English people saw the Old Testament’s narration of Israel as the primary subject of human history until Jesus Christ. “England” then replaced “Israel” as a chosen people, a nation, in their early nationalist self-image. Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²⁵³ David E. Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao’s Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 10.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁵⁶ At a Politburo meeting in Chengdu that year, Mao sanctioned his personality cult for the first time, stating, “There are two kinds of personality cults. One is correct, for example, we have to worship the correct things of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin and to worship them forever... The problem does not rest with the cult of the individual but with whether it represents the truth or not. If it represents the truth, it should be worshipped.” See Xin Lu and Elena Soboleva, “Personality Cults in Modern Politics: Cases from Russia and China,” *Center for Global Politics Working Paper Series* (January 2014), <http://www.global-politics.org/working-papers/cgp-working-paper-01-2014/cgp-working-paper-012014.pdf>.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

under the influence of propaganda campaigns extolling the “Three Loyalties” (三忠於) – “loyalty to Chairman Mao, loyalty to Mao Zedong Thought, and loyalty to the proletarian revolution route laid out by Chairman Mao” – and the “Four Boundlessness” (四無限) – “boundless worship of, boundless love for, boundless belief in, and boundless loyalty to Chairman Mao, Mao Zedong Thought, and Mao’s proletarian revolution route.”²⁵⁸ Of course these boundless loyalties, as with many other aspects of Maoism, could be analyzed apart from the nationalizing orientation of the PRC state under Mao. But in this study’s context of an analysis of nationalist rhetoric, they may represent something akin to – perhaps even a totalitarian disfiguration of – the “patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values” described by Ignatieff and scholars of the civic nation.

In another sense, James Wang has argued that the “mass line” (群眾路線), Mao’s model of engaging the masses with the party, ensuring grassroots political mobilization and enforcing cadre discipline, provided mid-20th century China with a civic national identity.²⁵⁹ Indeed this uniquely Chinese and uniquely communist form of populism remained “accepted as a fundamental principle of the Chinese political system” after Mao’s death,²⁶⁰ and continues to be noted as a central feature of Chinese-style democratic centralism.²⁶¹ More recently, the “mass line” has been invoked as justification for Xi Jinping’s anti-corruption campaign, implying that it remains a component of how the party imagines its own identity and that of the Chinese nation.²⁶²

In sum, characterizations of nationalism in the Mao era remain highly contentious, but it is clear that Mao sought the dramatic transformation of China as a nation and the Chinese people as human beings. Although the above analysis stretches the ethno-cultural, civic-territorial dichotomy somewhat far from its original expression in the theoretical literature, this author would contend that it essential to engage in precisely this kind of analysis in order to determine the place of the Mao era in the broader history of Chinese nationalism. While Wang makes a

²⁵⁸ Soboleva, “Personality Cults in Modern Politics,” 19.

²⁵⁹ James C. F. Wang, *Contemporary Chinese Politics: An Introduction*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 2002), 16.

²⁶⁰ James R. Townsend, “Chinese Populism and the Legacy of Mao Tse-tung,” *Asian Survey* 27, no. 11 (November 1977): 1011.

²⁶¹ Mohanty, *Ideology Matters*, 8.

²⁶² Meng Na, “‘Mass Line’ campaign key to consolidate CPC's ruling status,” *Xinhua*, June 19, 2013, <http://en.people.cn/90785/8289769.html>.

clear case that this era's nationalism was polity-based (nationalizing) in orientation, this analysis advocates going a step further to evaluate the content of Mao's putative nation could best be described as a totalitarian disfiguration of civic identity.

4.2.2: The Deng Period

With the PRC's official transition from a "revolutionary state" (革命型國家) to a "post-revolutionary state" (後革命型國家) as the Reform and Opening (改革開放) period began in 1978, Mao's disastrous dogmatism was replaced with Deng's pragmatic socialism, encapsulated, Wang writes, in Deng's "three orientations." (面向現代化，面向世界，面向未來).²⁶³ In this context, Wang notes, the CCP's "United Front" no longer stressed class struggle, but rather national unification (祖國統一).²⁶⁴ Hughes identifies in this rhetorical/ideological transition a movement from the "orthodox CCP" multi-*minzu* patriotism to "an underlying *volkish* [core ethno-cultural] conception of the nation,"²⁶⁵ especially in rhetoric directed towards the "unredeemed" territories of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao.²⁶⁶ The 1979 National People's Congress "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan" famously stated:

Every Chinese, in Taiwan or on the mainland, has a compelling responsibility for the survival, growth and prosperity of **the Chinese nation** (*minzu*)... If we do not quickly set about ending this disunity so that **our motherland** is reunified at an early date, **how can we answer our ancestors and explain to our descendants?**... Who among the **descendants of the Yellow Emperor** wishes to go down in history as a **traitor**?²⁶⁷

In this statement alone, one can clearly see at least four out of Smith's eight dimensions of myth commonly associated with *ethnie*, including *origins in space* ("our motherland"), *myth of ancestry* ("our ancestors...descendants of the Yellow Emperor"), *myth of decline* (this

²⁶³ 汪宏倫, 〈理解當代中國民族主義〉, 217.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 217.

²⁶⁵ Christopher R. Hughes, *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 18.

²⁶⁶ British colonial sovereignty over Hong Kong lasted from 1843 until July 1, 1997, while Portuguese colonial sovereignty over Macao lasted from 1557 to December 19, 1999. Chang quotes Zhang Haipeng, then director of the Modern History Institute of the Chinese Social Sciences Academy, explaining "Since the beginning of history, Hong Kong has been China's inherent (*guyou*) territory... The ceding of Hong Kong... constitutes a page in modern China's grievous and humiliating history... The return of Hong Kong [therefore] cleanses China's hundred years of national shame and humiliation." Zhang Haipeng, "Zhongguo Jindai yongru cuoyao (Important points concerning modern China's glory and shame)", *Guofang*, no. 7 (1997): 12-13. Quoted in Maria Hsia Chang, *Return of the Dragon: China's Wounded Nationalism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 210.

²⁶⁷ Quoted in Hughes, *Chinese Nationalism*, 18.

disunity), and *myth of rebirth* (“ending this disunity... [becoming] reunified”). One can also see Bourdieu’s “homogenous conception of time, space, number and cause,” i.e., the “logical conformism” that sustains the cultural nation, implied in the assertion that a failure to “quickly set about” ending national disunity would cause one to “go down in history as a traitor.” In presuming a present knowledge of how the future authors of China’s “national history” (which, it is implied, concerns the history of all descendants of the Yellow Emperor, into perpetuity) will interpret their actions, the 1979 National People’s Congress presumed the existence of exactly the logical conformism which unites the ethno-cultural nation across generations.

With an assumed ethno-cultural nation – indeed a perennialist *ethnie* – in place, nationalism of the Reform and Opening era could no longer be of the polity-based, “nationalizing” variety. The “deficient condition” to be addressed could no longer be the inadequacy of the national base, for the “who” of the nation had been settled: descendants of the Yellow Emperor throughout all of Greater China. Thus the “deficient condition” to be addressed by nationalism could be none other than the lack of an “adequate polity,” a unified motherland (祖國). To the extent that Chinese nationalist rhetoric remains concerned with unifying the motherland – fixing the polity – it remains, at its core, a form of the polity-seeking nationalism seen here.

This transition fits nicely with Wang’s phenomenological perspective on the same time period. Wang notes, “No longer stressing class struggle, the ‘order/logic of love’” found in the Deng era, “was also adjusted, as the patriotism that promoted “loving the motherland” (愛祖國) received emphasis.”²⁶⁸ The 1982 constitutional revisions noted by Wang include the telling clause:

“The State advocates the civic virtues (公德) of love of the motherland, of the people, of labour, of science and of socialism. It conducts education among the people in patriotism and collectivism, in internationalism and communism and in dialectical and historical materialism, to combat capitalist, feudal and other decadent ideas.”²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ 「由於不再強調階級鬥爭，『愛的秩序』也有所調整，宣揚『愛祖國』的愛國主義獲得強調。」汪宏倫，〈理解當代中國民族主義〉，217.

²⁶⁹ This is the wording of the official English language version: *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*, Article 24, adopted December 4, 1982, <http://en.people.cn/constitution/constitution.html>.

It must be noted that the English word “to” in the final clause “to combat capitalist, feudal and other decadent ideas,” has no equivalent in the original Chinese version. Thus while the English version seems to imply that education in patriotism, collectivism, internationalism and communism are conducted *in order to* combat bad ideas, The original Chinese divides the entire section grammatically between four verbs (提倡, 進行, 進行, 反對) without implying that one exists in order to accomplish the others. They are thus presented on grammatically equal terms, and precedence can only be inferred from sequence. As Wang notes, love of the motherland (愛祖國) is elevated to first place in this 1982 revision. Breaking the section down by its four verbs, in fact, we see “patriotism” doubly emphasized: the first thing to “promote” (提倡) is love of the motherland (愛祖國), while the first thing to “conduct among the people” (在人民中進行) is patriotism (愛國主義). Thus we can see evidence in the early Deng era of a polity-based (nationalizing) nationalism based on the promotion of civic values within the PRC in addition to the aforementioned polity-seeking (revisionist) nationalism based on a Greater China ethno-cultural nation.

Official nationalism in the Deng era also centered on the elevation of victim identity and the qualification of victor identity. This transition was contextualized by increasing domestic recognition of China’s socioeconomic backwardness relative to the prosperity of the industrialized capitalist states. While Mao’s politics-in-command, revolutionary totalitarianism had kept most Chinese unaware of the tremendous post-war economic success enjoyed by the capitalist bloc, Deng and Zhao’s reform and opening soon flooded coastal China with information and contact with the outside world.²⁷⁰ Thus the failures of Maoism and China’s supposedly superior political system became increasingly clear, prompting a period of intense national introspection. Thus “National Humiliation” was once again promoted to a primary place within the broad narrative of Chinese nationalism. As Wang writes, official patriotic education and the key tone of the narrative of nationalism (民族主義) began a transition from victor to victim. The historical memory of National Humiliation and tragic suffering became a

²⁷⁰汪宏倫,〈理解當代中國民族主義〉,219-220.

key element of the narrative of nationalism (國族論述).²⁷¹

A final moment in the “Deng period” of nationalism contrasts the state’s paternalistic view of the nation with a socially-defined nation seeming to embody all of the civic, territorial, ethnic, and cultural elements. Less than a month and a half before the June 4th incident, Deng erred badly by endorsing a *People’s Daily* editorial that criticized the students mourning Hu Yaobang (胡耀邦) as creating “a turmoil” that threatened “the great aspiration of the revitalization of China cherished by the whole nation.”²⁷² The day after the *People’s Daily* editorial went to print, new students marched through Beijing by the tens of thousands, displaying an emphatic rejection of the moral authority of Party hardliners like Deng and Li to define the students’ actions as unpatriotic.²⁷³ In fact, in the weeks that followed, one of the central demands of the Tiananmen protestors was that the government apologize for this characterization of the movement, and acknowledge that, as Wasserstrom writes, “they had marched precisely because they loved their country.”²⁷⁴ In fact the pro-democracy demonstrations and the official suppression that followed represented a struggle *within* the framework of nationalist politics. As they sang Hou Te-Chien’s (侯德健) “Heirs of the Dragon” (龍的傳人), the democracy protestors emphasized their unassailable national spirit by joining together to eulogize an ethno-territorial conception of the Chinese nation. The song tells of China’s mighty rivers, the “black eyes, black hair, [and] yellow skin” of all “heirs of the dragon,” and the need for the “mighty dragon” – symbolizing China as a supernatural creature and a single organism – to “open [its] eyes!”²⁷⁵

4.2.3: The Globalization Period

Following Wang’s three period framework, we may note the June 4th 1989 Incident,²⁷⁶

²⁷¹ Wang offers essentially the same description here: 「在這段時期，官方的愛國主義教育與民族主義的敘事基調，也開始有了轉變，從『勝利者』轉而強調『受害者』。國恥記憶與悲情苦難，成為國族論述的重要元素」。汪宏倫，〈理解當代中國民族主義〉，221。

²⁷² Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 307.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 307-308.

²⁷⁴ Jeffrey Wasserstrom, “China’s June 4, 1989: Remembered – and Misremembered,” *TIME*, June 3, 2010, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1994133,00.html>.

²⁷⁵ The full English and Chinese lyrics of Hou Te-Chien’s “Heirs of the Dragon” are reproduced in Appendix 3.

²⁷⁶ The various appellations of the 1989 protest movement and subsequent crackdown communicate particular interpretations and sentiments. The usage of “June 4th 1989 Incident,” as opposed to, for example “The Tiananmen

the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War, as well as the U.S. “Unipolar Moment,” and the beginning of a new surge of neoliberalism and globalization, as a transition point for Chinese politics and the beginning of the “Globalization Period” of Chinese nationalism.²⁷⁷ Several different aspects of the post-1989 political environment shaped the resulting shift in nationalist discourse. First was the recognition of CCP leadership that the generation represented by the student protests had not been properly educated in how far the CCP had brought the Chinese people from their humiliating past. Five days after the June 4th Incident, Deng Xiaoping reflected, “during the last 10 years our biggest mistake was made in the field of education, primarily in ideological and political education.”²⁷⁸ This recognition had profound effect on the contents and orientations of Chinese nationalism under Jiang Zemin (江泽民), discussed below.

4.2.3.1: Chinese Nationalism under Jiang Zemin

Two documents written in 1991, “Notice about Conducting Education of Patriotism and Revolutionary Tradition by Exploiting Extensively Cultural Relics,” and “General Outline on Strengthening Education on Chinese Modern and Contemporary History and National Conditions” set the patriotic education campaign in motion.²⁷⁹ Wang writes that in “General Outline,” “history education reform” is framed as “China’s fundamental strategy to ‘defend against the “peaceful evolution”²⁸⁰ plot of international hostile powers and is the most important

Massacre,” means not to minimize the moral or historical import of the event, but rather to maintain the objective neutrality of the most common rendering in Chinese (六四事件). The usage of “June 4th 1989 Incident” also avoids reinforcing the myth that the killing in question happened within Tiananmen Square. See Jay Mathews, “The Myth of Tiananmen,” *Columbia Journalism Review*, June 4, 2010, http://archives.cjr.org/behind_the_news/the_myth_of_tiananmen.php.

²⁷⁷汪宏倫, 〈理解當代中國民族主義〉, 222.

²⁷⁸ Quoted in Zheng Wang, “National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China,” *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (December 2008): 788.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 790.

²⁸⁰ “The ‘Peaceful Evolution’ plot” originally refers to Mao’s interpretation of the words of John Foster Dulles, who in 1957 and 1958 used the phrase “promoting peaceful evolution towards democracy” when discussing US policy towards the “Sino-Soviet bloc.” Although “Peaceful Evolution” has not featured in official U.S. policy towards China since the 1950s, it remains connected to the common Chinese perception that the U.S. seeks to “contain” China, and may have especially concerned Chinese in the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s collapse. See Haun Saussy, *Great Walls of Discourse and Other Adventures in Cultural China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 237.

mission for all schools.”²⁸¹

The Patriotic Education Campaign that officially began in the mid-1990s, reformed the content of education of a generation of Chinese with an end to “boost the nation’s spirit, enhance cohesion, foster national self-esteem and pride... direct and rally the masses’ patriotic passions to the great cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics.”²⁸²

The “Three Represents” (三個代表), Jiang Zemin’s principle theoretical contribution as the “core of the third generation” of CCP Leaders, has a complex but important connection to nationalism. Written into the Party Constitution (黨章) in 2002 but first described by Jiang in early 2000, the “Three Represents” describe the Party’s view of itself rather than the Chinese nation. Yet in describing what exactly about the Chinese nation the Party must represent, it demonstrates a particular, and at the time highly controversial, statement about the official view of the Chinese nation. In 2002 the Party Constitution was revised to include the following:

The Communist Party of China is the vanguard both of the Chinese working class and of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation. It is the core of leadership for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics and represents the development trend of **China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture** and the **fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people**. The realization of communism is the highest ideal and ultimate goal of the Party.²⁸³

According to senior officials within and intellectuals connected to the Party, Jiang’s “Three Represents,” besides effectively muting Deng’s “Four Basic Principles” (四項基本原則), also constituted a “sharp right turn” intended to forge an alliance between high-level and low-level officials, as well as “intellectuals, scientists, engineers, managers and other ‘advanced productive elements’” against a politically leftist “conservative old guard” and mid-level bureaucrats.²⁸⁴ In terms of doctrine, in claiming that the Party was to represent “China’s advanced productive forces,” Jiang reversed two key dimensions of the nation-party relationship envisioned by Mao. Mao, as noted above, called for the creation of “the thought, customs, and culture of [a] proletarian China,” and viewed the Party as the vanguard of the

²⁸¹ Wang, “National Humiliation,” 790.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Xinhua, “Explanations on Amendment to CPC Constitution,” *Xinhua Net*, November 18, 2002, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2002-11/18/content_633517.htm.

²⁸⁴ John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, “Social Change and Political Reform in China: Meeting the Challenge of Success,” *The China Quarterly* 176 (2003): 937.

proletariat that would guide China through continuous revolution, destroying the hegemony of bourgeois culture and capitalism.²⁸⁵ Reversing Mao's nationalizing nationalism that was to create a new people with a new culture, Jiang now institutionalized the Party's role as a representative of the forces that, under Maoism, repressed the creation of a proletarian nation. Secondly, perhaps reflecting the reality of weakened central power due to the decentralization inherent in Deng and Zhao's reforms, Jiang's "Three Represents" envisions the party in a much more passive role in relation to society. No longer aimed at reshaping the world, exporting revolution, and transforming the Chinese nation, The Party's role was to "represent" the (already existing) advanced elements of Chinese society. The deficient condition central to the state's nationalism thus became obscured.

On another level, however, Jiang's "Three Represents" hints at an emphasis on reforming the nature of the civic nation. Jiang expressed that the new doctrine had to do with "Keeping up with the times" (與時俱進).²⁸⁶ In fact a senior official offered his interpretation of Jiang's new doctrine as follows: "The 'three represents' policy directly affects the future course of our relations with Taiwan. With this new policy, the two sides of the Taiwan Strait will be converging, and the mainland will be becoming more like the democratic and capitalist systems of other nations."²⁸⁷ Implicit here is the familiar understanding that political relations across the Taiwan Strait are and have been strained by the opposing ideologies, governments and value systems institutionalized within the two societies. By taking a "sharp right turn," Jiang's "Three Represents" was thus seen by some as a movement away from "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought" (馬克思列寧主義，毛澤東思想) and towards convergence with a democratizing and capitalist Taiwan. To the extent that these considerations were at play in the development of the "Three Represents," it would suggest that Jiang's doctrine included a polity-based and polity-seeking nationalism designed to promote within the PRC a civic nation to then set the conditions for Taiwan's unification with the PRC.

²⁸⁵ Mohanty, *Ideology Matters*, 9-12.

²⁸⁶ Lewis and Xue, "Social Change," 938.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

4.2.3.2: Chinese Nationalism Under Hu Jintao

Under Hu Jintao's (胡锦涛) promotion of a "Harmonious Society" concept, CCP rhetoric began envisioning the party "not as an agent of social transformation, but as a mediator," and the steward of traditional culture.²⁸⁸ With this stark reversal of the party's relationship to society, a new set of ideas were woven into the construction of the nation. Johnson discusses the gradual unveiling of new rhetoric, including a 2011 report that described China's traditional cultural heritage as "a common spiritual garden for the Chinese nation."²⁸⁹ If the Chinese nation has a common spiritual garden, then a gardener is needed; the Party thus rhetorically assigned itself a primary role in the upkeep of China's cultural heritage. The same report described a starkly negative picture of Chinese society: "in a number of areas, morals are defeated, sincerity is lacking, the view of life and the value system of a number of members of society is distorted."²⁹⁰ In identifying Chinese society's "inadequate condition" as an insufficiency of morality and sincerity and the presence of a distorted value system, the Party thus implies its duty to provide a "polity-based" (nationalizing) nationalism to engender a cultural nation to drive out the *anomie* of "post-ideology" China. The cure-all to China's national woes could be nothing less than the revival of "China's vast and rich culture" which "embodies the profound spiritual aspirations of the Chinese nation."²⁹¹

In a 2008 address commemorating the 1978 "Message to Taiwan Compatriots" (告台灣同胞書), Hu continued the practice of presenting cross-strait relations in an explicitly nationalist rhetorical context. In particular, Hu used the speech to repeatedly declare that the people of Mainland China and Taiwan belong to the same ethnic nation. Within the speech, Hu refers to the people of Taiwan 21 times as *Taiwan tongbao* (台灣同胞), which, often translated "Taiwan compatriots," in fact carries the literal meaning of "the Taiwan kin" or "the Taiwanese, who share our same blood-line." The *tongbao* label serves to delineate a clear ethnic basis of the relationship across the Taiwan Strait; in fact the people on both sides of the strait are referred to as *liang'an tongbao* (兩岸同胞) – "kin or blood-relatives on both sides of the [Taiwan] Strait" –

²⁸⁸ Johnson, *Souls of China*, Kindle Loc. 1434.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 1447.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 1443.

²⁹¹ Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 370.

an additional 23 times. At one point Hu even uses the emphatic phrase *gurou tongbao* (骨肉同胞) – “bone and flesh kin, or compatriots of the same flesh and blood”, and declares, “the blood-relatives on both sides of the Strait are a community of fate linked by blood.” (兩岸同胞是血脈相連的命運共同體).²⁹²

Based on that articulation of a single ethnic nation, Hu articulates a polity-seeking (revisionist) nationalism as the highest aim of the state. Hu repeats “unification of the ancestral land/country” (祖國統一), or “peaceful unification of the ancestral land/country” (祖國和平統一) 15 times, and calls that unification the “sacred duty” (神聖責任) of the PRC government. Each of the 14 mentions of “the Chinese nation” (中華民族) is followed by either “great rejuvenation” (偉大復興), “fundamental interest” (根本利益), or “collective interest” (整體利益). Thus unification of the presently divided ethnic nation is presented as a precondition to national rejuvenation and thus in keeping with the fundamental and collective interests of the nation. Such a rhetorical approach attempts to bestow legitimacy on calls for unification in a way that discussions of “state interest” and geopolitics simply cannot.

However, while Hu presents a shared ethnic nation as the basis for polity-seeking (revisionist) nationalism, Hu also articulates a deficiency of “national consciousness” (民族意識) to be overcome by the strengthening of the cultural nation. Within this rhetorical framework, existing ethnic ties legitimate revisionism at the state-level, while the need to “realize unity of the whole nation” (實現全民族的團結) substantiates cross-strait cultural *nationalization* to be accomplished by increased “exchange” (交流) and “active measures” (積極措施).²⁹³ “The kin on both sides of the Strait must together carry on and promote Chinese culture’s excellent traditions... in order to strengthen national consciousness, concentrate shared will, and form the spiritual force [behind] the shared seeking of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”²⁹⁴ Eulogizing Chinese culture as a “spiritual tie” (精神紐帶) and an “important bond [that] holds together/links the national sentiments of the kin on both sides of the Strait” (維繫兩岸同胞民族

²⁹² 胡锦涛,〈携手推动两岸关系和平发展 同心实现中华民族伟大复兴〉,《人民日报》,2009年1月1日.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ 「兩岸同胞要共同繼承和弘揚中華文化優秀傳統...以增強民族意識、凝聚共同意志,形成共謀中華民族偉大復興的精神力量。」 Ibid.

感情的重要紐帶), Hu in fact declares the need to increase these sentiments at the social level. Thus Hu's speech presents two distinct kinds of nationalism: a polity-seeking nationalism aiming to revise the cross-strait status quo in order to unify the existing ethnic nation, and a nationalizing nationalism aiming to boost national cohesion at the social level to create a more fully embedded cultural nation. Both dimensions are thus required to “create a new condition of peaceful development in cross-strait relations” (開創兩岸關係和平發展新局面)²⁹⁵

With the Beijing Olympics in the Summer of 2008, the 30th year anniversary of Reform and Opening in December 2008, the 60th anniversary of the PRC's founding in October 2009, and clear indicators that China had survived the 2008-2009 global financial crisis with far better than the capitalist democracies, Hu's second term witnessed an explosion in “the so-called ‘discourse of greatness’ (盛世話語) that include[d] such terms as ‘China in ascendance’ (盛世中國), ‘the China path’ (中國道路), ‘the China experience’ (中國經驗), ‘the China pace’ (中國速度), ‘the China miracle’ (中國奇蹟) and ‘the rise of China’ (中國崛起).”²⁹⁶ This discourse communicates and inspires pride in and attachment to the political state, particularly for its successful management of the economy and its unique model of development. Bolstered by perceptions that Chinese state capitalism – “socialist market economy” (社會主義市場經濟) in CCP parlance – was winning over Western neo-liberalism, Chinese leaders and commentators began to more confidently speak the language of Chinese exceptionalism. The link between economic performance and the victor-versus-victim identity in Chinese nationalism has thus been further suggested by a re-reversal of the shift discussed in section 4.2.2.

The party's responsibility for promoting Chinese culture took on a degree of militancy towards the end of Hu's tenure. An essay in *Qiushi* (求是) signed by Hu declared that “hostile international forces are intensifying [their] strategic plot to Westernize and divide China, and the ideological and cultural domain is the main area of their long-term infiltration.”²⁹⁷ Analysts outside of China widely interpreted the Hu government as declaring a “culture war” between

²⁹⁵ 胡锦涛, 〈携手推动两岸关系和平发展〉.

²⁹⁶ Suisheng Zhao, “Whither the China Model: Revisiting the Debate,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 26, no. 103 (2017): 4.

²⁹⁷ 「国际敌对势力正在加紧对我国实施西化、分化战略图谋，思想文化领域是他们进行长期渗透的重点领域。」胡锦涛, 〈坚定不移走中国特色社会主义文化发展道路: 努力建设社会主义文化强国〉, 《求是》, 2012年1月1日, http://www.qstheory.cn/zywz/201201/t20120101_133218.htm.

China and the West, but Damien Ma perceptively noted the intent most likely behind Hu's words:

The "culture war" is not truly meant to be waged against nefarious U.S. cultural encroachments. It is instead part of a battle to sustain the confidence of its own people -- via nationalism, Confucian tenets, wealth, cultural renaissance, or whatever substitute that can be dreamed up -- or risk the consequences. The war is, and has always been, about **defining the soul of the modern Chinese nation.**²⁹⁸

Although Hu's rhetoric appeared incendiary to the West, his intended audience was likely domestic party members, as Hu was engaged in agenda-setting before the upcoming leadership transition.²⁹⁹ His language, however, evokes the memory of Mao's concern over Western ideological infiltration leading to the "peaceful evolution" described by Dulles, a point noted by Ma.³⁰⁰ Hu was thus continuing the tradition of CCP leaders to argue that fostering a deeply embedded Chinese cultural nation would be the best defense against subversion from "the West." In doing so, Hu contributed once again to the polity-based (nationalizing) nationalism intended to engender a more unified cultural nation.

Hu's exhortations were manifested in at least two major projects in 2012: "a lavish film adaptation of the life of Confucius" and the establishment of a national-studies (國學) center in Beijing.³⁰¹ Yet the Party's use of culture to engender a nationalism that supports the state met with resistance from liberals such as Liu Xiaobo, who criticized "goals of enriching the state and strengthening the military [that take] precedence over ideas that could lead to human freedom."³⁰² Liu has provocatively criticized the nationalism often espoused by the CCP as "narrow nationalism" (狹隘民族主義), exactly the term used in state media to criticize ethnic separatist nationalism in Xinjiang and Tibet. For Liu, "narrow nationalism" is that which "turns 'patriotism' into an argument for despotic government, military adventurism and thuggery."³⁰³ Liu contrasts such "narrow nationalism" with a civic-values-based nationalism that prizes

²⁹⁸ Damien Ma, "Beijing's 'Culture War' isn't about the U.S. – It's About China's Future," *The Atlantic*, January 5, 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/01/beijings-culture-war-isnt-about-the-us-its-about-chinas-future/250900/>.

²⁹⁹ David Cohen, "Hu: China in Cultural War," *The Diplomat*, January 5, 2012, <http://thediplomat.com/2012/01/hu-china-in-cultural-war/#/more-3107>.

³⁰⁰ Damien Ma, "Beijing's 'Culture War'."

³⁰¹ Johnson, *Souls of China*, Kindle Loc. 1833.

³⁰² Liu Xiaobo, *No Enemies, No Hatred: Selected Essay and Poems*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 83. Quoted in Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 372.

³⁰³ Ibid.

“human freedom and dignity.”³⁰⁴ Though his language sometimes borders on cosmopolitanism, he in fact considers his desire to reform China *nationalist*: “My tendency to idealize Western civilization arises from my nationalistic desire to use the West in order to reform China.”³⁰⁵

Thus the overall picture of Chinese nationalist discourse under Hu included several different trends. Consistent with official nationalist rhetoric since Deng’s time, a putative trans-state ethnic nation was held to exist in Greater China, especially in rhetoric directed towards Taiwan, inspiring a polity-seeking (revisionist) orientation of nationalism. At the same time, the state’s adoption of an increasingly clear cultural paternalism in relation to a renewed perception of the “peaceful evolution” threat embodied a polity-based orientation of cultural nationalism. A shift in geo-economic prestige as essentially every major economy but China took major losses in the global financial crisis set the stage for an increased emphasis on victor identity and the discourse of a “China Model.” However, official nationalist rhetoric was contested by intellectuals resentful of the continued absence of liberalism from China’s political framework and official discourse.

³⁰⁴ Liu, *No Enemies, No Hatred*, 83. Quoted in Schell and Delury, *Wealth and Power*, 372.

³⁰⁵ Quoted in Simon Leys, “He Told the Truth About China’s Tyranny,” *The New York Review of Books* (February 9, 2012), <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2012/02/09/liu-xiaobo-he-told-truth-about-chinas-tyranny/?pagination=false#fn-5>.

Chapter 5: Nationalism and the Chinese Nation under Xi Jinping

As the above discussion highlights, the content and orientation of Chinese nationalism has consistently evolved according to the position vis-à-vis the state of Chinese nationalists (those describing the contents of, or ascribing contents to the “Chinese nation”), as well as changing ideological factors, social and political events, and the shifting policy directions of state actors. While Chinese nationalist discourse has generally drawn upon *ethnic*, *cultural*, *civic*, and *territorial* elements to justify China’s national cohesion (民族凝聚力) and “deep, horizontal comradeship,” as well as to interpret events in relation to “the nation” and mobilize a “national” response, the relative salience – and sometimes *meaning* – of each given element has varied. At the same time, the above analysis gives evidence of both polity-based (nationalizing) and polity-seeking nationalisms from the late Qing to the Hu Jintao era. To what extent have the first five years of Xi Jinping’s administration represented a new direction in the discourse of Chinese nationalism?

This question touches on two crucial issues. First, under Xi Jinping, *who* is espousing polity-seeking nationalism, and who is articulating polity-based (nationalizing) nationalisms? In a sense, this is the nationalism-studies equivalent of the question posed by Hays Gries et al in a 2011 study: “Is China a status quo power seeking to integrate itself peacefully into the extant international system? Or is it a revisionist power seeking to overturn the global order?”³⁰⁶ We can maintain the overall structure of that question to begin analysis here: Is Chinese nationalism a status quo (polity based, nationalizing) nationalizing seeking to integrate the Chinese nation peacefully into the present political boundaries of Greater China? Or is it a revisionist (polity-seeking) nationalism which seeks to overturn the status quo political boundaries of Greater China? This chapter focuses on addressing these questions through a detailed examination of Chinese-language sources.

5.1: Official Nationalism under Xi Jinping

We can begin by examining how the party under Xi narrates itself; how Xi and those who interpret his policies place his governance in the broader historical context. In a recent article in

³⁰⁶ Peter Hays Gries et al., “Patriotism, Nationalism and China’s US Policy: Structures and Consequences of Chinese National Identity,” *The China Quarterly* 205 (March 2011): 1.

the Journal of the Party School of the Central Committee of the C.P.C. (中共中央党校, hereafter referred to as the CPSJ, for Central Party School Journal), Professor Song Fu Fan (宋福范) declares that “examining the new line of thinking within Xi Jinping’s governance from a macroscopic logic perspective” one finds “achieving the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation as the foundational purpose.”³⁰⁷ If rhetoric is a guide, one can hardly disagree; Under Xi Jinping the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” (中华民族伟大复兴) is mentioned as the ultimate justification for basic tenets such as socialism with Chinese characteristics³⁰⁸ and envelopes fundamental goals such as national prosperity and strength (國家富強) and peoples’ well-being (人民幸福).³⁰⁹

Song additionally emphasizes that the ideology undergirding Xi’s governance centers on the understanding that China has entered a new historical starting point (新的历史起点).³¹⁰ This is to say that Xi intends to provide transformational leadership, shifting key aspects of the state-society relationship within the PRC. Most fundamentally, this has to do with troubling trends that have plagued China’s politics since the beginning of the reform era. Song notes the “increasingly clear trend of diversification of stakeholders, political demands and values in China” following the implementation of market-oriented reforms since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee (in December 1978).³¹¹ Indeed, China’s reform and opening introduced a flood of economic globalization, fiscal decentralization, wealth accumulation and interest diversification underneath a relatively static political structure. The explosion of corruption at the provincial and local levels of the Chinese government that Nathan observed in the 1980s and 90s apparently coincided with “an increasing sense of normlessness.”³¹²

It would be difficult to overstate the damage that this corruption did to the party’s image and reputation for “serving the people.” Sharing a similar interpretation, Song notes that the

³⁰⁷ 「从宏观逻辑上审视习近平治国理政的新思路...以实现中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦为根本目的」宋福范, 〈论习近平治国理政的宏观理路〉, 《中共中央党校学报》第 21 卷, 第一期 (2017 年 2 月): 5.

³⁰⁸ 「中国特色社会主义...实现中华民族伟大复兴的必由之路。」Ibid., 6.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 7-8.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 5-6.

³¹¹ Ibid., 8.

³¹² Andrew Nathan, *China’s Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1990), 103. Quoted in Melanie Manion, *Corruption by Design: Building Clean Government in Mainland China and HK* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 95.

development of China's market economy witnessed a soaring incidence of corruption that "seriously polluted China's political ecology."³¹³ He goes on to note:

In terms of ideology, the psychological conflicts caused by unequal [economic] distribution caused a degradation of [our] values, the long-term accumulation [of which] brought about a moral decline and deficiency of integrity [which] corrupted [China's] social atmosphere since [the advent of] reform and opening.³¹⁴

This reality – combined, of course, with a recognition of the Party's accomplishments – constitutes Xi's "new historical starting point."³¹⁵ "The new reasoning/logic of Xi Jinping's governance is based upon this reality. [This logic] is advanced from [Xi] fixing [his] gaze on resolving these contradictions and problems."³¹⁶

According to Song, Xi intends to address the accumulated issues plaguing China's politics, "social atmosphere," and party-people relations by reviving ideology. "Especially in regards to an organic whole composed out of diffuse individuals, [an] explicit purpose and goal can condense a group consensus and form united willpower; settle an ideological foundation [upon which] willpower converges."³¹⁷ Before assuming China's highest political offices in 2012 and 2013,³¹⁸ Xi served as president of the Central Party School (CPS). His words at the opening ceremony of the fall term of the CPS in September 2010 are particularly instructive:

A state, a nation, a party, at any time and in any circumstances must establish and stick to explicit ideals and convictions. If [we are] without, or lose [our] ideals and convictions, [we] will lose sight of the goal of [our] struggle and the direction [of our] advance. Like a sheet of loose sand, unable to muster cohesiveness, [we] will lose [our] spiritual backbone

³¹³ 宋福范, 〈论习近平治国理政的宏观理路〉, 7.

³¹⁴ 「在思想文化上, 分配不公造成的人们心理失衡, 引发价值观陷入混乱, 长期积累下来导致了严重的道德滑坡和诚信缺失, 恶化了改革开放以来的社会风气, 等等. 以上矛盾和问题与我们所取得的巨大成就一起, 构成了『在新的历史起点上』的基本内涵. 习近平治国理政的新思路, 就是立足于这一现实, 着眼于解决这些矛盾和问题而提出来的. 解决这些矛盾和问题的逻辑构想, 就形成了习近平治国理政的基本理路。」 Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ 「习近平治国理政的新思路, 就是立足于这一现实, 着眼于解决这些矛盾和问题而提出来的。」 Ibid.

³¹⁷ 「特别是对于一个由分散的个体所构成的有机整体来讲, 明确的目的目标, 能够凝聚群体共识, 形成统一意志, 为汇集力量奠定思想基础。」 Ibid.

³¹⁸ Xi Jinping assumed the office of General Secretary of the CCP's Central Committee and head of the Central Military Commission after appointment by the Politburo Standing Committee in late 2012. He assumed the largely ceremonial position of President of the PRC in March 2013, after receiving 2,952 out of 2,956 possible votes in the National People's Congress.

and self-disintegrate.³¹⁹

Xi's message fits into the historical context of Chinese nationalist rhetoric in no uncertain terms. In referencing Sun's "sheet of loose sand," he calls back to a time of Chinese weakness, when "national" disintegration appeared to be a more pressing and possible threat. In implying that the state, the nation, and the party struggle together, advance together, and share a common spiritual backbone, he advances the "logical conformism" of the cultural nation, as well as the party's place within that homogenous being: the party-nation-state.

5.1.1: National Rejuvenation under Xi Jinping

The "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation," as articulated by Xi, must be understood in light of the "new historical starting point" concept and Xi's previous emphasis on national cohesiveness. Xi has presented this concept in connection with several overarching ideas: the concept national struggle to overcome China's humiliation since the Opium Wars, a blurring of the line between ethnicity, nation, and state, and the goal of "building a prosperous and strong (富強), democratic, civilized and harmonious modern socialist state."³²⁰ In every case, the themes of Xi's national rejuvenation are intimately connected with the promoting a historiography of modern China that endows the CCP with the status of "national savior."³²¹ Xi connected these three themes with national rejuvenation on Nov. 29, 2012, in a brief speech entitled "Realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the Chinese nation's greatest dream in modern times."³²² In the speech, Xi emphasizes that "In modern times, the Chinese nation has endured hardships and sacrifices of a scale seldom seen in world history."³²³ "Having finally found the correct path to achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation... socialism with Chinese characteristics,"³²⁴

³¹⁹ 「一个国家、一个民族、一个政党，任何时候任何情况下都必须树立和坚持明确的理想信念。如果没有或丧失理想信念，就会迷失奋斗目标和前进方向，就会像一盘散沙而形不成凝聚力，就会失去精神支柱而自我瓦解。」 Quoted in 宋福范，〈论习近平治国理政的宏观理路〉，8.

³²⁰ 「建成富強民主文明和諧的社會主義現代化國家」。習近平，〈實現中華民族偉大復興是中華民族近代以來最偉大的夢想〉，《談治國理政》，36.

³²¹ This term is used similarly in Timothy Cheek, *Living with Reform: China since 1989* (London: Zed Books, 2006), 45.

³²² 習近平，〈實現中華民族偉大復興〉，35.

³²³ 「近代以來，中華民族遭受的苦難之重，付出的犧牲之大，在世界史上都是罕見的。」 Ibid.

³²⁴ 「終於找到了實現中華民族偉大復興的正確道路...這條道路就是中國特色社會主義。」 Ibid.

however, the Chinese nation now has “bright prospects”³²⁵ for national rejuvenation.

Xi goes on to blend the Chinese nation with both political and ethnic descriptors: “Achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation... this dream binds together the aspirations of generations of Chinese, embodies the Chinese nation’s and the Chinese people’s overall interests, and is the shared hope of every son and daughter of China [中華兒女 – son and daughter of *zhonghua*, in this case an “ethno-cultural China” capable of producing primordially Chinese offspring].”³²⁶ Xi structures this sentence around four different expressions of who composes “China:” the Chinese, the Chinese nation, the Chinese people, and the sons and daughters of ethno-cultural China. Following this statement, Xi raises what has become one of the most clear themes of “national rejuvenation” under his leadership: “the future and destiny of every individual is closely linked with the future and destiny of the state and the nation. Only if the state is well and the nation is well, may we all be well.”³²⁷

In addition to ethno-cultural dimensions, Xi has likewise expounded on civic dimensions of Chinese-ness, imparting a renewed emphasis on Chinese Communist ideology as a factor defining the Chinese nation. In the opinion of this reader, Xi’s April 2013 speech, “Hard Work Makes Dreams Come True” (實幹才能夢想成真) could instead have been named “Eulogy to the Worker.”³²⁸ Here Xi extolled China’s working class as “China’s leading class,” (我國的領導階級), reminding the Party of its responsibility to “consolidate the position of the working class” as such (鞏固工人階級的領導階級地位).³²⁹ In a turn of phrase reminiscent of Marx, Xi declares, “labor... is the source of happiness” (勞動... 是幸福的源泉).³³⁰ Yet he goes further: “Labor created the Chinese nation and formed the Chinese nation’s glorious history, and it shall produce the Chinese nation’s radiant future.”³³¹ To some extent, Xi hearkens back to Mao’s declared intent to create a proletarian China when he attributes the nation’s creation, history, and

³²⁵ 「中華民族偉大復興展現出光明的前景」. 習近平, 〈實現中華民族偉大復興〉, 35.

³²⁶ 「實現中華民族偉大復興... 這個夢想, 凝聚了幾代中國人的夙願, 體現了中華民族和中國人民的整體利益, 是每一個中華兒女的共同期盼。」 (Emphasis added). Ibid., 36.

³²⁷ 「每個人的前途命運都與國家和民族的前途命運緊密相連. 國家好, 民族好, 大家才會好。」 Ibid.

³²⁸ 習近平, 〈實幹才能夢想成真〉, 《談治國理政》, 45.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid., 46.

³³¹ 「勞動創造了中華民族, 造就了中華民族的輝煌歷史, 也必將創造出中華民族的光明未來」. Ibid.

future, to labor. As Zhu has pointed out, “It is not clear whether Xi actually agrees with the [Neo-Maoist] Left or if he is being pragmatic to gain their support,” as his rhetoric is “consistent with both possibilities.”³³² In any event, as Xi has become the PRC’s “core leader,” he enjoys particular power to establish the contours of politically correct speech; his rhetoric has a force of its own.

Further extolling civic sources of national identity, Xi reminds workers to “self-consciously practice the core socialist values” (自覺踐行社會主義核心價值觀), “use advanced thinking” (用先進思想), and thus “be a model in promoting the Chinese spirit” (做弘揚中國精神的楷模).³³³ In a phrase that is uniquely Chinese-Communist, he declares that “the model worker ethos... enriches the national ethos and the spirit of our times.”³³⁴ Xi has unambiguously reasserted the Party’s position on who – besides the CCP – most represents the Chinese nation: workers, especially dedicated socialist workers. In doing so, he re-elevated elements of the civic or political culture dominant under Mao into the content of official Chinese nationalism. Within this dimension, Xi’s nationalism is clearly polity-based and nationalizing. His rhetoric here is unconcerned with reshaping the borders of Greater China; in fact, in continuously stressing the PRC’s socialist national identity, he actually reinforces the differences in national identity within Greater China.

Polity-based (nationalizing) nationalism based on civic and ideological identity features prominently in a speech Xi gave to commemorate the 2013 anniversary of the May Four Movement. As suggested by the speech’s title, it was directed primarily at China’s youth: “Let Youthful Dreams Soar In the Lively Practice of Realizing the China Dream.”³³⁵ In familiar wording, Xi encouraged young people to be “firm in ideals and convictions,” for “without ideals

³³² Shaoming Zhu, “Comments on ‘China’s Coming Ideological Wars,’” *Foundation for Law and International Affairs*, <http://flia.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Shaoxing-Zhu-Comments-on-Chinas-Coming-Ideological-War.pdf>.

³³³ 習近平, 〈實幹才能夢想成真〉, 45-46.

³³⁴ The choice of “ethos” over “spirit” comes from Xi Jinping, *Governance of China*, 46. The original is as follows: 「劳模精神，豐富了民族精神和時代精神的內涵」。Ibid., 46.

³³⁵ The Official English Translation, “Realize Youthful Dreams,” simply does not communicate the fullness of 「在實現中國夢的生動實踐中放飛青春夢想」。習近平, 〈在實現中國夢的生動實踐中放飛青春夢想〉, 《談治國理政》, 49.

and convictions, one's spirit becomes weak.”³³⁶ Xi is explicit concerning the ideals and convictions “The China Dream is the shared ideal of people of every ethnic group in China and the lofty ideal that every generation of youth should firmly establish.”³³⁷ Xi repeats the same admonition regarding “socialism with Chinese characteristics.”³³⁸ More specifically, Xi advocates that China's youth:

firmly adhere to Deng Xiaoping Theory and the Three Represents, foster minds equipped with a ‘Scientific Outlook on Development;’ establish their ideals and convictions on a rational recognition of scientific theory, a correct understanding of history, and a correct comprehension of China's ‘national conditions’; unceasingly strengthen their confidence in China's path, its [ideological] theory, and its [political] institutions; strengthen their conviction to support the Party, and forever closely follow the Party as it holds high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics.³³⁹

Later in the speech, Xi goes into even greater detail concerning the role of China's youth in creating a nation of morality and character. Beginning with the declaration that “Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a form of socialism in which material and cultural (or spiritual) progresses go hand in hand. It is difficult for a nation without inner strength to be self-reliant, and a cause that lacks a cultural buttress cannot be sustained for long.”³⁴⁰ With political ideology as the nation's “inner strength,” and official state ideology as a doctrine that combines material and spiritual development, Xi's rhetoric is clearly designed to encourage the creation of a civic nation within the PRC's borders. He goes on to stress this nationalization as a moral imperative, stating:

Young people must integrate **correct moral cognition, conscious moral development and active moral practice**, conscientiously establish and practice the **core socialist values**, and take the lead in advocating good social conduct. Young people must strengthen

³³⁶ Xi literally said, “the absence of ideals and convictions causes a spiritual ‘shortage of calcium’” [廣大青年一定要堅定理想信念· · · 沒有理想信念, 就會導致精神上『缺鈣』.] 習近平, 〈在實現中國夢的生動實踐中放飛青春夢想〉, 50.

³³⁷ [中國夢是全國各族人民的共同理想, 也是青年一代應該牢固樹立的遠大理想]. Ibid.

³³⁸ [中國特色社會主義是我們黨帶領人民經歷千萬苦找到的實現中國夢的正確道路, 也是廣大青年應該牢固確立地人生信念.] Ibid.

³³⁹ [廣大青年要堅持用鄧小平理論, 『三個代表』 重要思想, 科學發展觀武裝頭腦, 把理想信念建立在對科學理論的理性認同上, 建立在對歷史規律的正確認識上, 建立在對基本國情的準確把握上, 不斷增強道路自信, 理論自信, 制度自信, 增強對堅持黨的領導的信念, 永遠緊跟高高舉起中國特色社會主義偉大旗幟.] Ibid.

³⁴⁰ This is the official English translation from Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2014), 52. Original: [中國特色社會主義式物質文明和精神文明全面發展的社會主義. 一個沒有精神力量的民族難以自力自強, 一項沒有文化支撐的事業難以持續長久.] Ibid., 52.

theoretical improvement and moral cultivation, take the initiative to carry forward **patriotism, collectivism and socialism**, and actively advocate **social and professional ethics, and family virtues**. Young people should bear in mind that ‘virtue uplifts, while vice debases’ and always be optimists and persons of integrity who have a healthy lifestyle. Young people should advocate new social trends, be the first in **learning from Lei Feng**, take an active part in voluntary work, shoulder social responsibilities, care for others, help the poor, the weak and the disabled, and do other good and practical deeds, so as to **promote social progress** with their actions... The theme of the Chinese youth movement today is to strive to **realize the Chinese Dream of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation**.³⁴¹

Xi has effectively nationalized morality, arguing that the correct morality for China’s people is *Chinese* morality. Though this differs from a notion that the leader himself *is* truth as seen in the Mao era, it nonetheless represents an intensely nationalist worldview. As Xi has argued that the Chinese nation must “uphold the moral values that have been formed and developed on our own soil” instead of “indiscriminately and blindly parrot[ing] Western moral values.”³⁴²

Alongside repeated emphasis on ideological elements of Chinese-ness, the speech also features elements of ethnic identity. Once again Xi raises “Sons and Daughters of *Zhonghua*” in the same breath as “state,” “nation,” and “people,” rhetorically blending the ethno-cultural nation, the state, and the people together as one.³⁴³ This kind of rhetoric is an explicitly polity-based form of nationalism in itself, for it suggests that the people of China simply *must* be a nation, and that nation simply *must* exist within the PRC. Xi makes explicit the purpose of “China Dream” within that framework of nationalization:

[We] must use ‘China Dream’ to lay a solid basis for shared thought among youth; to educate and **assist the youth in establishing a correct worldview**, outlook on life and values; to **forever love the great land of our ancestors, forever love our great people, and forever love our great Chinese nation**; to firmly follow the Party in progressing down **China’s path**. [We] must use ‘China Dream’ to inspire the youth’s sense of **historical responsibility**...³⁴⁴

³⁴¹ This is the official English translation offered in Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, 52-53. The lengthy original quote can be found in 習近平, 〈在實現中國夢的生動實踐中放飛青春夢想〉, 52-53.

³⁴² Quoted in Gow, “The Core Socialist Values of the Chinese Dream,” 98.

³⁴³ 「中國夢凝結著無數仁人志士的不懈努力, 承載著缺全體中華兒女的共同嚮往, 昭示著國家富強, 民族振興, 人民幸福的美好前景。」 習近平, 〈在實現中國夢的生動實踐中放飛青春夢想〉, 49.

³⁴⁴ 「要用中國夢打牢廣大青少年的共同思想基礎, 教育和幫青少年樹立正確的世界觀, 人生觀, 價值觀, 永遠熱愛我們偉大的祖國永遠熱愛我們偉大的人民, 永遠熱愛我們偉大的中華民族, 堅定跟著黨走中國道路. 要用中國夢激發廣大青少年的歷史責任感」. *Ibid.*

Official nationalism under Xi Jinping offers a view of modern Chinese history in which the CCP is constantly striving to address the deficient conditions plaguing the Chinese nation. Song describes the Party's more than nine decades of history in terms of three stages of nationalism. In the "Democratic Revolution Period," (民主革命時期), The Party fought to achieve national independence and people's liberation; after the founding of "New China," the Party fought for national prosperity and strength (國家富強) and peoples' well-being (人民幸福); in the 21st century, the Party has focused on the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Race; and under Xi Jinping, the Party has "gone a step further in refining (升華) its purpose as the China Dream."³⁴⁵ Benchmarks for national rejuvenation are established within the concept of the "Two Centenaries" (兩個一百年), the 100 year anniversaries of the 1921 founding of the CCP and the 1949 founding of the PRC. Xi declares:

I firmly believe that the goal of bringing about a moderately prosperous society in all respects can be achieved by 2021, when the CCP celebrates its centenary; the goal of building China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous and strong, democratic, civilized [or culturally advanced] and harmonious can be achieved by 2049, when the PRC marks its centenary; and the dream of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will then be realized.³⁴⁶

Central to the "Two Centenaries" concept, of course, is the role of the Party. Thanks to its correct leadership and ideology, Xi reminds the nation, "We are closer to achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation now than in any previous historical period."³⁴⁷

Xi further conceptualized the contents of the Chinese nation and the orientation of his nationalism in a March 2013 address to the first session of the 12th National People's Congress. "The Chinese nation has an uninterrupted history of over 5000 years of civilization. [It] created the wide-ranging and profound Chinese culture."³⁴⁸ He goes on to describe shared political

³⁴⁵ 「以习近平同志为核心的党中央更是进一步将其升华为『中国梦』」。宋福范,〈论习近平治国理政的宏观理路〉, 8.

³⁴⁶ 「我堅信,到中國共產黨成立一百年時全面建成小康社會的目標一定能實現,到新中國成立一百年時建成富強民主文明和諧的社會主義現代化國家的目標一定能實現,中華民族偉大復興的夢想一定能實現。」習近平,〈實現中華民族偉大復興是中華民族近代以來最偉大的夢想〉, 36.

³⁴⁷ 「現在,我們歷史上任何時期都更接近實現中華民族偉大復興的目標。」習近平,〈在實現中國夢的生動實踐中放飛青春夢想〉, 50.

³⁴⁸ 「中華民族具有五千多年連綿不斷的文明歷史,創造了博大精深的中華文化。」習近平〈在第十二屆全國人民代表大會第一次會議上的講話〉,《談治國理政》, 38.

history, common territory, an ethno-cultural “national spirit,” and “ideals and convictions” – a concept that clearly elicits civic/political identity – as elements binding the nation together:

That which tightly unites our 56 *minzu* and over 1.3 billion people together is the **extraordinary struggle** that we have experienced together, the great **homeland** that we have created together, the **national spirit** that we have developed together; and permeating throughout [it all], even more crucial are the **ideals and convictions** that we adhere to together.³⁴⁹

Xi continues in that speech to describe a clear logic of polity-based (nationalizing) nationalism based on state-sponsored patriotism: “All throughout, patriotism is the spiritual force that strongly unites the Chinese nation together.”³⁵⁰ He also reinforces an ethno-cultural, supra-political conception of Chinese-ness:

The broad/numerous overseas compatriots [*qiangbao* - literally those of the Chinese bloodline living abroad] must promote the Chinese nation’s good tradition of industriousness and friendliness, work hard to advance the development of the motherland [*zuguo* – literally ancestral country], and contribute to the advancement of the friendship between the Chinese people and local people.³⁵¹

Xi does not merely describe the Party’s hope that Chinese *citizens* abroad will advance China’s relationship with their local populations, but rather that all people of Chinese *descent* should be loyal to the Chinese nation and the motherland, and that, by implication, they are not – and cannot be – “normal” citizens of the state in which they reside. Such a supra-political notion of China and Chinese-ness is not an invention of the Xi Jinping administration, nor even a concept unique to the CCP. As Clayton notes, as early as the late 19th century the Qing court departed from the tradition practice of viewing Chinese emigres as “traitors who had abandoned their homeland and their families in the pursuit of profit,” instead professing a responsibility to protect overseas Chinese laborers.³⁵² The 1970s KMT government apparently also viewed “jurisdiction

³⁴⁹ 「把我們五十六個民族，十三億多人緊緊凝聚在一起的，是我們共同經歷的非凡奮鬥，是我們共同創造的美好家園，是我們共同培育的民族精神，而貫穿其中的，更重要的是我們共同堅守理想信念。」 習近平〈在第十二屆全國人民代表大會第一次會議上的講話〉，39.

³⁵⁰ 「愛國主義始終是把中華民族堅強團結在一起的精神力量」. *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁵¹ 「廣大海外僑胞，要弘揚中華民族勤勞善良的優良傳統，努力為促進祖國發展，促進中國人民同當地人民的友誼做出貢獻。」 *Ibid.*

³⁵² Cathryn H. Clayton, *Sovereignty at the Edge: Macao & the Question of Chineseness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 333-334.

over [ethnic] Chinese abroad as a right and responsibility of the Chinese government.”³⁵³ Then, with investment from overseas Chinese playing a key role in funding China’s 1980s and 1990s economic takeoff, the “Chinese government began promoting ‘myths of common origin’ of all Chinese in ways that emphasized ‘discourses connecting race, nation and territory.’”³⁵⁴

Primordialist nationalists both within and outside of China have used organismal metaphors to represent their putative nation as a being a combination of shared ethno-cultural DNA and territorial roots. Xi does so with a tree metaphor. After stressing “the history of the Chinese nation’s five thousand years of unbroken development” (中華民族幾千年綿延發展的歷史), Xi turns metaphorical: “No matter how long the shadow it may cast, the tree strikes deep roots in soil forever. No matter where they are ‘bodily,’ [Chinese] students studying abroad should always keep the ancestral country and people within their hearts.”³⁵⁵ In this context the metaphor functions on two levels. First, in which the Chinese nation is a great tree with shadows cast around the world, the organismal-nation ultimately belongs in the Chinese soil. Second, in which each student abroad is a tree temporarily casting a shadow abroad, its figurative roots inevitably (and primordially) return to Chinese soil. Chinese-ness is thus said to be rooted to a geographic space, and the nation shares a common ethno-cultural core the way every cell develops from a uniform DNA. Such metaphors grant a special role to territorial identity, for they imply that the ethno-cultural nation is grounded eternally to the national homeland. In this context the Central Plain (中原), said to be the birthplace of Han Chinese civilization, becomes something like sacred territory, just as in millennia past it conveyed to its the possessor territorial legitimacy or orthodoxy.

Sensitivity over the primordial and supra-political concept of China sparked a brief international incident in September 2015, when Huang Huikang, the PRC’s ambassador to Malaysia, spoke to reporters in the aftermath of a xenophobic rally in Kuala Lumpur’s Petaling Street Chinatown. In fact Huang merely stated that the Chinese government “will not sit idly by” if there is “infringement on China’s national interests or... interests of Chinese citizens and

³⁵³ Stephen Fitzgerald, *China and the Overseas Chinese: A Study of Peking’s Changing Policy: 1949-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 76, quoted in Clayton, *Sovereignty at the Edge*, 334.

³⁵⁴ Clayton, *Sovereignty at the Edge*, 334.

³⁵⁵ 「不論樹的影子有多長, 根永遠扎在土壤; 不論留學人員身在何處, 都要始終把祖國和人民放在心裡。」 習近平, 〈創新正當其時, 圓夢適得其勢〉, 《談治國理政》, 58.

businesses.”³⁵⁶ Though he specifically mentioned Chinese *citizens*, rather than Malaysian citizens of Chinese descent, Malaysian and international media outlets interpreted his remarks as asserting something like partial Chinese sovereignty over people who are ethnically Chinese regardless of their place of citizenship. This, of course, implies that neither Malaysia nor any other state can have complete sovereignty over its ethnic Chinese citizens (because they are *Chinese* first), and second, that the PRC’s sovereignty does not end at its political borders, but in fact extends ambiguously across the “Chinese world” (華人世界). Such a conception of Chinese-ness would threaten the political sovereignty of Southeast Asian states, implying a competing ethno-cultural sovereignty. Huang, of course, did not actually imply that the Chinese government holds such a stance, but with ethnic Chinese constituting a sizable minority in many Southeast Asian states, his rhetoric set off a political firestorm once misunderstood.

“Backwardness” represents an additional rhetorical element within current official nationalism. Song defends the continued adherence to “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics” as designed to “sustain the historical mission of achieving national rejuvenation in China, an **economically and culturally backwards**, Eastern power.”³⁵⁷ This rhetoric continues the tradition of a victim consciousness within Chinese nationalism, framing the putative nation’s “backwardness” in such a way as to ground the goals of the party-state in the language of nation-building. In order to understand the orientation of nationalism within a conception of Chinese “backwardness,” we must understand how nationalism is supposed to address such backwardness. Zhang Lei views nationalism as a development of national cohesion: “Essentially speaking, Chinese national cohesion forges every member of the Chinese nation into a united, organic whole, ensures the survival of the Chinese nation, and develops its inherent power.”³⁵⁸ Agreeing,

³⁵⁶ Shannon Teoh and Eunice Au, “KL Wants Chinese envoy to explain remarks,” *Straits Times*, October 2, 2015, <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/kl-wants-chinese-envoy-to-explain-remarks>. Original quote in Chinese: 「我们对于侵犯中国国家利益, 侵犯中国公民和企业合法权益、损害中国与所在国的友好关系的不法行径也决不会坐视不理。」〈中国驻马大使黄惠康有关「娘家」的谈话〉, 2015年10月3日, http://news.nanyangpost.com/2015/10/3_78.html

³⁵⁷ 「为承载起在中国这样一个经济文化落后的东方国家实现民族复兴的历史使命」, 宋福范, 〈论习近平治国理政的宏观理路〉, 9.

³⁵⁸ 「从本质上说, 中华民族凝聚力就是把中华民族全体成员结成一个统一的有机整体并确保中华民族生存、发展的内在力量。」张磊, 孔庆榕, 〈中华民族凝聚力学〉, (北京: 中国社会科学出版社, 1999), 4. Quoted in 陈伟群, 〈中华民族凝聚力量化的意义及实施方案探讨〉, 《广东省社会主义学院学报》, 第22期, 第1期, 2006年1月, 33.

Chen Wei Qun goes even further in calling national cohesion the “life force” (生命力) of the Chinese nation.³⁵⁹ Consistent with the notion of Chinese backwardness, Chen recommends strengthening China’s national cohesion in order to cope with today’s environment of fierce interstate competition.³⁶⁰ This is because, as he says, “established on the foundation of shared ideals and firm convictions, people’s unity and national cohesion are the propulsive source of composite state power.”³⁶¹ Chen, in fact, emphatically states that

If national cohesion is strong, [even] a state that is weak in economic, political, military, technological, and cultural power can, from backwardness, catch up to the advanced [states]; the [once] passive can take initiative; a weak state can become a strong state. Conversely, [with weak national cohesion,] a strong state may become a weak state.³⁶²

The writing of these scholars predates Xi’s rise to the General Secretary position by nearly two decades, yet their logic has been further solidified within official nationalism during Xi’s tenure. Xi appropriates their logic to expound on the nationalist imperative of innovation:

Innovation is the soul of a nation’s progress, the inexhaustible motive force of a state’s flourishing, and is the deepest natural endowment of the Chinese nation. In the midst of intense international [or interstate] competition, only the innovators progress, only the innovators are strong, only the innovators can win.³⁶³

While Xi is less apt to describe the Chinese nation’s “backwardness,” he nonetheless emphasizes a competition among states and nations, and views Chinese nationalism, the China Dream, and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation as “‘cohering’ together of [latently dispersed] Chinese power” (凝聚中國力量)³⁶⁴ Emphasizing nationalism’s instrumental value as a uniting ideology is certainly not novel to the Xi era. Yet it has perhaps never been so central to the discourse of the Chinese state as it is today.

Interestingly, at least towards foreign audiences, Xi has communicated a vision of a “Globalist” China in contrast to the surge in Western nationalism and populism. As the first

³⁵⁹ 陈伟群, 〈中华民族凝聚力量化的意义及实施方案探讨〉, 33.

³⁶⁰ 「处在当今世界国际竞争激烈的环境中, 我们要增强中华民族凝聚力」. Ibid., 34.

³⁶¹ In the context in which Chen writes, “composite state power” could also be rendered “smart power” à la Joseph Nye. 「建立在共同理想和坚定信念基础上的人民团结、民族凝聚, 是增强综合国力动力源泉。」 Ibid.

³⁶² 「一个经济、政治、军事、科技、文化实力相对落后的国家, 如果民族凝聚力很强, 落后可以赶上先进, 被动可以化为主动, 弱国会变为强国; 反之, 强国也可能变为弱国」. Ibid.

³⁶³ 「創新是一個民族進步的靈魂, 是一個國家興旺發達的不竭動力, 也是中華民族最深沉的民族稟賦. 在激烈的國際競爭中, 惟創新者進, 惟創新者強, 惟創新者勝。」 習近平, 〈創新正當其時, 圓夢適得其勢〉, 59.

³⁶⁴ 習近平, 〈實現中國夢不僅造福中國人民, 而且造福世界人民〉, 《談治國理政》, 57.

Chinese head of state to attend the World Economic Forum in Davos, Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech this year that emphasized China's commitment to economic globalization and free trade.³⁶⁵ There is no inconsistency, however, in positioning China as a leader of the liberal economic order, and even globalization, while continuing to develop polity-based nationalism.

There are also complex and multi-dimensional fissures between official and grassroots nationalisms in China today. According to Link, a central divide exists between those at the top who tout a return to China's rightful place "at the center of the world," and those at the bottom who are primarily concerned with "interpersonal ethics," especially democratization. He views the official version of Chinese identity under its current "retrograde" political system as unsuitable "for the present age."³⁶⁶ The kind of nationalism implied to be desirable according to Link and others is likewise civic, but in the more usual sense: that of a liberal democracy.

On the whole, several trends can be deduced within the Xi era. First, official Chinese nationalism continues to stress a rich combination of civic, territorial, ethnic, and cultural identity as the basis of a putative "Chinese nation." Second, the orientation of nationalist rhetoric appears primarily focused on engendering a more cohesive nation within the borders of the PRC, although concerns that an ethno-cultural conception of Chinese-ness combined with the existence of a large international Chinese diaspora – especially in Southeast Asia – inspires trepidation in small states with large and economically powerful Chinese communities. Official nationalist rhetoric certainly contributes to these trepidations when it expounds on primordial Chinese-ness. Third, Xi's China Dream narrative propels the language of Chinese nationalism to a newfound height in the overall discourse of China's politics. It embodies both victim and victor identities, relates to both nation-building and state-seeking, and confers upon China both an ethno-cultural and civic-territorial nation. It aspires to turn national rejuvenation into a kind of Gramscian "common sense" – something so internalized that it is unquestioned – as a part of the CCP's aspiring ideological and moral hegemony within China's politics.

³⁶⁵ Noah Barkin and Elizabeth Piper, "In Davos, Xi Makes Case for Chinese Leadership Role," *Reuters*, January 18, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-davos-meeting-china-idUSKBN15118V>.

³⁶⁶ Perry Link, "What It Means to Be Chinese: Nationalism and Identity in Xi's China," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 3 (May 2015), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-04-20/what-it-means-be-chinese>.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study began with the observation that there remains little consensus as to the role that Chinese nationalism plays in structuring China's domestic politics, foreign relations, and geopolitical future. This lack of consensus remains troubling given the variety of evidence indicating a highly salient sense of nationhood in Chinese society as well as the crucial role that nationalism allegedly plays in securing the PRC's regime legitimacy. Agreeing with Carlson's description of Chinese nationalism as a "contested object," this study has aimed to carefully consider the sources of such contestation along two dimensions: contents and orientations. In developing and testing a practical methodology through which to interpret Chinese nationalist rhetoric, this study has demonstrated a new approach within nationalism studies: the disaggregation of nationalist discourse according to the *civic/political*, *territorial*, *ethnic*, and *cultural* elements that constitute putative national identity, and the *polity-based* and *polity-seeking* orientations of nationalism as a form of politics. This broad and inherently generalizable approach strikes an attractive balance between pure theory and theory-blind China studies or regional studies. Specifically, it centers our attention on the actual words and deeds of those who claim to speak for their putative nation, but leverages the insights of theory to aid in the interpretation and contextualization of those words and deeds. This approach holds potential to generate more consensus regarding the nature and consequences of Chinese nationalism, and additionally to introduce greater uniformity into nationalism studies as a subfield of comparative politics.

6.1: Value of the Methodology

When a Chinese speaker attributes particular contents to the "Chinese nation," he or she is rhetorically appealing to a certain conception of Chinese national identity. This approach holds that national identity is constructed out of any combination of civic, territorial, ethnic, or cultural elements. Understanding the combination of inherently "nationalize-able" elements of identity that come to define the Chinese nation is important precisely because a particular conception of the nation "provides a conceptual map which enables people to relate their

particular material and moral interests to a broader terrain of action.”³⁶⁷ Indeed, as Wang notes, “national interests are constructed by national identity, and national interests in turn determine foreign policy and state action.”³⁶⁸ Thus by carefully considering the elements of identity which nationalist rhetoric claims *are* or *should be* constitutive of the putative nation, we have potential to further understand not only the rhetoric related to nationalization of a community, but in fact the very core of nation-ness as it pertains to the construction of national interest.

This study has also maintained that we must critically examine the orientations of any nationalism, since rhetoric and policy that is correctly understood as nationalist, can, in fact, be directed at either society or the state. As a form of politics, nationalism seeks to redress some issue considered to plague the putative nation: either a lack of an adequate polity for the existing nation, a lack of adequate social cohesion necessary for the engendering of the nation, or, as we have seen in much of Chinese nationalist rhetoric, both. In the first case, polity-seeking nationalism promotes state-level reform, revolution, separation or unification; it is thus said to be revisionist at the state or interstate level. In the second case, polity-based nationalism promotes nationalization of society within the status-quo state; it is thus revisionist at the societal level. Finally, as we have seen, nationalism may seek to accomplish both, but typically by appealing to two or more separate imaginings of the nation. In Hu Jintao’s rhetoric towards Taiwan, for example, an ethnic nation was imagined as the basis for a polity-seeking nationalism aimed at unifying Taiwan with the PRC, while a polity-based nationalism aimed to solidify cross-strait national cohesion on cultural grounds. Without carefully considering both content and orientation of nationalist rhetoric, the analyst misses these nuances.

This study focused disproportionately on nationalist rhetoric coming from Chinese political leaders, and spent relatively little space considering the competing views of dissidents, intellectuals, and grassroots movements. This choice was made in part due to the conception of Chinese nationalism as a component of the party-state-sponsored push for Gramscian hegemony within China’s state-society relationship, but also because political leaders tend to offer rhetoric that is relatively clear-cut in its orientation and is very frequently recorded. But a more complete picture of the contending discourses within Chinese nationalism would have to carefully dissect

³⁶⁷ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 13.

³⁶⁸ Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, xiii.

the content and orientation of the rhetoric of other speakers as well. Hopefully the methodology embodied in this study can serve as a model for such further research.

Focusing on the nationalist discourse of the CCP between its founding in 1921 and the establishment of the PRC in 1949 – Chinese nationalism’s “moment of arrival,” discussed in chapter four – would also greatly contribute to this study’s comprehensiveness. As noted, in the transition from inciting revolution against government, to *being* government, the nationalism of any group can be expected to change. Such was the case in the nationalism of the KMT before and after the Xinhai Revolution (辛亥革命); the Han-centric, polity-seeking nationalism of Sun Yat-sen, for example, was replaced by a polity-based multi-*minzu* imagining of the nation. We may presume that an equally stark transition existed in the CCP’s nationalism before and after 1949, but because this study does not investigate the former, this aspect of Chinese nationalism in history is left unstudied.

Possibilities to improve upon this study’s methodology exist as well. For example, this study does not engage with the social science literature of speech acts or the broader literature of political linguistics. It was determined that moving the methodology away from a strict focus on theories of nationalism would add unwanted complexity to the study. However, it remains possible that a more capable analyst could effectively integrate such literature into this or a similar study. An even more promising possibility for improvement is the incorporation of large-n quantitative data that could describe the relative frequencies with which particular contents are attributed to the Chinese nation over time and across politically diverse groups. Such a study could investigate one of several intriguing research questions. For example, the rhetoric of Chinese nationalists in the PRC and Chinese nationalists in Taiwan could be compared quantitatively to determine whether the common rhetorical object of “the Chinese nation” is in fact imagined consistently in these two very different parts of Greater China.

6.2: Implications for Theory

Any application of a particular methodology should yield feedback for the underlying theory. Although “civic-territorial” and “ethno-cultural” represent an enduringly fascinating theoretical dichotomy, the actual rhetoric of official Chinese nationalism freely draws on *civic/political*, *territorial*, *ethnic*, and *cultural* elements, resulting in conceptualizations of the

Chinese nation that cannot be described by Kohn's dichotomy. The analysis in chapters four and five, in fact, gave credence to the argument that Chinese nationalism has, at times, imagined the Chinese nation as a "civic-cultural" or "ethno-territorial" community.

As this study demonstrates, the contents of Chinese nationalism cannot be understood without a serious consideration of civic/political nation-ness in an authoritarian state. There is mounting evidence that many PRC citizens identify with their political system and with China's rise in international reputation, and this study has shown that much of the rhetoric of Chinese nationalism deals with framing the nation in terms that are at times civic, often related to public morality, and frequently based on some conception of a uniquely Chinese political culture. In the methodology of this study, these various contents have been subsumed under the category of "the civic nation," principally because they all seem related to the promotion of rational patriotism and allegiance to a specific form of politics – whether that be a Maoist "dictatorship of the proletariat" and "mass line" populism, or "socialism with Chinese characteristics" since Deng's time. Thus it is clear that theoretically restricting the civic nation to democratic polities impedes our ability to describe and understand Chinese nationalism.

There is a deeper epistemic issue within the question of Chinese civic nationalism. As Dickson's research reveals, "most Chinese see their political system as already at a relatively high level of democracy and becoming increasingly democratic, and they are optimistic about higher levels in the future and satisfied with the level as it currently exists." Dickson goes on to explain why: "The key is in recognizing how democracy is defined in China... most Chinese define democracy in terms of outcomes: providing for the needs of society and raising standards of living," thus, "most Chinese see [democracy] already happening."³⁶⁹ If there exists a consensus view among Chinese that their political system *is* democratic, then can we deny the existence of a civic nation within China? If the nation, after all, is an imagined political community, are its characteristics not imagined by its putative members? This author sees no problem in declaring that these Chinese respondents are *incorrect* as to the nature of their political system; it is not, in fact, democratic. Yet the fact that they see it as democratic means that their imagined community can absolutely be described as such. The state can perhaps be described in objective, universal terms, but putative nations are more subjective phenomena.

³⁶⁹ Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 317-318.

6.3: Chinese Nationalism as a Political Phenomenon

Should we continue to agree with Lucian Pye's 1996 assessment that "the content of contemporary Chinese nationalism... appears to be exceedingly thin... without a substantive core which can be readily articulated"? On the matter of "thin" content, this study begs to differ. At least within the rhetoric offered by leaders of the party-state, civic, territorial, ethnic, and cultural contents of Chinese national identity are consistently appealed to in the rhetoric of Chinese nationalism. These contents, if anything, are quite "thick" in the overall political discourse produced by the party-state. Moreover, under Xi Jinping, the theme of national rejuvenation has emerged as a clear "substantive core" within the broader discourse on Chinese-ness and nationhood. Xi Jinping's emphasis on national rejuvenation embodies both reclaiming the lost glory of ethno-cultural and civilizational China, and on infusing political ideology back into the heart of Chinese national identity. While the latter is often presented as a means to the former, these two sides of official Chinese nationalism are inseparable in the overall discourse and are embodied within Xi's "China Dream." It appears, therefore, that Pye's assessment is no longer helpful in the 21st century PRC.

There remains the question of whether Chinese nationalism contributes to a revisionist or status quo orientation within China's foreign relations. This study has demonstrated that, at least at the rhetorical level, both orientations are clear. The discourse of Chinese nationalism has both revisionist and status quo orientations with respect to China's domestic society and the interstate relations of Greater China. There are clearly revisionist trends, some of which have been internalized within Chinese society. A majority of respondents polled in 10 Chinese cities in 2017 expressed that the faster Taiwan is unified with the mainland, the better.³⁷⁰ This indicates an acceptance by the Chinese public of the official polity-seeking nationalism of the party-state. At the same time, citizens also express a serious need for sources of unity and moral guidance within the current borders of the PRC. A 2014 study found that 88 percent of Chinese respondents agreed that "China was beset by 'a social disease of moral decay and lack of

³⁷⁰ H.H. Pan, W. C. Wang, and Y.T. Chang, "How Chinese Citizens Perceive Cross-Strait Relations: Survey Results from Ten Major Cities in China," *Journal of Contemporary China* (January 2017). Cited in 王宏恩, 〈中國民眾怎麼看待統獨與兩岸關係?〉, 《菜市場政治學》, 2017年5月16日, <http://whogovernstw.org/2017/05/16/austinwang25/>.

trust.”³⁷¹ Thus there appears to be a recognition within Chinese society of the need for unifying civic and moral ideals. As Ian Johnson argues, China “needs a moral compass. This longing for moral certitude is especially strong in China due to its history and tradition. For millennia, Chinese society was held together by the idea that laws alone cannot keep people together.”³⁷² Whether nationalism can provide such moral certitude remains an unanswered question, but it is clear that under Xi Jinping the party-state has paternalistically included the moral domain within its version of nationalism, intensifying the party-state’s quest for a Gramscian expansive hegemony.

It is unclear whether the state’s paternalism with respect to morality and nationhood will produce, on balance, greater loyalty or greater backlash, as it is inseparable from and complicated by a paternalism with respect to history and culture. As Duara notes, a specific mobilization toward a particular source of [national] identification” inherently comes “at the expense of others.”³⁷³ Thus the party-state’s sponsorship of a core Han-nation conception of ethno-cultural Chinese-ness will remain problematic. There is tremendous evidence that particular ethnic minorities take serious issue with mobilization towards any source of identity that reduces their autonomy vis-à-vis Beijing. A sizable community of scholars views the PRC as a “‘powder-keg’ of ethnic contradictions,” a situation exasperated by mobilization towards a Han-centric national identity.³⁷⁴ “Hanification” of China’s ethnic minority regions may breed resentment rather than harmonious blending.³⁷⁵

Ethnic identity can both arise, in the first place, and take on national character among people with limited objective sociological commonalities upon which to imagine shared community. Wang Ming Ke’s (王明珂) research on the Qiang people (羌族) demonstrates as much.³⁷⁶ Liberal scholars such as Ma Rong (馬戎) have criticized the “institutionalization of ethnic groups,” arguing that this process “systematically creates institutional barriers for the

³⁷¹ Johnson, *Souls of China*, Kindle Loc. 1620.

³⁷² Ibid., Kindle Loc. 380.

³⁷³ Duara, “De-Constructing the Chinese Nation,” 55.

³⁷⁴ Leibold, “Ethnic Policy in China,” 12.

³⁷⁵ “The Great Leap West: The ‘Hanification’ of Xinjiang province,” *The Economist*, August 26, 2004, <http://www.economist.com/node/3140706>.

³⁷⁶ 王明珂, 《羌在漢藏之間：一個華夏邊緣的歷史人類學研究》, (臺北：聯經，2003年).

interaction and integration between the members of different ethnic groups.”³⁷⁷ These scholars are united around a concern that policy often intensifies *ethnicization*, or the “alienating process between peoples – stemming from intercultural contact – that results in the salience of ethnicity in social action.”³⁷⁸ Chirkova describes the process as follows:

A more or less universal pattern in present-day China is that the official state ethnic distinctions tend to gradually shape and partly solidify people’s ethnic consciousness so that they become strongly invested in the categories originally imposed upon them from outside. Eventually, this turns ethnic identity into a recognized identity.³⁷⁹

According to Ma and his followers, China must “‘de-politicize’ (去政治化) ethnic issues” if it hopes to “consolidate its own national identity.”³⁸⁰ In this context, Hu Angang (胡鞍鋼) controversially called for a “Second Generation of Ethnic Policies” in 2011, and liberal scholar Liu Junning (劉軍寧) has openly argued “we should abolish the concept of *minzu* both politically and legally.”³⁸¹ Liu believes that China must embrace territorial federalism, under which the state would deal with territories directly, rather than the current policy of “ethnic segregation” disguised as “regional ethnic autonomy.”³⁸²

Indeed the state’s paternalism over identity collides with more primordial ethnic-cultural identities within the PRC’s extremely diverse population. Familiar to any China watcher are the images of self-immolation in Tibet, where according to the exiled Tibetan government, 142 Tibetans attempted to commit politically-motivated suicide in public between 2009 and 2015.³⁸³ Also in recent memory are the September 2015 coalmine knife attacks in which ethnic Uighurs killed 50 mostly Han miners in Xinjiang.³⁸⁴ As if to prove that cultural conflict exists in China,

³⁷⁷ James Leibold, “Ethnic Policy in China: Is Reform Inevitable?” *East-West Center* (Honolulu, 2013), 16.

³⁷⁸ Pamela Kyle Crossley, “Thinking about ethnicity in early modern China,” *Late Imperial China* 11, no. 1 (June 1990): 26. Discussed in Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, 10.

³⁷⁹ Ekaterina Chirkova, “Between Tibetan and Chinese: Identity and Language in Chinese South-West,” *Journal of South Asian Studies* 30, no. 3 (December 2007): 407.

³⁸⁰ Leibold, “Ethnic Policy in China,” 17.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, xii, 30.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁸³ “Fact Sheet on Tibetan Self-Immolation Protests in Tibet Since February 2009,” *Central Tibetan Administration*, updated August 31 2015, <http://tibet.net/situation-in-tibet/factsheet-immolation-2011-2012/>.

³⁸⁴ “At least 50 reported to have died in attack on coalmine in Xinjiang in September,” *The Guardian*, October 1, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/01/at-least-50-reported-dead-in-september-attack-as-china-celebrates-xinjiang>.

the exiled Dalai Lama attributes the immolations to a policy of “cultural genocide” from Beijing, while the CCP reacts to violence in Xinjiang by cracking down on the public practice of Islam.³⁸⁵

Indeed, while this study has focused primarily on the rhetoric of Chinese political leaders, the continuing process of ascribing contents to the Chinese nation, identifying “deficient conditions,” and thus mobilizing and manipulating national identity occurs within a complex web of ethno-cultural identities, mythologized pasts, and imagined destinies. As a moral as well as cultural concept, the nation inspires some of humanities strongest passions, and nationalism has the potential to effect great change or realize long-term stability both within the PRC and throughout Greater China. It will continue to be vital that we correctly identify the nature and orientation of Chinese nationalism.



³⁸⁵ Andrew Jacobs, “Xinjiang Seethes under Chinese Crackdown,” *The New York Times*, January 2, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/03/world/asia/xinjiang-seethes-under-chinese-crackdown.html?_r=0.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Snapshots of Ethno-Cultural Chinese-ness in the PRC.



Ancestor worship, once condemned by the CCP as a "feudal practice", is back in vogue in the PRC. Here, a woman prays to the Yellow Emperor, the mythical forefather of all Han Chinese, alleged to have reigned in the 27th and 26th century BCE. The mythology surrounding the Yellow Emperor precedes nationalism's entry into Chinese political consciousness, but has since become a mainstay in Chinese nationalist rhetoric and a central piece of the Chinese nation's "ethnic roots" à la Smith.

Since 2006, an "Ancestor Worship Ceremony" has been conducted here annually. According to CCTV News, this past year's participants included "around 8,000 overseas Chinese, foreign nationals of Chinese origin and representatives from across the Taiwan Straits" including KMT Vice-chairman Chen Chen-hsiang, who, in keeping with custom, offered remarks about the people of Taiwan and the mainland as jointly descending from Emperors *Yan* and *Huang*.³⁸⁶
Photography by the author. 28 January, 2016, Xinzheng, Zhengzhou, Henan, China

³⁸⁶ "China Ancestor Worship Ceremony," CCTV News Content, March 30, 2017.
<http://newscontent.cctv.com/NewJsp/news.jsp?fileId=402656>

“Chinese [Zhonghua] Surnames”



“Chinese surnames are the ‘genes’ that transmit the blood-lineage of Chinese people, deeply fusing into the blood of every descendent of [the] *Yan* and *Huang* [emperors]...” This monument to Chinese Surnames, located across from the alleged dwelling place of the Yellow Emperor in the center of China’s Central Plain (中原), presents the finding of a 2006 research program funded by the Natural Science Foundation of China. The study found that the most common 129 Chinese surnames account for 87.5% of China. Western taboos about connecting race, science, and politics are quite alien to a Chinese political context, in which a primordial conception of ethnicity tends not to be considered problematic.

Photography by the author. 28 January, 2016, Xinzheng, Zhengzhou, Henan, China

Appendix 2: Glimpses of a Civic PRC³⁸⁷



In early 2014, the party-state’s propaganda arms unveiled the “Core Socialist Values,” which articulate the four objectives that the party-state holds for the Chinese state (國家), society (社會), and citizen (公民). While “Core Socialist Values” lists “patriotism” as a discreet value that citizens should develop, the entire set of twelve values can be understood as an officially sanctioned civic ideal which instructs Chinese citizens on public morality, a major function of polity-based nationalism.

³⁸⁷“Core Socialist Values,” *China Policy*, July 3, 2015, <http://policycn.com/15-07-03-anyone-for-valuism/>.

Appendix 3: Ethno-territorial Chinese-ness in Hou Te-jian's "Heirs of the Dragon"

The song figured prominently in the discourse of democracy movement students in Tiananmen Square, with Hou even helping to lead one of the hunger strikes. The lyrics particularly emphasize geographic features and ethnic or racial characteristics as inherent in the meaning of Chinese-ness, as well as a call for ethnic China to open its eyes, to awaken and rise up.

遙遠的東方有一條江
它的名字就叫長江
遙遠的東方有一條河
它的名字就叫黃河

In the Far East there is a river,
Its name is the Yangtze River
In the Far East there is a river,
Its name is the Yellow River

雖不曾看見長江美
夢裡常神遊長江水
雖不曾聽見黃河壯
澎湃洶湧在夢裡

Although I've never seen the beauty of the Yangtze,
In my dreams I miraculously travel the Yangtze's waters
Although I've never heard the strength of the Yellow River,
The rushing and surging waters are in my dreams

古老的東方有一條龍
她的名字就叫中國
古老的東方有一群人
他們全都是龍的傳人

In the Ancient East there is a dragon,
Her name is China
In the Ancient East there is a people,
They are all the heirs of the dragon

巨龍腳底下我成長
長成以後是龍的傳人
黑眼睛黑頭髮黃皮膚
永永遠遠是龍的傳人

I grew up under the claw of the dragon,
After I grew up I became an heir of the dragon
Black eyes, black hair, yellow skin,
Forever and ever an heir of the dragon

百年前寧靜的一個夜
巨變前夕的深夜裡
槍砲聲敲碎了寧靜夜
四面楚歌是姑息的劍

One hundred years ago on a tranquil night,
In the deep of the night before enormous changes
Gun and cannon fire destroyed the tranquil night,
Surrounded on all sides by the appeasers' swords

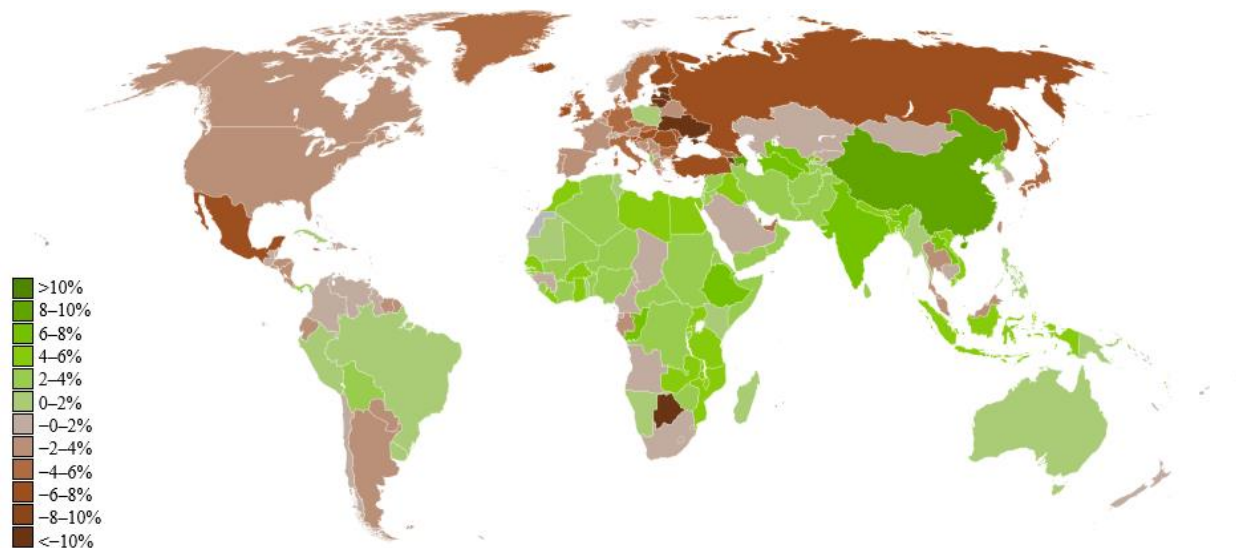
多少年砲聲仍隆隆
多少年又是多少年
巨龍巨龍你擦亮眼
永永遠遠的擦亮眼³⁸⁸

How many years have gone by with the gunshots still ringing out,
How many years followed by how many years
Mighty dragon, mighty dragon open your eyes,
Forever and ever open your eyes

³⁸⁸ Meredith Oyen, Cameron Holley, "Heirs of the Dragon," <http://www.onedayinmay.net/Other/Leehom/HeirsDragon.html>.

Appendix 4: Civic/political Attachment to State Performance?

2009 Real GDP growth rates by state³⁸⁹



In 2009, as much of the world reeled from the effects of the previous year's "global financial crisis," China maintained a real GDP growth rate above 9 percent. As the only top-eight economy not to suffer a net decrease in economic output that year, and the only economy of any considerable size to experience near-double digit growth, China's large and heavily globalized economy kept global demand from sinking even further. Thus evidence of the success of the "China model" included not only the survival of the world's only major Communist Party decades after the fall of the Soviet Union, but also economic prowess in the face of irresponsibility and market failure in the West. This shift in geo-economic power and prestige marks a key milestone in the Party's program of "national rejuvenation" and, as noted in Chapter Four, inspired an uptick in the discourse of civic/political nationalism.

³⁸⁹ File attribution: By Gdp_real_growth_rate_2007_CIA_Factbook.PNG: Sbw01f, Kami888, Fleaman5000, Kami888derivative work: Mnmazur (talk) - Gdp_real_growth_rate_2007_CIA_Factbook.PNG, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10058473>