

The London School of Economics and Political Science

Understanding Chinese Nationalism through Chinese Politics
Competing Claims and State-Society Dynamics

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Abstract

This thesis explores how different understandings, interpretations, and claims of diverse social actors from a growingly liberalizing society interact with China's authoritarian state and various agents in the market in shaping contemporary Chinese nationalism. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that sees the force and impact of nationalism primarily through its homogenizing effect on the people, this thesis argues instead that the success of nationalism, as a mobilizing force, depends on the existence of differences that various social actors inject into the discourse of state nationalism. Therefore, the key to understanding contemporary Chinese nationalism is to study the meanings and causes of such differences, which are wrapped up in the discourse of nationalism and reflect new dynamics of Chinese politics.

This phenomenon, as observed in China, represents a typical case in societies where the willingness and capabilities of people have increased in lodging nationalist claims towards other peoples. By explaining how and why nationalism has become a useful mobilizing force in China, where people do not take for granted what is propagandized by the government, this thesis also tries to make a theoretical push in the literature of nations and nationalism. It investigates the dialectical relations between tensions and disparities embedded in nationalism, on the one hand, and the homogenizing effect of nationalism at the national and symbolic levels, on the other hand. In so doing, it sheds new light on one of the most inviting puzzles in the field of nations and nationalism – why nationalism (like all ideologies) can incite widespread passion and appeal on the ground.

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 examine the phenomenon of contemporary Chinese nationalism, the conventional wisdom under which it has been studied, theoretical assumptions and their major critiques, and the theoretical propositions to be advanced in this thesis. Chapter 1 explores the puzzle of why nationalism can incite popular passion and appeal in the general field of nations and nationalism. In particular, it asks where the mobilizing power of nationalism comes from - whether it lies in the capacity to regularize diversity and construct homogeneity among the population, or it is in the other way around. Thus this chapter demonstrates what the study of contemporary Chinese nationalism can borrow from and lend to the field. Chapter 1 lays out major propositions of the thesis, introduces the research methods employed, and offers an overview of the rest chapters.

Chapter 2 has two parts. The first part reviews and challenges three basic assumptions in the study of contemporary Chinese nationalism, which have to be reconsidered for the field to advance. The first assumption sees the rise of Chinese nationalism as a post-1989 phenomenon. The second assumes state-centrism, lacking systematic investigation of the dynamics between state and society in reproducing nationalism. The third takes it for granted that Chinese nationalism must be a subversive force for international security, either because it is manipulated by the Chinese government or because it is incited by populists from below.

The second part offers an introduction to the changing relationship between state and society in contemporary China, deciphering the sociopolitical context in which the following empirical chapters are developed. For the purpose of understanding the rise of diverse social actors, and their understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism, this part disaggregates Chinese society so that relevant processes of social differentiation and contention during the reform period can be analytically presented. For the purpose of understanding the mechanisms through which these social actors are able to make their nationalist claims under the banner of Chinese nationalism sponsored by the state, it also disaggregates the (party-) state so that the relationships between its component parts and with society, and the relations between the central and local authorities in contemporary China are clarified.

Except for the introductory and conclusion chapters, this thesis is composed of four empirical chapters. Chapter 3 deals with different understandings, interpretations, and claims of Chinese nationalism through the problem of victimhood in Sino-Japanese relations. It shows how competing claims for suffering in the 2nd Sino-Japanese War have been expressed, transformed and nationalized, which grows from the bottom of society and incites anti-Japanese nationalism at the national level.

Chapter 4 studies visual representation of disparities and tensions between sub-populations and the party-state in making claims and interpretations of Chinese nationalism, through the changing images of anti-Japanese resistance in films, television series and Internet programs. It finds that joint endeavors and differing motivations of local governments, profit-seeking producers, artists and intellectuals, and minority groups have transformed popular images of anti-Japanese resistance in the Maoist years to new stylized images in the time of mass entertainment.

Chapter 5 looks at the *Baodiao* (Protecting the Diaoyu Islands) Movement and its evolution in three political contexts (Taiwan, Hong Kong and China). It shows that, in all of the three contexts, *Baodiao* is a spontaneous social movement unfolding in the contestation between the regime and competing claimants for nationalism. Yet it is under the most authoritarian and unstable regime that civilian contestation embedded in *Baodiao*, as advocated by the middle class and professionals, has been stifled, and the movement has fallen prey of street violence.

Chapter 6 focuses on one special group of the Chinese elites – the outspoken military officers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). It shows how their views in the mass media, which encourage anti-American nationalism, reflect more of their own personal viewpoints and sectoral interests than the Party's line. Taken together, Chapters 3, 5 and 6 shed light on the general argument of the thesis by providing case studies of different social strata in contemporary China.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion chapter. This chapter offers a summary and five policy caveats for international security and diplomacy, which are derived from the study of this thesis. It suggests that the evolution of socio-political conditions and state-society dynamics, rather than the substances and contents of state nationalism or popular

nationalism, that will determine what kind of impact nationalism is likely to have on China's domestic politics and international behavior. Therefore we should be careful not to draw too much, either pessimistically or optimistically, from the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism.

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Dedication

For My Parents
Who Opened My Eyes
For My Mentors
Who Opened My Mind

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“Why are you anti-Japan?” asked I to an activist, seated in a fancy cafeteria in Beijing’s central business district, “It has been over sixty years. Our generation did not eye-witness the atrocities of that time.”

“It’s quite simple,” my interviewee, a decent middle-class man, replied in calmness, “because our government won the war, but our people did not.”

-- Dialogue in Beijing, January 2009

“The American government is the enemy of the Chinese government, but the Japanese people are the enemies of the Chinese people.”

-- Quotation from a posting, appearing in the aftermath of the 1999 Anti-NATO protest, from Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, “Student protests in fin-de-siècle China”, *New Left Review*, 237(1999), p.70.

“The top of our society is anti-American, not anti-Japanese. The bottom of our society is anti-Japanese, not anti-American.”

-- A Chinese professor spoke to the author in Beijing, January 2009

Chapter 1 The Puzzle of Nationalism between Homogenization and Division: The Rise of Contemporary Chinese Nationalism and Its Theoretical Implications

The rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism has inspired intensive debates among academics and policy advisers, out of curiosity as well as fear for the China threat. No doubt that arguments about Chinese nationalism will continue, as long as China is seen as a rising power that will come into conflict with Western civilization and challenge the dominance of U.S. hegemony.¹ In recent years, the growing assertiveness of China's political gestures and military activities in Asia seems to provide new evidence for such a concern. Even for those experts who understand China's fragility, their concern with Chinese nationalism is explicit.² It is in these international and academic contexts that the study of Chinese nationalism becomes a topic of growing interest.

This thesis tries to add something that has been overlooked to the field of Chinese nationalism. Instead of looking at how nationalism is propagated and utilized by the state, it explores how different understandings, interpretations, and claims of nationalism by actors from an increasingly liberalizing society have shaped contemporary Chinese nationalism as such. These initiatives from below interact with the authoritarian state and an opportunistic market, the process of which not only determines the substances and contents of Chinese nationalism, but also explains why nationalism has become a most arresting ideology for the Chinese to fill in the vacuum after the bankruptcy of communism.

It is an age-old myth that the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) propaganda has been so successful that the Chinese people are brainwashed to accept nationalism as the new ideology, in replacement for the collapsed communism. This myth relies on a hidden assumption however. That is, the success of nationalism (like all ideologies) depends on the effect of homogenizing people's mind, which makes people identify with the nation

¹ Samuel Huntington, 1993, "The clash of civilization?" *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), pp. 22-49; Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro, 1997, *The Coming Conflict with China*, New York: Vintage Books; John J. Mearsheimer, 2001, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: Norton.

² Susan Shirk, 2007, *China: Fragile Superpower*, New York: Oxford University Press.

in the same way and therefore act in the will of the state. Nevertheless such an assumption is not held to be true, in both theory and practice.

Theoretically, it is commonly believed that the political force of nationalism lies in its ability to homogenize people, construct commonality and build solidarity among them. As Ernest Renan describes in his famous essay “Qu'est-ce qu'une nation”, two things constitute the soul of a nation. “One is the possession in *common* of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day *consent*, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an *undivided* form.”³ According to Ernest Gellner, nations were created by the demand of the industrial revolution and modern societies, which required a mobile and literate workforce, and led to unprecedented mass immigration to cities. Hence modern industrial societies generated a demand for creating some form of *common* identity and cultural *homogeneity*. The demand was met by creating a *common* history, culture and language, which united the new workforce and absorbed them into a high culture community (that is, a nation) in the process of industrialization and modernization.⁴ For Benedict Anderson, a nation is an imaged *community* facilitated by novel technologies of communication (“print-capitalism”), because “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, *horizontal comradeship*.”⁵ The community bounded by horizontal relations also means a high level of essential similarity. Thus, as Richard Handler defines, nationalism is “an ideology concerned with boundedness, continuity, and *homogeneity encompassing diversity*...however individual members of the nation may differ, they *share* essential attributes that constitute their national identity; *sameness overrides difference*.”⁶ (Italics added).

³ Ernest Renan, 1882, “What is a nation? (Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?)”, first delivered as a lecture in 1882. Excerpts available at <http://www.nationalismproject.org/what.htm>

⁴ Ernest Gellner, 1983, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

⁵ Benedict Anderson, 2006 (1983), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London; New York: Verso, p. 7.

⁶ Richard Handler, 1988, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, pp. 6-8.

According to these classical definitions, the effect of internal differentiation should be at most minimal for studying nations and nationalism. “[T]he nation is conceived by nationalism as an imaginary entity whose substance bears *no internal differentiations* of any consequence.”⁷ Therefore, the discourse of nationalism derives a “super-class character”, which makes it difficult to relate “the object of nationalism to the specific interests of social classes.” It becomes possible in modern society because of the rise of mass education. Educational institutions construct and preserve “the dominant version of national identity by the *homogenization* of all members of the nation...by the cultivation of a *uniform* national consciousness and the inculcation of the idea of supreme loyalty to the nation.”⁸ (Italics added).

These definitions and propositions, represented in the classical view of modernists, constitute the theoretical foundation of the conventional wisdom of nationalism. That is, the power of nationalism lies in its capacity to regularize diversity and construct homogeneity among the population, which is imposed by the state, the elite or the socio-economic processes of modernization on the population for instrumental purposes. However, some other studies of nations and nationalism suggest the possibility of a different theoretical story: Modern nations are riven by entrenched ethnic, religious and cultural differences. Internal differentiation in society has oftentimes led to competition, rivalry and even civil war, rather than a unified society and a people of homogeneity.

In fact, both modernists and their critics have realized this challenge to the conventional wisdom, and both have offered valuable insights. As Eric Hobsbawm, a modernist theorist, incisively points out, nations and the phenomena associated cannot be understood except as “dual phenomena, [which are] constructed essentially from above” but should also be “analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist.”⁹ Because the dual phenomena “from below” are “exceedingly

⁷ Padelis Lekas, 1996, “The supra-class rhetoric of nationalism: an introductory comment.” *East European Quarterly*. 30(3), p. 272.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 277-78.

⁹ Eric J. Hobsbawm, 1990, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*,

difficult to discover”, Hobsbawm proposes three principles in deciphering the relationship between nationalism from above and nationalism from below,

First, official ideologies of states and movements are not guides to what it is in the minds of even the most loyal citizens or supporters. Second, and more specifically, we cannot assume that for most people national identification - when it exists - excludes or is always or ever superior to, the remainder of the set of identifications which constitute the social being. In fact, it is always combined with identifications of another kind, even when it is felt to be superior to them. Thirdly, national identification and what it is believed to imply, can change and shift in time, even in the course of quite short periods. In my judgment this is the area of national studies in which, thinking and research are most urgently needed today.¹⁰

These tensions between the purpose of state nationalism to homogenize people and enduring divisions within modern society are also noted and debated by primordial/perennial and ethnosymbolic theorists of nations and nationalism. Clifford Geertz, a prominent primordialist,¹¹ finds that in the new states in Asia and Africa, there exists a “peculiarly severe and chronic form” of tension between “peoples’ sense of self”, which “remains bound up in the gross actualities of blood, race, language, locality, religion, or tradition”, and “the steadily accelerating importance ... of the sovereign state as a positive instrument for the realization of collective aims”.¹² The persistence of the tension comes from the interaction of two sources. On the one hand, for those

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 10.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

¹¹ The difference between a primordialist claim and a perennial claim is that the former argues that nations and nationalism are both perennial and natural. However, Fearon and Laitin argue that primordialism “is itself something of a construct of constructivists”. They study Geertz’s original text (pp.255–310) in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), and find that Geertz does not commit the alleged primordialist fallacy. As they argue, “Geertz holds that peoples’ beliefs in their primordial attachments, rather than the inherent immutability of those attachments, drive ethnic conflict in non civic societies.” Nevertheless they admit that “[i]n other of his essays on Bali, Geertz appears to be a primordialist”. Thus the standpoint of the so-called “primordialists” may be more complex and ambiguous than commonly assumed. See James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, 2000, “Violence and the social construction of ethnic identity”, *International Organization*, 54(4), p. 849.

¹² Clifford Geertz, 1963, “The integrative revolution: primordial sentiments and politics in the new states”, in Clifford Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, New York: The Free Press of Glencoe: Collier-Macmillan, p. 108.

peoples, to “subordinate these specific and familiar identifications in favor of a generalized commitment to an overarching and somewhat alien civil order is to risk a loss of definition as an autonomous person, either through absorption into a culturally undifferentiated mass or, what is even worse, through a domination by some other rival ethnic, racial, or linguistic community that is able to imbue that order with the temper of its own personality.” On the other hand, “at the same time, all but the most unenlightened members of such societies are at least dimly aware - and their leaders are acutely aware - that the possibilities for social reform and material progress they so intensely desire and are so determined to achieve rest with increasing weight on their being enclosed in a reasonably large, independent, powerful, well-ordered polity.”¹³ Therefore the tension between the two sources - peoples’ specific and familiar identifications and an undifferentiated culture that underpin a large polity – is unlikely to be reconciled.

Ethnosymbolic theorists, who reject both modernist and primordialist/perennialist views, seek a middle ground. They try to build a more coherent theory of nations and nationalism, incorporating both historical continuity (between traditional and modern eras) and the great transformations wrought by modernity on collective identities. In so doing, the tension between the homogenizing effect of nationalism as a product of modernity and “variations in the scope, intensity, salience and political importance of collective cultural ties and sentiments” has become a major focus on their research agenda.¹⁴ It is mainly through two channels - cultures and institutions – that these ethnosymbolic scholars have been advancing the new theoretical orientation.

Through culture, ethnosymbolism emphasizes memories, values, myths and symbols of historical *ethnie*, and their role in pre-figuring the themes and forms of modern nationalism.¹⁵ Thus, for Anthony Smith, although nations are a product of modernity, they do not derive “tout court” from the needs of modernity.¹⁶ Against Gellner, who

¹³ Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁴ Anthony Smith, 1988 (1986), *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 13.

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 13-18.

¹⁶ Anthony Smith, 1996, “Memory and modernity: reflections on Ernest Gellner’s theory of

claims that “the cultural continuity is contingent, inessential” in making modern nations,¹⁷ Smith argues for the importance of the genealogy of nations, which “ensure[s] some connection and even continuity between the modern nation and one or more pasts”. The connection and continuity are established through two mechanisms – cultural continuity and collective memories.¹⁸

Ethnosymbolism also stresses the role of institutions, which have carried memories of “centuries of conflicts” into the modern world through “missionary religions, imperial expansion, warfare, long distance trade and mass migrations and colonisations”. It rebuts the idea that cultures and identities are purely idealist and unrestrictedly protean. Rather, as John Hutchinson argues, they are vested with “binding power ... when they are institutionalized.”¹⁹ Institutions, according to Douglas North, are “the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction”.²⁰ These constraints can be informal or formal, from “conventions, codes of conduct, and norms of behavior to statute law, and common law, and contracts between individuals.” While “formal rules may change overnight..., informal constraints embodied in customs, traditions, and codes of conduct are much more impervious to deliberate policies”.²¹ Cultural attributes of social networks, such as language, customs, traditions and codes of conduct, are also informal institutions vested with binding power. In forming and sustaining cultures and identities, “the people who possessed specific cultural attributes often formed a social network or series of networks, which over the generations became what we today designate ‘ethnic communities’.”²²

Within the framework of ethnosymbolism, the power of nationalism to homogenize people is challenged. The purely instrumental view of nationalism from above is

nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism*, 2(3), p. 375.

¹⁷ Ernest Gellner, 1996, “Ernest Gellner’s reply: ‘Do nations have navels?’”, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2(3), p. 369.

¹⁸ Anthony Smith, 1996, “Memory and modernity”, p. 378.

¹⁹ John Hutchinson, 2005, *Nations as Zones of Conflict*, London: Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, pp. 4-5.

²⁰ Douglass North, 1990, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²² Anthony Smith, 1989, “The origins of nations”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 12(3), p. 344.

criticized as well. Cultural difference in nations is seen as persistent existence. As John Hutchinson points out, “the power of states to regulate populations is limited and fluctuating.”²³ “[T]he nationalists do not operate within a *tabula rasa*”, because they have to “invoke ethnic pasts, symbols and cultures”, and what they can and cannot exploit are hence pre-figured by the established cultural systems and pre-existing ethnic sentiments. “It is implausible, therefore, to conceive of modernising nationalists as outside their society mobilizing it from above. Once invoked, ethnic memories have an independent force with which they have to negotiate.”²⁴

According to Anthony Smith, the disparity between instrumental nationalism from above and ethnic vernacular cultures is the key to understand “why nationalism so often has such a widespread popular appeal”. While the intelligentsia “may ‘invite the masses into history’ and politicise them and their cultures”, the people do not necessarily respond, unless the process “involves the vernacular mobilisation of the masses”.²⁵ This reflects the “subtle relationships between modern nations and older *ethnie*, and between modern nationalism and a more long-lived and ancient ethnocentrism.” Therefore, “in order to forge a ‘nation’ today, it is vital to create and crystallize ethnic components, the lack of which is likely to constitute a serious impediment to ‘nation-building’.”²⁶

The insights herein offered, from both modernists and their critics, shed light on the importance of tensions and disparities between nationalism from above and nationalism from below. In particular, they suggest that nationalism from below is not necessarily national or nationalist, and that nationalism can be divided along various lines of interests and longings. Unfortunately, this wisdom has not been sufficiently heeded in the study of contemporary Chinese nationalism. Obsessed with the role of the party-state, the existing literature lacks sufficient investigation of the subtle relations between elite nationalism and popular nationalism.

²³ John Hutchinson, 2005, *Nations as Zones of Conflict*, p. 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²⁵ Anthony Smith, 1996, “Opening statement: nations and their pasts”, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2(3), p. 362.

²⁶ Anthony Smith, 1988 (1986), *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 17.

To make the point, it is worth borrowing the critiques offered by Whitmeyer of empirical studies in the general field of nations and nationalism. As Whitmeyer indicates, we cannot conclude causal relationship between the elite and popular nationalism just because in many places a great deal of such promotion precedes popular nationalism. “Even when popular nationalism adopts cultural aspects of nationalism advanced by the elite – such as myths, history, even the standardized language – it does not follow that the elite have caused the nationalism itself.”²⁷ There are alternative explanations for such associations. Elites “do affect expressions of popular nationalism, and do take advantage of popular nationalism and use it to their own ends”.²⁸ But they are neither necessary nor sufficient condition for popular nationalism. “If elites frequently fail to create popular nationalism, for whatever reason, then elites clearly are not sufficient. If popular nationalism appears without being elite-led, again for whatever reason, then elites clearly are not necessary.”²⁹ Therefore, for the proposition that “elites create nationalism” to hold, it needs “two legs of support”. First, “we must be able to see how what they postulate could happen at the level of the individual behaviour”. Second, we must see empirical evidences – “when elites promote nationalism, ordinary people soon adopt that nationalism, and when elites do not, ordinary people do not”.³⁰

This thesis, based on systematic empirical study of contemporary Chinese nationalism, speaks to the general literature in the field of nations and nationalism as well as the literature on Chinese nationalism. Debunking the age-old myth that Chinese nationalism is an outgrowth of the CCP’s instrumental propaganda, this thesis offers a new theoretical account of the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. It finds that the homogenizing power of nationalism exists only at the national and symbolic levels. At the micro-foundation - that is, the interaction between state and society in constructing, mobilizing and expressing nationalist claims, nationalism is anything but a force of forging consensus and eliminating diversities among people. Instead, the power of

²⁷ Joseph M. Whitmeyer, 2002, “Elites and popular nationalism”, *British Journal of Sociology*, 53(3), p. 328.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-29.

nationalism to mobilize population and construct consensus at the national and symbolic levels comes from the enduring differences in interpretations, understandings and claims held by various sub-populations and wrapped up in the discourse of nationalism. The existence of such differences is a necessary condition, not an impediment, for forging nationalism as an effective ideology.

Why Nationalism Can Incite Popular Passion and Appeal? Competing Claims and State-Society Dynamics

Although sharp minds such as Hobsbawm have proposed that nations should be understood as “dual phenomena”, few efforts have been made to understand the puzzle: How are the “dual phenomena” constructed? As nationalism from below and nationalism from above are differently constructed, how and why are they ultimately combined? Ethnosymbolists have offered some insightful account of the puzzle, through the subtle relations between instrumental nationalism from above and cultural differences embedded in pre-existing ethnic communities. But their approach is mainly historical. This means that their approach would be better at explaining long-time evolution under the impact of large-scale institutional changes. Accordingly, micro-level dynamics in a short span of time would not be dealt with in their theory, particularly when the nations and nation-states associated are thought to be well-established and relatively stable in the short period.

Therefore, although ethnosymbolism also emphasizes processes and understands nations as “dynamic entities”,³¹ it leaves the important puzzle unanswered: Why do nationalist mobilizations and claims rise and fall in a short span of time, when there are few significant changes in the broader process of nation-building? This is what happened in China since the 1980s. The rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism has been enthusiastically researched in intellectual circles, thanks to the global concern with the rise of China and its authoritarian resilience. However the literature on contemporary Chinese nationalism does not seem to be well-informed of theoretical

³¹ John Hutchinson, 2005, *Nations as Zones of Conflict*, p. 5.

advances in the literature of nations and nationalism. This has led to the embarrassing situation that the field of contemporary Chinese nationalism only speaks to itself, downplaying its potential contribution to the general field.

The phenomenon in China is not unique. It represents a typical case where there emerges a trend of growing willingness and capabilities of peoples to lodge their nationalist claims towards other peoples. This is what the “rise” means when we are talking about the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. This is a grey zone on the continuum between extreme nationalist mobilizations (such as identity wars and large-scale ethnic violence) and everyday representations of the nation. It is the area deserving more academic endeavors for the field in general today, because such kind of phenomena is more prevalent than the kind of extreme nationalist mobilizations that are attentively studied today. Ethnic cooperation, rather than wars and violence, is the norm in our world. In fact, the impressive links between nationalism and violence analyzed in the literature are in conflict with quantitative data, suggesting that academic focus on extreme nationalist mobilizations may have been misled by selection bias.³² In terms of political implications, such kind of phenomena is more important than everyday representations of the nation, because it will have influential constraints on state’s diplomacy and international security.

In this regard, this thesis speaks to the general literature of the field as well. Based on systematic study of contemporary Chinese nationalism, it tries to make a theoretical push, bridging the general field of nations and nationalism and the specific field of contemporary Chinese nationalism by showing what the latter can borrow from and lend to the former. Today one of the most inviting unresolved puzzles in the general field of nations and nationalism is to explain the tensions and disparities, on the one hand, and the subtle relations of symbiosis, on the other hand, between nationalism constructed from above (by the state, by national or local elites or by large socio-economic processes) and nationalism constructed from below. This question has

³² David D. Laitin, 2007, *Nations, States, and Violence*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, p. vii and p. 23.

engendered and implicated major debates in the field. At the grand socio-historical level there is the debate on the origin of nations between modernists, primordialists and ethnosymbolists. As discussed above in the account of Eric Hobsbawm, Clifford Geertz and Anthony Smith, despite their different theoretical origins, scholars from the three schools all realize, more or less, that nationalism cannot be fully understood as a top-down process, because this cannot explain why nationalism can incite widespread popular passion and appeal on the ground. Therefore, factors such as historical *ethnies*, institutions, vernacular cultures and other social identifications have been brought in to develop different explanations of the origin of nations and nationalism in the great socioeconomic transformations wrought by modernity. This is the first major debate in the general field.

In my view, the core of this debate should not be whether nations have navels, borrowing the famous metaphor Ernest Gellner used in the Warwick debate. Rather it should focus on why and how Adam was created in the form as he was presented at the moment of creation, with “the cycles of respiration, blood circulation or food digestion which Adam would have to have in order to live”,³³ borrowing Gellner’s metaphor again. “Nihil ex nihilo. Nothing comes from nothing.”³⁴ Anthony Smith is more coherent and convincing in the debate. The logic behind judgment is simple and clear: If the nations are created by nationalism, which nevertheless cannot invite popular passion and appeal on the ground ex nihilo, then how can the nations created in this way be said to be created ex nihilo? For modernists to debunk the ethnosymbolic argument and prove that nations were created all of sudden by the nationalists ex nihilo, it is not sufficient to claim that pre-existing *ethnie* is only a nation’s navel (which they have not been very successful so far). It also requires answering why the masses follow nationalism from above and showing whether the masses really follow nationalism from above.

Among modernists, Gellner never considered these questions in detail. Hobsbawm

³³ Ernest Gellner, 1996, “Ernest Gellner's reply: ‘Do nations have navels?’”, p. 369.

³⁴ Anthony Smith, 1996, “Memory and modernity”, p. 385.

raised the puzzles, but did not sufficiently address them. Neither do ethnosymbolic scholars such as Anthony Smith. This is not because they ignore the existence and importance of such questions, but because the level of analysis of their theories is not suitable for studying these questions. Such a deficiency has been avoided in the second major debate in the field, which is more empirically oriented, focusing on extreme nationalist and ethnic mobilizations (e.g. identity wars and large-scale ethnic violence) in contemporary politics. Its contemporary perspective offers a chance to observe both local mechanisms and structural causes in extreme mobilizations under the banner of nationalism.

The second major debate is between culturalist and rationalist accounts on extreme nationalist and ethnic mobilizations, which is best summarized by Fearon and Laitin.³⁵ Reviewing six empirical studies across a wide set of societies, including Hindu-Muslim tensions in Northern India, Hutu-Tutsi conflicts in Rwanda, fight between the Sinhalese and the Tamils in Sri Lanka, ethnic civil wars in Sudan, the war between Serbia and Croatia in the collapses of the Yugoslavia, and the radical Sinn Fein party in Northern Ireland, Fearon and Laitin test whether social construction of ethnicity has any bearing on the likelihood of large-scale ethnic violence. Because participation in violence is dangerous and costly to the masses, they pay special attention to the puzzle of why the masses follow. They arrive at three conclusions.

(1) The rationalist theories “linking individuals (whether elites or masses) to ethnic violence” and the culturalist theories “linking discourses to violent behaviors” can be bridged and placed in one constructivist framework, because both traditions posit “the content and boundaries of ethnic groups as produced and reproduced by specific social processes”.³⁶

(2) There is considerable evidence that “large-scale ethnic violence is provoked by elites seeking to gain, maintain, or increase their hold on political power”, particularly

³⁵ James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, 2000, “Violence and the social construction of ethnic identity”, *International Organization*, 54(4), pp. 845–877.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 874.

when there are “internal conflicts between extremists and moderates”. These conflicts incentivize “leaders or dissidents to provoke violence with members of an out-group”.³⁷

(3) However, on the ground, “some evidence suggests that the masses are not duped at all”. Ordinary folks strategically construct ethnic boundaries, motivated by calculations such as “looting, land grabs, and personal revenge”, fear of tit-for-tat violence if elites “let the thugs go”, or desire to raise their in-group status.³⁸ Therefore, “what is described as ethnic violence” may not have “necessary ethnic dimension”.³⁹

This is a more clear explanation of why the masses follow in extreme nationalist and ethnic mobilizations. Its most valuable insight is this: Even at a time of dramatic nationalist and ethnic mobilizations when the masses do not seem to have other choices but to follow the elites, they still cannot be treated as passive respondents. Rather the masses are as strategic as the elites who try to manipulate them. For the puzzle of why the masses follow, this is a powerful explanation, but it is not sufficient to explain such phenomena as the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. Unlike nationalist and ethnic mobilizations to violent extremity, the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism represents a different (and broader) category of nationalist mobilizations. It lies on the spectrum between large-scale violent mobilizations and everyday representations of the nation.

People involved in nationalist mobilizations are different at a time of peace and stability, compared with those at a time of violent large-scale conflicts. Fearon and Laitin’s study also implies this. As they suggest, ethnic violence “looks very much like gang violence with no necessary ethnic dimension”. Thus “one might conjecture that a necessary condition for sustained ‘ethnic violence’ is the availability of thugs (in most cases young men who are ill-educated, unemployed or underemployed, and from small towns) who can be mobilized by nationalist ideologues, who themselves, university educated,

³⁷ Ibid., p. 846.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 871-74.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 869.

would shy away from killing their neighbors with machetes”.⁴⁰ However, at a time of peace and stability, thugs are usually not major activists in nationalist mobilizations. Identifying thugs as major strategic actors at a time of peace and stability also contradicts the argument that people are not duped at all. Because among population these people are more prone to be “seduced by the ‘high’” (quote from Fearon and Laitin)⁴¹, due to poor education and financial conditions, how can we ascertain that the masses from below, if composed of thugs, are not duped and always pursuing their own agenda? As the opportunity of looting, land grabs, personal revenge and tit-for-tat violence is very small, what are the specific desires and fears thugs have if they strategically follow the elites at a time of peace and stability? Thugs are unlikely to be major activists in nationalist mobilizations at such a time.

Looking into the subtle relations between state nationalism and social actors in contemporary China in a period of peace and order, like ethnosymbolism, this thesis rejects the oversimplified view of structural-instrumentalism that sees nationalism as imposed from above. Complementary to ethnosymbolism, this thesis can focus on socio-political dynamics at the micro-level due to the short span of time it studies. Through these dynamics, it reveals the role of social groups and their different appeals in inciting nationalism and shaping nationalist mobilizations and expressions. Through process-tracing of nationalist mobilizations, it explains why Chinese people with different motivations and appeals have reacted to the invitation and manipulation from above, and how their reactions have been facilitated as well as constrained by socio-political conditions in contemporary China.

The explanatory framework offered in this thesis is more useful and integrative for studying the subtle relations between nationalism from above and nationalism from below, compared to the rationalist-constructivist approach used in the study of nationalist and ethnic violence. It not only addresses the differences between nationalism from above and nationalism from below, but also suggests that differences

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 869.

⁴¹ Ibid.

in nationalism from below are as important as differences between state and society. In this thesis we will see a great deal of differences between the understandings, interpretations and claims of nationalism by various social actors. Oftentimes they differ from state nationalism and sometimes they contest with state nationalism. Sometimes they compete with each other and sometimes they are complementary to each other. Taken together, counter-intuitively, they increase the popularity of state nationalism. Thus the existence of such differences at the micro-level is a necessary condition, not an impediment, for forging nationalism at the national and symbolic levels.

At the core of the subtle relations between nationalism from above and nationalism from below, it is the symbiotic relationship between state and society in reproducing nationalism. The success of nationalism, as a homogenizing power at the national and symbolic levels, not only depends on the state's intention and capacity to exploit the interests and appeals from bottom, but also on the degree of autonomy and spontaneity of such interests and appeals. For the symbiotic relationship to work, society requires a certain degree of autonomy and spontaneity. Only authentic interests and appeals from below can inject into the discourse of state nationalism the power of generating popular resonance. Neither the indoctrination of state nationalism, nor the appeals from the duped or the seduced, can work to this effect. Society is not a monolith. At a time of peace and stability, social actors from mainstream society, not the irregulars and thugs, play a major role in bringing up nationalist appeals and organizing nationalist mobilizations. Such nationalist actors are well-educated, politically sophisticated and socially resourceful. Their participation, mobilization and interaction with the state cannot be reduced to seduction by the high, because these actors also try to advance their own interest and raise their ingroup status in the process. As we will see in the thesis, oftentimes it is the Chinese party-state that has been forced into diplomatic crisis, which it would otherwise have wished to avoid by all means.

The subtle relations revealed in the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism also suggest that we need to take into consideration the broad socio-political structure that influences the interaction of the two kinds of nationalism. In authoritarian China,

political space for sub-populations to advance claims is limited. Political culture is conservative and still bears the trace of the Maoist time. These factors have led to a situation where social actors are more likely to yield to self-censorship. They tend to adapt and present their claims in a way that they think politically “right”. Therefore the autonomy and spontaneity of mobilizations from below is also regulated and constrained by the socio-political structure and political culture, which sustains and reproduces unequal power relations embedded in the state-society relations. As a result, the most subversive part of nationalism from below will be “autonomously” filtered, as it emerges in the public discourse. Meanwhile the most appealing part of nationalism from below will be integrated into the official discourse of nationalism, which enhances the legitimacy of state nationalism.

Thus, the symbiotic relationship between state and society has two sides, which are contesting with and complementary to each other, in inciting nationalist mobilizations and expressions at the national and symbolic levels. What deserves attention is not the proposition that nationalism from below is not the same as nationalism from above. This is apparent. The main contribution of this thesis is that, *because*, rather than *despite that*, nationalism from below is not the same as nationalism from above and nationalism from below is necessarily divided from within, nationalism has become a powerful ideology and a useful means of mobilization for the authoritarian state. In order to advance empirical study of contemporary Chinese nationalism, the key is to studying the meanings and causes of these differences, which are wrapped up in the discourse of Chinese nationalism claimed by different social groups, and reflect ongoing new dynamics in Chinese politics. These new political dynamics is the outgrowth of broader socio-political transformations, which is what is beginning to happen in China.

Structure of the Thesis and Main Propositions

In this thesis, I examine an array of social actors in Chinese society, and their understandings, interpretations, and claims of Chinese nationalism. I look at the mechanisms through which these actors are able to make their claims of Chinese

nationalism under the banner of state nationalism. I reveal why, through these different understandings, interpretations and claims, rather than through the state's often-mocked propaganda machine, that Chinese nationalism has become a powerful ideology and a useful means of mobilization in today's China.

To cover the social spectrum as wide as possible, social actors studied in this thesis are chosen from diverse social backgrounds that span the entire social hierarchy in contemporary China. At the bottom are subalterns struggling for war reparation and official recognition in national memory. In the middle, China's middle class and professionals have played a significant role in intensifying the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, making the authoritarian state mired in a series of international crises that the CCP would otherwise have wished to avoid. Then the thesis moves to the top of the social hierarchy, looking at one most outspoken group of the elite - the military elite fanning anti-American nationalism in mass media.

While these social actors share little in social capital, political goals and means of mobilization, they are strikingly similar in one way - that their respective interpretation of, and active engagement in Chinese nationalism, plays an important role in the rise of nationalism in today's China. The changes in the understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism are also reflected in cultural products in mass media, as represented in films, television series, and internet programs. The images of anti-Japanese resistance have experienced a dramatic shift in the past three decades, compared to what they were in the Maoist era. The shift not only reflects changes in the taste of the audience and the demand of market, but also reflects changes happening in China's state-society relations. The new images of anti-Japanese resistance in such films, television series, and internet programs represent more diverse social backgrounds, echoing changing state-society dynamics that re-emphasize a variety of social actors in constructing Chinese nationalism.

Taken together, these different understandings, interpretations, and claims of Chinese nationalism, and the new images of nationalist heroes in mass media, shed light on a

new direction to studying contemporary Chinese nationalism. As a result of changing socio-political dynamics in China, the rise of nationalism should be understood through the interaction of the state, market and a liberalizing Chinese society. In particular, it should be studied through socio-political dynamics in which various claims of Chinese nationalism are wrapped up and interact with the state.

This thesis tries to show that, in the process of transforming nationalism into an active political force in contemporary China, the autonomous engagement from society, with distinctive understandings, interpretations and claims made by various social actors, is a necessary condition. But this story of society autonomy has double sides. On the other side, while engagement from society is genuine and autonomous, it is constrained, by the authoritarian political culture and by the disadvantageous structural position in which some actors are restrained and constructed by unequal power relations.

The policy implication of the thesis is apparent. To understand the rise and implications of Chinese nationalism, one must first understand these new dynamics happening in Chinese politics. It is the evolution of these dynamics, not the content of Chinese nationalism (either from below or from above), that determines whether Chinese nationalism will serve as a force for political liberalization or authoritarian consolidation, and whether China's foreign policy will become more cooperative or assertive in international society. Therefore, any prediction of political implications of rising Chinese nationalism is groundless, without considering these evolving political dynamics in China.

To make the main arguments of this thesis more clearly and concisely, it summarizes as follows,

(1) Chinese nationalism from above and Chinese nationalism from below are necessarily different.

(2) Nationalism from below is a vague concept, and it has to be examined at the sub-

population level.

(2.1) In different sub-populations, popular nationalism is comprehended and represented with different meanings, interpretations and claims.

(2.2) These sub-populations, when reaching the top of social hierarchy, can have an overlap with state authority, which suggests that, under some circumstances, the state should also be understood in a disaggregated fashion in studying nationalism from below.

(3) These contradictions, between nationalism from above and nationalism from below, and between different sub-populations (or social groups), taken as a whole, collectively construct the “dual phenomena” of nationalism.

(3.1) In particular, it is the different understandings, interpretations, and claims of nationalism by various social actors that make campaigns of state nationalism successful, in the sense that nationalism has become a useful means of unifying power for the state.

(3.2) Without the emergence of such differences in a liberalizing society, as what is occurring in China, campaigns of state nationalism would fail, like other propaganda campaigns by an authoritarian state resting on dwindling legitimacy.

(4) This has significant policy implications. Although nationalism is on the rise in contemporary China, we should not draw too much from the phenomenon for China policy. It is the evolution of socio-political dynamics, not the content of Chinese nationalism (either from below or from above), that determines what kind of force it will serve in China’s domestic politics and international behavior.

While this thesis focuses on contemporary Chinese nationalism, for research in the field of nations and nationalism, this thesis also renders some interesting hypotheses which

deserve exploring in the future. Because both the state's intention and capacity to exploit nationalism and the degree of a society's autonomy account for the homogenizing power of nationalism at the national and symbolic levels, changes in the two aspects may influence the trend of nationalist mobilization and expression at a time of peace and order. Here are some ideal types which can be investigated and compared in future research.

(1) If the state's intention and capacity to incite nationalism are strong, but at the same time, there is little public space or information for social actors to initiate different understandings, interpretations, and claims of nationalism, then nationalism as a mobilizing ideology can hardly generate widespread popular appeal.

Empirical cases corresponding to this ideal type can be totalitarian or highly authoritarian regimes, such as North Korea under Kim Jong-il, where nationalist mobilization and expression are completely stage-managed by the state. Although expressed nationalist sentiments are very high under these regimes, the effect of nationalism as a useful mobilizing ideology to unify the people is suspicious, especially in the mid-to-long term and in the time of crisis. Thus, we see flows of North Korean refugees across the border, who seek new life at a huge risk of severe punishment. It suggests that the mobilizing effect of state nationalism could be weak under such regimes, if not being backed up by the repressive apparatus of the state.

(2) If the state's intention and capacity to incite nationalism are strong, and at the same time, there is some public space and information for social actors to initiate different understandings, interpretations, and claims of nationalism, then nationalism as a mobilizing ideology can generate popular appeal, and lead to the rise of nationalism during a short span of time. This is a scenario similar to what is happening in contemporary China.

(3) If the state does not have strong intention or capacity to incite nationalism for whatever reason (e.g. strong legitimacy from alternative sources or fear of inciting

separatist movements), then nationalism as a mobilizing ideology also has troubles in inciting popular appeal at the national and symbolic levels. Because in this situation, any social group who has strong incentive to campaign for their own understanding, interpretation, and claim of nationalism is difficult to find resonance at a higher level and with members of an out-group.

Research Methods and Chapter Overview

While this thesis also tries to make a theoretical push in the general field of nations and nationalism, its primary goal is to analyze and explain the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism through Chinese politics behind it. By taking mixed methods, it surveys the interpretations, understandings and claims of Chinese nationalism of representative social groups, from the bottom to the top of social hierarchy, and investigates the images of nationalists represented in mass media.

Because of the wide range of subjects it deals with, this thesis combines qualitative methods of oral history, historical archives (including official archives, newspapers, and personal documents), participant observation, in-depth interviews, online content analysis, media analysis and academic literature review. The standard by which methods are selected for the study of each chapter is straightforward. That is, to make the analyses and explanations as informative as possible. In the rest of this introductory chapter, it provides an overview of the following chapters and the methods used in each empirical chapter.

Chapter 2 offers a critical review of the existing works on contemporary Chinese nationalism. It challenges three prevailing assumptions explicit or implicit in the literature. The first assumption sees the rise of Chinese nationalism as a post-1989 phenomenon, which was an outgrowth of the CCP's patriotic campaigns against the collapse of the communist ideology. The assumption overlooks the effects of historical continuity and has serious empirical flaws. It relies on observation of nationalist mobilization when and *only* when it succeeds, which leads to selection bias based on the

outcome variable and assumes that nationalism is a psychological phenomenon or an outburst of irrationality to extremity.

Related to the first assumption, the second assumption is state-centrism, which only takes a cursory view of social actors. Although in recent years, the field of study is evolving from state-centrism to a dialectical perspective, taking into consideration the role of both the state and society in inciting nationalism, it still lacks a systematic investigation of the dynamics between state and society in reproducing nationalism.

The third assumption to be challenged is policy implications of the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. Most scholars concur that Chinese nationalism is a subversive force for international security, which is either manipulated by the Chinese government or incited by populists from below. Although a few scholars begin to challenge this pessimistic view, their number is small and their counter-arguments are too optimistic to be empirically sound.

Chapter 3 looks at the nationalist activists at the bottom of Chinese society. It explains how the making of historical memory of Chinese suffering in the 2nd Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) has emerged in post-reform China, and become an important factor in affecting Sino-Japanese relations. Through competing claims of war suffering, made by Chinese war victims, intellectuals and the state, contemporary Chinese nationalism has been constructed on the victimhood of the Chinese nation.

As the first empirical chapter of this thesis, this chapter is important for complicating the overall picture that this thesis tries to present and establish. On the one hand, this chapter debunks and complicates a narrowly “top-down” picture of Chinese nationalism. On the other hand, it does not present an oversimplified picture of purely, authentically, autonomously “bottom-up” dynamics and sentiments of war victims, because the historical memories produced and reproduced still bear the traces of the party-state.

Before the party-state started its patriotic campaign in the early 1990s, Chinese war

victims and a small group of civic activists were already initiating campaigns to commemorate war suffering and demand war reparation. But their activities were unable to leave enduring influences in the repressive political environment. The dynamics did not change, until some war victims and their descendants, with the help of Chinese intellectuals, lodged lawsuits against the Japanese government. Such a symbolic activity disrupted the political dynamics that had previously repressed the expression of war suffering from Chinese society.

Two other factors further complicate the situation. First, the role of the intermediaries, that is, the Chinese intellectuals, with their interpretations and claims, are sometimes in conflict with both the party-state and the victims, while at other times, their engagement helps facilitate the making of historical memory on the political agenda of the state. Second, the making of historical memory, and thus the construction of anti-Japanese nationalism in post-reform cannot be comprehensively understood without the knowledge of the early post-revolutionary political discourse, practices and political culture in China. Because of such a legacy, and because of the authoritarian nature of the party-state, the “bottom-up” dynamics and sentiments of war victims bear the deep imprint of the party-state.

This chapter uses a mixed methodology of in-depth interviews, oral histories, participant observation, and archival research to find how war suffering has been preserved, remade and disseminated since the occurrence of war atrocities. My participant observation was conducted in Chongshan Village, which is located on the suburbs of Yiwu City in Zhejiang Province, in the summer of 2010.

During the Japanese occupation in October 1942, a Black Death hit the village, which had a population of about 1,200 persons in 300 households. Within three months, 405 villagers died of the plague, and 23 households perished. The homes of 176 households were burnt, and 421 rooms were completely destroyed, for preventing the spread of the disease. The plague was not a natural catastrophe, but was imposed by the Japanese bacterial warfare in Zhejiang Province during 1940-1942.

In Chongshan Village, I attended the meetings of nationalist activists, visited the local bacterial war museum and the clan temple, acquired published and unpublished materials from the activists and the Yiwu Archive Bureau, and conducted interviews with activists in China's civil reparation movement. I also held interviews with, and acquired publications from, activists of the movement in Shanghai and Beijing.

Using these materials, this author shows that, although the expression of war suffering had been stifled for decades after 1949, it was preserved and transformed at the bottom of Chinese society through family stories, public events of village, and Maoist political mobilization sponsored by the state. This preserved and transformed memory of war suffering has been repeatedly exploited by intellectuals and state agents to advance their own political agendas in the past decades.

On the other hand, the victims and their descendants - the voiceless and powerless in Chinese society, also attempted to seize all possible opportunities to air their grievance. Even in the Maoist time, when anti-Japanese nationalism was sidelined in the national political agenda, and class struggle dominated political mobilization, these war victims never forgot their grievances, and tried all kinds of means to have their grievances publicly expressed. Their campaigns to seek redress for war suffering were far ahead of the party-state's policy change towards Japan in the 1990s. The state's patriotic campaign in the 1990s was just a new opportunity for them to have their grievances heeded.

Chapter 4 studies the cultural representation of the central argument in this thesis. The primary source of research is visual materials in films, television series, and internet programs, most of which were not used in the existing literature on contemporary Chinese nationalism.

It researches changing images of anti-Japanese resistance in Chinese films, television series and internet programs. It explores how different motivations and joint endeavors

of Chinese local governments, profit-seeking film and TV producers, Chinese artists and intellectuals, and various minority groups, have been transforming old images of anti-Japanese resistance fighters in the Maoist years, to new stylized images in the post-Mao era. This is not only a process of fundamental changes in cultural products in mass media, but a process that reflects deep transformations in Chinese society.

It finds that, in the cultural products of mass entertainment, there is a fundamental change in the narrative of China's resistance against Japan after the ending of the Maoist years. In the Maoist years, the portrait of nationalist resistance was coloured by a language of class struggle. This standard portrait has been gradually shifting to new images since the mid-1980s, which allows for and exploits the expression of social divisions in Chinese society.

What has risen is a multitude of images of anti-Japanese resistance fighters, including the "class enemy" such as the KMT, gentries and warlords, and the "bad elements" in the people such as bandits and prostitutes. In contrast, the prominent role of the CCP in the resistance movement has been contracting, from the unique leader to a supporter of or an ally with other organized force, and sometimes even being absent in the course of resistance. These new images have stoked wide popularity in mass media.

Nevertheless, like the old images, these new styles do not present an accurate picture of history as well. Despite striking differences between old images and new ones, continuity in images of anti-Japanese resistance is salient. The new images are still coloured by a legacy of the political discourse in the Maoist years. They lack deep reflection on the war, and they are more of socio-political constructs under new political dynamics in China, not necessarily being closer to historical veracity.

Chapter 5 looks at the mobilization of Chinese middle class in the Protecting the Diaoyu Islands Movement (*Baodiao*). It reveals how and why the middle class, the educated and professionals engage in *Baodiao* Movement, with an analysis of their understandings, interpretations, and claims of Chinese nationalism. Their initiatives and

participation in *Baodiao* not only has brought the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute to the centre of the political agenda, but has altered the set of policy choice that the party-state is facing.

There are different kinds of *Baodiao* mobilization in the Greater China area. This chapter also compares *Baodiao* Movement under different socio-political conditions in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China. Whereas in all the three contexts, *Baodiao* was initiated by activists that were contesting with the state for the power of explaining Chinese nationalism, the movement displays a pattern of similarities and differences across these contexts.

This is the first study that researches *Baodiao* with rich historical materials and cross-contextual comparison. The benefit of a historical and comparative perspective is that it not only contributes to a better understanding of how the understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism by *Baodiao* activists in China differ from what is propagated in state nationalism, but also reveals how and why the way that China's *Baodiao* activists construe, express and exploit state nationalism is different from their counterparts in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Through the comparison, this chapter demonstrates striking differences in both members of *Baodiao* activists and evolution of the movements in different contexts. Due to different levels of repression from the authority, it requires different mobilizing structures that activists can utilize to successfully challenge the state's monopoly of the discourse of nationalism. Because a different mobilizing structure requires a different combination of resources and skills, the state's propensity to repress also explains why leading *Baodiao* activists have different social backgrounds in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China. It is in China, under the most authoritarian regime, that civilian contestation in *Baodiao* has been derailed in the direction of street violence.

In this chapter, the author used the snow-ball method to identify interviewees, who are leading activists of *Baodiao* Movement in China. Combined with online content

analysis, the author double-checked the accounts acquired from interviews, and obtained more details of the movement. All interviews were conducted in Shanghai and Beijing in 2008 and 2009. The websites for online content analysis were popular websites maintained by Chinese nationalists. These websites used to be the information platform for organizing navigations from China to the Diaoyu Islands, and for soliciting donations for various nationalist purposes. In researching *Baodiao* Movement in Taiwan and Hong Kong, the author relied on publications, newspapers and personal memories. Because *Baodiao* occurred in Taiwan and Hong Kong a few decades before in China, there are sufficient written materials on what was happening in the two political contexts.

Chapter 6 focuses on one outspoken group of Chinese elites - the military officers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), who are fanning anti-American nationalism in mass media. The officers of the PLA were formerly confined to secretive military institutions and invisible in the public sphere. In recent years, there has emerged a group of PLA officers who are outspoken in mass media. Through the channels of television and broadcasting, newspapers and magazines, bestselling books and the internet, their viewpoints are being aired to millions of Chinese and become widely popular.

On the surface these viewpoints echo the Party line of nationalist propaganda and its long-embraced fear of U.S. intentions and capabilities. However, a close investigation reveals that these PLA officers are more likely to have seized the channels of mass media to express their own personal viewpoints and sectoral interests under the banner of Chinese nationalism. Their recommendations on foreign policy are more offensive than the Party would encourage. Moreover, they are no longer satisfied with being confined to the foreign policy arena, and have begun to make public their critiques of domestic policy, which are always wrapped in the discourse of nationalism as well.

Methodologically this chapter surveys four types of Chinese media to conduct the study of military elites – television and broadcast programs, newspapers and magazines, bestselling books, blog posts and websites. In studies of the Chinese military,

information transparency and the reliability of news leaks have been notorious problems, although access to military analysts has improved since the 1990s. Unlike previous studies, this chapter does not rely on information collected from academic journal articles or from news leaks in the Hong Kong press, which are either unavailable to most Chinese audiences or of questionable reliability. Instead it draws on open-source materials that have been viewed, read and debated by millions of Chinese, rather than on internal reports or academic articles being circulated and read by a limited number of academics or military staff.

Apparently this chapter has a selection bias of research subjects, because the media tend to encourage and make use of the most outspoken speakers. However, this is a positive factor for the purpose of this research, because it is precisely the views of these most outspoken PLA officers that penetrate the public sphere and influence public opinion. As Susan Shirk points out, the information gathered from such sources may be skewed, but it is precisely this distortion that affects the perception and choices of policy-makers.⁴²

Chapter 7 offers five policy caveats for international security and diplomatic choices of China and Japan, based on the systematic study in previous chapters. As the CCP's control over nationalism has been weakened, compared to the Maoist years, it is unrealistic for international society to hope that the Chinese government will be able to effectively contain nationalism at home. There is simply no way for the CCP to monopolize the understandings, interpretations and claims of nationalism in an increasingly liberalized society.

It also reminds readers and policy makers that we should be careful not to draw too much from the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism when making China policy. As the complicated dynamics between state and society shows, it is the evolution of socio-political conditions and state-society dynamics, not the substances and explicit claims of

⁴² Susan Shirk, 2007, "Changing media, changing foreign policy in China," *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 8(1), p. 60

state nationalism or popular nationalism, that will determine what kind of force Chinese nationalism serves in China's domestic politics and international behavior.

This has practical implications for international security in East Asia and Sino-Japanese relations. Because there is no such evidence to evaluate whether Chinese nationalism is ultimately good or bad for international security, practical policy research on Chinese nationalism should consider China's entire portfolio – such as its interests, intentions, capacities, history records of behavior, opportunities and constraints.

In terms of Sino-Japanese relations, for both Chinese and Japanese statesmen who hope that time will ultimately wash away the remembering of war suffering and hatred, this is an empty wish that would better be abandoned sooner than later. This is because war suffering has its own life and it can be transformed and nationalized. To build more stable and reliable relations, both governments should be prepared with strategic foresight to facilitate deep reconciliation, which is only possible when both governments pay attention to the bottom-up initiatives, heeding their concerns and relieving their discontents.

Chapter 2 Understanding Chinese Nationalism through Chinese Politics: Challenges to Three Assumptions in the Conventional Wisdom

Questions of nationalism are always about representation of the nation, as if the nation is a monolith and its representation is homogenous. Yet the question of representation is one which is political and open to contestation and change, for reasons such as structural transformations and different motivations. For nationalism to become an effective ideology of mobilization, which can be exploited by the state or elites, its mobilizing power has to be built on solid micro-level foundations.

Therefore, it should suggest that, instead of homogenizing people's thoughts through the indoctrination of nationalism from above, the success of nationalism as a mobilizing power may depend on the existence of different understandings, interpretations, and claims that social actors are able and willing to inject into the broad discourse of nationalism. This is a reverse mechanism that has not been sufficiently studied in the existing literature. It is also the main proposition that this thesis argues for.

The Chinese today are passionate about nationalism, but they do not understand, interpret and claim nationalism in the same way that the state has wished for. Instead Chinese nationalism from below is decentred from the orthodox nationalism, as propagated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from above. Their understandings, interpretations, and claims of nationalism are often inconsistent with, and sometimes contrary to what the Chinese state wishes to represent.

Moreover, the Chinese people, who are designated as a totalistic entity, do not understand, interpret, and claim nationalism in the same way as well. Their disparities and divergences can be seen in the various instances of nationalist mobilization and expressions by different social groups, from the subalterns to the middle class activists and the military elite.

However, in the existing works on contemporary Chinese nationalism, research is often

based on some explicit and implicit assumptions, which are not necessarily held to be true. By critically reviewing the existing literature on contemporary Chinese nationalism, this chapter challenges three most prominent assumptions in the literature, which is necessary to critically reflect and clarify for the field to advance. Empirical studies start from the next chapter.

Literature Debate 1: Historical Discontinuity vs. Historical Continuity

The first assumption to be challenged sees the rise of Chinese nationalism as a post-1989 phenomenon. This is a widely-held conventional wisdom with its major argument as follows: Against the collapse of the communist ideology, the CCP propagated nationalism and used it as an alternative ideology to legitimize its rule and consolidate the authoritarian regime.⁴³ The first assumption is not equal to state-centrism, which will be considered in the next part. While most scholars in this band emphasize the role of the state, some also take a bottom-up view, and see the existence of a gap between state nationalism and popular nationalism.

Therefore, advocates for both nationalism from above and nationalism from below can be found in this group. According to them, the age of the 1980s is regarded as being in stark contrast to the decade of the 1990s.⁴⁴ Whereas the 1980s resembles a liberal and pro-Western era, the 1990s is a time of irrationality and xenophobia, in that the Chinese (especially the rising middle class) turn a blind eye to domestic problems and act out of

⁴³ Suisheng Zhao, 1998, "A state-led nationalism: the patriotic education campaign in post Tiananmen China", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 31(3), pp. 287–302; Suisheng Zhao, 2004, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press; Christopher Hughes, 2006, *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era*, London: Routledge; William Callahan, 2010, "When is China? (1): patriotic education and the century of national humiliation", Chapter 2 in *China: The Pessimist Nation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 31-59.

⁴⁴ Yongnian Zheng, 1999, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China: Modernization and International Relations*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press; Peter Hays Gries, 2004, "Popular nationalism and state legitimation in China," Chapter 9 in Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen (eds.), *State and Society in 21st Century China: Crisis, Contention, and Legitimation*, New York; London: Routledge Curzon, pp. 180-194; Peter Hays Gries, 2005, "Chinese nationalism: challenging the state?" *Current History*, 104(683), pp. 251-256; Simon Shen, 2007, *Redefining Nationalism in Modern China: Sino-American Relations and the Emergence of Chinese Public Opinion in the 21st Century*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

nationalist fever.

This assumption has serious empirical flaws nevertheless. In most studies and in almost all journalistic reports, there is a standard style of representing Chinese nationalism. It records in detail periodic outbursts of Chinese anger against foreign targets, showing that Chinese nationalism has been dangerously growing. The 1999 anti-NATO student protest after the Belgrade bombing, the 2001 spy-airplane conflict, the 2005 anti-Japanese mass demonstration, and the 2008 torch relay protest, just name a few that are frequently talked of in academic and journalist discourse.

However, these incidents do not reveal the causes of Chinese nationalism at all. First, because outbursts of nationalist mobilization are triggered by accidental events, they are political outcomes, not political causes, of the rise of Chinese nationalism. Thus it is groundless to deduce, from these incidents, whether Chinese nationalism is stage-managed by the state or spontaneously rising from society, simply by pointing to some incidents occurring at such a time of mobilization.

Consequently, anecdotes supporting either side of the story can be found in such incidents. But anecdotes cannot explain anything. An anecdote such as state universities transporting students to the U.S. Embassy to participate in protest could be out of the intention to stir up anti-American nationalism among the youth, but could also be out of the intention to control the protest so that it will not turn into an anti-government demonstration. In the same vein, the autonomous self-mobilization of the Chinese on such occasions might be out of their genuine anger, but it is unclear that, to what extent, such “genuine” public opinion is authentic, free of interference of power and constraints of the broader environment these people live in.

Second, these records rely on observation of nationalist mobilization, when and *only* when it succeeds. This renders selection bias based on the outcome variable. It is good to use these cases for analyzing China’s state-society interactions at the time of diplomatic crisis, but it does not reflect the causes of Chinese nationalism, and does not

explain why nationalist mobilization succeeds at some time but fails at other time. The real causal mechanism(s) must be able to explain two things at the same time: (1) Why Chinese are prepared to rise up for nationalism at a time of crisis, *not* why they rise up at such a time; (2) Why Chinese rise up at certain times, but keep silent or are kept silent at other times.

Therefore, the causes of these nationalist outbursts, the *real socio-political causes*, should exist somewhere else, outside these incidents and prior to the time of crisis. Unfortunately, because the mainstream view presents Chinese anti-foreign mobilization as irrational activities of brainwashed Chinese people, few efforts have been made to investigate why these activities occur from a broader view anchored in the dramatic socio-political changes taking place in China. When sometimes these changes are discussed, they are talked of as a general background, lacking necessary work of process tracing to show how and why these changes have manufactured the socio-political causes of contemporary Chinese nationalism.

The study of Chinese nationalism could and should learn more from other fields in social sciences. In developing new theory of social movements in the early 1980s, Doug McAdam criticizes the classical model of social movements that it is supposed to represent more of a psychological than a political phenomenon.⁴⁵ The focus on “madness” has also derailed the study of political violence for a long time that Stathis Kalyvas, a most distinguished scholar in the field, refers to it as a major “pathology” which is “unsatisfactory and misleading”.⁴⁶ This is the same disease from which the study of Chinese nationalism suffers.

Nationalism, like other socio-political products of a society, is first of all a socio-political phenomenon, not outbursts of irrationality or simply an instrumental tool of the state, which is able to take control of when and how nationalism should emerge, evolve

⁴⁵ Doug McAdam, 1999 (1982), *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (2nd ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁴⁶ Stathis Kalyvas, 2006, “Pathologies”, Chapter 2 in *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 32-51.

and recede. Theoretically, the concept of nationalism is not a monolith.⁴⁷ It refers to (intellectual) ideas, (popular) sentiments and concrete actions.⁴⁸ For nationalism as actions to take place at a certain point of time, it is indispensable to consider two necessary conditions – the reproduction of nationalist sentiments preceding these actions and the conditions for successful mobilization in a society.

Therefore, nationalism cannot be taken for granted as a psychological phenomenon or an outburst of irrationality to extremity, though it arrests most attention at the time of extreme manifestations. As students of social movements remind us again, “the politics of nationalist contention as well as its intersection with other forms of politics” should not be “cordially ignored”⁴⁹. Because nationalism as actions is a form of political engagement by various social actors, it is insufficient to analyze nationalism only as a sentiment or a belief, and it is also insufficient to analyze nationalism only at a time when it erupts in a most extreme form.

Because the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism is a socio-political phenomenon, it needs to be studied with a scientific historical view. Seen from a historical perspective, the conventional periodization of Chinese nationalism, using the year of 1989 as a watershed event,⁵⁰ does not reflect historical reality, but represents an academic and political construct. In fact, if history is seen as a continuum, not a ruptured chain of critical junctures, the causes and rising course of contemporary Chinese nationalism would have been seen very differently.

The view holding that the rise of Chinese nationalism is a post-1989 phenomenon assumes that history is discontinuous, separated by critical junctures (i.e. those big

⁴⁷ Christopher Hughes, 2008, “Japan in the politics of Chinese leadership legitimacy: recent developments in historical perspective”, *Japan Forum*, 20(2), pp. 245-266.

⁴⁸ John Breuilly, 1993 (1982), *Nationalism and the State* (2nd ed.), Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 404.

⁴⁹ Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, 2001, *Dynamics of Contention*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 234.

⁵⁰ Although the conventional wisdom regards the year of 1989 as the watershed event, the object of most empirical studies is nationalism movements in the late 1990s, because it is supposed that there was a time lag between ideological indoctrination and its effects (the rise of nationalism movements).

events). The idea of critical juncture is borrowed by historical comparativists, from the idea of path dependence in institutional economics, to study major events in revolution, modernization, industrialization, democratization, historical institutionalism and technology change.⁵¹ Following Collier and Collier, critical junctures are defined as transitions that “establish certain directions of change and foreclose others in a way that shapes politics for years to come.”⁵² These transitions are often pushed by “the choices of key actors”, which “lead to the formation of institutions that have self-reproducing properties.” Because “[t]hese institutions...produce[s] a series of reactions and counterreactions that culminate in the creation of major regime outcomes,” the “key actor choices during critical junctures” are causally more deterministic.⁵³ Key actors are influential “political leaders, policymakers, bureaucratic, judges...[who] during a phase of institutional fluidity ... steer outcomes toward a new equilibrium.”⁵⁴

According to the definition of critical juncture, seeing the rise of Chinese nationalism as a post-1989 phenomenon seems to be logical and correct. The bloodshed on Tian’anmen Square in 1989 not only ended vigorous student activism in the 1980s, but also ousted the CCP’s reformist leader Zhao Ziyang and his team of bureaucrats. The incident interrupted China’s political reform and shifted the trajectory of its economic development. Attempts to make incremental political reform have been suspended. The nascent market has become deeply penetrated by state power. Crony capitalism has flourished, and corruption has gone wild. Technology innovation has been halted. A bubble growth, built on real estate speculation and monopoly over high-yields sectors, has become the most important pillar of national economy. The society has become deep divided and fragmented. With grave environmental, human and moral costs of development, social morale has sunk, and political discontent has grown.

⁵¹ For a review of studies on critical juncture, see: Ruth Collier and David Collier, 1991, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, 2007, “The study of critical junctures: theory, narrative, and counterfactuals in historical institutionalism,” *World Politics*, No.59, pp. 341-69.

⁵² Ruth Collier and David Collier, 1991, *Shaping the Political Arena*, p. 27

⁵³ James Mahoney, 2001, “Path-dependent explanations of regime change: Central America in comparative perspective,” *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 36(1), p. 112

⁵⁴ Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, 2007, “The study of critical junctures”, p. 354

Then why was the Tian'anmen Massacre not the watershed event that has brought up the rise of Chinese nationalism? The answer lies in the systematic strength of existing empirical evidence. Whereas the 1980s has been idealized as an age of liberalism and the 1990s as a time of nationalism, empirical evidence points in the other direction. History does have critical junctures, but first of all, history evolves in continuity. The existence of watershed events (such as the Tian'anmen Massacre) in the course of history does not suffice to discontinue the evolution of history. It changes the trajectory of history, but does not separate it from the past, whether seeing history as a whole or as being made up of each building block. The political system does not experience discontinuity. "Even in revolutions, political systems are never completely transformed."⁵⁵ Institutions, as a major building block of political system, do not discontinue. "A critical juncture with respect to one institution may not constitute a critical juncture with respect to another...even when political systems as a whole face" has changed dramatically, "many institutions may remain unaffected."⁵⁶

When applied to the field of nationalism, the idea of historical discontinuity encounters more challenges, because nationalism is "not just a doctrine...but a more basic way of talking, thinking, and acting."⁵⁷ Nationalism is an enduring political discourse and political force in modern societies, constructing our identities on an everyday basis, and reproduced through everyday practice.⁵⁸ Such a discursive dimension and the embeddedness of nationalism in everyday practice also suggest that contemporary Chinese nationalism cannot be a socio-political product of historical discontinuity. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 1, neither nations nor nationalism were created ex nihilo. This suggests that factors bearing the traces of historical continuity, which may not be national or nationalist, oftentimes come into play in reproducing nations and inciting nationalism.

⁵⁵ Ruth Collier and David Collier, 1991, *Shaping the Political Arena*, p. 34

⁵⁶ Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, 2007, "The study of critical junctures," p. 349

⁵⁷ Craig Calhoun, 1997, *Nationalism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 11.

⁵⁸ Michael Billig, 1995, *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage; Umut Özkırımlı, 2000, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, New York: St. Martin's Press; Craig Calhoun, 1993, "Nationalism and ethnicity," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol.19, pp. 211-239.

Empirical studies of contemporary Chinese politics substantiate these theoretical conjectures. In a comparative study of the 1989 and the 1999 student movements, Wasserstrom finds that the 1999 anti-NATO student protest and the 1989 June 4th movement are not completely dissimilar. The idea that the generation of 1999 is xenophobic, standing in contrast to the generation of 1989, who are thought to be liberal and internationalist, is simply a myth.⁵⁹

The 1989 pro-democracy movement is also not separable from the political campaigns led by the CCP in an earlier age. In the Maoist years, nationalism and mass mobilization were the two most powerful apparatuses of mobilization in the hands of the CCP. Through a process of socialization in these campaigns, particularly the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese became so acquainted with such tools that they would habitually take up the same tools to direct discontents towards the government.

As Craig Calhoun, who was in China during the 1989 movement observes: “The sense of acting on behalf of the Chinese nation was a powerful motivator for protesting Chinese students...The vocabulary of national identity also enabled students to affirm the higher purposes of democracy and freedom and to rise above their more narrowly self-interested claims and desires.”⁶⁰

In Calhoun’s record, there is an emotional letter from a student on hunger strike in the 1989 movement. It is clear, from this letter of an ordinary participant of the 1989 pro-democracy movement, that it is first out of “love for my country”, not out of admiration for liberal internationalism that inspired students to participate in this risky hunger strike in the 1989 movement. The excerpt is quoted below (*italics added*):

Dear mother and father,

⁵⁹ Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, 1999, “Student protests in fin-de-siècle China,” *New Left Review*, No.237, pp. 52-76

⁶⁰ Craig Calhoun, 1994, *Neither Gods nor Emperors: Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 261.

I am part of this student movement because *I love my country*. I am not a counterrevolutionary. I am not a lawless agitator. Please understand my actions...Rest assured that your son will not bring shame upon you. I will not die in disgrace.⁶¹

*The country is our country,
Its people are our people,
The government is our government,*

If we do not cry out, who will?
If we do not act, who will? ...

In the spirit of sacrificing our lives, we fight for life. But we are children, we are still children! *Mother China, look earnestly upon your sons and daughters*; as hunger mercilessly destroys their youth, as death closes in on them, can you remain indifferent?⁶²

Whereas democratic appeals in the 1989 student movement were ruthlessly repressed by the authoritarian regime, nationalist elements in the movement continued after 1989. As to be seen in this thesis, nationalist appeals of the 1980s have been integrated into the political appeals of different social groups in China since the 1990s. In the 1980s, the intelligentsia-student alliance was the only social force that was able to challenge the state's monopoly of the nationalist discourse in the public arena. But in today's China, more and more social groups are able to interpret and claim different meanings of Chinese nationalism.

In fact, from the view of historical continuity, the 1989 pro-democracy movement is also inseparable from political mobilization that was prevailing in earlier periods of the

⁶¹ Cited in Craig Calhoun, 1994, *Neither Gods nor Emperors*, p. 50.

⁶² Cited in Craig Calhoun, 1994, *Neither Gods nor Emperors*, p. 62.

People's Republic of China. As MacFarquhar points out, the form of mass mobilization in the late 1980s seems to bear "the dark penumbra of the Cultural Revolution",⁶³ though scholars such as Esherick and Wasserstrom disagree with his judgment.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Esherick and Wasserstrom's counterargument does not address the key concern in MacFarquhar's argument. Their counterargument may be normatively appreciated, but it is not persuasive.

The valuable point in this debate is not to make a normative judgment about the 1989 student movement. It is to understand how and why those protesters acted as such. For example, the dramatic performance of which some of the student leaders who knelt down when presenting the petition to the officials,⁶⁵ and the students' distrust in the less educated people (such as peasants, workers and entrepreneurs)⁶⁶, in the eyes of Elizabeth Perry, indicate "an ancient tradition of scholar-martyrs dating back to the third century B.C."⁶⁷ To those student protesters, fighting for the future of the nation might not be a cause of sacrifice only. It could also be a privilege of honor and grace reserved for the knowledge class. While the normative implications of these students' behavior remain open to debate, the fact that the 1989 student movement occurred in a context of historical continuity can help reconsider the assumption of historical discontinuity in studying Chinese nationalism.

Some scholarly works are beginning to rediscover nationalism as a foundation for

⁶³ Roderick MacFarquhar, 20 July 1989, "The end of the Chinese Revolution," *The New York Review of Books*, pp. 8-10. Quoted from William A. Joseph, Christine P.W. Wong and David Zweig, "Introduction: new perspectives on the Cultural Revolution," in William A. Joseph, Christine P.W. Wong and David Zweig (eds.), 1991, *New Perspectives on the Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies/Harvard University, p. 15.

⁶⁴ Joseph W. Esherick and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, 1994 (1990), "Acting out democracy: political theater in modern China", Chapter 2 in Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry (eds.), *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China: Learning from 1989* (2nd edition), Boulder, Colo.; Oxford: Westview Press, p. 33.

⁶⁵ Joseph W. Esherick and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, 1994 (1990), "Acting out democracy," p. 37; Craig Calhoun, 1994, *Neither Gods nor Emperors*, p. 43.

⁶⁶ Elizabeth J. Perry, 1994. "Casting a Chinese 'democracy' movement: the roles of students, workers, and entrepreneurs," in Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry (eds.), *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China: Learning from 1989* (2nd edition), Boulder, Colo.; Oxford: Westview Press.

⁶⁷ Elizabeth J. Perry, 1994, "Casting a Chinese 'democracy' movement", p. 80.

political mobilization of Chinese students in the early 1980s. Jessica Weiss's dissertation records for the first time in detail the 1985 anti-Japanese protests, which "were the first display of popular anti-Japanese sentiment that had been allowed in mainland China since the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations in 1972."⁶⁸ Weiss also realizes that the 1985 anti-Japanese protests were connected with the 1986 pro-democracy protests, in that the 1985 anti-Japanese protests "made the 1986 protests more likely", and "helped set the stage for the 1989 democracy movement."⁶⁹ In *Strong Society, Smart State* published in 2012, James Reilly also finds that the root of anti-Japanese populism in China should date back to the years prior to 1989, and argues that waves of anti-foreign public mobilization in recent years are largely explained by factors beyond the control of the CCP.⁷⁰

This thesis adds two new dimensions to this emerging trend that reconsiders contemporary Chinese nationalism in a framework of historical continuity. First, it surveys different social strata in contemporary China, particularly those social groups that have played an important role in the rise of Chinese nationalism, but have not been systematically studied before. Second, it investigates the lingering influence of socialist political culture in the Maoist years (1949-1976) on the expression of anti-foreign nationalism in today's China. The three-decade socialist rule with distinct Maoist characteristics is a most important source of historical continuity for China today. For example, Xi Chen, a scholar of Chinese contentious politics, finds that the rise and routinization of social protests since the early 1990s was facilitated by the organizational legacy of the party-state in the Maoist era.⁷¹ Yet in the literature of contemporary Chinese nationalism, its influence and implications remain untouched, due to the conventional assumption that the rise of Chinese nationalism is principally a post-1989 phenomenon.

⁶⁸ Jessica Weiss, 2008, "From anti-Japan to pro-democracy: the road from 1985 to 1989", Chapter 3 in *Powerful patriots: nationalism, diplomacy, and the strategic logic of anti-foreign protest in China*, PhD Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, p. 46.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 58.

⁷⁰ James Reilly, 2012, *Strong Society, Smart State: The Rise of Public Opinion in China's Japan Policy*, New York: Columbia University Press.

⁷¹ Xi Chen, 2011, *Social Protest and Contentious Authoritarianism in China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 19.

To clarify, the purpose of this thesis is not to document and narrate the existence of nationalism, in terms of both action and sentiment, before 1989. The purpose of the thesis is analytical and explanatory, not descriptive. It is to offer a systematic and historical explanation of the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism, and provide a scientific foundation for making policies concerning China. The empirical chapters will reveal historical continuity in contemporary Chinese nationalism by tracing political dynamics behind its rise.

Challenging the assumption of historical discontinuity does not negate the role of critical junctures in history. A view of historical continuity does not deny the role of dramatic changes in the course of history. As Collier and Collier summarize, “[i]n some instances, one may be dealing with apparent continuities that conceal significant changes.... Alternatively, one may find apparent differences that conceal continuities.”⁷² The principles in social science research are always dialectical.

The end of the Mao era, the economic reform, and the outbreak and the suppression of the 1989 pro-democracy movement are all critical incidents that have left an impact on the evolution of political dynamics in China. Nevertheless, the effects of these watershed incidents should be weighed with scrutiny in understanding the rise of Chinese nationalism. While the 1989 pro-democracy movement triggered the CCP to strengthen patriotic campaigns, the causal link between such campaigns and Chinese nationalism in the 1990s remains unclear. No direct evidence proves the CCP’s patriotic campaign was the cause of the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. What we know is that the CCP did strengthen patriotic education and propaganda after 1989, and therefore such an action predated most nationalist mobilization in the 1990s and the 2000s. Yet temporal sequence cannot guarantee causality.

In fact, before the late 1980s, nationalism had already been embraced by some Chinese. The critical juncture of 1989, and the subsequent patriotic campaign, is only one factor,

⁷² Ruth Collier and David Collier, 1991, *Shaping the Political Arena*, p. 34

among many others, that have changed political dynamics in China. The uninterrupted economic reform, the reconfiguration of social bases, technology innovation in mass communication, and the changes in international environment, all contribute to the subsequent mobilization of Chinese nationalism, besides the CCP's patriotic campaign. Furthermore, the effects of these watershed incidents do not converge in one direction. The net effect depends on the process through which the CCP and society engage with each other. Therefore, a multitude of factors needs to be weighed concerning their respective roles in changing China's political dynamics, and causing the rise of Chinese nationalism.

Literature Debate 2: State-Centrism vs. Dialectics

The second assumption to be challenged in this thesis is state-centrism. The field of study is evolving from state-centrism to a dialectical perspective, which considers both state and society. This thesis will push forward this ongoing change of the field beyond where it has stopped. That is, it is not sufficient to point out that both state and society have affected the rise of Chinese nationalism. It requires a systematic study of the dynamics between state and society in reproducing nationalism, and a reevaluation of the policy implications it bears.

State-centrism is a conventional perspective in the literature. In this tradition, it only takes a cursory view of social actors, and ascribes the rise of nationalism largely to the state's political campaigns after the 1989 crisis.⁷³ This is the basic, instrumental type of state-centrism. A second type of state centrism emphasizes the constructive aspect of the top-down process of manufacturing Chinese nationalism. It is a process that national memory has been reconstructed.

The reconstruction of national memory unfolds through the rewriting of history. China's account of war history tends to stress some aspects and neglects others. As Parks Coble

⁷³ Suisheng Zhao, 2004, *A Nation-State by Construction*; Christopher Hughes, 2006, *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era*

writes, public memory of the 2nd Sino-Japanese war virtually disappeared in the Maoist years, and it only returned in the reform era. In the reform era, the government has not only stressed “a patriotic nationalist narrative of heroic resistance”, but emphasized Japanese atrocities, “virtually a ‘number game’ in historical writing”.⁷⁴ As a result, despite voluminous publications on the war emerging in recent years, the Chinese perspective of the war remains selective, failing to provide a comprehensive and unbiased narrative of history.⁷⁵

Because the content of official war history has been changing with political concerns of the state,⁷⁶ the elite have played an important role in historical “mythmaking”.⁷⁷ In this view, other social actors are taken for granted as the silent masses who are passive recipients of the instructions from the elite.⁷⁸ Thus, both the state and the elite are regarded as if they were a monolith, wielding the baton of anti-foreign nationalism as a bargaining leverage in international negotiations⁷⁹ and directing mindless people as they wish.

However, such an assumption of state-centrism is itself a myth. In the rise of Chinese nationalism, social actors are anything but mindless and monolithic. They are not mindless, because they make rational calculation and act out of emotion as well. They are not monolithic, because they are differentiated by the political, social, economic and cultural capitals they possess. Therefore, between the orthodox nationalism, which is propagated by the state, and its heterodoxies, which are advanced by various social actors, there exists wide disparity and even intense tension.

In fact, disparity and tension between the orthodox ideology from above and its

⁷⁴ Parks Coble, 2007, “China’s ‘new remembering’ of the anti-Japanese war of resistance, 1937-1945,” *The China Quarterly*, No.190, p. 394.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 394-410.

⁷⁶ James Reilly, 2011, “Remember history, not hatred: collective remembrance of China’s war of resistance to Japan,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 45(2), pp. 463-90.

⁷⁷ Yinan He, 2009, *The Search for Reconciliation: Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations since World War II*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁷⁸ Yinan He, 2007, “Remembering and forgetting the war: elite mythmaking, mass reaction, and Sino-Japanese relations, 1950-2006,” *History and Memory*, 19(2), pp. 43-74.

⁷⁹ Jessica Weiss, 2008, “Powerful patriots”

heterodoxies from below is a universal principle of social sciences. It is observed in a wide range of social phenomena, including communism and religion,⁸⁰ civil war and ethnic violence.

In the study of agrarian societies, for example, such a contrast is studied as a society's little tradition vis-a-vis the great tradition of the elite.⁸¹ The essential difference between the two is not in the form, which is often represented as "oral" vs. "written", nor in the place of its dissemination, which is rural area vs. urban area. It is in the process of transforming the great tradition when it reaches out to different groups of people under different social structures. As James Scott says, the relationship between great tradition and little tradition is not, as some cultural anthropologists believe, isomorphic and harmonious,⁸² but is full of tension, criticism, resistance, subordination, hierarchy, and power relation reflecting the larger social structure.

Nevertheless, the tension between the process imposed from above and the one emerging from below does not always lead to a zero-sum game. It can generate a symbiotic relationship between the two processes. In the study of civil war, Kalyvas also finds that "the habitually cited causes of groups division (e.g., ideology, social, or ethnic polarization) often fail to account for the actual dynamics of violence."⁸³ Instead, "selective violence is the result of transactions between political actors and individuals: it is *jointly* produced by them."⁸⁴ (italics added). When one political actor (the incumbent or insurgent) is near hegemonic in civil war, selective violence is mostly likely to take place, because at such times this political actor's demand for information can meet the supply from local individuals. The reason that local individuals are willing to providing information is that they "have strong incentives to exploit the informational

⁸⁰ James Scott, 1977, "Protest and profanation: agrarian revolt and the little tradition, part I", *Theory and Society*, 4(1), pp. 1-38.

⁸¹ Ibid. Also see: Robert Redfield, 1956, *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁸² For example, see Yiyuan Li (Taiwanese cultural anthropologist who first introduced Redfield's theory to mainland China), 1996, *Renlei de Shiye (The Perspective of Humans)*, Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi Chubanshe (Shanghai Literature and Arts Publishing Company).

⁸³ Stathis Kalyvas, 2006, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, p. 5.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 12.

asymmetries of civil war in order to reap all kinds of benefits, including settling accounts with personal and local enemies”,⁸⁵ not that they are motivated by the master cleavage at the national level.

Such a “collaborative” process between the centre and the periphery can also be found in the study of Chinese politics, particularly in the field of the Cultural Revolution. While this disastrous political movement was initiated and manipulated by Mao Tse-tung, the movement cannot be understood without seeing the motivations, interests and appeals from below. The mainstream view of the field holds that the sudden collapse of state governance in the movement was resulted from pre-existent conflicts of interests between social groups.⁸⁶ Particularly, it was the resentment towards the privileged communist bureaucrats that made people enthusiastically support Mao’s destructive policy. People followed Mao’s endless revolutionary instructions, not because they were crazy and mindless, but because they were rational actors who saw their own interest in pursuing Mao’s instructions. Political factions everywhere took advantage of the ambiguous instructions from the top to interpret them in their own interests.⁸⁷ Local collaborators tried to “manipulate these campaigns to their own advantage. In many cases, they were motivated by long-standing hostility between individuals, families, or local factions.”⁸⁸ It was the autonomy and rationality from bottom that ultimately led to aggregate irrationality in a top-down political campaign in the specific setting of China’s authoritarian institutions.⁸⁹

In the field of contemporary Chinese nationalism, a dialectical approach that challenges state-centrism has recently emerged. It recognizes the role of both state and society,

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

⁸⁶ See: Hong Yung Lee, 1978, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, Berkeley: University of California Press; Stanley Rosen, 1982, *Red Guard Factionalism and the Chinese Cultural Revolution in Guangzhou*, Boulder: Westview.

⁸⁷ Guoqiang Dong, 2012, “Shehuishi shiye xia de wenhua dageming yanjiu (Studies on the Cultural Revolution from the perspective of social history),” *Zhonggong Dangshi Yanjiu (Research on the History of the CCP)*, No.2, p. 74.

⁸⁸ Jun Jing, 1996, *The Temple of Memories: History, Power, and Morality in a Chinese Village*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, p. 87.

⁸⁹ Shaoguang Wang, 1995, *Failure of Charisma: the Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, Oxford University Press.

seeing social actors as active constructors of Chinese nationalism. Peter Gries and Xu Wu argue, through their respective research, that popular nationalists are empowered by the Internet, and are able to act independent of the state in an organized way.⁹⁰ James Reilly finds that the rewriting of history on the 2nd Sino-Japanese War is not completely a state project. Its beginning and evolution are inseparable from a group of “history activists” emerging in the 1990s, who “share a single, guiding objective: to document Japan’s wartime atrocities to ensure they are not forgotten”. These activists, having “academic liberties, local support, and popular appeal”, also possess “a measure of political autonomy” that the Chinese government has been wary of.⁹¹

Furthermore, the dialectical approach argues that, in the process of constructing Chinese nationalism, the relationship between the state and social actors has been uneasy.⁹² On the one hand, the tension in the relation has affected China’s foreign policy through the “rebirth of *minjian waijiao*” (public diplomacy), which is imposed by public opinion that the CCP would not have wished to see.⁹³ The mass mobilization against Japan in the late 1990s to the early 2000s, which was comprised of “shifts in public opinion, political activism, and popular media content”, was mainly an initiative of social actors, and the CCP’s goal during this period was to maintain a balance between popular appeals and manageable bilateral relations with Japan. In this process, the state was a passive respondent at most times.⁹⁴

On the other hand, the CCP has not yet lost control of nationalist mobilization, due to the authoritarian institutions it can take advantages of. Whenever the CCP was

⁹⁰ Peter Hays Gries, 2004, *China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Xu Wu, 2007, *Chinese Cyber Nationalism: Evolution, Characteristics, and Implications*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

⁹¹ James Reilly, 2004, “China’s history activists and the war of resistance against Japan: history in the making,” *Asian Survey*, 19(2), p. 277.

⁹² Peter Hays Gries, 2004, “Popular nationalism and state legitimation in China”; Suisheng Zhao, 2005, “China’s pragmatic nationalism: is it manageable?” *The Washington Quarterly*, 29(1), pp. 131–144.

⁹³ James Reilly, 2008, “The role of public opinion in China’s Japan policy: 1997-2007,” PhD Dissertation, The George Washington University; James Reilly, 2009, “The rebirth of *minjian waijiao*: China’s popular diplomacy toward Japan,” *Japan Policy Research Institute Working Paper*, No.115. <http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp115.html>

⁹⁴ James Reilly, 2012, *Strong Society, Smart State*, pp. 208-209 and p. 126.

determined to repress nationalist mobilization, mobilization of popular nationalism was contained, though oftentimes for a short while only.⁹⁵ Moreover, the kind of strategies the CCP took has affected the development of civil organizations in anti-Japanese nationalism movement, as Bin Xu and Xiaoyu Pu find through their extensive fieldwork in China.⁹⁶ The state still plays an important role in shaping the opportunity structure and micro-environment of nationalist mobilization, though it is already unable to exclude social actors and their different claims from the domain.

This is the development of the dialectical approach in the field of contemporary Chinese nationalism. Despite the progress, the new approach still suffers from a critical deficiency. Whereas it emphasizes the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism as “dual phenomena”, it does not explain how the discrepancy and tension between the state and social actors has led to regeneration and reproduction of Chinese nationalism, not reduction or demise of it, as seen in other areas where the Chinese state and society are fiercely contesting each other.

It is realized, in the dialectical approach, that disparity and tension does exist between state and society in the understandings, interpretations, and claims of Chinese nationalism. But it does not provide an answer to the question it departs from. That is, since nationalism is a “dual phenomenon”, how is it constructed in the competition and tension between the state and social actors who have different understandings, interpretations, and claims of nationalism? What is the nature of the relations between the state and social actors in the rise of Chinese nationalism?

In particular, if the state has to compete with social actors for the discourse of Chinese nationalism, as suggested by the dialectical approach, why does the CCP’s patriotic propaganda seem to be so successful facing the challenge of these heterodoxies? This puzzle can be framed in a reverse way. While the CCP never gives up its efforts to tighten ideological control over a growingly diverse society, why have most of the

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Bin Xu and Xiaoyu Pu, 2010, “Dynamic statism and memory politics: a case analysis of the Chinese war reparations movement,” *The China Quarterly*, No.201, pp. 156-175.

propaganda campaigns it initiated been disregarded, derided and deconstructed in society?

For example, the campaign for a “harmonious society” (*hexie shehui*), initiated by the former paramount leader of China Hu Jintao, has been ridiculed as the campaign for a “river crab society” (*hexie shehui*). In mandarin Chinese, “river crab” and “harmonious” are homonyms, whereas “river crab” is a metaphor of rampant power that tramples on civil rights and overturns the rule of law. The anti-porn campaign is another illuminating instance. Such a campaign is a traditional means of tightening control over ideas and thoughts, usually in the name of “cleaning spiritual pollution”, in China. It used to work well, in both the early 1950s and the 1980s, but has failed today. Instead of applauding the campaign, the Chinese are now fiercely debating whether the brutal treatment of sexual workers by the police violates human dignity. This indicates that the campaign has been ideologically bankrupt, unable to resonate with the people anymore.

In contrast, the patriotic campaign seems to be exceptionally successful, in the sense that nationalism does become a useful means of mobilization for the state to unify the people. Its success relies on a simple fact that nationalism is able to ring true to the public. As Shogo Suzuki points out, for the Chinese elite, the use of rhetoric of anti-Japanese nationalism to serve their political ends can work, only because the rhetoric is able to capture the audience.⁹⁷ Zheng Wang also argues that the key to understanding Chinese nationalism is not whether it is a top-down or bottom-up phenomenon, but why the propaganda of national humiliation has a large and sympathetic audience.⁹⁸

Both Suzuki and Wang try to give an explanation, but neither of their explanations is substantiated by empirical studies. This is because, although they both realize that historical memory is deeply entrenched in society, and thus cannot be attributed to elite manipulation only, their work does not start from the empirical study of changing

⁹⁷ Shogo Suzuki, 2007, “The importance of ‘Othering’ in China’s national identity: Sino-Japanese relations as a stage of identity relations,” *The Pacific Review*, 20(1), pp. 23-47.

⁹⁸ Zheng Wang, 2008, “National humiliation, history education, and the politics of historical memory: patriotic education campaign in China,” *International Studies Quarterly*, No.52, pp. 783–806.

society in China, but from the psyche of the nation, which is not substantiated or falsifiable by the changing socio-political dynamics occurring in China.

In this approach, Suzuki finds that Japan is an important “Other” in China’s defining its self-identity,⁹⁹ and Wang studies the power of historical memory in Chinese identity formation.¹⁰⁰ Because their analyses remain at the level of the nation – an aggregate intellectual construct, their interpretations are tautological, unable to address why Chinese people believe in the propaganda of nationalism as they do. If the propaganda can evoke resonance in the Chinese people, because of Japan’s role in defining national identity of the Chinese, as Suzuki and Wang suggest, then what makes people think and believe as such in the first place? After all, why do Chinese people of different sub-populations need to bother with the relations between Japan and their national identity? These puzzles are left unanswered by Suzuki and Wang.

This thesis tries to improve the dialectical approach by focusing on how the interactions between the state, market and social actors reinforce each other in making Chinese nationalism, *because of, not despite of*, their different interpretations, claims, purposes and relational tensions. It advances the dialectical approach in two aspects. First, besides analyzing the differences in claims of nationalism between the state and social actors, this thesis also emphasizes the differences between various sub-populations. Second, by exploring the meanings and causes of such differences between the state and social actors, and between various social groups, this thesis proposes a counter-intuitive causal mechanism in the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. That is, for Chinese nationalism to become a powerful ideology that is capable of capturing a wide sympathetic audience, it has to be first construed and utilized by various social actors in ways that are adapted to their own interests and purposes.

This proposed causal mechanism overturns the causal explanation implicit in the

⁹⁹ Shogo Suzuki, 2007, “The importance of ‘Othering’”.

¹⁰⁰ Zheng Wang, 2008, “National humiliation, history education, and the politics of historical memory”; Zheng Wang, 2012, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*, New York: Columbia University Press.

conventional wisdom that the Chinese are becoming more nationalist because, for various reasons, they accept the CCP's patriotic propaganda. What is suggested in this thesis is an opposite logic. That is, unless social actors have their own understandings, interpretations and claims of nationalism, the state's propaganda campaign could not have been taken as a legitimate discourse by society. This can be seen in the failed cases of the campaign for a "harmonious society" and the anti-porn campaign, as discussed above.

It is the different motivations, interpretations, and claims of different sub-populations that inject legitimacy into the CCP's propaganda campaign for Chinese nationalism. This counter-intuitive causal mechanism also exists in other socio-political phenomena, and deserves more attention of social scientists in their future endeavors. Here just name a few more examples from the broader study of Chinese politics.

In the study of Chinese politics in the Republican era (1912-1949), Zhongping Chen finds that the May Fourth Movement of 1919 - the banner of Chinese nationalism in the Republican era - incorporated different interests of regional warlords in its successful rise, rather than homogenized and eliminated such differences.¹⁰¹ More than that, it was exactly because the Movement "incorporated their varied personal, parochial, and factional interests into a broad nationalist platform", that "the May Fourth Movement could obtain crucial support from the different factions of provincial warlords and achieve its final successes." As Chen suggests, this was a mutually reinforcing process, because "the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement gave provincial warlords a new opportunity to increase their influence in politics, especially in diplomatic issues."¹⁰²

The experience of the Kwangsi militarists in Chinese politics between 1925 and 1937 shows much the same thing. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that "a high degree of political regionalism may threaten the cohesiveness of the nation," Diana Lary finds that even "in a period of extreme devolution of Central authority, the 1920s and 1930s,

¹⁰¹ Zhongping Chen, 2011, "The May Fourth Movement and provincial warlords: a reexamination," *Modern China*, 37(2), pp. 135-69.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 163-64.

and in a province on the edge of China, Kwangsi,” regionalism and nationalism were, in fact, supplementing each other.¹⁰³ Therefore, the belief that “the stronger regionalism is, the weaker nationalism is”¹⁰⁴ is simply a myth.

The mutually supplementary process was possible because nationalism was used by regional militarists to justify regionalism in the name of serving the nation, as those militarists saw that “the Kuomintang’s weakness as nationalists meant that other groups could lay claim to nationalism.”¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the weakness of central authority and the ambition of local militarists to compete for the interpretations and claims of nationalism converged, leading to the political dynamics that was pushing up the momentum of Chinese nationalism in the age of the 1920s and the 1930s.

This process, this author finds, is very similar to what is observed in today’s China in the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. Although the CCP today is much stronger, in both economic strength and authoritarian control, than the KMT in the Republican era, the CCP is weak in the arena of ideology, facing all kinds of challenges from society. It shows again a combination of weak central authority and strong appeals from sub-populations under the banner of Chinese nationalism in today’s Chinese political dynamics.

In the study of the Republican China, not only the differences in regional warlords, but also those in the native places of merchants and working class, were an influential force in supporting the rise of nationalism. Bryna Goodman’s study of regional networks and identities in Shanghai shows, that in the May Fourth Movement of 1919, “native-place organization underlay many of the social coalitions that staged the Shanghai student, commercial and worker strikes following the news of the May Fourth arrests of students in Beijing.”¹⁰⁶ These native places were not only an instrument of nationalist

¹⁰³ Diana Lary, 1974, Introduction in *Region and Nation: The Kwangsi Clique in Chinese Politics, 1925–1937*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁶ Bryna Goodman, 1995, “The native place and the state: nationalism, state building and public maneuvering,” Chapter 8 in *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in*

mobilization, but also constituting the national identity. As Goodman argues, they “illuminate a paradox: universal identity (nationalism) depended on the further articulation of specific identity...In this fashion native-place strength contributed to national strength.”¹⁰⁷

A similar phenomenon is found in Elizabeth Perry’s study on labor politics in the Republican era in *Shanghai on Strike*. From archival work on labor movements in Republican Shanghai, Perry finds that “the Shanghai labor movement had a life of its own, closely linked to the countryside from which its workers sprang.” Her most interesting finding is that intraclass divisions were not an obstacle to the labor movement. “*Despite* (and, in large part, *because of*) important distinctions along lines of native-place origin, gender, and skill level, the Chinese working class has shown itself capable of influential political action.” (italics added)

This political dynamics has important implications. As Perry explains, “[t]he Chinese labor movement certainly did undergo a major transformation when politically motivated intellectuals became involved in its direction....Nevertheless, Chinese workers were not a tabula rasa on which Party cadres could write whatever political messages suited their designs. Workers were heir to their own traditions of protest, rooted in native-place cultures and workplace experiences, which engendered a certain tension between them and student organizers and limited the direction in which labor could be led.” It is clear, in the view of Perry, that divisions in society, exemplified in the fragmentation of the Chinese labor in Shanghai, influenced state transformation in the Republican era.¹⁰⁸

To summarize, there is a rich tradition in studying Chinese politics that substantiates the dialectical relations between a top-down process and a bottom-up process, which is represented in both ideological propaganda and mass mobilization. This tradition is

Shanghai, 1853–1937, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 261.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 270.

¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth J. Perry, 1993, Introduction in *Shanghai on Strike: the Politics of Chinese Labor*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, p. 5.

intellectually subtle and sophisticated. It not only sees the differences between the two, but also realizes the differences in various sub-populations in society, and the mutually reinforcing interactions between process from above and process from below.

Such a rich and intelligent tradition of dialectical approach in studying Chinese politics has been forgotten in the recent literature on Chinese nationalism. This thesis tries to restart the momentum, advancing our understanding of the relations between social diversity and state nationalism. As Helen Siu, a respected China scholar, impressively points out, for understanding state-society relations in Chinese politics, without “the initiative of the ambitious individuals who actively pursued the symbols of power recognized by the state tradition”, “the priorities of the various state systems could not have penetrated local society.”¹⁰⁹

Literature Debate 3: Determinism vs. Uncertainty

The third assumption that this thesis challenges is policy implications of the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. Regardless of their views on the origins and actors of this socio-political phenomenon, most scholars concur that Chinese nationalism is a subversive force for international security. As they have warned, Chinese nationalism is manipulated by the authoritarian state as a means of diverting discontent and venting anger towards western democracies (including Japan). Even for those who have seen the role of social actors and the challenges they pose to the authoritarian state, the prospect of Chinese nationalism is not optimistic. Chinese nationalists are regarded, above all, “populists” who “seek a powerful state capable of defending all of China’s territorial claims and securing international respect.”¹¹⁰

Only a few scholars have challenged this pessimistic conclusion, but their counter-arguments seem to be too optimistic, proposing that the nationalist movement in China is pro-democracy. Suisheng Zhao argues that nationalist activists are “liberal

¹⁰⁹ Helen Siu, 1989, *Agents and Victims in South China: Accomplices in Rural Revolution*, London: Yale University Press, p. 293.

¹¹⁰ James Reilly, 2012, *Strong Society, Smart State*, p. 113.

nationalists” who “have called for popular participation in foreign policy making.”¹¹¹ Jessica Weiss also finds that the 1985 anti-Japanese protests were related to the 1986 pro-democracy protests.¹¹² But these counter-arguments are empirically weak. Zhao’s claim lacks solid evidence, and only uses remarks from two professors to corroborate his optimistic prediction. While Weiss’s study contains much richer information, the policy implications of the 1985 protests for today are doubtful, as political context and social conditions have dramatically changed ever since.

What can we learn from such paradoxical predictions of contemporary Chinese nationalism from both pessimistic and optimistic scholars? In the view of this author, the pessimistic argument is too mechanical, and the optimistic one is too idealistic. Let us first reconsider what the pessimistic argument fails to inform. As the American historian Peter F. Sugar reminds us, “there is no corner on the globe where the leaders of the most significant or the most insignificant state do not constantly use all the means of communication (in the widest sense) at their disposal to foster nationalism, the state-supporting loyalty”.¹¹³ Therefore, the pessimistic argument does not provide us with a useful tool to understand what is happening of specific interest in China. That is, what distinguishes contemporary Chinese nationalism from state-sponsored ideology and state-solicited loyalty in other countries at other times? Because it is almost a universal state project to foster nationalism in the modern international system, it provides little insight to say that the CCP is interested in inculcating and mobilizing nationalism for the sake of its interest.

Furthermore, as discussed above, socio-political phenomena, once created, acquire a life of its own, and will evolve beyond the anticipation of the elite who are motivated to create them. Theoretically, it is unwarranted to assure that the CCP is able to keep Chinese nationalism under its control, or manipulate it to its advantage. It may turn out that the rise of Chinese nationalism does help consolidate state legitimacy in certain

¹¹¹ Suisheng Zhao, 2005, “China’s pragmatic nationalism”, p. 138.

¹¹² Jessica Weiss, 2008, Chapter 3 in “*Powerful patriots*”, pp. 42-87.

¹¹³ Cited from “Introduction” in Jonathan Unger (ed.), 1996, *Chinese Nationalism*, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E.Sharpe, p. xi

crises, but it does not necessarily prove, as analyzed above, that it is either because of the CCP's propaganda or the CCP's will. It is through a complicated and interactive socio-political process, which is largely out of the control of the state, that it arrives at certain outcome at certain time.

This means that there is no guarantee that it can arrive at the same outcome every time. In fact, for the CCP, in the second decade of the 21st century, the primary trouble is that the Chinese are too passionate about interpreting and claiming nationalism in their respective ways, not that they are unresponsive to the call of nationalism. Therefore, it is groundless to infer that China will become more authoritarian at home or more assertive abroad, simply because Chinese nationalism is on the rise. There is also no systematic evidence from which to infer whether Chinese nationalism is “good” or “bad” for international security. And this author doubts whether such evidence would ever exist.

Whereas the pessimistic argument is weak, it does not lead to the opposite conclusion that the optimistic argument should be stronger. Portraying Chinese nationalism as a form of civil participation and a force of pro-democracy movement, the optimistic view jumps quickly to an unsubstantiated conclusion. That is, Chinese nationalism is a threat to the authoritarian regime, and nationalist challenges from society are a pro-democracy force in contemporary China. The rationale behind the inference is groundless. It also does not specify the conditions under which the threat would come true. This means it is not falsifiable.

A most frequently cited reference point for such uneasy relations between Chinese nationalism and the authoritarian regime is the Republican era. The KMT's inability to resist Japan's invasion was fiercely attacked by left-wing intellectuals, which provoked demonstrations and protests against the KMT government. Written in 1932 by Chen Duxiu, the founding father of the CCP, the famous article, “From Anti-Japan to Anti-KMT (*cong fanri dao fan guomindang*)”, defended students' violence against the KMT government in the name of nationalism, and encouraged that students escalate the anti-

Japan movement to a higher stage of against the KMT government.¹¹⁴

Therefore, in the 1930s, anti-Japanese nationalism and anti-KMT movement did converge. The most commemorated event of this convergence was the December 9th Movement of 1935, when university students were demonstrating against Chiang Kai-shek's anti-communist policy and urging the government to form a united front against Japan's invasion. But such a convergence occurred in a very specific historical context – after the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931 and its ongoing encroachment of China's territory. Meanwhile, the CCP, an organized political and military force, was rising to power. By using nationalism as a powerful propaganda tool, it not only mobilized the peasant class to join in the CCP-led revolution, but also attracted the heart of leftist students and intellectuals. After the breakout of the 2nd Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the CCP's propaganda machine was “remarkably free of a ‘Communist’ quality”, but stressed “national salvation” instead.¹¹⁵

Although anti-foreign nationalism played a role in leading to the demise of the KMT, it happened in a specific context of protracted war and foreign invasion, and under a less authoritarian regime than what China is today. Unlike the KMT in the Republican time, today, the CCP has eliminated all kinds of organized political and military force. There is no alternative force that can compete with the CCP for claiming legitimacy on the basis of nationalism. And today we are living in a time of long peace. National revival has replaced national salvation to become the most powerful appeal in Chinese nationalism. That said, the relations between nationalism and regime change are not determined, depending on the broader socio-political context and the international environment. It is equally likely that anti-foreign nationalism arising from society, despite being different from state nationalism in interpretations and claims of nationalism, can help consolidate the foundation of the CCP's rule under certain circumstances.

¹¹⁴ Wan Shi (pen name of Duxiu Chen, one influential CCP founder), 23 Jan 1932, “Cong fanri dao fan Guomindang (From anti-Japan to anti-KMT),” *Re Chao (Heat Wave)*, No.7

¹¹⁵ Chalmers Johnson, 1963, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937-1945*, New York: Stanford University Press, pp. 3-4.

Even though we assume that Chinese people's discontent with the CCP will ultimately lead to the demise of the party-state, such a regime change does not necessarily guarantee that China will become a liberal democracy. As William Callahan's revealing study of competing discourses on the China Dream shows, "China's new civil society is not necessarily liberal; rather, it contains a broad spectrum of activity that ranges from promoting the fundamentalism of the China model to more cosmopolitan views of China and the world."¹¹⁶ Democracy may flourish after the collapse of the CCP, but constitutional liberalism may not. While democracy and constitutional liberalism have been interwoven in the West for almost a century, they "are coming apart in the rest of the world", and they have "never been immutably or unambiguously linked".¹¹⁷

Not only could a China after democratization be illiberal, a democratizing China could go illiberal as well. As Mansfield and Snyder report, states undergoing democratic transitions are more likely to participate in external wars than those regimes remaining unchanged or changing in an autocratic direction. This is because elites in newly democratizing states tend to use nationalist appeals to attract mass support, and the weak institutions of transitional states are not able to check these war-prone demagogues.¹¹⁸ Using a more refined research design, they further find out that the transition from an autocratic regime to one that is partly democratic is particularly dangerous.¹¹⁹

Given these theoretical and empirical backgrounds, this thesis refutes the view that policy implications of rising Chinese nationalism are determined, in whichever direction. Rather it takes a cautious and agnostic view that does not predict any policy implication of contemporary Chinese nationalism. In such a view, the predictions

¹¹⁶ William Callahan, 2013, "Officials, dissidents, and citizen intellectuals," Chapter 1 in *China Dreams: 20 Visions of the Future*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 39

¹¹⁷ Fareed Zakaria, 1997, "The rise of illiberal democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, 76(6), p. 23

¹¹⁸ Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, 1995 "Democratization and the danger of war," *International Security*, 20(1), pp. 5-38; 1995, "Democratization and war," *Foreign Affairs*, 74(3), pp. 79-97

¹¹⁹ Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, 2002, "Democratic transitions, institutional strength, and war," *International Organization*, 56(2), pp. 297-337

rendered by both pessimistic argument and optimistic argument share the same weakness that this thesis challenges. That is, they exaggerate the level of determinism in the evolution of Chinese nationalism, which actually depends upon structural changes in international society, in Chinese socio-political conditions, and upon fortuitous factors in the historical process.

This does not mean predictions are impossible. But they should be built on a more solid empirical ground and a more dynamic approach in studying China's ongoing socio-political dynamics. This is one more instance showing that the study of Chinese nationalism could and should borrow insights from other sub-fields in political sciences. In the literature on democratization, for example, there has been a call for "revised thoughts" on the requisites for democratization. As Karl and Schmitter argue, there could be no single set of preconditions for the emergence of a democratic polity, and consequently, the focus of research should shift from looking for structural conditions to strategic choices, shifting alliances, emergent processes, and sequential patterns involved in democratic transition.¹²⁰

Therefore, in understanding outcomes of democratic transition, both structural conditions and uncertainty should be weighed. "On one hand, intention and uncertainty are important even when structural conditions are controlled. On the other hand, even in midst of the tremendous uncertainty, the decisions made by various actors respond to, and are conditioned by, socio-economic structures and political institutions already present, or existing in people's memories".¹²¹ In a recent article in *Journal of Democracy*, Donald Horowitz also reconsiders the transition paradigm of democratization, and says much of the same thing – "the tyranny of starting conditions and the fortuity of early choices", according to him, are the only two variables worth emphasizing in various paths to democracy.¹²²

¹²⁰ Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe Schmitter, 1991, "Modes of transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe," *International Social Science Journal*, No.128, pp. 269-284

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 271

¹²² Larry Diamond, Francis Fukuyama, Donald L. Horowitz, Marc F. Plattner, 2014, "Reconsidering the transition paradigm," *Journal of Democracy*, 25(1), p. 89

This thesis agrees much with the same principle. In understanding policy implications and making policy recommendations for rising Chinese nationalism, both structural conditions and uncertainty should be weighed. To do so, we need to rebuild the study of contemporary Chinese nationalism on a richer empirical study of Chinese sub-populations, and their understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism. We need to investigate whether these interpretations, understandings, and claims differ from state propaganda and from each other. We need to ask where such differences come from, and how they interact with each other and state propaganda in constructing Chinese nationalism. We need to pay attention to the causal mechanisms that construct Chinese nationalism in such a way that it becomes receptive to the audience, for which state propaganda has failed in many other arenas. We need to see through the hidden power relations in the process, and to understand Chinese nationalism through the ongoing socio-political changes behind it. A more comprehensive discussion of these caveats for Chinese nationalism will be developed in Chapter 7, the conclusion part of this thesis.

The Background Context: Changing Relationship between State and Society in Contemporary China

Before moving onto the empirical chapters of the thesis, it is necessary to introduce the changing relationship between state and society in contemporary China, that is, the sociopolitical context in which the following empirical chapters are developed. The study of contemporary Chinese nationalism should not be isolated from this context, because it is the processes of social differentiation and contention during the reform period that make possible increasingly active expression of different understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism. Interacting with the authoritarian state and an opportunistic market, the processes not only determine the substances in the claims of Chinese nationalism, but also explain why nationalism has become a most attractive ideology for the Chinese to fill in the vacuum left by the bankrupt ideology of communism.

On the other hand, such expressions and their influences are both facilitated and restrained by the (party) state, the term of which will also be clarified in this part. While the thesis will provide more detail in the conclusion explaining the mechanism how top-down and bottom-up mobilizations of nationalism reach mutual accommodation in contemporary China, this introduction part offers some background information on China's (party) state and its relations with society.

This part has two sections. For the purpose of understanding the rise of diverse social actors, and their understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism, the first section disaggregates Chinese society so that the relevant processes of social differentiation and contention during the reform period are analytically presented. For the purpose of understanding the mechanisms through which these social actors are both facilitated and restrained by the state in making their claims of Chinese nationalism, the second section disaggregates the (party-) state so that the relationships between its component parts and with society, and the relations between the central and local authorities in contemporary China are clarified.

Disaggregating Chinese Society

The state-society relationship has experienced dramatic changes in China since the start of the reform in the late 1970s. Before the reform, the Chinese party-state directly controlled the means of production, monopolized distribution of all economic resources, and strictly limited the existence of private property. It was able to create a totalistic institutional structure that was built on “a web of bureaucratic organization by the late 1950s which covered all Chinese society and penetrated deep into its fabric”.¹²³ Although the scope, intensity and effect of the penetration of the party-state and the cohesion of the top leadership have invited reconsideration and debate, particularly with respect to the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and its aftermath, it does not overturn

¹²³ Franz Schurmann, 1968, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p. 17. Cited from Yanzhong Huang and Dali Yang, 2002, “Bureaucratic capacity and state-society relations in China”, *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 7(1), p. 19 (pp. 19-46).

the important insights of the general portrayal of Chinese party-state.¹²⁴

In the Maoist period, all important aspects of economic, political and social life of Chinese people were strictly regulated by, and organized around, the system of work units (*danwei*) in cities and communes in rural areas. For individuals, not only subsistence and social welfare were monopolized by the state, their political and social life was also bound to work units and communes. In cities, work units provided employees with life-long employment and welfare, including housing, child care and other kinds of service. However, not all urbanites were treated according to the same standard. Families of class enemies were deprived of opportunities of social advancement. Welfare available to individual workers was associated with loyalty to the party-state. In the countryside, the benefits of the peasantry were largely sacrificed for the sake of the urban industrial revolution and China's international competition with the U.S. and USSR. Under strict internal immigration policy and the household registration (*hukou*) system, it was very difficult for both urbanites and villagers to change employment and place of residence.

Since the reform, the state has continued withdrawing from the economic and social spheres. Although some path-breaking initiatives of the reform were created by individuals at the bottom, it is the reformist leadership (Deng Xiaoping and his comrades) and state policies that quickly seized such initiatives, and promulgated them as a reform model across the country. This was how China's rural reform started. In 1978, a small group of starving farmers in Xiaogang village (Anhui province) secretly signed an agreement to divide the land between them, which turned out to be effective for increasing the production of food. This innovation, which was illicit at the time at a huge political risk, was soon found out and upheld by the new leadership, who were enthusiastically seeking for ways to reform China's bankrupt economy after the disastrous Cultural Revolution.

¹²⁴ Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg, 1988, *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 4-9. What later landmark revisionist works have contributed is a shift of stress on the complex interaction and processes in the state-society relations.

The reform opened a long period of rapid economic and social transformation in contemporary China. In the rural sector, the communes were dismantled and the individual household-based farming system (i.e. the household-responsibility system) was set up in 1979. As a result of a series of policies, including the increase of state procurement prices for major crops and increasing availability of chemical fertilizers, China's agricultural growth during 1978-1984 was accelerated to levels several times higher than the preceding period.¹²⁵ Meanwhile, government domination of enterprise and commerce also began to ease, in both rural areas and cities. According to Minxin Pei, the percentage of China's total industrial output contributed by state-owned enterprises (SOEs) dropped from 78% to 28% between 1978 and 1999. Employment also became more diversified. While employment in SOEs accounted for 60% of non-agricultural jobs in 1978, its share fell to only about 30% in 1999.¹²⁶ The private sector has gained increasing prominence and become the main source of economic growth: "as of 2007 it contributed 66 per cent of GDP and 71 per cent of tax revenues."¹²⁷ Although state policy started to shift in favor of cities in the 1990s, redirecting national resources from the countryside to big cities like Shanghai - which is regarded as counterproductive in terms of entrepreneurial spirit and poverty reduction in the countryside¹²⁸ - China's economic achievement in both cities and the countryside during the past three decades has been unprecedented and stunning.

As important as growing economic development and differentiation is the increasing space for social autonomy and political activism unleashed from the totalistic control of the party-state. First of all, mass social mobility and nationwide physical mobility became possible in the 1980s. The restrictive policies banning certain classes from upward social mobility in the Maoist period were lifted. Although the household

125 Justin Yifu Lin, 1992, "Rural reforms and agricultural growth in China", *The American Economic Review*, 82(1), pp. 34-51

126 Minxin Pei, "Changing state-society relations in China", <http://www.ceibs.edu/ase/Documents/EuroChinaForum/minxin.htm>

127 Jie Chen and Bruce J. Dickson, 2008, "Allies of the state: democratic support and regime support among China's private entrepreneurs," *The China Quarterly*, No.196, p. 780.

128 Yasheng Huang, 2008, *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the State*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

registration system was not abolished, internal immigration became much easier so that people (both urbanites and villagers) could use their skills to find better-paying and more promising jobs across the country. “[T]he existence of alternative lucrative income opportunities ...has restructured the aspirations of the entire rural labour force. Approximately 60 million rural residents migrate annually in search of higher paying jobs. Some migrate to cities, others to richer, more industrialized rural areas...”¹²⁹ In cities, the blossoming economy has created a large base of middle class. “From 1995 to 2005, the population of China’s middle class, defined here as households with annual incomes ranging from \$6,000 to \$25,000 - grew from close to zero in 1995 to an estimated 87 million in 2005.”¹³⁰

Consequently a relatively independent civil society began to emerge, and the relationship between state and society has been restructured. Reflected in the scholarly literature, these changes have led to the blossom of the society-centered paradigm and the state-society model, that challenge the dominance of the state-centered paradigm in the China field, shifting “the focus to relatively autonomous markets, culture, ideas, class, social groups, or even individuals”.¹³¹ As an indicator, the number of associations grew dramatically after the beginning of the reform. While only few state-sponsored associations were active during the Cultural Revolution, the number grew quickly after 1978. In Jiangsu province (one of China’s wealthiest provinces), for example, only 65 registered provincial associations were found before 1978, while the number soared to 254 between 1978 and 1985, and 268 between 1986 and 1992.¹³²

China’s civil society is not completely independent of the state. Many civil society organizations in China do not meet the Western criteria of non-governmental groups.

¹²⁹ Jean Oi, 1999, “Two decades of rural reform in China: an overview and assessment”, *The China Quarterly*, No.159, Special Issue: The People's Republic of China after 50 Years, p. 620.

¹³⁰ Kheehong Song and Allison Cui, 1 January 2009, “Understanding China’s middle class”, *China Business Review*, <http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/understanding-chinas-middle-class/>, accessed on 5 September 2015

¹³¹ Bruce Gilley, 2011, “Paradigms of Chinese politics: kicking society back out”, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 20(70), p. 520.

¹³² Cited from Minxin Pei, 1998, “The growth of civil society in China”, Chapter 17 in James A. Dorn (ed.), *China in the New Millennium: Market Reforms and Social Development*, Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, p. 247.

However, the emergence of civil society “exerts a critical impact on political outcomes ... often through a close ‘embedded’ relationship with the state”.¹³³ It has “created new opportunities for public participation in the state’s policy making process.... with greater access to information and more sophisticated communication capabilities, there has been a continuous expansion of rights consciousness among Chinese people.”¹³⁴ The unique status of China’s civil society is partly a reflection of the party-state’s willingness and efforts to readjust the state-society relationship, so that it could delegate some state power and transfer some management functions to the designated social organizations in order to achieve better social governance.¹³⁵ However, this dynamics between state and society in expanding civil sphere should not be misinterpreted - in either direction.

On the one hand, the CCP’s permission or initiative to encourage the establishment of civil society organizations does not mean that the party-state has been moving towards political liberalization. Rather it “is fully aware of the political risk that accompanies the rise of Chinese [civil society organizations], and has spared no effort to dictate the outcomes of China’s political development.” By co-opting new stakeholders such as the middle class and engaging civil society organizations in addressing common social issues, the CCP has been “utilizing China’s social organizations to maintain political legitimacy and social stability.”¹³⁶ The effectiveness of the CCP’s co-optation is strengthened by the composition of China’s middle class, which is a path-dependent outcome of the reform. The formation of China’s middle class follows two distinct paths, that is, either “through the state institutions, where the middle class is employed in government and party agencies, state-owned enterprises, collective owned enterprises, and public organizations”, or “through the market institutions, where the middle class is

¹³³ Bruce Gilley, 2011, “Paradigms of Chinese politics”, p. 521.

¹³⁴ Sheng Ding, 2014, “Analyzing the impacts of civil society organizations on China’s political modernization,” Chapter 5 in Sujian Guo (ed.), *State-Society Relations and Governance in China*, Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, pp. 97-98.

¹³⁵ Keping Yu, 29 Oct 2014, “Restructuring the relations between the state, market and society in China”, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/political-social-development/restructuring-the-relationship-between-the-state-the-market-and-society-in-china/>”, accessed on 5 Sep 2015

¹³⁶ Sheng Ding, 2014, “Analyzing the impacts of civil society organizations on China’s political modernization”, p. 98

employed in the private sector (e.g., private enterprises, foreign-related enterprises, and private organizations) or self-employed (e.g., self-employed laborers)".¹³⁷ According to a survey conducted in five cities in 2008, "about a half of the Chinese middle class is employed in the public sector". The finding is consistent with some earlier studies, and it confirms that "the Chinese state played an important role in creating and shaping the middle class".¹³⁸

On the other hand, a one-sided picture of the party-state's attempt to co-opt emerging civil society risks obscuring "the capacity of the 'co-opted groups' to influence the policy-making process or to pursue the interests of their members." There are two main reasons for this caveat. First, the state's "capacity to realize this control is increasingly limited", because it lacks financial means and human resources to implement controls, and because local governments may pursue goals that are in conflict with national policy. Second, social organizations can devise "strategies to negotiate with the state a relationship that maximizes their members' interests or that circumvents or deflects state intrusion."¹³⁹ As a result, social organizations can always make successful policy input, obtain their members' interests or achieve organizational goals through "negotiation, evasion or feigned compliance".¹⁴⁰

While the continuing expansion of rights consciousness among Chinese people cannot be properly heeded and institutionalized, it leads to social contention to express grievances and make collective bargaining. From the 1990s to the 2000s, popular resistance grew dramatically in China. According to Jianrong Yu, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), while the number of incidents of protest was only 8,709 in 1993, it soared to 90,000 in 2006, of which more than 75% were lodged by workers and villagers.¹⁴¹ The predominant model of studying social

¹³⁷ Chunlong Lu, 2013, "China's middle class: unified or fragmented?" *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 14(1), p. 131.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

¹³⁹ Tony Saich, 2000, "Negotiating the state: the development of social organizations in China", *The China Quarterly*, No.161, p. 125.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

¹⁴¹ Jianrong Yu, 2008, "Gongzhi weiquan yu fazhi weiquan: zhongguo zhengzhi fazhan de wenti he chulu (Authoritarianism of collegiality and authoritarianism of legality: problems and solutions in

movements in Western societies is the political process model, which is composed of three conceptual tools – political opportunities (and constraints), mobilizing structures, and framing alignment (and processes).¹⁴² Though useful as a heuristic tool kit, the model is too static and structuralist to study contentious politics in the context of contemporary China. As China specialist Elizabeth Perry points out, it is close attention to sentiments and acute sensitivity to power relations, rather than highly professionalized works, that should guide the study of social movements.¹⁴³ Even Doug McAdam, the father of the political process model, now encourages using more dynamic frameworks to incorporate “the unfolding patterns of interaction between the various parties to contention” in the overarching structural model.¹⁴⁴

Therefore, in studying contentious politics in contemporary China, indigenous concepts, frameworks and empirical works are often more useful than general social movement theories for understanding social differentiation and contention. During the last decade China scholars have contributed to a spate of empirical work on labor politics, villagers’ protests, student movements, urbanites’ property rights movements, and environmental protests, along with other forms of popular resistance.¹⁴⁵ Among these works, the

China’s political development)”, *Dangdai Shijie Shehui Zhuyi Wenti (Issues of Contemporary World Socialism)*, No.4, pp. 17-25.

¹⁴² The political process model was first theorized in Doug McAdam’s classic work on American civil rights movement, see Doug McAdam, 1999 (1982), *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (2nd ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press. See also: Sidney Tarrow, 1998 (1994), *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (2nd ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 1996, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁴³ Elizabeth J. Perry, 2008, “Diceng shehui yu kangzhengxing zhengzhi (Underclass society and contentious politics)”, *Dong Nan Xue Shu (Southeast Academic Research)*, No.3, pp. 4-8.

¹⁴⁴ Doug McAdam, 1999 (1982), *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (2nd ed.), p. xiv.

¹⁴⁵ For labor politics, see: Ching Kwan Lee, 2007, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China’s Rustbelt and Sunbelt*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press; William Hurst, 2004, “Understanding contentious collective action by Chinese laid-off workers: the importance of regional political economy”, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 39(2), pp. 94-120; Yongshun Cai, 2006, *State and Laid-Off Workers in Reform China: The Silence and Collective Action of the Retrenched*, London: Routledge. For villagers’ protest, see Kevin O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, 2006, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press. For student movement, see Dingxin Zhao, 2001, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. For environmental protest, see Peter Ho and Richard Louis Edmonds (eds.), 2007, *China’s*

concept of “rightful resistance” generates a particularly useful framework for understanding the dynamics between protestors and segments of state apparatus in China. Defined as “a form of popular contention that operates near the boundary of authorized channels”, rightful resistance “employs the rhetoric and commitments of the powerful to curb the exercise of power, hinges on locating and exploiting divisions within the state, and relies on mobilizing support from the wider public.”¹⁴⁶ Similar to the idea of “consentful contention” theorized in the context of former German Democratic Republic¹⁴⁷, the value of rightful resistance is in that Chinese protestors, situated in a disadvantageous position vis-a-vis state power and corrupt state agencies, can take the state as its word to “beat the authorities at their own game”.¹⁴⁸

The concept of rightful resistance illuminates the study of contentious politics in contemporary China in two ways. First it treats the state in particular as stratified and fragmented, the structural characteristic of which provides opportunity space for social and political contention under an authoritarian regime. Second it points to a symbiotic relationship between state and society even at times of contention, because the opportunity space for contentious politics also constitutes the base for the reproduction of state power. For example, in rural resistance, China scholars already find that “those officials and administrative appellants ...cooperatively lubricate the governing machine in the new era.”¹⁴⁹ When both villagers and local cadres attempt to exploit the blurring boundary of public and private spheres, the cadres can always take advantage of personal ties and common sense to implement state power, which otherwise would be

Embedded Activism: Opportunities and Constraints of a Social Movement, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge. For general edited books, see: Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden (eds.), 2000, *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict, and Resistance*, London; New York: Routledge; Kevin O’Brien (ed.), 2008, *Popular Protest in China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

¹⁴⁶ Kevin O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, 2006, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ Jeremy Brooke Straughn, 2005, “Taking the state at its word: the arts of consentful contention in the German Democratic Republic”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 110(6), pp. 1598–1650.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1626.

¹⁴⁹ Xing Ying, 2000, “Dahe yimin shangfang de gushi: cong ‘taoge shuofa’ dao ‘baiping lishun’ (From ‘asking for a statement’ to ‘balancing relations (*baiping lishui*): a story of a hydroelectric station area in southwest in China)”, PhD Dissertation, The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, p. 150.

impossible or very costly to implement.¹⁵⁰ Although most of these insights derive from social contention triggered by economic grievances (e.g. layoff of labor, pension arrears, insufficient compensation for seizures of land, property demolitions, or corruption in village elections), they also shed light on state-society dynamics in understanding the rise and development of nationalism in contemporary China. Accordingly, the study of Chinese nationalism should not be separated from this background context, because it coexists with other forms of popular politics under the rule of the party-state.

Disaggregating the Party-State

In order to understand the mechanisms of state-society dynamics, through which social actors are both facilitated and restrained in making their claims of Chinese nationalism, it is necessary to have an understanding of the relationships between the Chinese party-state's component parts and with society, and the relations between the central and local authorities in China. This section addresses these issues.

Before the reform, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was dominated by government officials, workers and peasants. With the processes of economic and social differentiation after the reform, the CCP has tried to absorb new social strata that represent the advanced force of production and new culture in order to expand its social base. In 2001, the then Chinese President Jiang Zemin declared on the 80th birthday of the Party that “private entrepreneurs, private business owners, self-employed artists, white-collar professionals employed by foreign companies and joint ventures are welcome to join the Party”.¹⁵¹ This declaration, along with the decision on enhancing the Party's governing capacity in 2004, is most indicative of the CCP's proactive pragmatism in adapting to new circumstances.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Liping Sun and Yuhua Guo, 2000, “‘Ruanying jianshi’: zhengshi quanli feizhengshi yunzuo de guocheng fenxi (‘Carrot and stick’: process analysis of the informal operation of formal power)”, *Qinghua Shehuixue Pinglun (Tsinghua Sociology Review)*, Special Edition, Amoy: Lujiang Publishing Company.

¹⁵¹ Ming Xia, “The Communist Party of China and the ‘party-state’”, *China Rises Companion*, <http://www.nytimes.com/ref/college/coll-china-politics-002.html>

¹⁵² David Shambaugh, 2008, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Berkeley: University of California Press.

The Chinese party-state is an autonomous entity. It should not be reduced to just a superstructure reflecting the interests of an economic or social base. Although the Party (i.e. CCP) and state are nominally separate, it is the CCP that ultimately controls the state. This kind of regime is typically referred to as a party-state.¹⁵³ Like all single-party states, the CCP has the right to form the government as a single political party, outlawing all opposition parties. The relationship between the CCP and the government is thus at the core of China's political system. Generally speaking, the CCP "leads the work of the government (usually called by Chinese the 'state', *guojia*), but remains distinct from the government."¹⁵⁴ In this thesis, I use the CCP (Party), state and party-state as synonymous terms when it refers to national authority at the center. When it refers to authority at the local level, the terminology of local government is used.

The nominal highest legislative branch of the Chinese government is the National People's Congress (NPC). However, because the CCP derives its ruling authority from the success of the 1949 Revolution rather than legislative processes, it is the CCP that sets up the guidelines and policies for the NPC to carry out, exercises authority over the routine work of the NPC Standing Committee and those at lower levels, appoints cadres to important positions in the congresses and exercises authority over the election work. The State Council is the executive branch of the Chinese government, and the Chinese judiciary branch functions more as a department of the executive. The CCP leaders simultaneously occupy all important positions in the executive and judiciary institutions.¹⁵⁵ At the apex, the CCP "is headed by the Standing Committee of the Politburo, the Politburo, and the Central Committee At provincial, municipal, and county levels there are similar leadership bodies (CCP committees) and staff offices.

¹⁵³ Teresa Wright, 2015, "Party and state, or party-state?" Chapter 2 in *Party and State in post-Mao China*, Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity, pp. 18-40.

¹⁵⁴ Susan L. Shirk, 1992, "The Chinese political system and the political strategy of economic reform", Chapter 3 in Kenneth G. Lieberthal and David M. Lampton (eds.), *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 60.
<http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft0k40035t&chunk.id=d0e59&toc.depth=1&oc.id=d0e59&brand=ucpress>

¹⁵⁵ Sujian Guo, 2001, "The Party-State relationship in post-Mao China," *China Report*, 37(3), pp. 301-315

Every agency of the national, provincial, and county governments has within it a Party committee.”¹⁵⁶

While the CCP can appoint and occupy all important positions at various levels of the government, its monopoly over the processes of decision making and policy implementation is not guaranteed. Although there seems to be “a unified chain of command at the apex of the Chinese political system”, as Susan Shirk argues, the authority structure between the CCP and the government is more like “a manifestation of the delegation relationship” between the two, “not evidence of the lack of boundaries between Party and government.”¹⁵⁷ That is, the CCP acts as the “principal” and the government as the “agent”. This brings up all possible principal-agent problems in this authority relationship. The CCP’s authority over the government is based primarily on its authority to appoint and promote government officials, to set the general policy line and oversee the work of the government, and to remold the ideology of the entire society through its control of the media.¹⁵⁸ However the CCP has never been able to dictate and unify agents’ fragmented motivations and interests that may be different from, and even opposed, to the party-state as such (per se).

It used to be believed that policy directives by the CCP at the center were to be implemented unconditionally at various levels, but empirical research since the 1980s has found this is not to be true. Rather “authority below the very peak of the Chinese political system is fragmented and disjointed ... The fragmentation, moreover, grew increasingly pronounced under the reforms beginning in the late 1970s.”¹⁵⁹ Therefore, contrary to the predictions of the “rationality model”, policy outcomes are not “coordinated responses to perceived policy problems, in light of the ideological

¹⁵⁶ Susan L. Shirk, 1992, “The Chinese political system and the political strategy of economic reform”, pp. 60-61

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 60 (see footnote 1)

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 61

¹⁵⁹ Kenneth G. Lieberthal, 1992, “Introduction: The ‘fragmented authoritarianism’ model and its limitations”, Chapter 1 in Kenneth G. Lieberthal and David M. Lampton (eds.), *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 8.

<http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft0k40035t&chunk.id=d0e59&toc.depth=1&oc.id=d0e59&brand=ucpress>

proclivities of the prevailing policy makers”.¹⁶⁰ As Lieberthal and Oksenberg argue, the rationality model ignores the constraints on the Chinese leadership, not taking into consideration the limited information, the ambiguities and ambivalences of the leaders’ value preferences, and the time pressure they confront in evaluating alternatives. It also neglects “the pursuit of and struggle over power as a core interest in politics”, uncritically accepting the notion “that policy is shaped primarily at the top”.¹⁶¹

For the CCP, there simply never existed “a cohesive leadership group in smooth control of its society”, even under the charismatic leadership of Mao Tse-tung. Rather political conflict and tension have been endemic in Communist China.¹⁶² The end of the Mao era and the start of the reform complicated the problem of fragmentation and disjointedness. Compared with the Soviet Union, which was more centralized because the Stalinist purges had decimated political elites at the regional level, the CCP’s strength at the provincial level since its establishment provided an opportunity for the reform-oriented leadership to take the path of administrative decentralization.¹⁶³

Before the reform, the CCP relied on Party “leading groups” or “fractions” (*dang zu*) that were established in all government agencies for acquiring information about government actions and administering the work of the agency. Under this arrangement, the CCP “actually substituted itself for the government”, and the “organizational lines between the Party and government blurred”.¹⁶⁴ The blurred relationship between the CCP and the government began to change in the 1980s, because “decentralization of decision-making authority was a key reform initiative”, through which “Beijing seeks to

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 12

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 13 and p. 17

¹⁶² Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg, 1988, *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 7.

¹⁶³ Susan L. Shirk, 1992, “The Chinese political system and the political strategy of economic reform”, p. 82

¹⁶⁴ Susan L. Shirk, 1992, “The Chinese political system and the political strategy of economic reform”, pp. 62-65. According to Shirk, “the Party leading group within a government agency is much more powerful than the Party committee ... The Party committee only supervises the lives and thoughts of the Party members within that agency. But the Party leading group has authority over the non-Party bureaucrats as well as those who are Party members.”

work with lower levels rather than to dictate to them”.¹⁶⁵ Hence “[t]he Party delegated more responsibility to the government bureaucracy, especially in economic policy-making... At the provincial level, specialized Party departments overlapping their counterpart government departments were abolished.”¹⁶⁶ By reducing the use of coercion, laying stress on feasibility studies, encouraging government organs to become self-supportive, loosening the use of ideology as an instrument of control, and decentralizing personnel management, these reformative developments “have produced increased bargaining in the Chinese bureaucratic system.”¹⁶⁷

Bargaining processes further transformed government departments and lower levels of government from agents of delegation to stakeholders, as they endowed various organs with “mutual veto power” in the search for consensus to develop projects. “This consensus, in turn, required extensive and often elaborate deals to be struck through various types of bargaining stratagems.”¹⁶⁸ This fragmentation and decentralization has also led to local protectionism, compartmentalized institutionalization of power, and rampant corruption, which could harm both prosperity and governance of the party-state. At departmental levels, various administrative departments are both law implementers and lawmakers. As it is “within the scope of authority of the administrative organs to interpret and implement” the general legal provisions promulgated by the NPC and the State Council, the administrative departments are incentivized to use their de facto legislative power to legalize their own interests. Sometimes their “discretionary power is so abused as to become a violation of law.”¹⁶⁹ At local levels, local governments were given much greater power over the local economy and resources as well as much greater responsibilities for delivering public service. Due to considerable regional variations in economic revenues, many local governments without a sufficient tax base

¹⁶⁵ Kenneth G. Lieberthal, 1992, “Introduction: The ‘fragmented authoritarianism’ model and its limitations”, p. 6

¹⁶⁶ Susan L. Shirk, 1992, “The Chinese political system and the political strategy of economic reform”, pp. 65-66

¹⁶⁷ Kenneth G. Lieberthal, 1992, “Introduction: The ‘fragmented authoritarianism’ model and its limitations”, p. 9

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Guangbin Yang, 2014, “Decentralization and central-local relations in reform-era China”, Chapter 8 in Kenneth G. Lieberthal, Cheng Li and Yu Keping (eds.), *China’s Political Development: Chinese and American Perspectives*, pp. 259-260.

to fund their operations turned to cut public services or impose arbitrary taxes and fees on farmers, which has been a major source of conflict and contention for the party-state.¹⁷⁰

Despite the fragmentation and decentralization of the ruling authority, it is not accurate to conclude that in general the party-state has been weakened in the reform era. Here are three of the most important reasons. First, it is a general strategy of the Chinese leadership to drive reform initiatives by “playing to the provinces”, incentivizing the local officials, and circumventing the central bureaucracy controlled by rival leaders. This is the rationale behind the radical fiscal decentralization introduced by Deng Xiaoping and many of the other reform policies in the 1980s. In one word, “administrative decentralization became a key element in the political strategy of economic reform.”¹⁷¹

For the Chinese Communist regime that had just ended the Cultural Revolution, it was more urgent to fulfill such governmental functions as developing the economy and providing public goods and services, than curbing corruption and centralizing authority in the economic sphere. It is also evident, in hindsight, that ensuring economic growth and stability has been one of the pillars that underpin the current regime. In the local political systems characterized by fragmentation of authority and the absence of rule of law, patronage networks have performed functions that are not accomplished by professional modern bureaucracies at certain times of transition. Although local officials have competing interests that are different from, and even opposed, to the party-state per se, in the process of competing for access to state power and meeting the CCP’s basic policy dictates, their patronage networks also serve to coordinate across agencies, mobilize funding, implement projects, and provide a supplementary set of rules for facilitating local governance.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Ben Hillman, 2014, “Introduction: Studying the local state in China,” in *Patronage and Power: Local State Networks and Party-State Resilience in China*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, pp. 1-12.

¹⁷¹ Susan L. Shirk, 1992, “The Chinese political system and the political strategy of economic reform”, pp. 82-84.

¹⁷² Ben Hillman, 2014, “Introduction: Studying the local state in China”.

Second, although decision making processes and actual policy implementation are affected “in significant fashion” by the decentralization and fragmentation of the bureaucracies, the system still retained “important elements of coherence”. The processes of research, debates and bargaining have contributed to the formation of “policy communities” built upon particular projects and issues that cut across formal bureaucratic lines. In general, the central authority is not “helpless”, the departments of the bureaucracies are not “unable to cooperate”, and the locales are not “all-powerful”.¹⁷³ It is simply the case that the ruling authority in Communist China, as in liberal democracies, is constrained by bureaucratic politics and informal networks characterized by the structures and processes of the political system.

Last but not least, the level and intensity of decentralization is uneven in political and economic spheres. In broad terms, China’s national political organizations can be grouped into six functional clusters: economic bureaucracies, propaganda and education bureaucracies, organization and personnel bureaucracies, civilian coercive bureaucracies, military system, and communist party territorial committees.¹⁷⁴ The strategic initiative of decentralization mostly took place in certain clusters, which can increase efficiency and revenues relying upon the market. This is why some scholars characterize the Chinese regime as “political centralism and economic federalism”¹⁷⁵ or “federalism in a unitary state”.¹⁷⁶

In other clusters, such as China’s military system, the relationship between the CCP and the cluster is more centralized. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is directly subordinate to the CCP, and its leading body is co-equal in rank with the executive branch of the government. The PLA not only functions as the security provider against external threats, but also has been involved in domestic political rivalry in the history of

¹⁷³ Kenneth G. Lieberthal, 1992, “Introduction: The ‘fragmented authoritarianism’ model and its limitations”, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 2-3.

¹⁷⁵ Guangbin Yang, 2014, “Decentralization and central-local relations in reform-era China”, p. 265

¹⁷⁶ Susan L. Shirk, 1992, “The Chinese political system and the political strategy of economic reform”, p. 82

communist China.¹⁷⁷ The relationship between the PLA and the CCP is vital to the survival of the Chinese party-state. As in other Communist militaries, “there is an essential symbiosis between the army and the ruling communist party.” Although sometimes the CCP asserts greater control over the PLA and at other times the PLA becomes more politically assertive, “because of the essential symbiosis, militaries generally do not engineer coups d’état against their ruling parties (although they may become involved in intra-party factional maneuvering).”¹⁷⁸

Unlike the economic initiatives in the early reform period, the key organizational reform of the PLA was steps towards recentralization in the 1980s. “[T]he eleven military regions were amalgamated into seven in order to improve the centralization of command and control from the General Staff Department in Beijing...the Central Military Commission (CMC) ordered all main and regional force units placed under GSD control (the latter had previously been controlled by military regional commanders). As a result, the movement of any forces of brigade size or larger must be authorized specifically by the GSD, and in no case can troops be moved across military region boundaries without CMC approval.”¹⁷⁹ Moreover, the PLA’s decade-long commercial activity since the 1980s was formally stopped by the CMC in 1998.¹⁸⁰ The issue of the accountability of the PLA to the state, instead of the CCP, was first brought into debate in the 1980s, and resurfaced in 1997 when the National Defense Law was passed in the National People’s Congress.¹⁸¹ However, these initiatives have never challenged the CCP’s essential control over the PLA, despite the continuing professionalization of the officer corps and efforts to legislate government authority over the PLA.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Kenneth G. Lieberthal, 1992, “Introduction: The ‘fragmented authoritarianism’ model and its limitations”, p. 3.

¹⁷⁸ David Shambaugh, 2002, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p.12.

¹⁷⁹ David Shambaugh, 1999, “The People’s Liberation Army and the People’s Republic at 50: reform at last,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 159, Special Issue: The People’s Republic of China after 50 Years, p. 664.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 664-665.

¹⁸¹ David Shambaugh, 1999, “The People’s Liberation Army and the People’s Republic at 50: reform at last,” p. 667.

¹⁸² David Shambaugh, 2002, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects*,

In recent years, some new elements have triggered a wave of reflection on the evolving PLA-CCP relationship. Frequent reports have surfaced of the PLA's purported actions without civilian authorization, the Party leaders currying favoring with the military, and the increasing exposure of PLA officers in the open media. These changes have split observers of Chinese politics. While some attribute these trends to the increasing influence of the PLA on a wide range of policy issues, Saunders and Scobell believe that PLA influence on Chinese policymaking has been overestimated. However, this debate does not deviate from the basic consensus that the PLA remains a "party-army" that is responsive to orders from the CCP rather than from the government (e.g., the State Council and the National People's Congress).¹⁸³

Despite remaining a party-army, the structural changes in PLA-CCP relations – such as the changing character of the CCP leadership, the bifurcation of civilian and military elites, the professionalization of the officer corps and the formation of a military corporate identity, the emergence of new avenues and an active opinion market - have affected the PLA's role in policymaking and the maneuvering room of the PLA. This is why even Saunders and Scobell admit that today's PLA has more influence on military issues and has become more actively engaged in policy debates on mixed civil-military issues, while its influence on political issues has declined.¹⁸⁴ The problem for Saunders and Scobell is that the nature of the issues is not easy to adjudicate in real world politics as in academic discussion. In particular, the category in-between (i.e. mixed civil-military issues) is broad, deserving most attention at a time of pluralism in Chinese policymaking, when informal and indirect channels endow the PLA and its officer corps more leverage and autonomy in exerting influence at the operational level and through unconventional means. Chinese military specialist You Ji also concludes that there is a fine division of labour in foreign affairs between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)

Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 51-54.

¹⁸³ Phillip Saunders and Andrew Scobell (eds.), 2015, *PLA Influence on China's National Security Policymaking*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, pp. 1-2.

¹⁸⁴ Phillip Saunders and Andrew Scobell, 2015, "Introduction: PLA influence on China's national security policymaking" in Phillip Saunders and Andrew Scobell (eds.), *PLA Influence on China's National Security Policymaking*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, pp. 1-30.

and the PLA, with the former in charge of generic foreign affairs and daily diplomacy and the latter responsible for security/military-related foreign affairs. But the problem, as he admits, is that this division of labour over diplomatic issues is thin, and hard to demarcate for outsiders.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, even though the PLA does not deviate from the Party line at the strategic level, it is likely that the influence of the PLA will cross the thin division and disturb the status quo. As Eric Hagt argues, the PLA's focus on strategic objectives can complicate overall Chinese diplomacy and produce outcomes incongruent with those of the foreign policy apparatus.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ You Ji, 2014, "The PLA and diplomacy: unraveling myths about the military role in foreign policy making," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 23(86), pp. 236-54.

¹⁸⁶ Eric Hagt, 2015, "The rise of PLA diplomacy", Chapter 8 in Phillip Saunders and Andrew Scobell (eds.), *PLA Influence on China's National Security Policymaking*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, pp. 218-247.

Chapter 3 Competing Claims for War Suffering: Chinese Victims, Intellectuals and the State

It is assumed that war suffering in the 2nd Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945, a.k.a. the anti-Japanese war of resistance in China) should have been forgotten in Chinese society, as six decades have passed since the end of the war. Following the logic of this assumption, it seems natural that the rising claims for war suffering in recent years cannot be reasonably explained, unless they were produced and manipulated by the Chinese government. This is because, in the CCP's patriotic campaign, which attempts to fill in the ideological vacuum after the collapse of communism, one of the major themes is to stress war suffering of the Chinese people in the anti-Japanese war.

After the collapse of communist ideology, especially after the 1989 Tiananmen crisis, the CCP seized nationalism as an ideological instrument in order to rebuild legitimacy of rule.¹⁸⁷ This top-down process is not only instrumental, but constructive. The party-state has been actively engaging in remaking the collective memory of history, particular the traumatic memory of the anti-Japanese war. In this process, the account of official history has been changing upon political concerns of the time.¹⁸⁸ Through selectively stressing some aspects of the war and neglecting some others, China's remembering of the anti-Japanese war has been reshaped.¹⁸⁹

In recent years, the new remembering of the anti-Japanese war has become a driving force for anti-Japanese nationalism in China, which is constructed on victimhood of the Chinese people. According to Yinan He, this phenomenon is explainable by the theory of "elite mythmaking",¹⁹⁰. As suggested in the subtitle of her article, "Elite mythmaking, mass reaction, and Sino-Japanese relations", it is the political elite that have played a

¹⁸⁷ Suisheng Zhao, 2004, *A Nation-State by Construction*; Christopher Hughes, 2006, "After 1989: nationalism and the new global elite," Chapter 2 in *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era*, pp. 42-69.

¹⁸⁸ James Reilly, 2011, "Remember history, not hatred: collective remembrance of China's war of resistance to Japan," *Modern Asian Studies*, 45(2), pp. 463-90.

¹⁸⁹ Parks Coble, 2007, "China's 'new remembering' of the anti-Japanese war of resistance, 1937-1945."

¹⁹⁰ Yinan He, 2009, *The Search for Reconciliation*.

dominant role in constructing this new myth, while other social actors are regarded as a passive and undifferentiated “mass” who “react” to the elite’s mythmaking.¹⁹¹

This chapter argues against both myths of the above. Through original fieldwork in a Chinese rural community, it shows first that war suffering has its own life. It has survived in Chinese society much longer than is assumed. Second, the emergence of a new remembering of the anti-Japanese war of resistance is not a narrowly top-down process. It was neither initiated, nor was it dominated, by the Chinese political elite. Instead, it was through joint endeavors of Chinese war victims, intellectuals and the state, that contemporary Chinese nationalism has been reconstructed on the victimhood of the Chinese nation in the anti-Japanese war.

State-Society Dynamics in Producing a New Remembering of War

This process of producing a new remembering of war bears two characteristics worth noting for understanding the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism, which has been neglected in the existing literature. First, the actors who have constructed the new remembering have different and sometimes conflictual understandings, interpretations, and claims of Chinese nationalism. Although Chinese suffering in the anti-Japanese war is emphasized in the CCP’s patriotic campaign, claims for war suffering have very different origins, motives, and meanings, all of which ultimately contribute to the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. It is exactly because of, not despite, the existence of such discrepancies that makes Chinese nationalism a successful ideology for political mobilization, which otherwise would not have become possible through the party-state’s propaganda.

The party-state regards Japanese wartime crimes and war suffering of the Chinese people as a useful instrument for mass mobilization, a good source of political legitimacy, and a bargaining chip in international negotiations. Its major goal is to

¹⁹¹ Yinan He, 2007, “Remembering and forgetting the war: elite mythmaking, mass reaction, and Sino-Japanese relations, 1950-2006.”

monopolize the tool of anti-Japanese nationalism, and maintain its interactions with Japan as flexible as possible, not to seek rectification for the Chinese people from the Japanese government. Therefore the CCP has tried to keep alive the theme of Sino-Japanese friendship in propaganda. By blaming war crimes and its denial on a handful of Japanese jingoists and rightists, it reinforces the “myth of the military clique” that the Japanese government and the majority of the Japanese people did not bear responsibilities for the war. This was exactly the myth made by the Japanese conservative elites in the 1950s,¹⁹² who tried to whitewash Japan’s war record and the war responsibilities of its political and economic elites.

However, this discourse of war suffering is not what is accepted in popular discourse. In the post-reform era, the state is no longer able to monopolize the use of war suffering to advance its political agenda. Other actors, particularly intellectuals and local activists, are major agents of changing the Chinese vernacular memory of the war of resistance. They help bring the unheeded war suffering of rural communities to the national audience. The intellectuals’ claim for war suffering is different from both of the state and local activists. On one hand, their rhetoric of moralization clashes with the state’s discourse of nationalism, given their emphasis on civil rights and humanity. On the other hand, their rhetoric also conflicts with the communal interests of subalterns who place more value on material compensation. Local activists are usually strongmen or capable men who are resourceful in political capital, social networks or intellect in the community. For them, the major concern is to seek attention and redress for their community.

The second characteristic is that, though these understandings, interpretations, and claims are different and competing with each other, this does not necessarily lead to the naive conclusion that the engagement of local activists (including war victims) and intellectuals presents a picture of authentically and autonomously “bottom-up” dynamics and sentiments. The historical memories produced and reproduced still bear

¹⁹² Yinan He, 2011, “Comparing postwar (West) German-Polish and Sino-Japanese reconciliation: a bridge too far?”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 63(7), pp. 1157- 1194.

the traces of the party-state.

This is for two reasons. On the one hand, these nationalist activists live in an authoritarian environment in which public space for expressing dissident voices is limited. As a result, the possibility for social actors to compete with the state, to some extent, relies on their ability to seize the discourse propagated by the state in order to advance their own claims. This is a dynamic of “mutual capture”. While the state is captured by social actors to commit to what it pays lip service to in the state propaganda, the kind of claims that social actors are able to make is also captured by what is propagated by the state.

Such a dynamic can be seen in various forms of contentious politics. In studying rural resistance in contemporary China, O’Brien and Li propose the concept of “rightful resistance” to describe such dynamics between social protestors and state apparatus. It is “a form of popular contention that operates near the boundary of authorized channels, employs the rhetoric and commitments of the powerful to curb the exercise of power, hinges on locating and exploiting divisions within the state, and relies on mobilizing support from the wider public.”¹⁹³ The idea of “consentful contention”, developed by Straughn, is a similar conceptual tool. As he finds, in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), there existed “various nonradical practices of contention under the old regime...that used performances of *consent* to contest state directives”.¹⁹⁴

At the core of both concepts is that dissidents in an authoritarian regime, despite being in a disadvantageous position in their power relation to the state, can resort to legal rights, central policies, values, principle or precedents which are propagated (yet not guaranteed in practice) by the government, in order to object to the abuse of power in governance and defend their rights. The nature of both concepts is taking the state as its

¹⁹³ Kevin O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, 2006, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ Jeremy Brooke Straughn, 2005, “‘Taking the state at its word’: the arts of consentful contention in the German Democratic Republic,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 110(6), p. 1599.

word in order to “beat the authorities at their own game”.¹⁹⁵ In fact, the dynamic mechanism revealed in these concepts has universal application, travelling beyond socialist or authoritarian political contexts. It includes, just to name a few, contentious politics of the blacks struggling for residency rights in apartheid South Africa, workers campaigning for equal pay in modern United States, peasants seeking for redress in Egypt on the eve of British colonial rule, and numerous cases in imperial and republican China.¹⁹⁶

However, taking the state as its word has cost as well, because it not only provides an opportunity space for people to make different voices, but strengthen the productive power of the party-state. As Elizabeth Perry points out, contentious politics in the form of rightful resistance, strengthens rather than weakens the traditional Chinese concept of “right”, which lacks counter-hegemonic consciousness of modernity.¹⁹⁷ Ying Xing, a Chinese sociologist, makes the point more straightforwardly. He argues that such a dynamics discloses how the Chinese state satisfies “the secret need of governing power” by turning rural resistance into a mechanism of power reproduction. The base of this mechanism is the state’s institutional design after the failed experiment of the people’s commune. “It is those officials and administrative appellants who cooperatively lubricate the governing machine in the new era.”¹⁹⁸ Ying’s view may be radical, but it is not groundless.

The second reason why the reproduced historical memories still bear the traces of the

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 1626.

¹⁹⁶ For the cases of South Africa and the U.S., see Kevin O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, 2006, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China*, pp. 16-23. For the case of Egypt, see John Chalcraft, 2005, “Engaging the state: peasants and petitions in Egypt on the eve of colonial rule,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37(3), pp. 303-325. For the case of imperial and republican China, see Elizabeth J. Perry, 2010, “Popular protest in China: playing by the rules,” Chapter 1 in Joseph Fewsmith (ed.), *China Today, China Tomorrow: Domestic Politics, Economy, and Society*, Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 11-28.

¹⁹⁷ Elizabeth J. Perry, 2008, “Chinese conceptions of ‘rights’: from Mencius to Mao - and now,” *Perspectives on Politics*, 6(1), pp. 37-50.

¹⁹⁸ Xing Ying, 2000, “Dahe yimin shangfang de gushi: cong ‘taoge shuofa’ dao ‘baiping lishun’ (From ‘asking for a statement’ to ‘balancing relations (*baiping lishui*): a story of a hydroelectric station area in southwest in China)”, PhD Dissertation, The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, pp. 149-150.

party-state is that they have been deeply influenced by the political discourse, practice and culture of the Mao time. That is, regardless of the dynamics between nationalist activists and the authoritarian state in the post-reform era, the process of reproducing historical memories in Chinese society cannot be separated from the past. In fact, the emerging competing claims for Chinese suffering in the anti-Japanese war of resistance have historical roots in the political campaigns of the Mao time.

In the Maoist years, Japanese atrocities and war suffering of the Chinese people were intentionally played down by the CCP for geopolitical calculations in the Cold War. Japanese war criminals were tried with mass clemency. Scholars and the public were denied access to records of war atrocities. Objections to such policies in public opinion were suppressed.¹⁹⁹ In the 1950s, while the CCP tried to persuade the Chinese people to “let bygones be bygones”,²⁰⁰ Japan was in the early post-war period of whitewashing its war crimes and responsibilities, the process of which was dominated by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the conservative elites who had taken part in engineering the invasion of China.²⁰¹ From the early 1950s to the mid-1960s, Japan’s official policy was consistently unapologetic.²⁰²

However, the absence of the state’s intention and activities to emphasize and redress war suffering for the Chinese people in the Maoist years does not mean that war suffering was forgotten in Chinese society. In the existing literature, the research agenda is biased towards one question: why the Chinese people still remember the traumatic experience of the 2nd Sino-Japanese War after six decades since the end of the war. Unfortunately, this is not a valid research question, because it starts from a non-empirical assumption. It ignores that traumatic experience and war suffering, like wealth and power, is unevenly distributed in any society.

¹⁹⁹ Justin Jacobs, 2011, “Preparing the people for mass clemency: the 1956 Japanese war crimes trials in Shenyang and Taiyuan,” *The China Quarterly*, No.205, pp. 152-172.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

²⁰¹ Yinan He, 2011, “Comparing postwar (West) German-Polish and Sino-Japanese reconciliation: a bridge too far?”

²⁰² Jennifer Lind, 2009, “Apologies in international politics,” *Security Studies*, 18(3), pp. 517-56.

China's most war-inflicted area in the anti-Japanese war of resistance was in the vast rural regions, not in large cities where rehabilitation from war suffering was faster because of the abundance of resources and mass immigration. Therefore, the adverse effects of traumatic war experiences have been more enduring in China's rural society, where subsistence, everyday life and social networks of residents were more vulnerable to war destruction, compared to those more privileged social groups in large cities.

This raises a challenge vis-a-vis our conventional knowledge of the new remembering of war suffering in Chinese nationalism. In most of the existing literature, two things are conflated - the expression of war suffering and the remembrance of it. To put it simply, that the expression of war suffering has been suppressed in a society for a long time does not mean that war suffering has been forgotten in a society during the same period of time. In particular, because both war suffering and the means of recovering from it are unevenly distributed, war suffering has its own life and survives longer in some sub-populations than in some others, while it not expressed at the national level in the Maoist years.

The absence of war suffering in historical records during the early post-revolutionary years only reflects one thing – that the party-state monopolized written records of national memory, and intellectuals were conspirators, wittingly or unwittingly, in such a monopoly. But this does not mean that war suffering cannot be kept in various unofficial and unwritten ways by the Chinese people.

Historical studies already show that the subalterns have their own ways of keeping historical memory alive. Between 1958 and 1962, the Great Famine decimated the lives of millions of rural Chinese people. Although death tolls were covered up by officials, the remembering of the suffering outlived the cover-up action of the state. The devastating effects were well remembered far beyond the early 1960s,²⁰³ because during the famine, the adverse effects of the misery upon ordinary people could not be easily

²⁰³ Dali Yang, 1996, *Calamity and Reform in China: State, Rural Society, and Institutional Change since the Great Leap Famine*, Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

washed away. People were ruthlessly humiliated, beaten to the point of permanent injury, forced to trade sex, to sell their children, and lose their family.²⁰⁴ The memory of such devastation cannot be forgotten for the entire life of those victims, and if circumstances allow, is likely to be passed down to their descendants.

Because Chinese peasants were the major bearers of the costs and suffering of the anti-Japanese war, and because they were not able to make a written history without the help of intellectuals, it is of particular interest to study how they kept remembering of war suffering and expressed their grievances in the Maoist years, which was a politically problematic subject at that time.

As this chapter will show, their claims for war suffering are not the same as what are propagated by the party-state or what are advocated by the intellectuals who help them to voice their claims in the post-reform era. These claims bear distinct concerns of rural communities. But on the other hand, they also contain a legacy of revolutionary discourse which was in the mainstream political culture in the Maoist years. As a result, the so-called “new” remembering of war suffering is contaminated by the political culture of the Mao era, instead of being a completely new phenomenon that only reflects the socio-political dynamics in the post-Mao period.

This finding is strikingly similar to some studies from different political and cultural contexts, which suggests there are some law-like mechanisms in state-society dynamics in reproducing a political discourse of any kind, even that discourse has been outdated or rejected by the subjects. In Shahid Amin’s book on Chauri Chaura, he likewise finds it impossible to have a pure subaltern memory uncontaminated by the national narrative of the elites. The event of Chauri Chaura refers to an incident of February 4, 1922, in which peasant adherents to Gandhi’s non-cooperation movement set fire to a police station and killed twenty-three policemen. Gandhi and India’s nationalist elites, however, disassociated themselves from the incident and denounced it as a riot and crime. This

²⁰⁴ Frank Dikotter, 2010, *Mao’s Great Famine: The History of China’s Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-62*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

was a process of trying to depoliticize and criminalize the incident. This dominant national narrative had shaped the memories of the subaltern informants Amin interviewed in Chauri Chaura. Although the local informants, either from the families of the policemen killed or from families of local peasant activists, injected political elements to their narrative of the incident, their accounts were still influenced by the master narrative of the state that defined the incident as a crime.²⁰⁵

Overview of the Empirical Case: Chongshan Village

This chapter is based on a case study of a war-inflicted Chinese community. Chongshan (崇山) Village was attacked with Japanese bacterial warfare in the 2nd Sino-Japanese War. The village is located on the suburbs of Yiwu (义乌), a county-level city in Zhejiang Province. It is three hours from Shanghai by rail. Sitting in hills, Yiwu is famous for its thriving market of small commodities and light industries. It has been one of China's top ten most developed counties (and county-level cities) since 2007. Chongshan is only a 30-minute bus ride from the downtown of Yiwu. Today many villagers make a living by renting their houses to small labor-intensive workshops, or going to work in other cities. Some villagers have their own workshops, and run them as small entrepreneurs.

Most villagers belong to the local Wang (王) clan or are related to it through marriage. In October 1942, during the Japanese occupation, a black death hit Chongshan, which then had a population of about 1,200 persons and 300 households. Within three months, 405 people died of the plague, and 23 households perished. The homes of 176 households were burnt to ashes, and 421 rooms were destroyed.²⁰⁶ Not a natural epidemic, the plague was a product of the Japanese bacterial warfare on Zhejiang Province, which was conducted during 1940-1942.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Shahid Amin, 1995, *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura, 1922-1992*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

²⁰⁶ Figures were provided by a local informant to the author.

²⁰⁷ Indictment to Tokyo Local Court (1999), available at <http://blog.sina.com.cn/wx5286> (Xuan Wang's blog), under the section of *susong wenjian* (lawsuit documents)

This chapter examines how the interactions between villagers, intellectuals and the state have constructed the expression of war grievances in the post-reform era – sometimes enabling the expression in certain ways and sometime restricting it in other ways. But the study does not stop at the beginning of the reform era. It takes a process-tracing approach, and explores how and why the Chinese claims of war suffering in anti-Japanese nationalism have been constructed in certain ways. It traces the claims back to the Maoist years, when they were first preserved in unwritten ways by villagers, and then transformed in socialist campaigns. It examines how these earlier experiences of preserving and transforming war suffering at the local level have affected the expression of war grievance in public discourse today.

Unlike what the conventional wisdom would predict, this chapter finds that the expression of war suffering did not perish in the Maoist period. At the local level, war suffering was preserved, spread and transformed by the victims and their families throughout the entire Maoist period. Moreover, the expression of war suffering was also exploited by the state, from time to time, as a resource for political mobilization during the same period, though such kind of mobilization was not aimed at Japan.

Consequently, the socialist experience has shaped the discourse of war suffering in the reform era. In the post-Maoist years, the loosening political sphere allowed war victims and their descendants to seek new opportunities for airing their grievances and demanding redress. It became possible with the help and intervention of intellectuals, who have their own understanding, interpretation and claim of nationalism and Sino-Japanese relations. Through this process, the bottom-up initiative encountered the patriotic project from above, which nationalized local war suffering to serve the political goals of the state. Thus state nationalism and popular nationalism have been conflated, affecting each other and culminating in strong resentment against Japanese war atrocities after six decades since the end of the war.

My fieldwork was conducted in the summer of 2010 in China. Chongshan was selected

because it is the most developed case in China's Civil Reparation Movement (CRM, a.k.a. *minjian suopei yundong* 民间索赔运动). The CRM has engaged in a series of civil activities that demand reparation from Japan for Chinese victims who suffered from bacterial warfare, chemical weapons, massacres, indiscriminate bombing, or who were forced into slave labors or were comfort women during the 2nd Sino-Japanese War.²⁰⁸ Among all of the cases, the movement of victims of the bacterial warfare has developed most robustly, in terms of activeness of participants, functioning organization, and financial state.²⁰⁹ Chongshan is also the birthplace and the headquarters of all branches of the CRM in Zhejiang Province.

The success of Chongshan in publicizing war suffering and constructing anti-Japanese nationalism at national level provides a useful lens to observe how war suffering was preserved and exploited at the bottom of Chinese society. The war suffering in Chongshan is astonishing, but is not exceptional compared to civilian suffering in other rural areas. However, very few rural communities have been able to express grievances to a larger audience outside their community, and air their competing claims in national remembrance of the anti-Japanese war. This is because their attempts to do so have failed in the harsh political, material and intellectual environment where they live. Most of the grievances can live through two to three generations, if they are not captured in official records. After that, these grievances, along with the suffering lives of their victims, are buried in the dust of history, without any opportunity to be aired and heard again. Hence the salience of Chongshan in marketing their grievance with the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism presents an opportunity to observe mechanisms how Chinese rural communities preserved, transformed, and expressed war suffering in both of the socialist and the reform periods.

Preserving War Suffering in Unwritten Traditions

For war suffering of rural communities to be expressed, which occurred more than six

²⁰⁸ Sometimes damages and casualties occurred after the war, particularly in the cases of abandoned chemical weapons.

²⁰⁹ Bin Xu and Xiaoyu Pu, 2010, "Dynamic statism and memory politics."

decades ago, first, it has to be preserved in local memory in some unwritten ways, because most rural communities in China do not have had a tradition of keeping written records. In war-afflicted areas, suffering is usually more enduring in rural communities than in large cities, because the subsistence life and social networks of villagers take a longer time to rehabilitate, due to resource scarcity and characteristics of community life in villages. In Chongshan, a first important means by which villagers used to pass down their experience of war suffering is the oral tradition in the everyday life of a rural community.

“[After 1953] we talked a lot about Japanese *Guizi* (literally “devils”). When working collectively on the farm, we talked about those women who were raped, how many people died in those families, how painful it was when someone died, and how many corpses one helped to bury...We spoke of these as stories. Some young people didn’t know it, so we kept talking.” [Interviewee b.1932]

“We all heard something from the elderly. At that time we were working in the production team. We were young at that time and heard these as stories. The elderly in the production team talked about how many died today or yesterday... It was said that everyone was so scared [during the plague] that no one was outside home after three o’clock in the afternoon.” [Interviewee b.1947]²¹⁰

Although the expression of war suffering was suppressed in the Mao era, the generation of war survivors felt a sense of responsibility to recount the war suffering of the village to the younger generations. These traumatic stories of war, passed down from the elder generation, became a cultural legacy of Chongshan village. It penetrated the everyday life of members of the community, and strengthened a feeling of belonging to the community which had barely survived the plague.

War suffering was not only kept in words and stories. Hardship in life and loss of social networks impressed a remembering of war suffering on everyday life of the survivors

²¹⁰ Nine of this interviewee’s family members were died of the plague.

and their families.

“[After my father’s death in the plague, life became] very difficult. I don’t know how we were able to struggle for living at that time. As so many people in the family had been infected, we had spent a large sum of money saving them, but in the end people died and the money was gone. In order to bury their corpses, we had to borrow money, but we had nothing with which to pay back the debt. The creditors came to our home and took whatever they saw – our waterwheel, farm tools, and cattle. After everything was gone, the other creditors climbed on the roof of our house and attempted to take off the roof tiles. I still keep a lively memory of that day. While many tiles were being stripped off, my blind grandpa, who cried himself blind at the death of my father and uncle, knelt down and begged for mercy...Before the death of my father and uncle, our family lived a decent life, having two good labourers and no worries for food and clothing. But after such a blow, we lost source of labour and owed debts. Only the elderly and children survived...My sister and I had to dig wild vegetables and sometimes beg food from others. I was only eight or nine years old at that time but had to work full time. While other kids went to school every day, I could only attend school once or twice a week. Most time I studied on my own while working...Sorry, I cannot continue, it’s too sorrowful. The misfortune had an impact on my childhood and growth.” [Interviewee b.1940]²¹¹

“We used to live in Jiangwan Town before I was thirteen.²¹² Because our house had been burnt to ashes by the Japanese, we had to rent a house in the town. Whenever others asked why we did not have our own house, my mother would tell them the story of the Japanese. That’s why I often heard of the plague... The debris of our old house stood in the village for decades. When living in the town, we often visited our relatives in the village. Whenever we came back to the village and saw

²¹¹ Five members of this interviewee’s family members were died of the plague. The interviewee is from Changde, Hunan Province. The author met the interviewee at a meeting held by the CRM activists in Yiwu in June 2010.

²¹² Jiangwan Town is very close to Chongshan Village. By the author’s experience, it only takes five-minute bus ride to the village.

the debris, the memory came to us. If we had rebuilt our house earlier, perhaps we would not have remembered it for such a long time. We did not rebuild our house until 1985 or 1986.” [Interviewee b.1966]

Compared to hardship in life, loss of social networks had a more enduring effect on memories of war. The social conditions in a traditional rural community made it possible to keep war suffering alive among villagers who have not experienced any life hardship directly caused by the war. In a Chinese village, the head count of males is a symbol of power and family status. Because a male family member not only means a source of labour but a reliable defender for family interest, the loss of head counts, especially those of males, would leave an incurable scar on the family for generations.

“After the death of my uncle, my father no longer had any brother. In a village, one always has brothers and sisters, and this is very important. I used to complain to my father about his not having siblings. On these occasions he would say that he had had...Living in a village one needs brothers. The more brothers you have, the stronger you are. Without brothers, you would get into trouble and no one dares to uphold justice for you.” [Interviewee b.1966]

“[None died of the plague in my close family.] I did not experience the plague. My father was only six at that time. He was sent to a relative’s home in another village, so he was also not clear of the plague. My grandma was infected, but was fortunately rehabilitated. She was infected when helping with the funeral at Wang RL’s home. Wang RL’s father was my grandpa’s brother. Before the plague, Wang RL had 13 siblings in his family. Once the plague broke out, 11 of the 13 died within several days. Together with other relatives who died in the plague, our family lineage lost 17 to 18 lives. The plague was a big blow to our lineage. Were these people still alive, said my grandma, a large half of Chongshan would have been under our lineage’s influence.”²¹³ [Interviewee b. 1964]

²¹³ Chongshan Village is a natural village, which is comprised of two administrative villages. One is named Chongshan and the other Upper Chongshan. The division was arbitrarily made after 1949 for

Transforming War Suffering in Socialist Campaigns

While unwritten traditions have kept alive war suffering in the memory of rural communities through generations, socialist campaigns have transformed these oral accounts and family experiences with idiosyncratic characteristics to some model stories, which were easier to spread and impress audience beyond the community. Transformation is not necessarily taken in writing. In fact, the 1986 Yiwu County Annals shows that in the mid-1980s the official history of the county only had scarce information of the plague. Recorded in the documents of local health office, such information gave a cursory mention of the black death occurring during the war.²¹⁴ The plague was treated as a natural disease, without any indication that the dreadful casualties were related to the Japanese bacterial warfare.²¹⁵

Notwithstanding, Chongshan's encounter with socialist campaigns in the Maoist years facilitated the formation of a standardized account of their war suffering, and expanded the remit of its influence. Under the early rule of the CCP, speaking bitterness (*suku* 诉苦) was one of the most important governing techniques of building and consolidating regime legitimacy in rural areas.

“Speaking bitterness” was massively used for the first time in the land reform of 1946 in the CCP's rural base. In the land reform, this technique was exploited to mobilize the mass peasants, because the real economic disparity was not as sharp as the CCP proclaimed, and in some areas there was no intense conflict between peasants and landowners.²¹⁶ The goal of “speaking bitterness” was not to liberate the peasants by

the convenience of administration. There is no identifiable boundary between the two parts. The interviews were conducted by the author in both administrative villages, but what the interviewee herein referred to was Chongshan Administrative Village.

²¹⁴ In the 1980s, Yiwu was categorized as a county in China's administrative system. It is now categorized as a county-level city.

²¹⁵ *Yiwu Xianzhi (Yiwu County Annals)*, 1987, p. 11. The Annals were recompiled in 2005 and 2010 (trial copy).

²¹⁶ Lifeng Li, 2007, “Tugai zhong de suku: yizhong minzhong dongyuan jishu de weiguan fenxi (Speaking bitterness in land reform: a micro analysis of a mass mobilization technique),” *Nanjing*

allocating them lands, but to rebuild their understanding of the cause of poverty as “exploitation” and to incite their resentment towards the landowners. It was usually at a “speaking bitterness” assembly that mass mobilization became more and more violent.²¹⁷ Through repeated land allocation and reallocation during 1946-1949, the CCP purposely led an extra-violent mass mobilization of land reform in order to fight the KMT in the civil war.²¹⁸

The use of “speaking bitterness” also reshaped people’s idea of the state in the Chinese revolution. By evoking suffering from peasants, it constructed one positive and one negative state image through the creation of class identity based on some extant social divisions.²¹⁹ In various post-1949 political campaigns, the technique of “speaking bitterness” was inherited and repeatedly used to produce enemies – either class enemies or imperialists.

This technique of governing power has reproductive effects on the subject’s identity as well, as can be seen in a path-breaking study on Soviet subjects in Steven Kotkin’s *Magnetic Mountain*.²²⁰ Instead of “speaking bitterness” through socialist campaigns among peasants, the Soviet workers in Magnitogorsk, an industrial city founded in 1929, learnt to “speak Bolshevik” through the Stalinist social revolution.

As Kotkin’s meticulous research shows, Stalinism became an accepted system in Russia not only because the system had an intensely repressive nature, but because people willingly accepted the norms and values of the system, and behaved in a way that conformed to the required norms and values. This is a process of social engineering,

Daxue Xuebao (Journal of Nanjing University), 44(5), pp. 97-109.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ming Zhang, 2003 (June), “Dongyuan jiegou yu yundong moshi: huabei diqu tudi gaige yundong de zhengzhi yunzuo (1946-1949) (Mobilization structure and movement mode: political operation in the land reform movement of Huabei (1946-1949)),” *21 Shiji (wangluo ban) (21st Century (internet edition))*, No.15.

²¹⁹ Yuhua Guo and Liping Sun, 2002, “Suku: yizhong nongmin guojia guannian xingcheng de zhongjie jizhi (Speaking bitterness: an intervening mechanism for the formation of the state idea among peasants),” *Zhongguo Xueshu (Chinese Academic)*, 3(4), pp. 130-157.

²²⁰ Stephen Kotkin, 1995, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*, London: University of California Press.

through which the entire population of the Soviet state was rapidly socialized to acquire a new set of norms and values that redefined the relations between individual and regime. As each person learnt what norms and values were expected of, he learnt how to “speak Bolshevik”. He himself was therefore transformed, becoming a carrier of the Bolshevik discourse and reproducing the governing power, regardless whether he really believes in it or not. This transformation of identity was possible not because of authentic willingness from below, though it had a certain level of autonomy and willingness at individual level. The repressive nature of the state, along with its totalitarian control of the means of survival, welfare and personal advancement, changed the calculative matrix of individuals, who were pragmatic and self-interested beings rather than the mindless mass under the Stalinism. As a result, the subjects “voluntarily” chose, under coercion and cajoling, to play the “identity game” set by the state.

Chongshan, a small village in the hilly hinterland of coastal Zhejiang Province, had a similar experience of socialist campaigns as in many rural communities in the Maoist years. Through the identity game of “speaking bitterness” in socialist campaigns, the oral accounts and family experiences of war suffering had been transformed into model stories, and the villagers into a living carrier of the socialist discourse with Maoist characteristics.

According to the author’s interviews, the first wave of public denunciations of the Japanese atrocities in Chongshan occurred at the time when the province was taken over by the CCP, and the Peasants’ Association of the locality was established. In a “speaking bitterness” assembly, peasants were urged to accuse of the imperialism, the landowner class and the KMT. But the villagers of Chongshan did not feel suffering under landowners and the KMT, as it used to be a relatively well-off village. Therefore the object of denunciation had to shift to imperialism in order to continue these campaigns.

“In terms of suffering under imperialism, we knew nothing about American

imperialism, but we had suffered so much under the barbaric aggression of the Japanese. It is Japanese atrocities that we most frequently denounced at that time...In Chongshan, public denunciations focused on suffering under imperialism... The focus was Japanese *Guizi* (literally “devils”),” the then village militia leader [b.1932] recalled during an interview.²²¹

Mass assemblies and meetings were the most popular form of socialist campaigns in Chongshan between 1950 and 1953, when the new communist regime was extending outreach to every organic unit of society. The new socialist life in Chongshan was vividly summarized by villagers in a popular saying, “going to queue in daytime, and going to meet at night” (*zaoshang paipaidui, wanshang kaikaihui* 早上排排队,晚上开会). Thus, life in the village was entirely reorganized around means of communist mobilization – in the daytime, villagers went to sell agricultural produce in a queue to the Supply and Marketing Cooperative (*gongxiaoshe* 供销社); and at night, they went to meetings convened by party cadres.

These years of regime building and consolidation happened to be concurrent with the Korean War (1950-53), which placed denunciation of American imperialism at the centre of political mobilization. However, American imperialism was too far from the villagers’ life experience. To encourage mobilization, villagers were encouraged instead to denounce the Japanese war atrocities on the assemblies and meetings, although the target of criticism was still the United States.

In fact, such a propaganda technique, which incited people’s resentment towards an exotic target by evoking their negative emotion towards a replacement target, was widely used in the early years of the Chinese communist regime. A boastful article on the official website of the History of the People’s Republic of China has revealed the intention of using this technique,

“In the Movement to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid North Korea, the feature of

²²¹ Interviewed by the author, June 2010.

propaganda was to take on different forms of movements and mobilize/organize different movements at different stages. It was to embed a series of small movements in the large movement...It was necessary to combine the appeal of every small movement at every stage with the concrete work of different sectors, and with the people's idea and life in order to give patriotism a sensible, tangible and humanized meaning...Meanwhile, the propaganda to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid North Korea was combined with other movements such as the Movement to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries, the Land Reform, and the Movement to Eliminate Traitors, Local Despots and Bandits, so that this movement not only became a spiritual source of patriotism, but also mobilized the widest mass participation in economic reconstruction and democratic reform, elevated mass political consciousness, and encouraged their recognition of and love for the new regime..."²²²

There was no written record regarding what the villagers in Chongshan said of the Japanese at these "speaking bitterness" assemblies. But according to the recollection of the villagers, the small village donated "several hundred loads of paddy" in the campaign of donating air fighters and cannons in 1952 during the Korean War. There is no evidence to deduce that the villagers donated such a large amount of their life subsistence because they believed in the CCP's propaganda that "not taking actions to resist the imperialism, they will suffer once again". Yet their action indicates one thing - that through successive political campaigns, the organic decentralized accounts of war suffering preserved in villagers' daily life were being transformed through political campaigns. The political transformation of war suffering captured the most horrendous elements in original accounts, and it was rehearsed for many times in such campaigns before the account of war suffering became crystallized and standardized.

Therefore, although Chongshan's suffering was not written in the official history of the county at that time, the accounts of their suffering became standardized, and more

²²² Dan Sun, "Lun kangmei yuanchao zhanzheng de guonei xuanchuan gongzuo (On propaganda work in the Movement to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid North Korea)," accessed 1 Oct 2010, http://www.hprc.org.cn/gsyj/zhutiyj/111/111_2957/200909/t20090909_30281.html

accessible to a larger audience outside the village. The most frequently recounted stories today are still those which were considered the most horrendous at the time, and therefore were transformed into model stories in socialist campaigns.

“On the day Wu XN was dissected by the Japanese in the Linshan Temple, she cried out, ‘Help, help!’ She cried as such seven times and then did not say anything. Zhang JL happened to be in the temple on the same day. She went there in the hope that the Japanese could cure her. Hearing Wu’s cry, she realized the danger. As the Japanese were guarding the gate, she escaped by crawling out a hole in the public toilet. Upon returning to home, she warned the villagers not to go to the temple because the Japanese were dissecting patients there.” [Interviewee b.1932]

“Only the names of those well-known victims were recorded [in the investigation by the Air Force in the 1960s], such as Wu XN, the one whose belly was cut open alive by the Japanese. We’ve heard of the story since we were little boys. Whenever one came to investigate, the woman who crawled out the public toilet would accompany them to the Linshan Temple and made a public speech. We often went to these speeches when we were young...There has always been a legend that Wu XN was still alive when cut on her belly.” [Interviewee b.1949]

In the post-Mao era, particularly after Chongshan started to engage in the CRM, Wu XN’s misery has been brought to numerous written records, and has become part of the orthodox memory of history. A book on Japanese bacterial attacks on Chongshan, which was published in 1999 by Zhejiang Education Press, vividly describes the dramatized story as follows.

“The most miserable was Wu XN. She was Wang ZF’s child bride and was only 18 at the time...She was infected and sent to the Linshan Temple by her mother-in-law in the morning...In the afternoon, the Japanese military doctors tied her on a bench. Being surrounded by the white-clothes and realizing the danger, she cried and begged, ‘Sir, I’ll recover! Sir, I’ll recover’, in order to refuse the ‘treatment’ by the

Japanese. The Japanese military doctors cut open her chest while she was still alive, took out her heart and lung...During this process she kept crying. Yet her cry was dwindling and ended with her last breath.”²²³

Similar recounts of Wu XN’s story, only with minor variations, have appeared in local, provincial, and national newspapers, in books and on internet forums.²²⁴ The story of Wu, a child bride who lived at the bottom of social hierarchy in a Chinese village, has now become a reference point in the orthodox history of the village’s war suffering, which links this village’s historical remembering to the national narrative of the anti-Japanese war of resistance and Japanese war atrocities.

The mode of transformation also changed in tandem with the form of political mobilization. In the late 1960s, when amateur drama troupes became a popular means of mass mobilization in socialist campaigns, Chongshan villagers wrote and performed a drama based on their suffering of the plague in the war. The play was composed by an ordinary villager, Xu CQ [b. 1930s]. It was performed by the villagers, and was funded by the performers. In contrast to the plays performed by neighboring villages, which featured despotic landowners and KMT spies, the play of Chongshan was unique in its emphasis on the villagers’ suffering of the plague under the Japanese occupation. The play had such scenes about Japanese planes hovering over the village, the horrors of the plague, the death of the village doctor, and the burning down of houses.

On the one hand, this play was a grassroots initiative to air the villagers’ real suffering in a political milieu in which only such themes as cleansing the class enemy were

²²³ Shixin Zhang, 1999, *Zhejiangsheng Chongshancun Qinhua Rijun Xijun Zhazheng Zuixing Shishi* (*Chongshan Village of Zhejiang Province: Crime Facts of Japanese Bacterial Warfare in China*), Hangzhou: Zhejiang Education Press, p. 13.

²²⁴ For coverage in local news media of Yiwu City and Jinhua District, see: *Shangpin Shijiebao* (*Commercial World News*), 30 Aug 1997; *Jinhua Ribao* (*Jinhua Daily*), 20 Nov 1998. For coverage in Zhejiang provincial media, see the website of *Zhejiang Zaixian* (*Zhejiang Online*), 8 Aug 2005, <http://zjnews.zjol.com.cn/05zjnews/system/2005/08/08/006262279.shtml>. For coverage in national news media and books, see the report in *Nanfang Zhoumo* (*Southern Weekends*), 7 Jul 2005, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2005-07-07/10497160794.shtml>; Xianghong Nan, 2005, *Wang Xuan de Banian Kangzhan* (*The Eight Years’ Anti-Japanese War of Xuan Wang*), Beijing: Shiyue wenyi chubanshe (October Literature Publishing House).

permitted and encouraged. It shows that even at a time when class struggle was the only political correct theme in the official discourse, the subalterns had their own understanding of what was of most concern for themselves. My interviews in Chongshan attest that it was persecution under the occupation of the Japanese, rather than class struggle that was the focus of the villagers' concerns.

Me: Did you talk about other issues (than Japanese atrocities) in the production team, say, the landowners (as class enemy)?

“No. Landowners were different here. They didn't organize armed force. Through diligent work, they accumulated some money, bought some land, and then built their houses. Landowners here were different from those on television.”

[Interviewee: b. late 1940s]

On the other hand, the initiative of the villagers that deviated from the line of class struggle could only survive in the narrow space within the state-sponsored ideology, and it could only get publicity on state-organized assemblies and ceremonies. Even their expression was colored by the language of class struggle, as seen in the name of the play - *Blood, Tears and Hatred* (*xue lei chou* 血泪仇). Most performers were also intentionally recruited from the activists of socialist campaigns, because participation in rehearsals and performances required spending time and money at their own expense.

Me: Were you paid for the performance?

“Nothing at all. We had to buy makeup for ourselves. We even donated our clothing quota to make stage settings. I was a member of the Communist Youth League, and they promised to introduce me to join the Party. I was very happy, and donated five *yuan* and one quota for clothing.”²²⁵ [Interviewee: a female villager who staged in the play]

Me: For how many times was the play performed?

“Many times. We performed all over the town. Whenever the town was holding an

²²⁵ It was a large sum of donation by the standard of that time.

assembly, they would call us to perform before the assembly started, so that the mass would be educated on the scene. Our village was famous in the county, because a lot of people had died of the plague. On the assembly, some elderly women were also mobilized to “speak bitterness”... [We were called to the assembly so that it] could attract more people.” [Interviewee: *ibid*]

Sometimes, the state adopted a more straightforward mode of intervention in the transformation of war suffering in the locality. Compared to “speaking bitterness” and performing drama, which depended on the victims of war suffering to taking an active role, official investigation represented a top-down tradition that transferred communal memory to official records and transformed active “people of suffering” into a passive “population of sufferers”.

After 1949, there have been three investigations about Chongshan’s casualties in the black death. The first one took place in 1953, conducted by Wang ZM, a doctor working in the clinic of Jiangwan Town. The purpose of this investigation was to record epidemic characteristics of the plague. It estimated a toll of more than 300 people, but all the materials of this investigation were lost. The second investigation occurred in 1966, when the 5th Army of the PLA Air Force came to the village in order to conduct class education by visiting the poor and inquiring the suffering (*fangpin wenku* 访贫问苦). According to the statistics compiled by the 5th Army, 382 people died of plague, 18 households were decimated and 420 rooms were burnt to ashes. This investigation did not collect names of the victims, but it recorded the story of vivisection.

The third investigation was initiated by Japanese activists, not the Chinese state. In 1991, some Japanese activists of Japan’s Peace Movement, interested in the Japanese bacterial warfare in Yiwu City, visited Chongshan. Because there was no convincing record at that time, Wang D, a retired officer of the city’s health and prevention centre and a native of Chongshan, was commissioned to conduct a survey. This investigation not only recorded epidemic characteristics of the plague, but also the names, gender and age of the victims. Wang D’s work did not proceed well until Wang PG, an able and

retired township party secretary, who was also a native of Chongshan, joined in 1996. Thanks to Wang PG's strong networks and tactic leadership²²⁶, the third investigation was developed to a memory movement that has spread to neighboring villages and adjacent regions which suffered from the plague as well.²²⁷

The different outcomes of the three investigations suggest that the purpose of the investigation was more important than when it was conducted for acquiring accurate information on the plague. The first investigation, which occurred only ten years after the plague, should have been able to collect most information, because at that time many villagers who had witnessed or experienced the plague were still alive. Nevertheless, it was the most incomplete investigation, because its purpose was simply to record epidemic characteristics of the plague. In my interviews, none of the villagers remembered this investigation. In contrast, while the investigation was triggered by political motivations, it became more productive in collecting information. Both the second and the third investigations enumerated death tolls and loss of properties, and recorded the most horrendous stories of the Japanese "atrocities and savageness". The third investigation, which was inspired by the CRM to collect evidence for reparation lawsuits in Japan, was the most meticulous, documenting the name and demographic characteristics of each victim.

Unlike "speaking bitterness" and performing drama, these investigations put a priority on counting. Even small changes in the numbers meant a big difference. On a notice board in the Bacterial Warfare Museum, which is located in the clan temple in Jiangwan Town, it lists a roster of all victims in Yiwu City, with a serial number attached to each name. At the end of that list, there is an informal note, which reads, "Plus four more, 1318 persons altogether." In an interview, when the author mentioned, that the toll of the village was 403, the interviewee who led the local investigation immediately

²²⁶ According to the author's interview, this is not only because he used to be a CCP township secretary, but also because the municipal government is located in the town he used to govern, which gives him extra leverage in dealing with the municipal officials.

²²⁷ The chronology of investigations is based on a document drafted by D. Wang found in the Bacterial War Museum in Jiangwan Town. The document records four investigations but the author finds that three are more appropriate according to interviews.

interrupted and corrected, “No, it should be 405. Two more victims have been verified since then.”

Why is the number so important? What is the real difference between 403 and 405? Correctness generates authority. Counting grants authority to those who supervised and controlled the process of investigation. Through this process, regardless of who the enumerators are – state agencies, local elites, or outside intellectuals - they are entrusted with authority to speak on behalf of the suffering community. Whoever controls the authority of enumeration, therefore controls the power of interpreting war suffering. Because an investigation requires considerable resources such as money, time, literacy and local networks, it cannot be controlled by the voiceless peasants. The process of investigation becomes a ritual that generates authority independent of the suffering community.

It should not be a surprise that through all the mechanisms of transforming war suffering, those inconsistent voices from the community have been filtered, either because they were from the politically “unreliable” elements in socialist campaigns or because those narratives did not sound sufficiently “horrendous and barbaric”. “No one has ever come to interview me,” a well-educated interviewee with a good memory [b. 1926] told me when I visited his house in Chongshan. The interviewee had graduated from middle school, and was staying in the village when the plague broke out in 1942, whereas those representatives who have been chosen to speak publicly on behalf of the victims were only three to ten years old at that time.

In the interview, this informant not only talked of the plague and hardship under the Japanese occupation, but revealed other sides of history that were not covered in official discourse or the claims made by local activists. He talked of local Chinese rogues who helped the Japanese to plunder the village. He described the takeover of the village by the Japanese during the plague to supervise sanitation conditions in the village. He also mentioned that some small money for compensation, only worth several kilos of rice, was distributed by the Japanese after they burnt down villagers’ houses.

Whilst the Japanese troops stationed in the region attempted to make an impression of good order under their occupation, and because they probably did not have knowledge of the bacterial attack, which was secretly administrated by a special military unit, the account offered by this informant does not mitigate the atrocities conducted by the Japanese. However, his account was politically “incorrect” in the eyes of official agencies, local activists and intellectuals, thus it was excluded from the process of transformation. In this process, not only the state, but also local elites and outside intellectuals, “collaboratively” played a role in censoring and filtering such heterodox narratives of war suffering from below.

Nationalizing War Suffering in Public Discourse

Once war suffering had been transformed, it became the currency of grievances and was ready for nationalization. To some victims, however, remembrance of suffering is instinctively repulsive. After doing fieldwork for six years on the victims of bacterial warfare in Changde (常德), Hunan Province, cultural anthropologist Nie Lili writes,

“Some victims and their family members talked ‘in extreme tranquility’. An elderly person spoke to me in simple words, ‘I had had five sons. All died that year. All died.’ Then she did not say a word. Another old woman, who had lost almost all family members in the plague...when I visited her, she looked at me in an empty expression, repeating one sentence, ‘[I’ve] forgotten it, all forgotten.’”²²⁸

This author had similar experience when doing fieldwork in Chongshan. When I talked informally to a group of villagers who were chatting on a public terrace, a man in his sixties replied listlessly, “[I’ve] forgotten it, all forgotten.” Then he reluctantly turned his face to the ground, without one more word.

²²⁸ Lili Nie, 2006, “Changde minzhong rijun xijunzhan shouhai jiyi de wenhua renleixue yanjiu (A cultural anthropological study on the victims’ memory of Japanese bacterial warfare in Changde),” *Hunan Wenli Xueyuan Xuebao (Shehui Kexue Ban) (Journal of Hunan Arts and Science College (Social Science Edition))*, 31(6), p. 23.

The expression of war suffering, whether in interviews, in newspapers, on the Internet or in witness statements to court, is by no means natural and spontaneous for the suffered, particularly those who had a traumatic experience, to talk. When the currency of grievances circulates out of the suffering community, it also swirls out of control of the villagers. Among those who are able to use the currency of grievances to construct public discourse, intellectuals are the most powerful agent.

Xuan Wang is a major figure in bringing the suffering of Chongshan to China's national audience. Receiving a master degree in Japan, she speaks fluent English and Japanese, and has family connections in Chongshan.²²⁹ Wang's involvement in the CRM started in 1995, and it became a turning point for the movement. She advocated that the CRM should be independent of the Japanese activists, and used her media skills and connections to promote the publicity of the movement. In 2002, Wang was selected as one of the "Top Ten People who Moved the Hearts of the Chinese", a highly honored award sponsored by the CCTV (China Central Television). She is also a member-elect of the Political Consultative Conference in Zhejiang Province.

Unlike state propaganda, which interprets war suffering of the Chinese people in a discourse of national humiliation, Xuan Wang, as an intellectual, has issued competing claims in the rhetoric of morality. Rights, dignity, and peace are the most frequently used words in her interpretation of the movement.

"Why do we persist? Just for money? We the people in Yiwu do not need money... We need apology, and we need acknowledgement of facts! What we have done is for the friendship between China and Japan, for Japan not committing such blunders again, for the good of the Japanese people, and for humanity...Bacterial warfare is a historic fact, a momentous event in human history...We are struggling

²²⁹ Xuan Wang's father was born and grew up in Chongshan before joining the CCP. He worked in the Shanghai Supreme Court as a senior official after 1949. His brother died of the plague at the age of 13. Xuan Wang [b.1952] was brought up in Shanghai. When the Chinese youth were sent down to the countryside, she went back to Chongshan and taught in a village school. She graduated with a B.A. in English, went to work in a middle school in Yiwu, and then went to study and work in Japan.

for our dignity.”²³⁰ Xuan Wang announced at a mass meeting to the villagers in 2005.

“This war was a disaster for China as both a state and a nation. It was also disastrous for numerous families in this state and millions of individuals of this nation. Whether China and Japan will resolve the legacy problems of the war largely depends on how we Chinese look at and treat history. The history is the common history of thousands of millions of Chinese. It is also the individual history of thousands of millions of Chinese. The historical problem between China and Japan is fundamentally the problem of everyone.”²³¹ Xuan Wang wrote in 2004 in *Southern Weekends*, a metropolitan weekly popular among the educated Chinese.

“The lawsuit is a joint endeavor of the Chinese and Japanese people...in order to find the facts of history and fight for the rights of the victims, the process of which contributes to deepening mutual understanding, eliminating hatred, understanding the war and moving forward to peace...Circumventing issues of history means ignoring victims, ignoring the existence of their lives and dignity.”²³² Xuan Wang addressed at the Southern China Lecture in 2007, a public forum jointly sponsored by a popular metropolitan daily and the propaganda department of Guangdong Provincial Government.

Through the discourse of morality, the claim of intellectuals wins the attention of national audience, but it also marginalizes the claim of the sufferers in public discourse. Rural communities are subsistence-oriented. Neither the discourse of morality nor state nationalism is an organic expression of their grievances and claims. Therefore the intellectuals’ discourse encounters challenges when facing grassroots activists.

²³⁰ Xianghong Nan, 2005, *Wang Xuan de Banian Kangzhan (The Eight Years’ Anti-Japanese War of Xuan Wang)*, p. 4.

²³¹ Xuan Wang, 18 March 2004, “Bainian shanghen (Scars of one hundred years),” *Nanfang Zhoumo (Southern Weekends)*, <http://www.southcn.com/weekend/top/200403190052.htm>

²³² Xuan Wang, 1 September 2007, “Yiqie weile kefu guoqu: xijunzhan susong (All for overcoming the past: the lawsuits of bacterial warfare),” address at the Southern China Lecture, transcription available at http://www.nbweekly.com/Print/Article/3405_0.shtml

“What I would like to emphasize is that our victims are still concerned with reparation, although we have talked a lot of the significance of bacterial warfare. To the victims, the issue of reparation is most practical. We know a guy whose family lost ten lives. He survives as an orphan, being handicapped and unmarried. He is in his seventies and lives a very hard life. Admittedly it is *necessary* to seek justice for people like him, but it is also *very necessary* to claim economic compensation for him. We don’t need to say all the time that we are claiming justice from Japan,”²³³ a local activist spoke indignantly at a general meeting of the CRM. [bold italic added]

The words of this activist immediately triggered a fierce debate at the meeting. On most occasions, the discontent of grassroots activists is contained, but such self-restraint does not extinguish their antipathy to the discourse of morality and the nationalization of communal grievances.

“Ordinary people won’t talk in this way (such as national dignity and state dignity). They value pragmatic interests. They want compensation from the Japanese government and that’s all...At the beginning we once proposed that we should restrict the movement within Chongshan or Yiwu. It should not spread to other places.” [Interviewee A]

“There was a different opinion in our village in contrast to the movement leaders’. It was our village that initiated the lawsuit against the Japanese government, and it was our village that had suffered in the plague. But now the movement has spread all over the country. Were our village alone, perhaps the Japanese would have paid some compensation to our village, as it would not be a large sum. Many people once had such an opinion.” [Interviewee B]

However, the lack of intellectual and discursive resources in rural communities means that, for their grievances to be aired and win sympathy, their claims for war suffering

²³³ Participant observation by the author, June 2010.

have to be subordinate to competing claims that are colored in some grand discourses. Because only the state and the intellectuals can invent master discourses, the villagers have to adapt and speak in the new discourse that is alien to their life experience and authentic claims.

“Today we come here to discuss what to do next [for the CRM], and how we can assist the work of Xuan Wang...We are not doing it for money, but to voice grievances. It is part of our rights. Our ancestors suffered all kinds of bitterness and abuses. We, as their descendants, have to inherit [the memory] and let the world know how much grievance and bitterness we experienced. We have the rights to uphold justice. So we must follow the leadership of Xuan Wang and these people of vision to continue the movement!”²³⁴

This was an opening remark made by a villager representative at a CRM annual meeting in the clan temple of Chongshan. The message is short, but it demonstrates a unique mixture of the state’s socialist culture and the intellectuals’ discourse of morality. Words such as “grievance”, “bitterness” and “abuses” are inherited from political mobilization in the Mao era, while words such as “rights” and “justice” are new terms borrowed from the intellectuals. The remarks also reflect a clear consciousness of the villagers of their subordinate role in the CRM, as represented in such words as “assist” and “leadership”, although their purpose is to “let the world know” their own suffering.

The subordinate status of villagers does not mean that the state and intellectuals can completely dominate the expression of their grievances. In addition to dealing with public challenges and antipathy of the villagers, the state and intellectuals also need cooperation from below. In order to keep the expression of grievances alive and affective, they need to mobilize active engagement and authentic emotion from the villagers. Sometimes intellectuals have to exploit the meaning system of local culture to solicit support.

²³⁴ The meeting was attended and recorded by the author in the summer of 2010. The participants of the meeting included activists from Zhejiang province and Hunan province, and some old villagers in Chongshan.

“As said in the old words of Chongshan, one has to apologize and remedy for the wrongdoings he has committed. He has to buy something as a gift, or by whatever means [to apologize], but till now nothing has been done [by Japan]. If you do not continue [the movement], it means you give it up,” Xuan Wang tried to encourage the villagers at one meeting.

More often, persistence is not enough. The expression of grievances, to be effective and impressive, relies on active participation of the villagers. This requires performance of rituals. Ritual is the “symbolic behavior that is socially standardized and repetitive.”²³⁵ After the plague and until the entire 1980s, the villagers of Chongshan did not hold any specific ritual to commemorate the victims.²³⁶ Although they used to burn some paper money as an offering to the victims on Chinese tomb-sweeping day or during the Chinese New Year’s Festival, they did not treat these victims of the plague in a way different from other deceased family members.

To some extent, the lack of ritualization can be explained by hardship in the post-plague time. But the fundamental reason is that in the Mao era, all political rituals must serve the purpose of socialist campaigns which were centered on class struggle. Ritualization of war suffering had little political function at that time, except on rare occasions when it could be framed in socialist discourses.

It was not until the 1990s, when the state began to re-exploit the resource of war suffering in the Patriotic Education Campaign, that ritualization of Chongshan’s suffering developed fully.²³⁷ Wu ZY was the principal of Jiangwan Middle School during 1990-1996. He recounted in an interview how a patriotic monument was erected

²³⁵ David Kertzer, 1988, *Ritual, Politics and Power*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 9.

²³⁶ According to one interviewee, there was a Daoist ritual to pacify the dead after the plague, which was held in the clan temple in 1943 or 1944, right after the plague. However, this recollection is not confirmed by other interviewees. Moreover, using Daoist rituals to pacify the dead and seek blessing for the community, particularly after a disaster, is a conventional practice in Chinese culture. This ritual, even if it did exist, has very different meanings from those emerging in the 1990s.

²³⁷ For a detailed account of the campaign, see Suisheng Zhao, 2004, *A Nation-State by Construction*.

for a students' assembly in front of the Linshan Temple, where the child bride Wu XN was dissected. The theme of the assembly, held on 18th September 1992, was "Revisiting History and Remembering National Humiliation".

"Some villager representatives came and talked at the assembly. The head of the village was very supportive. The villagers carved the monument and erected it...The chief of Yiwu Education Bureau also came. So did some officials in the United Front Department [of the CCP]... [Before the patriotic assembly,] patriotic education was dull, such as the campaign of 'Learning from Lei Feng', 'the five stresses, four beauties' campaign²³⁸, or the trip to martyrs' memorial mausoleum. After this assembly, the Linshan Temple was designated as the 'moral education base'... The Linshan Temple was first written into our Yiwu local textbook for moral education in 1996 or 1998."

According to Wu ZY, the Linshan Temple has become a tourist site for "moral education" of the state since 1992. Many middle schools in Yiwu City came to the temple for the purpose of patriotic education. In the Bacterial Warfare Museum, there is an exhibition of honor placards. The engraved text on these placards silently records the increasing influence of Chongshan's war suffering in national memory. On each placard, it writes in which year a school recognized the temple and the museum as its "moral education base" or "patriotic education base". The earliest placard, dated to 1992, is from Jiangwan Middle School, which belongs to the township where Chongshan Village is located. The next placard, dated to 1995, comes from Yiwu Middle School, which belongs to the city administrating Jiangwan Town. A college in Ningbo, a city of Zhejiang Province where Yiwu is located, recognized the education base in 2006. Most recently in 2009, a middle school in Shanghai, a region adjacent to Zhejiang Province, put up its placard in the temple.

The 1992 students' assembly is not only part of the patriotic education campaign, but an

²³⁸ The "five stresses" are stress on decorum, manners, hygiene, discipline and morals. The "four beauties" are beauty of the mind, language, behavior and the environment. It was initiated in the early 1980s.

important ritual to consecrate the Linshan Temple. Through this process of ritualization, a place of horror and legend, which was repeatedly spoken of in local memory and socialist campaigns, was sacralized. It became a symbolic space linking local war suffering to national humiliation. The stone monument standing outside the temple, which was erected in 1992, is an ironical symbol that represents the relations between the suffering community and the state in the process of nationalizing war suffering of the subalterns. Whereas it was the villagers who spent time and money building this monument, in the hope of venting their unheeded grievances, the monument has become a hallmark of state power, serving the interest of the state to reinforce state nationalism rather than heeding the concerns of the locality. The irony lies in the unfortunate fact that the suffered can only seek to legitimize their suffering in national discourse through a process that delegitimizes their own legitimate claim of war suffering.

The power of ritualization also relies on the form that a ritual takes on. The more dramatically a ritual is performed, the more arresting it is in the eyes of outside observers. Furthermore, a ritual with some coloring of local elements produces stronger theatrical effects, and therefore is more likely to be voluntarily performed by the villagers. The most frequently reported and broadcast ritual in Chongshan is the very performative and traditional form of paying homage to the deceased. A typical newspaper report describes such a ritual as follows:

“It is another year’s Tomb-sweeping Day. More than 80 representatives of the Bacterial Warfare Victims’ Organization, coming from Quzhou, Lishui, Ningbo, Jinhua, Yiwu of Zhejiang Province and Changde of Hunan Province, are marching towards the memorial pavilion in Chongshan to memorize our innocent compatriots dying of the plague. [At the front of the procession,] each representative is holding a portrait of a deceased member of the complaint group [who has been suing Japan for their family members that were victimized in the bacterial warfare].”²³⁹

²³⁹ *Zhezhong Xinwen (Middle Zhejiang Province News)*, 29 March 2007, p. 14.

Along with the report, pictures of the solemn procession are displayed in a melancholic way. In one picture, the representatives were asked to vow before the memorial pavilion, with their fists waving over head. The participants obviously knew that they were performing in the presence of outside observers, as two of the pictures show a journalist carrying a professional video camera with the procession.

Because large-scale rituals are organized only at certain momentous times, small-scale rituals are necessary for getting media's attention from time to time. In those rituals, sticks of incense are burnt and Chinese wreaths, usually taller than adults, are offered to the deceased. People, fewer in number, are standing solemnly in front of the memorial site to pay homage.²⁴⁰ According to Yiwu Tourist Bureau, many news media have visited to make documentaries of the national humiliation monument and the memorial pavilion, including the CCTV, provincial and municipal televisions from Shandong, Hunan, Shanghai, Zhejiang and Nanjing, as well as international media such as the BBC and Asahi.²⁴¹ The visit of news media is often an occasion to perform such a ritual.

Besides moralization and ritualization, internationalization is also an expediency of nationalizing war suffering in public discourse. There are two target audiences in this process - the West as the immediate audience and people at home as the ultimate audience. Xuan Wang, the charismatic leader of bacterial warfare lawsuits as well as a symbolic figure of the CRM, clearly knows who should be the audience to address. In an interview published in *China Youth Daily*, she explained why she committed herself to the CRM. Despite knowing that the lawsuits would not succeed, she thought that she had to let the world know what the Japanese had done in China. "Perhaps we will not win the cases in court, but we must win them in morality and public relations."²⁴² Indeed, Wang has been rather successful in achieving this goal. Many major

²⁴⁰ See Xuan Wang's blog: <http://wx5286.blog.sohu.com/156122224.html> accessed on 15 Oct 2010.

²⁴¹ Yiwu City Tourist Bureau, "'Buwang guochi' ji'nianbei (The monument of 'remembering national humiliation')," http://www.yw.gov.cn/ygb/25644/25646/200812/t20081225_164123.html accessed on 15 Oct 2010.

²⁴² Tiejuan Chen, "Wang Xuan: yige rang riben shifen touteng de zhongguo nvren (Xuan Wang: a Chinese woman who makes Japan uneasy)," *Zhongguo Qingnianbao (China Youth Daily)*, 28 Aug 2002, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/junshi/60/20020828/809658.html>

international media, such as the BBC, the NOS, the New York Times, Reuters, the Associated Press and Asahi News,²⁴³ have made special reports on China's bacterial warfare lawsuits.

Another way of internationalizing local war suffering is to bring foreigners on site. On such an occasion, the foreigners are less regarded as experts (journalist, pathologist, professor) than a "judge" to redress the injustice and allay the ordeal that the Chinese people experienced, although for the foreigners, they come primarily for professional commissions. Most of the foreigners are Westerners from the most developed countries (including Japan). This is because only citizens and media from the most powerful countries are regarded as proper witnesses to behold China's ordeal and as competent judges to do China justice. A nation's psyche does not differ much from an individual in that it needs recognition and consolation from those it admires and envies.

The domestic politics of China also accounts for the necessity of seeking international recognition, because it can help open political opportunity for the CRM in an unfavorable political milieu and encourage activists to continue the movement despite the failure of the lawsuits for war reparation. Though the immediate audience of internationalization is Westerners from the old OECD countries, the ultimate audience is still domestic people. It makes human species feel good and dignified when they feel committed to fighting against a powerful evil, and that feeling is intensified if they are knowingly fighting before a powerful Other.

Conclusion

The case of Chongshan represents the unheeded war suffering of the Chinese in the 2nd Sino-Japanese War. War suffering does not end with the armistice of warring states or the decease of the war generation. It has its own life, surviving in people's oral traditions, in their lived experiences, and in the social conditions of their community. As

²⁴³ Ibid.; also see: Xianghong Nan, 2005, *Wang Xuan de Banian Kangzhan (The Eight Years' Anti-Japanese War of Xuan Wang)*.

a source of politically problematic grievances and of anti-Japanese nationalism, the expression of war suffering is conditional on the political environment of the time and on the way it is mobilized. Under socialist campaigns in the Mao era, the expression of war suffering was suppressed and replaced by class struggle at the national level.

Nevertheless, that expression of war suffering has been stifled in a society for a long time does not mean that war suffering has been forgotten. In particular, in the communities that experienced grave suffering, the devastating effect of war and the memory of it were not erased in the Maoist time. The absence of war suffering in historical records after 1949 reflects the state's monopoly of official national memory and the complicity of intellectuals in making history under an authoritarian state. The Chinese people, particularly the less privileged social groups, did not forget war suffering and renounce their claims. Moreover, they had their own ways of keeping memory alive. This long suppressed remembering and airing war suffering at the bottom of Chinese society should be rediscovered and reemphasized in understanding the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism.

On the other hand, the picture presented in this chapter is not a purely, authentically, autonomously "bottom-up" dynamic. The production and reproduction of historical memories bear deep traces of the party-state and intellectuals, who control the grand discourses and resources of mobilization. In the Mao era, the expression of war suffering became possible only when the villagers were able to find a crack in the state-sponsored ideology and make their claims in the political campaigns of the state. Therefore, though the Mao era was a time when the expression of war suffering was stifled in national discourse, the CCP was still able to exploit local war suffering as a resource for mobilization. Consequently the new remembrance of war suffering today has been inflicted by the political culture of the Mao era.

In the post-reform era, the state is no longer the only actor transforming local war suffering. Other actors, particularly intellectuals, are also major agents working to change the Chinese vernacular memory of the war. On the one hand, they help to bring

the unheeded suffering of rural communities to a national audience. On the other hand, the intellectuals have also issued competing claims about war suffering, which are different from those of the state or the villagers. The intellectuals' rhetoric of moralization clashes with the state's discourse of nationalism, given their emphasis on civil rights and humanity. Their rhetoric also conflicts with the communal interests of subalterns who prioritize material compensation.

Local activists also play an important role in the process. They are usually resourceful in political connections, social networks or intellectual merits in the community. Different from the state and intellectuals, their major concern is to seek attention and redress for their community. However, their claims have to rely on the grand discourse provided by the state and intellectuals to attract the audience beyond the community. Participation of ordinary villagers, as seen in speaking bitterness, drama performance and the process of ritualization, also plays a role in transforming and nationalizing war suffering, as both the state and intellectuals need their active engagement and authentic emotion for successful mobilization.

Therefore, the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism and its concern with Chinese war suffering in the anti-Japanese war of resistance is not a purely top-down or bottom-up dynamics. It is a mutually constitutive process between the state and various social actors. It is also a historical process in which Maoist socialist campaigns and political culture have left a deep trace on the remembering of war suffering today. The claims wrapped up in Chinese nationalism of the state, the intellectuals, and the subalterns are rarely consistent with each other. Nevertheless, it is because of, rather than despite, these discrepancies and conflicts in understandings, interpretations and claims that Chinese nationalism has become a successful ideology for political mobilization, which otherwise would not have been possible through the party-state's propaganda alone.

Chapter 4 Changing Images of Anti-Japanese Resistance, Changing State-Society Dynamics

As in all kinds of societies, cultural product is a reflection of politics. The disparities and tensions, between sub-populations and the party-state in the understandings, interpretations, and claims of Chinese nationalism, are represented in the changing images of anti-Japanese resistance in films, television series and Internet programs. Taking the Mao era as a reference point, this chapter explores and explains the emergence of such a fundamental change in visual representation in the post-Mao age. By chronicling this change, it shows how state-society dynamics in Chinese politics have reshaped and will continue to reshape the images of anti-Japanese resistance in China.

Since the mid-1980s, the standard portrait of anti-Japanese resistance, as colored in the language of class struggle in the Mao era, has gradually shifted to new images that allow and exploit the expression of disparities and tensions between sub-populations and the party-state. These new images in films, television series and Internet program have generated wide popularity and explosive reactions in Chinese society, and become a popular and profitable theme in the industry of mass entertainment.

Channel 1 of China Central Television (CCTV) is the most widely watched as well as the most politically important television channel in China. When *Showing Sword* (*liang jian* 亮剑) was first broadcast in 2005, it was not expected that the television series would win the biggest audience among all series broadcast on Channel 1 in the year.²⁴⁴ The series are cast against the backdrop of the anti-Japanese war of resistance, the civil war and the early years of the People Republic of China (PRC). It portrays a disobedient and charismatic CCP military officer Li Yunlong, and his legendary military achievements, particularly in China's anti-Japanese war of resistance.

²⁴⁴ For the audience rate of CCTV Channel 1 in the year of 2005, see: <http://ent.people.com.cn/GB/42075/3926640.html>

Unlike traditional CCP protagonists, Li Yunlong is not a model party member, and often makes mistakes. He speaks and behaves in a coarse manner. He beats soldiers. He defies rules and orders from the superiors. He is shrewd and self-centered. In order to gain more supplies for his own troops, which is regarded as selfish and not disciplined in the CCP's behavioral code, he dares to violate the rules and disciplines of the CCP. He makes friend with a talented general of the enemy, the Nationalist Party (KMT), with whom he fights in the anti-Japanese war, and against whom he fights in the subsequent Chinese civil war. He even falls in love with the best friend of his wife, which is a sign of spiritual corruption in the orthodox code of the CCP.

All these characteristics of Li Yunlong subvert the requirements of a model CCP military officer by tradition. However, such a protagonist has received wide popularity in society, and stoked a contentious debate as well. The sensational success of *Showing Sword*, based on an unconventional CCP protagonist, has encountered harsh criticism from radical conservatives. "Li Yunlong is like a bandit!" "He is not like an officer of our army. He does not understand at all the disciplines of our army. He is far from a real soldier of the people's army." "Li Yunlong is completely a warlord." The anger of the conservatives has been fiery. To them, Li was an iconoclast, and *Showing Sword* subverted the principle that "the Party commands the gun". It ridiculed and tore down the three major principles of the political work of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). It denigrated senior PLA officers and damages the image of the army in public opinion.²⁴⁵

Yet these accusations did not deter appraisals. After its first appearance on CCTV, the series were rebroadcast by more than twenty provincial televisions in three months. High audience rates and high rebroadcast frequency encouraged a nationwide fever for the original novel and recording DVDs. From China's most authoritative source of audience survey, more than 50% of the audiences were civil servants, CCP cadres and managerial personnel, a strong indication of its popularity among the Chinese middle

²⁴⁵ Hui Cai, 18 Sep 2005, "Li Yunlong xiang tufei. Liang Jian liangchu le shenme? (Li Yunlong is like a bandit. What does *Showing Sword* show?)," accessed on 5 Mar 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2005-09/18/content_3506321.htm

class and elite.²⁴⁶ Disagreeing with the conservatives, even the sons and daughters of late senior PLA officers, such as those of Marshal Liu Bocheng and Senior General Chen Geng, lauded *Showing Sword* for “its faithfulness to the historical context”.²⁴⁷

Despite the great success, the popularity of Li Yunlong cannot be attributed only to the personality of the protagonist. The character would not have been so impressive if he were not placed in the historical context of China’s war of resistance. In the 30 episodes of the television series, the first 18.5 episodes depict Li’s legendary story in the war of resistance, while the next 6.5 ones and the last 5 focus on the civil war and the early years of the PRC.²⁴⁸

In response to the criticism of *Showing Sword*, its defenders are apparently aware of this advantageous position on the moral high ground. “No doubt that Li Yunlong is not an easily manageable character, but his loyalty to the state, the nation and the course of anti-Japanese resistance is second to none,” a television drama critic commented. “Li Yunlong is the hero made by the time. The war of resistance needs such kind of military men. Li is born for the war,” the renowned actor who starred Li Yunlong replied to criticism.²⁴⁹ To them, if the charisma of the protagonist and its popularity among the audience do not sufficiently justify political correctness of Li Yunlong, then his nationalist credentials in the war of resistance does.

Back to the year of 1955, the politics of mass entertainment, which was under a lively communist ideology, produced another type of popular anti-Japanese hero. The protagonist in *Guerrilla of the Plain* (*pingyuan youjidui* 平原游击队) Li Xiangyang is a guerilla leader, whose wisdom and valor intimidate Japanese invaders and Chinese traitors. *Guerrilla of the Plain* has been one of the most popular and influential films on

²⁴⁶ Aixin Chai and Jia Jia, 28 Dec 2005, “Renxinghua junren suoxiang pimi (The humanized military men are bound to be welcomed),” <http://news.sohu.com/20051228/n241171111.shtml>

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ It is calculated by the author. The series are accessible online. The introduction of each episode can be accessed via http://news.xinhuanet.com/ent/2005-09/07/content_3456384.htm

²⁴⁹ Shu Yu, 8 Oct 2005, “Liang Jian yin zhenglun: Li Yunlong shi yingxiong haishi ‘tufei’? (*Showing Sword* instigating debate: Is Li Yunlong a hero or a bandit?),” accessed on 5 Mar 2012 <http://ent.people.com.cn/GB/1083/3748463.html>

China's war of resistance. Even in the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), when most films were prohibited from screening, this black-and-white film of 1955 was recast in color in 1974, with only minor changes in substance. In a special feature to commemorate Chinese films on the war of resistance, which was made by China's largest Internet portal sina.com in the 60th anniversary of the war, Li Xiangyang was rated at the top of the ten most popular anti-Japanese heroes.²⁵⁰

Comparing the image of Li Xiangyang in 1955 with that of Li Yunlong in 2005, the differences are striking. Although both are from the same class background, the peasantry in Northern China, Li Xiangyang is wise but not cunning, brave but not rebellious, authoritative to soldiers, but not in a coarse and explosive manner, all of which are in sharp contrast to Li Yunlong. Above all, unlike Li Yunlong, Li Xiangyang is unconditionally obedient to the orders and principles of the CCP, and acts as a perfect role model for the CCP's military officers.

The changing image of anti-Japanese heroes from Li Xiangyang to Li Yunlong is not a coincidence. In the post-Maoist years, films, television series and Internet programs have started to integrate various social actors into the narrative of China's anti-Japanese war of resistance. Such a change constitutes part of China's broad narrative change of this war. The success of *Showing Sword* is not an exception, but only a case that represents the culmination of such a trend.

In this process, a multitude of political and social actors, particularly the "class enemy" such as the KMT, members of the gentry and warlords, and the "bad elements" in the people such as bandits and prostitutes, have gone mainstream in the representations of anti-Japanese resisters. Meanwhile, the protagonists of the CCP, who used to be touted as the dominant agent in anti-Japanese resistance, are sometimes relegated to a minor status, if not completely absent. In some other works, their image has been subversively reconstructed. As shown in *Showing Sword*, such protagonists are no longer uncritical

²⁵⁰ "Jiaopian zhong de fenghuo niandai: kangzhan ticai dianying huigu (The years of fire in the films: a retrospect of the films about the Anti-Japanese War)," accessed on 5 Mar 2012
<http://ent.sina.com.cn/f/m/krdy/index.shtml>

practitioners of the CCP's principles or true believers in communist ideology. Instead they are presented as unruly figures with grassroots spirit, who dare to challenge the rigidity of the Party's rules and principles. In one word, they are not a role model of the CCP officers, and even not a qualified CCP member in any traditional sense.

On the other hand, the change is not simply a process of *de-politicizing* the images of Chinese anti-Japanese resisters. The images of the legendary heroes today, despite their striking differences from those which were created at the height of the socialist culture in the Maoist years, are not a return to historical veracity. Rather, they are created in a process of *re-politicizing* the images of anti-Japanese resistance, which has been reconstructing China's national memory on the new narrative of the anti-Japanese war of resistance.

Despite the subversive challenges that these new images have brought to the traditional ones, which were erected by the CCP in the Maoist time, the new images are widely recognized and lauded, first in society, for their reinterpretation of loyalty and contribution to the Chinese nation, and then in official discourse, for their popularity and recognition in society.

Thus, the standard of political correctness for the narrative of the war of resistance has been dramatically changed, first through the efforts of various society agents, and then through acquiescence and even encouragement from the Chinese government. Loyalty to the nation and contribution to the war of resistance now replace political loyalty and unconditional obedience to the CCP as the primary standard of making a successful and popular image of anti-Japanese protagonist.

Such a change has both cultural and political implications. As the Chinese name of this war suggests, "resistance" is the central theme in defining collective identity of the Chinese nation and the CCP's legitimacy. From the 1930s to the 1940s, successful mobilization of peasant nationalism in the war of resistance was a crucial factor for the

CCP's rise to power.²⁵¹ During the subsequent civil war and in the early years of the PRC, it was also based on the myth that the CCP was the leading force in China's nationalist quest for greatness and modernization that united different subpopulations and bought the acquiescence of those who had feared communism.²⁵²

However, at the turn of the 21st century, the CCP is surrendering its role of leadership in resistance against Japan to a variety of social and political forces, as represented in the new images of anti-Japanese resistance. Behind these changing images are changing state-society dynamics of contemporary China. The CCP, which is ideologically bankrupt, would not have been able to reconstruct such a group of new images in the cultural market, without the joint endeavors and different motivations of various social agents, including local governments, profit-seeking producers, artists and intellectuals, and some minority groups in the population.

On the other hand, the new images are not free of political traces and constraints of earlier and present times. It is still influenced by stylized images of anti-Japanese resistance, which is inherited from the ideal of the people's war in the Mao era. It also reflects the regulative power of the CCP, which incentivizes various social agents to engage in self-censorship and to use symbolic CCP characters in their cultural products. Consequently, most of these new images lack deep reflection on the anti-Japanese war, and are unable to represent the veracity of history.

This chapter examines changing narratives of China's war of resistance, as represented in films, television series and Internet programs, and its evolution, limitations and implications. It tries to explain how and why it occurs as such against the backdrop of both historical continuity and changing state-society dynamics in China. In the rest of this chapter, it first takes a brief review of narrative change of China's war of resistance in the existing literature, and shows why use of visual images in films, television series and Internet programs will be revealing. Then it divides into two major sections. The

²⁵¹ Chalmers A. Johnson, 1963, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power*, pp. 3-4.

²⁵² Suisheng Zhao, 2004, *A Nation-State by Construction*, p. 210.

first section analyzes the images of resistance in the early PRC, and the second part studies the period of the post-Mao era. The two sections are set as a reference point of comparison for each other. A conclusion then follows.

Changing Narratives of China's anti-Japanese War of Resistance: from Text to Image

In the existing literature on Chinese nationalism and China's changing narratives of the anti-Japanese war of resistance, text materials are the main source of research. They include, but are not limited to, bestselling books, newspaper articles, internal reports and research articles. Using materials from these sources, scholars of the field have produced valuable works that advance our understanding on the subject.

In *China's New Nationalism*, Peter Gries observes, based on books, articles, conference talks and newspapers, that China's narrative of the anti-Japanese war has shifted from "China as victor" to "China as victim". In the postwar era, the storyline was that there would be no New China without the Party-led victory of the anti-Japanese War. Yet after the death of Mao, a new narrative of victimhood arose. It is obsessed with quantifying casualties, documenting the most horrendous cases (such as those in the Nanjing Massacre) and presenting China's suffering to the West.²⁵³

To historian Rana Mitter, the war of resistance was reconfigured in the era of Deng Xiaoping's reform. During the Cold War and under the Maoist historiography, the CCP took a pragmatic policy to appease Japan, and purposefully raised the importance of the Yan'an base area in the war of resistance. As a result, the war was dealt with in a cursory manner in propaganda, and the trauma of the Japanese invasion was downplayed.²⁵⁴ According to Justin Jacobs, even at the time of the 1950s, when war atrocities remained alive in the memory of the war generation, high-profile cultural and

²⁵³ Peter Hays Gries, 2004, "Victors or victims," Chapter 5 in *China's New Nationalism*, pp. 69-85.

²⁵⁴ Rana Mitter, 2003. "Old ghosts, new memories: China's changing war history in the era of post-Mao politics," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38(1), *Special Issue: Redesigning the Past*, pp. 117-131.

propaganda campaigns were held by the Chinese government in order to persuade the people to restrain their bereavement and embrace yesterday's aggressor as today's friend.²⁵⁵

The status quo was shattered by the 1978 economic reform. It led to deep splits in the Chinese leadership and society. Rising income inequality and growing regional disparity, with the resurgence of religious and ethnic separatism, pushed China to the brink of fragmentation. The danger was particularly grave in late 1988 to early 1989, around the time when the Tian'anmen Massacre took place. Therefore, a new ideological force, which would pull China together, was in urgent need for the CCP in the post-reform era. Along with these dramatic socio-political changes, commemoration of the war of resistance started.

In fact, as Yinan He points out, Japan's cover-up of war crimes was never challenged by the CCP until the early 1980s, when Deng Xiaoping's reform policy met with strong resistance from party conservatives and society. In order to "facilitate intra-party consolidation and for rallying public support", history education regarding China's resistance of foreign aggression was enthusiastically promoted after the 1982 Sino-Japanese textbook controversy. War commemorations began to be held in newly constructed war museums, which were designated by the Party as patriotic education bases. The KMT's military contribution to the war of resistance also began to be acknowledged in history textbooks, which were "published on the basis of the 1986 Teaching Guideline".²⁵⁶ In view of Yinan He, this process of China's reinterpretation of the war was one of national myth-making, which was exploited by the ruling elite for instrumental purpose as they felt insecure at home.²⁵⁷

However, text materials are neither the only means, nor the most important ones, of studying political culture. In socio-political life, narrative changes can be represented in

²⁵⁵ Justin Jacobs, 2011, "Preparing the people for mass clemency."

²⁵⁶ Yinan He, 2007, "History, Chinese nationalism and the emerging Sino-Japanese conflict," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 16(50), pp. 6-7.

²⁵⁷ Yinan He, 2007, "Remembering and forgetting the war."

a multitude of ways, both linguistically and non-linguistically. Using multiple sources of materials to study narrative change has the advantage in that it reveals multiple aspects of the change and enriches our understanding of the trend. Hence it requires expanding the scope and type of sources for studying China's changing narratives of the anti-Japanese war of resistance.

In light of the requirement, the early years of the PRC and the formation of new socialist culture provide an excellent case of reference for scholars interested in studying narrative change in contemporary China. Through a variety of means - spatial reconstruction, monument building, folk dance, parade performance, history writing, visual representation (such as oil painting, cartoon and New Year print) and commemorative ritual, the CCP succeeded in manufacturing and spreading a new political narrative within only a short period of time.²⁵⁸

Museums, memorial sites and spatial symbols are believed to play a more direct and enduring role in shaping collective memory. "For most people, the written texts of history are only pale reflections of the history they see in their everyday surroundings. An ancient building, a local museum, a statue in a park, or even a notable landscape can carry historical narratives in ways that are more immediate and lasting than any well-researched discourse on history."²⁵⁹ China's narrative change in the war of resistance has been reflected in the growing number and shifting style of museums, memorial sites and spatial symbols. In the Maoist era, the city space of Beijing was void of anti-Japanese memorials - "no cenotaph, no tomb of the unknown soldier, no elite honor guard, no eternal flame". Among the ten bas-reliefs at the base of the Monument of the People's Heroes, the only one relating to the war of resistance is "not one of the bloody main-force engagements, but rather a scene from the guerrilla war against the Japanese".²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Chang-tai Hung, 2011, *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

²⁵⁹ James A. Flath, 2002, "Managing historical capital in Shandong: museum, monument, and memory in provincial China," *The Public Historian*, 24(2), p. 41.

²⁶⁰ Arthur Waldron, 1996, "China's new remembering of World War II: the case of Zhang Zizhong," *Modern Asian Studies*, 30(4), *Special Issue: War in Modern China*, p. 949.

In the post-Mao period, many landmark museums and memorial sites of nationalism have been constructed all over the country, such as the Longhua Martyrs Memorial Park (Shanghai), the Yuhuatai Memorial Park (Nanjing), the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall (Nanjing), the Memorial Museum of the People's Resistance to Japan (Beijing) and the Unit 731 Crimes Museum (Ha'erbin).²⁶¹ In a comprehensive study of war museums in China, Kirk Denton finds that it was in the 1990s that the new narrative of emphasizing Chinese victimhood and atrocities came into the mainstream.²⁶² Meanwhile, exhibitions in these museums were also shifting. For example, as Rana Mitter finds, the Military Museum, which was constructed in the Mao era, represented the style of the old period. Portraying the struggle between the CCP and the KMT as the main storyline, it described the Japanese invasion in a secondary position. In contrast, the Beijing War of Resistance Museum, which was opened in 1987, represented a new style of interpreting the war of resistance. In its exhibition, not only the prominence of the KMT's military resistance, but also China's contribution to the world anti-fascist war was recognized and acclaimed.²⁶³

Besides museums, memorial sites and spatial symbols, rituals and performances also play a role in changing political culture and war narrative. As William Callahan points out, "politics is best analyzed as a series of performances, not just by state actors in official sites like the Foreign Ministry, but also through the cultural governance of less official sites in art, film, literature - and public holidays."²⁶⁴ His study of the performances on China's national humiliation day is illuminating in this regard. Comparing the early 20th century and the early 21st century, the study shows that China has had different kinds of practice on such a national day, and such differences have

²⁶¹ Kirk A. Denton, 2005, "Museums, memorial sites and exhibitionary culture in the People's Republic of China," *The China Quarterly*, No.183, *Special Issue: Culture in the Contemporary PRC*, pp. 565-586.

²⁶² Kirk A. Denton, 17 October 2007, "Heroic resistance and victims of atrocity: negotiating the memory of Japanese imperialism in Chinese museums," *Japan Focus*, available at http://japanfocus.org/-kirk_a_-denton/2547

²⁶³ Rana Mitter, 2000, "Behind the scenes at the museum: nationalism, history and memory in the Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987-1997," *The China Quarterly*, No.161, pp. 279-293.

²⁶⁴ William Callahan, 2006, "History, identity, and security: producing and consuming nationalism in China," *Critical Asian Studies*, 38(2), p. 179.

produced different political implications. In the early 20th century, political performances on the national humiliation day aimed to make a nation for salvation. After 1989, commemoration on the national humiliation day was revived, with the purpose of containing the nation and limiting the expression of identity by the populace.²⁶⁵

Parks Coble is one of the few scholars who realize that China's restoration of war memory in the post-Mao era not only relies on text materials, but on visual images through such media as television dramas, films and cartoon books. Despite this understanding, his empirical study only exploits writing materials. From voluminous new writings on the war of resistance that have surfaced in public sphere since the 1980s, Coble reaches the conclusion that the themes covered in this new wave of memory restoration are selective. Only the narratives of heroic resistance and Japanese atrocities have been emphasized, whereas research and reassessment of the war from other perspectives has still been in underdevelopment.²⁶⁶

In contemporary China, films, television series and Internet programs have become one of the most important means of propaganda. Taken together, they represent the most important source of visual images in the mass media. However, in the existing study of changing narrative of China's war of resistance, changes of this source in popular images have barely been touched.²⁶⁷ Compared to text materials, museums and monuments, and official rituals and performances, materials of this source have a cutting edge: As a means of propaganda, films, television series and Internet programs

²⁶⁵ William Callahan, 2006, "History, identity, and security: producing and consuming nationalism in China," *Critical Asian Studies*, 38(2), pp. 179-208.

²⁶⁶ Parks Coble, 2007, "China's 'new remembering' of the anti-Japanese war of resistance."

²⁶⁷ In English literature, few empirical studies have been made on narrative change of China's war of resistance by using these sources of materials. The only exception, according to this author's readership, is Michael Berry, 2001, "Cinematic representations of the Rape of Nanking," *East Asia: An International Quarterly*, 19(4), pp. 85-108. However, Berry's study is narrowly limited and far from being comprehensive. His major interest is the representation of the Rape of Nanking in Chinese films. By comparing three films between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s - *Tucheng Xuezheng* (Massacre in Nanjing) (1987), *Heitaiyang: Nanjing Datusha* (Black Sun: The Nanjing Massacre) (1995) and *Nanjing 1937* (Don't Cry, Nanking) (1995) - Berry shows how the Nanjing Massacre was depicted when "the Nanjing Massacre suddenly began to reenter the Chinese consciousness" in the mid-1980s.

are most influential and faster in reaching to the public.

As early as in the Maoist years, the CCP already understood to take advantage of motion pictures to mobilize the subaltern population. Starting a politico-cultural campaign, it aimed to train and send motion picture projectionists to remote rural areas. From 1950 to 1976, the number of projectionist teams increased from 600 to 81,367. By the mid-1980s, there were more than 120,000 teams that delivered motion pictures in rural areas, covering 97% of the production brigades nationwide.²⁶⁸

Since the mid-1980s, televisions began to replace motion pictures as the primary means of propaganda that used visual pictures. With rapid economic development, televisions became one of the major assets in Chinese households. The majority of urban households owned at least one black-and-white television at the time. Ten years later, urban households had at least one color television on average, and the majority of rural residents owned one television per household (though 70% of the televisions in rural areas were black-and-white).²⁶⁹ By the time of 2005, when *Showing Sword* was broadcast, the coverage rate among the population was 95.81%, which kept increasing to 97.23% in 2009.²⁷⁰ Meanwhile, China’s Internet users had reached 111 million by the end of 2005. The figure kept growing, climbing to 298 million in 2008 and soaring to over 513 million by the end of 2011.²⁷¹

Table 1: Household Year-end Ownership of Television Sets for 100 Households

	Urban Average	Urban Lowest Income (10%)	Rural Average	Rural West China*

²⁶⁸ “Liushinian fengyu jiancheng: zhongguo nongcun dianying fangyingdui (Sixty years of rural motion picture projectionist team),” see the website of China New Rural Film, <http://n.chinafilm.com/news/60thncfy/> accessed 5 Mar 2012

²⁶⁹ See Table 1.

²⁷⁰ Statistics of the state administration of radio, film and television are available at: <http://gdj.chinasarft.gov.cn/showtiaomu.aspx?ID=9839bd59-979e-47f8-a7f7-11de55a00415>

²⁷¹ China Internet Network Information Center, January 2012, *Zhongguo Hulian Wangluo Fazhan Zhuangkuang Tongji Baogao (Statistical Report of China’s Internet Development)*, No.29, p.12 <http://www.cnnic.cn/dtygg/dtgg/201201/W020120116337628870651.pdf>, accessed 6 Mar 2012

	Color	Black -white	Color	Black -white	Color	Black -white	Color	Black -white
1985	17.21	66.86			0.80	10.94		
1990	59.04	52.36			4.72	39.72		
1993	79.46	35.92			10.86	58.30		
1995	89.79	27.97	72.01	38.88	16.92	63.81		
1997	100.48		83.56		27.32	65.12		
2000	116.56		98.79		48.74	52.97		
2005	134.80		107.26		84.00	21.77	78.40	22.43
2009	135.65		111.25		108.94	7.65	96.70	8.83

Source: Collected by the author from Statistics Year Book of China (1996, 1998, 2001, 2006, 2010), National Bureau of Statistics of China, <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsjs/>

Besides their unparalleled coverage in influencing the public, films, televisions and the Internet are also more accessible to non-state actors, compared to museums, monuments, official rituals and performances. In contemporary China, a market of films, televisions and Internet programs has been in relatively good shape, whereas a market for museums, monuments and official rituals remains underdeveloped, leaving these means more vulnerable to the intervention of the party-state and scholars. Therefore, empirical study on narrative changes in the war of resistance can be benefited if employing more materials from the rarely researched source of films, televisions and the Internet. This chapter tries to take a lead from this neglected gold mine, and construct a roadmap concerning how and why the narrative of China's war of resistance has changed as such in films, television series and Internet programs.

Images of Resistance in the anti-Japanese War in the Early PRC

In China's cinema studies, PRC films are traditionally periodized into two eras.²⁷² To some scholars, before 1978, films were only an instrument to serve the CCP's ideology,

²⁷² A more subtle periodization differentiates 1949-1966 from 1966-1978 because the latter period was in the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution.

which went to the extreme in the Cultural Revolution that only a limited number of model dramas (*yangbanxi* 样板戏) were permitted to be screened. It was not until the second period, when the fourth and fifth generations of directors rose to prominence, that films on the war of resistance began to flourish with diverse themes and perspectives.²⁷³ To other scholars, although the second period is closer to historical veracity, the first period is also filled with effervescent enthusiasm, which cannot be entirely attributed to the enforcement of the CCP's ideology. "These works have received lasting popularity, because they reflect popular taste, national and traditional empathy, and the environment of the time."²⁷⁴

Despite the differing views between scholars, a consensus has been reached that in the first period the central theme of the films was to "integrate it [nationalism] into the grand narrative of the new state ideology." "In the authoritative discourse ... modern Chinese history is a history of the people's resistance towards foreign aggression and counterrevolutionary regime under the leadership of the CCP. The war of resistance against Japan is one part of Chinese people's revolutionary struggle led by the CCP."²⁷⁵

Because television was a luxury and the Internet was non-existent in the first period, my study of this period focuses on Chinese film. Based on secondary literature of cinema studies and through personal viewings of representative films of this period, this author finds that the CCP's ideology was represented in three aspects of the images of anti-Japanese resistance - legendary heroes, indomitable people, and hierarchical relations between the CCP and anti-Japanese resistance. Altogether they constituted a dominant narrative of China's war of resistance in popular culture, which served the political needs of the CCP and the popular taste of ordinary people.

²⁷³ Qingguo Qian, 2002, "Xinzhongguo kangzhan tical dianying gushipian xingtai yanbian (Image and style change in new China's Anti-Japanese War movies)," *Jiefangjun Yishu Xueyuan Xuebao* (*Journal of People's Liberation Army Arts College*), No.4, pp. 12-19 and p. 23.

²⁷⁴ Bogong Shi, 2005, "Yizhong tical, bieyang fengcai - zhongguo 'kangzhan tical' dianying shuping (1932-2005) (One theme, different styles - commentary review on China's Anti-Japanese War movies (1932-2005))," *Dangdai Dianying* (*Contemporary Cinema*), No.5, pp. 80-86.

²⁷⁵ Lili Wang, 2005, "Minzu jiyi yu yingxiang shuxie - zhongguo kangzhan tical dianying de lishi wenhua bianqian (National memory and image writing - historical and cultural change in China's Anti-Japanese War movies)," *Wenyi Lilun yu Piping* (*Theory and Criticism of Literature and Art*), No.4, pp. 21-27.

At the Core: Legendary Heroes of Resistance

There is a galaxy of legendary heroes in the films of this period. These protagonists are guerrilla or militia leaders, or work in occupied areas as intelligence agents. Their activities are under the direct leadership of the CCP, or they can receive guidance from it. In these films, each hero is a legendary figure, if not a superhero, in leading the people's resistance against the Japanese.

The popular film *Guerrilla of the Plain* (1955) tells the story of Li Xiangyang and his guerrilla in the Japanese mopping up operations (*saodang* 扫荡) in Northern China. Li is assigned a difficult task by the leader of the Eighth Route Army (the CCP's army in the north). The task is to contain the Japanese force in the neighboring county, and to transport grain, which is stored in Village Li, to the Army's mountainous base area. Li's first appearance in the film is evocatively portrayed, not only as an experienced guerrilla leader, but as a Robin Hood. Skilled in riding and bimanual shooting, Li successfully broke through the Japanese blockade, with the company of one guerrilla soldier. On the way Li takes his men to Village Li, they defeat a small corps of puppet army on the way without striking a blow. The power of words that "Li Xiangyang is coming" suffices to intimidate the enemy. The film ends when the guerrilla wipes out the enemy in Village Li, saves the people and grain, thanks to the leadership of Li.

The legendary figure Li Xiangyang in *Guerrilla of the Plain* is not an exception, but a role model of protagonists at the time. In some films, the images of heroic resistance are portrayed in an ensemble. *The No. 51 Military Warehouse* (1961) (*wushiyihao bingzhan* 五十一号兵站) is such an example. During the Japanese occupation, the CCP has a secret military warehouse in Shanghai, which provides strategic supplies to the New Fourth Army (the CCP's army in the south). Unfortunately, it is found by the Japanese police. In order to protect strategic supplies and prepare for a military counteroffensive, a young military officer Liang Hong is dispatched to Shanghai. To fulfill the task, he has to use a fake identity as a secret society member, who has relations with the head of

Shanghai's puppet army. Although Liang does not like this identity, he accepts the task without hesitation, for his willingness to do whatever the CCP asks him to do. Encountering doubt and distrust, the young hero manages to split the enemy, and wins the trust of the head of the puppet army. As a brilliant intelligence agent, Liang is able to deal with all walks of life, including the head of the puppet army, his associates, a master spy and the godfather of the local secret society. Behind this CCP-style James Bond is a small group of CCP intelligence agents, who operate the No.51 military warehouse. In the end, they not only finish the impossible mission of transporting strategic resources to the base area under the scrutiny of the Japanese, but also persuade the head of the puppet army to become their collaborator.

Among the images of legendary heroes in these films, there are subtle differences. The closer are their relations to the CCP, the more impeccable the images of the heroes. Symbolically, these heroic protagonists constitute a rigid hierarchy of communist rule, which reflects the political order in real life in the Maoist years. On the top of the hierarchy are the perfect heroes of resistance, such as Li Xiangyang and Liang Hong. In addition to unparalleled wisdom, courage and good looks, which other protagonists may also have in these anti-Japanese films, the perfect heroes never commit mistakes in the struggle of resistance. They do not need to experience a stage of "growing up" in leading the resistance. Since their first appearance, their image is both mature and legendary. But such characters of maturity and perfectness are not seen in other kinds of heroic protagonists.

In *Railway Guerrilla* (1956) (*tiedao youjidui* 铁道游击队), another influential film on China's war of resistance, which was produced one year after *Guerrilla of the Plain*, the protagonist is guerrilla leader Liu Hong, who fights the Japanese on the railway in Shandong Province. Despite being as legendary as Li Xiangyang and Liang Hong, Liu's image is imperfect, compared to the two model CCP protagonists. Like Li and Liang, Liu is charismatic and adventurous. In order to acquire weapons for the guerrilla, he climbs up a running train which is transporting weapons for the Japanese. His signature

posture, standing at the front of a running train, with left hand clasping the train and right hand raising a gun towards the sky, is a powerful image of anti-Japanese resistance.

Liu is also a loyal follower of the CCP. At the beginning of the film, the political commissar, who is dispatched by the CCP, brings a new order that the guerrilla should abandon the newly established base in the Japanese occupied area and withdraw to the lake area. The associates of Liu vehemently object to it. It is only under the authority of “Brother Hong” (Liu Hong) that they finally concede. Although unhappy with the new order, Liu insists on obeying it, because they are “the CCP’s army”. He persuades his associates that the primary requirement is to maintain party discipline and listen to the political commissar. Liu’s insistence shows that he is closer to the CCP than his associates.

However, compared to the political commissar, who has closer relations to the CCP, Liu appears immature. After the Japanese attack the village, which is the base of the guerilla, Liu gets irritated. In retaliation, he disregards the objection of the political commissar, and orders his men to fight the Japanese, which puts the entire guerrilla force at a great risk. Liu’s recklessness results in the death of his closest associate and a nearly complete collapse of the guerrilla force. The political commissar is also wounded in the battle. In bitter regret, Liu admits his mistake to the political commissar, who, is of a similar age but with paternalistic lenience and military foresight, and teaches Liu the principles of guerrilla war and does not blame a word on him.

The lesson arising from the mistake of Liu Hong is revealing. Without the correct leadership of the CCP, which is represented in the image of the political commissar, the heroic protagonist, no matter how brave, clever and charismatic he is, will commit mistakes and direct the course of anti-Japanese resistance into abysmal failure. In *Guerrilla of the Plain* and *The No. 51 Military Warehouse*, the protagonists do not commit mistakes because both Li Xiangyang and Liang Hong are military officers from the CCP’s army, and are dispatched by the superiors to carry on a special mission in the base area. Before their departure, they are both called to headquarters, and are given

instructions to lead the struggle. In both cases, their direct connections with the CCP, as well as their long-term service in the army, ensure the correctness of their leadership in anti-Japanese struggle. In such protagonists, we see an integration of the CCP's leadership and grassroots heroes in one person, who constitutes a perfect protagonist of anti-Japanese resistance. In contrast, in *Railway Guerrilla*, the guerrilla is newly incorporated into the CCP's Eighth Route Army. Although Liu Hong is also dispatched from the CCP's army (at an unclear time), his connection with the CCP is weaker than the political commissar, whom Liu relies on to obtain order and learn correct strategy of struggle.

The weakness in the image of Liu Hong also exists in the images of other heroic protagonists, whenever they are not an integrated symbol of the CCP's leadership and grassroots resistance. In such films, there is often a theme of "growing up". Grassroots heroes have to commit mistakes first. Only under the mentorship and support of the CCP are they able to gradually become mature leaders of anti-Japanese resistance. *Muslim Regiment* (1959) (*huimin zhidui* 回民支队) recounts the story of Ma Benzhai, a leader of a grassroots Muslim troop that fights against the Japanese in Northern China. Almost perishing in a battle with the Japanese, Ma and his force are saved by commander Guo's Eighth Route Army. In order to survive and continue anti-Japanese struggle, Ma takes his force to join the Eight Route Army. To transform the Muslim regiment, the CCP dispatches Guo to be Ma's political commissar, but Ma does not know that Guo is the person who saved him. Because of Ma's warlord style, arrogance, and the instigation of Ma's associate, who later betrays Ma, suspicions and conflicts break out in the regiment. Nevertheless, every time Guo is able to help solve the acrimonious problem and win Ma's respect.

Ma's experience is a vivid demonstration of how a grassroots anti-Japanese force, which is led by a legendary hero without previous connection with the CCP, is transformed into a revolutionary army, and how the hero himself is converted into a qualified CCP member. In fact, the theme of growing up is represented in every major episode of this film. Soon after joining the Eighth Route Army and studying Mao Tse-

tung's *On Protracted War*, Ma's knowledge of military strategy immediately improves. He leads a successful assault on the Japanese, whereas not long ago he has been devastatingly defeated. Besides military skills, Ma's political leadership is also strengthened. Due to his insistence on putting anti-Japanese resistance over the struggle against landlords, Ma is losing authority in the Muslim regiment. It is the political commissar who saves Ma's authority by supporting the soldiers' claim. At the end of the film, the Muslim regiment defeats a Japanese main force yet political commissar Guo dies. Beside the dying Guo, Ma swears to join the CCP. The death of Guo implies the rebirth of Ma. The protagonist, after a long process of mentoring under the CCP, finally becomes the integrated symbol of party leadership and grassroots resistance.

Not every heroic protagonist can be converted into such an integrated symbol, even though he is from the most revolutionary force - Chinese peasants in the CCP's base area. In the early 1960s, two propaganda films, *Landmine Warfare* (1962) (*dilei zhan* 地雷战) and *Tunnel Warfare* (1965) (*didao zhan* 地道战), received wide popularity. *Tunnel Warfare* has had 3,000 copies and more than 1.8 billion times of viewing.²⁷⁶ The two pedagogic films contribute another two well-known heroes to the images of anti-Japanese resisters - Zhao Hu, the militia leader in *Landmine Warfare* and Gao Chuanbao, the militia leader in *Tunnel Warfare*. Their appearance represents the image of heroes in the people's war of Mao Tse-Tung's thought.

These heroes from the people's war are at a lower rank in the hierarchy of the communist rule than those professional military officers in *Guerrilla of the Plain*, *The No. 51 Military Warehouse*, *Railway Guerrilla* or *Muslim Regiment*. In *Landmine Warfare*, the protagonist Zhao Hu only plays an ancillary role in resistance. After being trained at the CCP's military base, he returns to the village and leads the militia to fight the Japanese with self-made landmines. Although the militia is enthusiastic and brave, it is the Eighth Route Army that finally saves the villagers and defeats the major Japanese force. Likewise, in *Tunnel Warfare*, although Gao Chuanbao is growing up from a reckless young man to a mature militia leader, the role of his militia in resistance is

²⁷⁶ Quoted in Bogong Shi, 2005, "Yizhong ticai, bieyang fengcai (One theme, different styles)".

secondary to the Eighth Route Army. In two episodes, Gao and the villagers are almost annihilated by the Japanese, before the Army comes to rescue them.

Despite being popular in the audience, Zhao Hu and Gao Chuanbao are not highly evaluated in the CCP's hierarchy of anti-Japanese resistance. They are not formal army officers, who are dispatched from the CCP's military base to carry on a special mission as a guerrilla leader or intelligence agent. They are not charismatic leaders of local military forces, who are worth being converted into qualified military officers of the CCP. Therefore, such protagonists as Zhao and Gao are politically unfit for being made into legendary figures in the war of resistance. Their relations to the CCP are inherently inferior, compared to those legendary protagonists. Their weak tie with the CCP only suffices to make them stand out among the ordinary people in anti-Japanese resistance. They are heroes of a minor status, belonging to the people, not the CCP.

In the Periphery: Liberated Ordinary People in Resistance

Images of anti-Japanese resistance in the early PRC also include ordinary people, who are depicted as unyielding and resolute in accordance with the principles of the people's war. In the course of resisting the Japanese, they assist the legendary heroes and the CCP's army. They are both victors and victims of the war. Whereas their victory is often symbolized in the final battle between the CCP's army and the Japanese, their victimhood is intertwined with unyielding resistance against the formidable enemy.

A typical episode is as such: The Japanese and the puppet army kidnap villagers as hostage, and try to compel them to hand over the guerrilla soldiers they help hide. The villagers are resolute and loyal to the CCP. Then the Japanese begin to torture and kill people. At this time, a supporting actor or actress - usually an elderly man or woman - will bravely stand out. After denouncing the Japanese, s/he sacrifices his/her life. To enhance the impression of Japanese cruelty, the death of the elderly is often accompanied by killing children and setting fire by the Japanese. However, these victims do not die in vain. Their death inspires the anger of the legendary heroes and the

CCP's army to take revenge, which leads to the demise of the enemy at the end of the film.

The images of ordinary resistance fighters are present in many popular films in the early PRC. In *Guerrilla of the Plain*, refusing to tell the location of the guerrilla, Grandpa Laoqin, the most authoritative person of the village, is burnt to death by the Japanese. Little Baozi, a boy of five to six years old, is killed as well. Despite his young age, the boy does not have any fear and keeps resisting the Japanese until his death. In *Zhang Ga the Soldier Boy* (1963) (*xiaobing zhangga* 小兵张嘎), the most impressive children's film on the anti-Japanese war of resistance, the soldier boy's grandma saves a company commander of the Eighth Route Army. In order to protect the commander, she is killed by the Japanese. In *Muslim Regiment*, the Japanese arrest Ma Benzhai's mother in order to induce Ma to capitulate. After instructing his son to repel the Japanese, Ma's mother kills herself on a hunger strike. In *Struggle in an Old Town under Wild Fire and Spring Wind* (1963) (*yehuo chunfeng dougucheng* 野火春风斗古城), which is one of the most popular films on intelligence battle in the occupied area, the mother of the protagonist (a guerilla political commissar) jumps out of the imprisonment tower and uses her death to strengthen his son's conviction in anti-Japanese struggle.

The images of these ordinary people are heroic and unyielding, completely different from the images of passive victims emerging in films of the post-Mao era. For example, in the sensational film *Nanking, Nanking* (2009) (a.k.a. *City of Life and Death* 南京!南京!), there is little trace of resistance by ordinary people. The Chinese nation, as depicted in this film, is weak, cowardly and miserable. Although the renowned director repeatedly told the media that he was trying to remake the image of the Chinese in the Nanking Massacre and show that "resistance is everywhere"²⁷⁷, his word was just a bluff. A film critic wrote in fury against the passivity of the Chinese people in the film,

²⁷⁷ "Lu Chuan jiedu Nanjing: zhongguoren de lian buzai mohu (Lu Chuan interprets Nanking: the face of Chinese people is no longer vague)," originally from *Xinwen Chenbao* (*News Morning*), 13 April 2009, cited from <http://ent.163.com/09/0413/13/56PJGDP0000335TL.html>, accessed 25 March 2012; "Lu Chuan: 'wo jiang de shi Nanjing de dikang' (Lu Chuan: 'I am telling the story of Nanking's resistance')," originally from *Chongqing Shangbao* (*Chongqing Business*), 14 April 2009, cited from <http://ent.163.com/09/0414/02/56R0TJ2800032DGD.html>, accessed 25 March 2012.

“I have viewed *Nanking, Nanking* twice, but do not find a pinch of resistance”.²⁷⁸ Such an absence of resistance would be unthinkable for films in the early PRC, in which victims die from resistance against the Japanese, not in surrender and humiliation.

The images of ordinary people constitute part of the narrative of resistance in the early PRC, and fit the CCP’s propaganda of the people’s war. These images, like those of legendary heroes, demonstrate the subtle political hierarchy in communist China. The resistance of ordinary people is praised, but it is bound to fail at first. It is only under the leadership of the CCP that they can organize themselves, and assist the CCP’s army. When they are persecuted by the Japanese, it is the legendary heroes, the guerrillas, and the CCP’s army who comes to rescue them or takes revenge on their behalf.

Furthermore, for these ordinary people, the process of resistance against the Japanese is also a process of liberation under the leadership of the CCP. In the early PRC, the propaganda of anti-Japanese resistance is often intertwined with the propaganda of the communist revolution. The three major themes in films on anti-Japanese resistance are struggle against economic oppression, resistance against enforced marriage, and fights with local traitors, usually from landlords, capitalists, local despots and villains. Led by the CCP, ordinary people are simultaneously liberated and empowered in the process of anti-Japanese resistance. They are “growing up”, and becoming conscious fighters against the old social order as well as the Japanese.

New Story of Heroic Sons and Daughters (1951) (*xin’ernv yingxiongzhuan* 新儿女英雄传) is one of the first films that recounts ordinary people’s anti-Japanese resistance in the language of class struggle. It is directed by Shi Dongshan, a renowned left-leaning director who committed suicide under political pressure in 1955. This film depicts how submissive peasants in a village of Northern China are enlightened by the CCP, and learn to organize themselves in resisting the Japanese and defending their homeland. In

²⁷⁸ Pingbang Sima, “Nanjing shi Q, Labei shi A (*Nanking* is the question and *John Rabe* is the answer),” http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_537fd7410100d33b.html

the film, the course of social revolution is tightly bound up with the course of anti-Japanese resistance.

Why do we ask for reducing rents and interests?

For us tenant farmers to eat our fill.

Why do we ask for eating our fill?

For us to produce more this year

Why do we ask for producing more?

For us to resist against the Japanese with less difficulties

... ..

Let us tenant farmers unite for the movement of reducing rents and interests

Oh Landlord please listen,

Reducing rents and interests is for the anti-Japanese war

... ..

For living a peaceful life after the victory of the anti-Japanese war

This emotional lyric is sung to the villagers at the beginning of the film, where the villagers are educated that only by implementing the good policy of the “democratic government” (i.e. the CCP) to reduce rents and interests, will they win the anti-Japanese war. Not only sufferers from economic oppression, but victims of enforced marriage are liberated in the course of anti-Japanese resistance. Xiao Mei, who used to be a cowardly young woman suffering from arranged marriage and her husband’s mistreatment, grows to be a capable revolutionary through her work for the CCP led anti-Japanese resistance. Finally she divorces her defective husband, and gains true love from a fellow revolutionary, whom she fell in love with before the arranged marriage.

These revolutionary themes are recurrent in popular anti-Japanese films of that time. In *Guerrilla of the Plain*, the landlord is a traitor, and at the end of the film, he is executed by the revolutionary forces. In *Muslim Regiment*, it is also the landlord who betrays the regiment, although he initially joins the anti-Japanese force and finances it. The uneasy relationship between the landlords and peasant soldiers almost dissolves the Muslim

regiment, if the CCP's policy of reducing rents and interests were not implemented. In *Jie Zhenguo* (1965) (*jie zhenguo* 节振国), a film of rigid Cultural Revolution style that portrays the struggle of mine workers in Northern China, the working class resistance against the Japanese is simultaneously the struggle for economic welfare under the leadership of the CCP.

Even in a few films of higher artistic quality, class struggle and social revolution are still a pivotal point in representing anti-Japanese resistance by ordinary people. *Story of Liubao Village* (1957) (*liubao de gushi* 柳堡的故事) is a very special film in the 1950s-1960s in that it delicately depicts the love between a CCP soldier and a young village woman, which is forbidden by the CCP's military discipline. Although the story challenges the CCP's orthodox propaganda of the army, the film does not deviate from the standard narrative that integrates anti-Japanese resistance with class struggle. The coming of the CCP's New Fourth Army not only liberates the villagers from the Japanese, but also frees them from exploitative landlords and saves the female protagonist from forced marriage with a villain, who is working for the KMT and the Japanese. Like Xiao Mei in *New Story of Heroic Sons and Daughters*, the female protagonist in *Story of Liubao Village* also experiences "growing up" under the CCP-led revolution, from an ignorant young woman to a capable revolutionary cadre. At the end of the film, she reunites with the CCP soldier who comes back to Liubao Village, who has also grown up to be a mature military officer.

Bitter Lettuce (1965) (*ku caihua* 苦菜花) is probably one of the last works of impressive artistic quality before the Cultural Revolution. What makes this film unique is that the protagonist is an old woman, whereas in most films of that time, an elderly female only plays a supporting role. As a fatalistic rural woman, the protagonist suffers from poverty and misery. Her husband is beaten to death by the landlord, and her elder son is forced to escape. Despite all the suffering, she is intimidated and dares not to resist. However, seeing the power of people led by the CCP and the sacrifice of the CCP's revolutionaries, she feels empowered and completely changes. Becoming a steadfast supporter for the revolution and anti-Japanese resistance, she encourages her

elder daughter to work for the CCP and insists sending her younger son to join the army. At the end of the film, the protagonist grows to be a mature revolutionary. In calm and with great valor, she leads the Japanese army to the field of landmines, and kills the traitor by hand. The short dialogue between the protagonist and her younger daughter in the prison explains why she has changed.

“My good kid, do you know what your elder brother, elder sister, Xin Mei sister, and the Eighth Route brothers are doing?”, asks the protagonist to her little girl, who is sick after being tortured by the Japanese.

“Fighting the Japanese evil,” murmurs the little girl.

“Yes, they are fighting the Japanese evil (*da guizi* 打鬼子) and struggling for the revolution (*nao geming* 闹革命). They are to uproot the misery and poverty of the poor. What are you going to do when you grow up?”

“Learning from the elder brothers and sisters to fight the Japanese evil and struggle for the revolution.”

In early PRC films, fighting the Japanese and struggling for the revolution are two indivisible sides of the same cause, which is the source of legitimacy for the CCP and its mass mobilization. This is an artificial amalgamation for political purposes, because there is no internal causal logic between the two goals. By combining the two, the CCP successfully inculcates the idea that the resistance movement would not be achieved, if the poor people were not liberated and the social revolution did not succeed, all of which should be under the leadership of the CCP. The amalgamation nicely fits the political hierarchy constructed in the CCP’s narrative. The ordinary people rely on the CCP for national salvation; they also need the CCP for class liberation. In both relations, they are placed in a subordinate position, inferior to the CCP and the legendary heroes who lead the CCP’s army.

Images of Resistance in the anti-Japanese War in the post-Mao Era

In the early PRC, the CCP tried to “integrate it [nationalism] into the grand narrative of the new state ideology”.²⁷⁹ In the post-Mao era, after the end of the Cultural Revolution, the socio-political conditions have been dramatically changing, with the decline of the communist ideology and the opening of a cultural market. These new conditions enable a variety of social actors to join in reconstructing the narrative of China’s anti-Japanese resistance, which breaks away from the model narrative of the early PRC. Whereas the CCP still tries to take advantage of anti-Japanese discourse to serve its social and political goals, it has to compromise with these new actors in the context of changing socio-political conditions.

In the cultural market, these new actors, driven by economic, political and cultural motivations, are trying to have their voices heard and their interests expressed by reconstructing the national narrative of China’s anti-Japanese resistance. They include, but are not limited to, a new generation of artists, local governments, market-oriented television producers, and religious and minority groups. Consequently, new images of anti-Japanese resistance have emerged in films, television series and Internet programs in the post-Mao era. The relations between anti-Japanese resistance and the CCP have also undergone a fundamental change, as presented in these new images. These changes are a response to the bankruptcy of the CCP’s ideology, changes in popular taste, and the desires and means that these new actors have to remake the war narrative.

State, Market and Local Groups: Remaking Class Enemy and Bad Elements in People

Starting from the 1980s, those model images of anti-Japanese resistance in the early PRC began to lose popularity. The traditional war narrative was not extinguished, but it no longer appeared in any monumental or sensational work in the post-Mao era. The CCP-led guerrilla warfare in Northern China, which was depicted as the major

²⁷⁹ Lili Wang, 2005, “Minzu jiyi yu yingxiang shuxie (National memory and image writing).”

resistance movement in films of the early PRC, has lost prominence in the new narrative, facing challenges from other forms of resistance organized by non-CCP actors.

The first challenge emerged in 1986, when *Blood Battle in Tai'erzhuang* (1986) (*xuezhàn tai'erzhuang* 血战台儿庄) was released. Recognized as a monumental work in Chinese film history, it is the first film in the PRC that positively depicts the KMT army and resistance in the front battlefield, as opposed to the battlefield of guerilla warfare in the war of resistance. The Tai'erzhuang battle marks the first major victory of defense of Chinese army in the war, which is directed by the KMT leadership of Chiang Kai-shek and Li Tsung-jen. The film also portrays a group of renowned KMT generals, such as Chang Tzu-chung (1891-1940), Wang Ming-chang (1893–1938) and Chih Feng-cheng (1903–1955), who abandon their personal grudges and fight heroically in the battle.

Not only the images of KMT officers, but also those of unknown soldiers are evocatively represented in the film and capture the hearts of the audience. In order to thwart the progression of tanks in a crucial battle, the KMT soldiers rush to the marching tanks with a bunch of grenades, and throw themselves to the bottom of the tanks. Before they march to the battlefield, these soldiers are given some incentive money for this special commission. Yet they immediately throw all the money on the ground, saying, “Sir, what is the use of money if we do not care our lives anymore? Please don’t forget to erect a monument for us after the victory of the war of resistance.” This is an emotional and thought-provoking plot arranged by the film director. It implicitly questions the nationalist credentials and political morality of the CCP for its wiping out the contribution of ordinary KMT soldiers in the war of resistance. Apparently, the KMT martyrs were betrayed and forgotten in the early PRC.

On the other hand, although this film aims to revoke national memory beyond politics, it cannot escape politics in the real world that has complicated the birth, spread and influence of the film. As early as in 1982, the first script of the film had been finished. But the proposal for making a film on KMT-led anti-Japanese resistance was rejected by

all state-owned film production factories. It was not until 1985 that the changing political atmosphere in China made it possible to cast such a film. The change was not completed in one day. In October 1981, on the 70th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution, Hu Yaobang, the General Secretary of the CCP, released a signal of CCP-KMT reconciliation by publicly inviting KMT gurus to visit China.²⁸⁰

The ultimate transition took place in 1985. In that year, for the first time, the Chinese Military Museum redesigned the exhibitions to showcase the contribution of the KMT in the war of resistance. On 25 August, *The People's Daily* officially lauded the victory of the Tai'erzhuang battle, which was downplayed in the official historiography of the early PRC.²⁸¹ On 3 September, Peng Zhen, a party guru and chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress, formally acknowledged the contribution of the KMT on the front battlefield and proposed a third collaboration between the CCP and the KMT, when addressing on a conference to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the victory of the war. In the same year, two scholarly monographs were published, in which the military operations led by the KMT in the war of resistance were covered.²⁸²

The production of *Blood Battle in Tai'erzhuang* suited the political need of the CCP at the time. As the signal from the top was becoming conspicuous, the support for the film was also growing unconditional. In the process of making the film, the Ji'nan Military Region dispatched its best troops to participate in the casting. The film successfully passed the censorship meeting, which was attended by senior officials from state departments. In 1987, *Blood Battle in Tai'erzhuang* was granted the highest honor of Chinese films – the best feature for the Hundred Flowers Award and the best

²⁸⁰ Yuenong Wu, 2005, "Deng Xiaoping he Jiang Jingguo zai taiwan wenti shang de qujin (The convergence on the Taiwan problem between Deng Xiaoping and Chiang Ching-kuo)," *Dangshi Wenxuan (Journal of Party History)*, No.5, pp. 48-52, available at <http://history.huanqiu.com/china/2008-10/254631.html>

²⁸¹ Chengliang Yuan, 2009, "Xuezhuan tai'erzhuang paishe de taiqian muhou (The stories before and behind the blood battle in Tai'erzhuang)," *Dangshi Bolan (Review of Party History)*, available at http://xinmin.news365.com.cn/ygb/200904/t20090418_2286016.htm

²⁸² Wenqing Wang and Yiding Liu, 2007, "Kangri zhanzhengshi yanjiu yu zhongguo shehui jinbu: fang zhongguo kangri zhanzhengshi xuehui huizhang He Li jiaoshou (Research on the history of anti-Japanese war and social progress in China: Interview with Professor He Li, chairman of history of China's anti-Japanese War)," *Bai Nian Chao (Tide of One Hundred Years)*, No.7, pp. 59-64. <http://www.crt.com.cn/news2007/news/JSYJ/10102914160C77C8C1BCC64DC112AHD.html>

script for the Golden Rooster Award. It was listed as one of “the hundred films of patriotic education” by the Chinese government. It is believed that the film has achieved the political effect that the CCP’s leadership had wished for. Upon learning this film, Chiang Ching-kuo and the central committee of the KMT immediately viewed it in Taiwan, and allowed it to screen in 1987. In the same year, Chiang approved the policy that allowed old KMT soldiers to visit China and reunite with their families there.²⁸³

Despite all of the above, *Blood Battle in Tai’erzhuang* was not pre-planned work of the CCP. It was not until the last minute that the CCP saw the political benefit of such a film and threw support to its casting and circulation. The director of the film, Yang Guangyuan, was well aware of the political risk of his initiative in making this film. He was so deeply worried about the censorship meeting that he even brought a copy of *Quotations from Chairman Mao* to the meeting, hoping that it would justify his political loyalty in case he were be politically attacked at the meeting.²⁸⁴ Moreover, the success of *Blood Battle in Tai’erzhuang* did not guarantee that his later works on the KMT would have the same good luck.

His second monumental film on the KMT’s fighting in the war of resistance, *Iron and Blood on Kunlun Fortress* (1994) (*tiexue kunlunguan* 铁血昆仑关), was banned for ten years. The film was cast in 1994 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the victory of the war in 1995. The combat on Kunlun Fortress, led by KMT Major General Du Yuming and his associates, Major General Dai Anlan, Qiu Qingquan and Zheng Dongguo, was the first victory in capturing Japanese occupied fortress in the front battlefield. When the film was ready for public screening, the political atmosphere suddenly changed in an unfavorable direction. The Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui visited Cornell University in June 1995, and the first presidential election in Taiwan was to be held in the following year.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Chengliang Yuan, 2009, “Xuezhhan tai’erzhuang paishe de taiqian muhou (The stories before and behind the blood battle in Tai’erzhuang).”

These incidents triggered the CCP's fear and anger. In retaliation, the CCP deployed a series of missile tests from July 1995 to March 1996 in the surrounding waters of Taiwan. Meanwhile it was also a critical juncture for Chinese President Jiang Zemin, as he was trying to consolidate his power within the Party and the military. As a result, Jiang needed to shore up support from the PLA,²⁸⁵ and took a stern stance towards Taiwan. The missile crisis of 1995-96 barely brought China and Taiwan on the brink of a regional war. Although Beijing stopped military coercion and resumed to seek cross-straits talks in 1997, for *Iron and Blood on Kunlun Fortress*, the political opportunity of passing censorship in the mid-1990s was missed. As an example of contrast, in 1994, *Flame of War in the Sky* (*changtian fenghuo* 长天烽火), a television series on the KMT Air Force in the war of resistance, was still able to appear on China's televisions. In 1995, however, *Iron and Blood on Kunlun Fortress* was banned for its acclaim for the KMT generals who had fought the CCP. It was not until ten years later that public screening of the film was approved. That was the year 2005.

The year 2005 was the 60th anniversary of the victory of China's war of resistance, and it witnessed the first visit of a KMT chairman to the PRC ever since its retreat to the island. On 29 April 2005, Chinese President and CCP General Secretary Hu Jintao met KMT Chairman Lian Zhan in Beijing, which signaled a new phase for CCP-KMT relations.²⁸⁶ In September 2005, in an address on the commemoration of the 60th anniversary, Hu Jintao again sent out a signal of cooperation to the KMT, and praised both the KMT army and the CCP army for taking a leading role in resisting the Japanese, in the front-line battlefield and in the battlefield of guerrilla war respectively. The CCP officially acknowledged that major battles led by the KMT in the front-line battlefield had severely crushed the Japanese.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ Suisheng Zhao, 1999/2000, "Military coercion and peaceful offence: Beijing's strategy of national reunification with Taiwan," *Pacific Affairs*, 72(4), *Special Issue: Taiwan Strait*, pp. 495-512.

²⁸⁶ "Lian Zhan fangwen dalu: 26/04/2005-03/05/2005 (Zhan Lian's visit to mainland China: 26 April through 3 May 2005)," available at <http://news.sina.com.cn/z/lzfdl/index.shtml>

²⁸⁷ "Hu Jintao zai kangzhan shengli jinian dahui shang fabiao zhongyao jianghua (Hu Jiantao made important speech on the commemoration conference of the success of the anti-Japanese War)," 3 Sep 2005, available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2005-09/03/content_3530293.htm

After 2005, the KMT-led anti-Japanese resistance began to reemerge and return to the mainstream in films and television series. *Chinese Broadsword against Japanese Sword* (2007) (*dadao xiang guizimen de toushang kanqu* 大刀向鬼子们的头上砍去) is a 28-episode television series, dedicated to the KMT broadsword brigade of the 29th Army. *Crimson West Hu'nan* (2007) (*xuese xiangxi* 血色湘西), a popular television series, portrays the heroic resistance of the KMT's new 86th Corps and local people in West Hu'nan. *My Chief and My Regiment* (2009) (*wode tuanzhang wode tuan* 我的团长我的团) and *China Expeditionary Force* (2011) (*zhongguo yuanzhengjun* 中国远征军) remind the audience of the forgotten achievements of the Chinese expeditionary army in Yunnan and Myanmar. *Death and Glory in Changde* (2010) (*diexue gucheng* 喋血孤城) is the first film to commemorate the failed defensive battle of Changde City, which was led by KMT Major General Yu Chengwan. The Changde battle was one of the bloodiest defensive battles in the war of resistance. In the 8315 personnel of the 57th Corps of the 74th Army, only 83 survived the battle. *Sichuan Legion Fights till the Last Drop of Blood* (2011) (*chuanjuntuan xuezhhan daodi* 川军团血战到底) is the first television series that commemorates the contribution of Sichuan Legion and presents the unfair treatment on the "irregular army". During the war of resistance, the region of Sichuan sent out a total of 3.5 million soldiers to the frontlines across the country.

The list cannot be exhaustive, but the trend it conveys is conspicuous. The most distinctive feature of these new films and television series is the recognition and commemoration of the role of the KMT army in China's war of resistance. Though the political atmosphere has been more tolerant in this respect since 2005, there is still political risk of not passing censorship. In order to circumvent such a risk, there emerges an interesting expediency of compromise in almost all the works. That is, some unnecessary scenes or figures will be added in order to represent the role of CCP in the resistance movement.

Unlike its role in films in the early PRC, the CCP now becomes a generous supporter of the KMT-led resistance in the front-line battlefield, not the absolute leader and

miraculous savior in the course of resistance. Accordingly, the KMT army now is called “the allied army” (*youjun* 友军), not “Kuomintang reactionaries”. For example, the 33-episode *Sichuan Legion Fights till the Last Drop of Blood* has four episodes that depict a plot in which the CCP Eighth Route Army officers sacrifice their lives to save the KMT protagonists and help them return to the legion. No longer a leading force of resistance, the CCP army becomes a selfless ally that wholeheartedly helps the KMT in the course of fighting against the Japanese.

In some cases, the images of the CCP become so awkward that there is no reason to have such characters in the works except for the sake of overcoming censorship. In *Crimson West Hu’nan*, it portrays a group image of local people and the KMT army, and their brave fighting against the Japanese army in the area which is historically related to the Changde defensive battle. In order to show the political correctness of the series, it tries to emphasize the CCP’s leading role in the resistance by setting up a woman who comes from outside and helps to mobilize the local people to resist the Japanese. This is a traditional way of constructing legendary CCP heroes and erecting the image of an omnipotent CCP in resistance in the early PRC.

However, this character becomes a complete failure in *Crimson West Hu’nan*. Not only does she lack the wisdom, skill and charisma to lead the local people, but her presence brings troubles and disaster to the local people. In this television series, the traditional war narrative is completely subverted, though superficially it attempts to revive it. It is not CCP ideological work but Japanese cruelty that mobilizes the local people to join in the resistance movement under the leadership of local strongmen and bandits. It is not the CCP woman who saves the local people from the Japanese, but the local people who organize themselves and sacrifice their lives to defend their hometown and save this woman. In the end of the series, in order to protect the radar station which is supposed to be crucial for the Changde defensive battle, all major protagonists and the entire KMT army die in the bloody fight, and the CCP woman survives, without shooting a bullet at the Japanese.

This CCP figure is so unsuccessful because there is a fundamental conflict between this character and the purpose of the entire television series. As *Crimson West Hu'nan* is to sing praises for the local people and the KMT army in the war of resistance, the appearance of a CCP figure who is supposed to lead and mobilize the local people is self-contradictory. As a result, a compromise is made between political correctness and the need of the work. The CCP woman is present in the series, but she does not play an important role in the resistance movement, and her image is weak and pale. Such an embarrassing image of the CCP in *Crimson West Hu'nan* reflects the embarrassing political situation that the CCP has to face today: As the narrative change in the war of resistance is becoming inevitable in the post-Mao era, the CCP can no longer maintain a monopoly of the discourse of nationalism, and its nationalist credentials are being challenged by various actors arising from a growingly open society.

Besides the KMT, the images of other kinds of “class enemy” and “bad elements” in the people, as classified in films in the early PRC, have also been reshaped in films and television series in the post-Mao era. Today they have become part of the mainstream images of anti-Japanese resistance in the new narrative. The popular characters include warlords, capitalists, landlords, gentries and bandits, who reflect more comprehensively the composition of anti-Japanese resistance in history. Since 2005, these new images have become a distinct type of cultural product in the industry of mass entertainment. Table 2 is an inexhaustive list of Chinese films and television series from 2005 to May 2012 that use such characters as major protagonists. Along with this diversification of anti-Japanese protagonists, there is the changing role of the CCP in these films and television series. Whereas in some works, it plays a traditional role of enlightenment to the resistance, in some others, it is an ally, an actor of no importance, or does not exist at all.

Table 2 Examples of Films and Television Series with New Images of Resisters

Year	Title	Protagonists	Region
2005	Wolves Attack Prairie (langxi caoyuan)	Bandit	Inner Mongolia
2005	Millet Ear Turns Yellow (gusui huangle)	Gentry/merchant	Manchuria

2006	Broken Jade (yusui)	Gentry/merchant	Tianjin
2007	Crimson West Hunan (xuese xiangxi)	Gentry and bandit	Hu'nan
2008	Venture into East of Shanhai Fortress (chuang guandong)	Immigrant merchant	Shandong, Manchuria
2008	Auspicious Cloud over Naiman Banner (xiangyun naiman)	Mongolian Chief & bandit	Inner Mongolia
2009	Sword suspended in the Sky (zhongtian xuanjian)	KMT general/ independent force	Unknown
2009	The Sorrowful Soul of Tengchong (tengyue shanghun)	Gentry/Merchant	Yunan
2009	Legend of Ha'er (Ha'er chuanqi)	Bandit/warlord	Sichuan
2009	Course of History (lishi de jincheng)	Landlord	Anhui
2010	Iron Pear Flower (tie lihua)	Warlord & bandit	Northwest
2010	Qiao Longbiao (Qiao Longbiao)	Bandit	Shandong
2012	Independent Brigade (duli zongdui)	Bandit	Unknown
2012	Ordinary Man ('s responsibility) (pi fu)	Bandit	Northwest
2012	Valley of Snow Wolves (xuelang gu)	Bandit/strongman	Northwest
2012	Flaming Meteor (huo liuxing)	Independent force	Shandong
2012	Two Bandit Queens (liangge nvfeiwang)	Bandit	Huabei

Source: compiled by this author

The burgeoning images of such non-conventional protagonists ring alarmed some conservative ideologues of the CCP. In September 2011, *The People's Daily* published a critique of such a development in recent films and television series, under the title, "Caution! Entertainment Is Burying History". Through an analysis of some recent works, it expressed deep worries that these films and television series were only interested in entertainment and making profit, which was at the cost of historical veracity. It alarmed that many producers reduced preparation time for making television series, and only cared for making a visual shock to attract audience.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ Shan He and Jiabei Cui, 2 Sep 2011, "Dangxin! Yule maizang le lishi (Caution! Entertainment is burying history)," available at <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/15568230.html>

This is a political accusation of the changing narrative as reflected in these films and television series, but the commercial interest it emphasizes is not exaggerated. In China, anti-Japanese films and television series are profitable both politically and commercially. *Crimson West Hu'nan* has set a successful model in the two regards. The series contains attractive commercial elements from nearly every perspective – handsome protagonists, a sorrowful love story, exotic folk songs and customs, and the gorgeous landscapes in West Hu'nan. It is ranked the second in audience size at its broadcast time of the year.²⁸⁹ Relying on the success in the cultural market, *Crimson West Hu'nan* was awarded the first prize of the best anti-fascist television series between 2005 and 2010 by China Television Artists Association.

Whereas commercial interest has engendered enthusiasm for producing films and television series that break away with the old narrative, market mechanism has also distorted the images of anti-Japanese resistance in the new narrative. In order to survive in fierce market competition, film and television series producers tend to use the most eye-catching elements to attract audiences. Once such an element proves to be successful, it will be soon copied and employed by others. Since the subversive image of Li Yunlong (*Showing Sword*) became popular, many anti-Japanese television series have adopted this “coarse-style” to portray major protagonists. Their innovation, if any, is to make the protagonists more subversive and coarser. As a result, we have seen the rise of vulgar and maverick images of anti-Japanese heroes in many later works, such as the leader of the bandits in *Crimson West Hu'nan*, the CCP warrior in *Euphorbia Flower* (2007) (*langdu hua* 狼毒花) and the charismatic warlord in *Iron Pear Flower* (2010) (*tieli hua* 铁梨花). All these protagonists have been commercial successes in the cultural market.

Sometimes producers are motivated to seek new elements for the protagonists in order to outdo competitors. This has brought continuing change in the styles of major

²⁸⁹ For the audience rate of *Crimson West Hu'nan*, see <http://ent.sina.com.cn/v/m/2007-12-11/13511829870.shtml>

protagonists in recent anti-Japanese films and television series. The popular television series *Town of Tiger Killing* (2009) (*shahukou* 杀虎口) represents such a commercial success. Inspired by classic Hong Kong film series *Young and Dangerous* (*guhuo zai* 古惑仔), the television series uses a blend of youth idol drama and triad society drama, which are tailored to attract a young audience. Filled with the youthful spirit of provocation, as the director of the television series admits, *Town of Tiger Killing* is made for the generation of the late 1970s and the 1980s under the cloak of the anti-Japanese war.²⁹⁰

Another strategy for gaining commercial success is to use women as major protagonists in anti-Japanese resistance, because it is rare to portray legendary heroes in female identities in the old narrative. For example, while the image of bandits has been over-exploited in the new narrative, some shift to construct an image of female bandits to cater to the appetite of the audience. In early 2012, two such series were released at the same time - *Flaming Meteor* (2012) (*huo liuxing* 火流星) and *Two Bandit Queens* (2012) (*liangge nvfeiwang* 两个女匪王), both starring popular Chinese actresses. For shrewd producers and directors, using images of female resistance is a good selling point, because it can whet the appetite of the audience by blending erotic elements and national sorrows in the works.

Directed by Zhang Yimou, China's most internationally well-known film director, *The Flowers of War* (2011) (*jinling shisancai* 金陵十三钗) illustrates this point, as a most sensational Chinese film in 2011. The plot of the film is simple. Twelve young prostitutes hide themselves in the cellar of a cathedral during the Rape of Nanjing, and finally sacrifice their lives in order to protect the girls in the cathedral from the Japanese. The film is impeccable in terms of visual and acoustic aesthetics. As a talented film director, Zhang Yimou knows well what the audience want – the erotic clothing and

²⁹⁰ Nan Yu, 11 May 2009, "Shahu kou: pizhe geming waiyi de heibang xi (*Town of Tiger Killing*: a triad society drama under the cover of revolution)," *Xinshiji Zhoukan* (*New Century Weekly*), available at <http://ent.sina.com.cn/v/m/2009-05-11/17352512207.shtml>; "Shahu kou: kangri ticai de qingchun pai (*Town of Tiger Killing*: the youth idol style of anti-Japanese themes)," 29 Apr 2009, available at <http://ent.sina.com.cn/v/2009-04-29/ba2496842.shtml>

postures of the women, the sorrowful love story between a Chinese prostitute and a white American, the brutality of the war, and the tragic sacrifice in the end.

However, Zhang's taste and motivation have been harshly criticized, both at home and overseas. Zhu Dake, a renowned professor of cultural criticism berates Zhang for his exploitation of such a national sorrow and human disaster. Disgusted by the political and commercial interest that is behind the film, Zhu labels it as "pornographic patriotism".²⁹¹ *Hollywood Reporter* would certainly agree with Professor Zhu, as seen in the straightforward critique for the film that "it's something...only the crassest of Hollywood producers would come up with – injecting sex appeal into an event as ghastly as the Nanjing massacre."²⁹²

Despite of the critiques, *The Flowers of War* has become a big commercial success. According to the statistics of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, with total revenue of 467.14 million RMB from cinema screening in the domestic market, *The Flowers of War* was the best-selling film of 2011. The figure continued increasing, and by 1 January 2012, it reached a total of 584 million RMB.²⁹³ Therefore it seems that the Chinese public does not feel as disgusted as the professional critics do with the "pornographic patriotism" in the film.

Besides the state and market, the appeals arising from local, religious and minority groups for recognition in the national discourse also contribute to the emergence of new images in the narrative of anti-Japanese resistance. In *Sichuan Legion Fights till the Last Drop of Blood*, the protagonists are not the regular KMT army, but a troop of inferior quality that is sent out by Sichuan Province to the frontline. The film depicts

²⁹¹ Dake Zhu, 13 Dec 2011, "Shisan chai de qingse aiguo zhuyi (The pornographic patriotism of *The Flowers of War*)," http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_47147e9e0102e25m.html

²⁹² Todd McCarthy, 11 Dec 2011, "*The Flowers of War*: film review," <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/flowers-of-war-film-review-christian-bale-272125>

²⁹³ "2011 quanguo dianying piaofang gongbu, jinling shisanchai duoguan (*The Flowers of War* ranks the first in ticket revenue among Chinese films of 2011)," 18 Jan 2012, *Chengdu Wanbao* (*Chengdu Evening*), <http://ent.newssc.org/system/2012/01/18/013425167.shtml>

how Sichuanese soldiers, who are regarded as third-rate and treated with discrimination in the regular KMT army, bravely fight the Japanese in the war of resistance.

Religious leaders and artists from ethnic-minority regions are also a vigorous force in struggling for the acknowledgement of the sub-populations they represent in the national discourse of anti-Japanese resistance. *The Qixia Temple 1937* (2005) (*qixiasi 1937* 栖霞寺 1937) is a film based on the real story of the Qixia Temple in suburban Nanjing during the Nanjing Massacre. It recounts the monks' heroic acts of saving KMT military officers and more than 24,000 refugees under the terror of the Japanese. The playwright and producer of this film is a charismatic monk of the Qixia Temple, who was presiding over the temple from 2003 to 2005.

Auspicious Cloud over Naiman Banner (2008) (*xiangyun naiman* 祥云奈曼) and *Diary on the Kunlun Mountains* (2010) (*kunlun riji* 昆仑日记) are two recent works that depict anti-Japanese resistance by the ethnic minorities. The protagonists of the twenty-episode *Auspicious Cloud over Naiman Banner* are a Mongolian chief and a group of bandits in Naiman Banner of Inner Mongolia. *Diary on the Kunlun Mountains* is dedicated to the Uyghurs in Xinjiang who helped the Chinese army to transport strategic supplies over the Kunlun Mountains in dangerous weather. The playwrights of both films are scholars who are resident in these ethnic regions, and have profound local knowledge and deep attachment to the localities.²⁹⁴

Interacting with these sub-national groups who are motivated to identify themselves with the course of national resistance are various actors who are seeking political and economic benefits in constructing the new narrative of nationalism. For the sake of political correctness and developing tourism, local government is one such enthusiastic supporter of expression of local identities in national discourse. As a result, local governments, television stations, and their affiliates become active producers and

²⁹⁴ Among the four playwrights, one is ethnic minority (Mongolian) and the three others are Han Chinese living for a long time in ethnic regions, which indicates that their view of ethnic minority's anti-Japanese resistance can be Han-centric. The Mongolian playwright is a high-rank official in the Han-dominant local government.

sponsors of patriotic films and television series. For example, *Crimson West Hu'nan* is produced by Hunan Provincial Television, *Venture into East of Shanghai Fortress* (2008) (*chuang guandong* 闯关东) by Film and Television Producing Centre of Shandong Provincial Government and Dalian City Television, and *The Sorrowful Soul of Tengchong* by Teng Chong County Government and Yunnan Provincial Ethnic Film Studio.²⁹⁵ *The Qixia Temple 1937* is sponsored with one million RMB by Jiangsu Provincial Government and Nanjing City Government.

Shrewd businessmen are also interested in exploiting local identities to make money from anti-Japanese films and television series. The exotic customs in local culture, such as dialect, music, food and clothing, are cultural symbols that are both appealing and profitable. While the national audience views these films and television series, they are also impressed by local cultures and attracted by exotic customs. The mysterious culture of West Hu'nan in *Crimson West Hunan*, the melodious local opera in *Death and Glory in Changde*, and the native Nanjing dialect in *The Flowers of War* – all the cultural elements of the locality in films and television series become a selling point for tourism and products of local specialties.

Transcending People's War: Alternative Narratives in the post-Mao Era

Although the intervention of the state, market, and local, religious and minority groups has changed the images of anti-Japanese resistance and shattered the CCP's myth of national salvation in the post-Mao era, the new images represented in films and television series still bear traces of the communist culture that was prevalent in the Mao era.

In the early PRC, the concept of people's war, which was developed under the CCP and Mao Tse-Tung's thought, was acclaimed to be a decisive factor that had determined China's victory in the war of resistance. As Marshal Lin Biao, Mao's designated

²⁹⁵ All televisions in mainland China are state-owned and supervised, including Yunnan Provincial Ethnic Film Studio.

successor in the Cultural Revolution, boasted on the 20th anniversary of the victory of the WWII, the fundamental reason for a weak China to win over a strong Japan was accredited to the belief that “the anti-Japanese war is truly a people’s war under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Mao Tse-tung, which implements the correct political and military line of Marxism and Leninism.”²⁹⁶ Reflected in films, the images of the people in the early PRC are obscure and lacking personalities. Their capacity and achievement in the course of resistance depend on their relations to the CCP. Therefore, in such films, ordinary people are victimized and killed, those trained by the CCP can grow up to become capable local leaders, and the guerrilla leaders dispatched from the CCP’s military base are depicted as legendary heroes who defeat the enemy and save the people.

In the post-Mao era, there emerges a subversive trend that tries to redefine the idea of people’s war in films and television series. A variety of political and social actors, who were conventionally defined as class enemy or bad elements in the people in the early PRC, are now reinterpreted as an independent force of resistance in China’s war of resistance, and reintegrated into the new narrative. These actors almost cover the entire spectrum of the social hierarchy - from KMT generals, warlords and capitalists to members of the gentry and landlords in locality to subaltern groups such as bandits and prostitutes – all of whom constitute an ensemble of the new people in China’s war narrative. Accordingly, the role of the CCP has contracted, from the unique leader of the people to a supporter of or an ally of other organized forces in the course of resistance, and sometimes its image is even absent.

Despite these striking differences in the images of anti-Japanese resisters, the new narrative is still influenced by the legacy of communist culture. Although these new images of anti-Japanese resisters decipher the old myth of the CCP’s role in the course of anti-Japanese resistance, they still lack a deep reflection on the war, and are unable to present the veracity of history. To some extent, the new narrative is constructing a new

²⁹⁶ Biao Lin, Aug 1965, “Renmin zhanzheng shengli wansui (Long live the victory of People’s War),” <http://www.marxists.org/chinese/linbiao/marxist.org-chinese-linbiao-196508.htm>

myth in national memory, which is born on the debris of the old one. Consequently we see the emergence of a group of new stylized images of anti-Japanese resistance, while the old ones under the leadership of the CCP are receding from the mainstream. The problem of these new images is that personalized experience is still ignored in the new narrative. As was in the old narrative, individual experience and memory is replaced by the stylized images of anti-Japanese resistance, which are shaped today by political, commercial and local interest, not the interest of the CCP alone.

Nevertheless, in some recent works, mainly those relying on the spread of the Internet, there surfaces a challenge to these stylized images, and instead uses oral history to recount individualized experience of the war of resistance. Among these works, *Archives of Females in the anti-Japanese War* (2008) (*kangzhan nvxing dang'an* 抗战女性档案) and *My anti-Japanese War* (*wode kangzhan* 我的抗战) series I (2010) and II (2011) are a landmark. Both documentary series are made by individual producers.

Zhang Xi is a writer and the producer of *Archives of Females in the Anti-Japanese War*. With the support of voluntary graduate students from a film college, she spent 100 thousand RMB out of her savings, recording ten thousand minutes of her dialogue with 60 female soldiers of the Eighth Route Army, who were aged in their eighties and nineties at the time of interview.²⁹⁷ The documentary series presents an entirely different angle of the CCP's female soldiers in the war of resistance, which is closer to the veracity of history than are the images of heroines in films and television series.

Coming from diverse family backgrounds - bankers, landlords, KMT generals, intellectuals, workers and peasants - these young women participated in the Eighth Route Army for a variety of reasons during the war of resistance. Not everyone was a nationalist, and not everyone joined the CCP army voluntarily. Whereas there were

²⁹⁷ “Zhang Xi, Fu Hongxing jiemi *Kangzhan Nvxing Dang'an* (Xi Zhang and Hongxing Fu decipher *The Women's Files of the Anti-Japanese War*),” 18 Apr 2008,

<http://you.video.sina.com.cn/v/2/2008/0418/25752.html>

For the video recording of the interview, see <http://you.video.sina.com.cn/a/1596088.html>

For the book, see http://vip.book.sina.com.cn/book/index_42904.html

some who left family and sought to join the CCP army for revolutionary ideals, there were some others who joined the Eighth Route Army in order to escape harassment of other troops, and some others who had hoped to fight the Japanese while maintaining their independence from any organized political force.

Whatever their initial motivations were, the experience in the Eighth Route Army changed their lives. Some of these female soldiers died in the war. Some were held captive by the Japanese, and for the sake of this experience, they became victims of political movements in the post-1949 era. Some survived the war of resistance, but did not escape the tragedy of enforced marriage with high-rank CCP officers. Others were true heroes of the resistance, fighting against both the Japanese army and the CCP arranged marriage.

This short documentary series, which lasts only 69 minutes due to limits of funding, has displayed for the first time the personal voices of ordinary female soldiers in the CCP army. It manifests a multitude of dimensions of the sweet and sour lives of female resistance fighters in a time of war and turmoil, which has not been represented in previous works. Therefore, although *Archives of Females in the anti-Japanese War* also presents images of female soldiers from different social classes, it does not attempt to construct a stylized story of social integration and national salvation as the new war narrative does. By revealing personal experiences and memories of these forgotten female resistance fighters, it challenges the new war narrative of the post-Mao era that is built on the collaboration and competition of various political, commercial and local interest groups.

The two series of *My anti-Japanese War*, produced by Cui Yongyuan, a renowned CCTV talk show host, are the largest project so far that tries to deconstruct stylized images of anti-Japanese resistance fighters and reflect a more accurate picture of the war based on oral history. Starting in 2002, the self-funded project, which costs more than 120 million RMB, has interviewed 3,500 war survivors by the end of 2010, recorded by video two million minutes of oral accounts, and collected more than three

million photos related to the war of anti-Japanese resistance.²⁹⁸ The 32 episodes of Series I were broadcast in 2010, and the 30 episodes of Series II were put online in 2011.²⁹⁹

Targeted at the young generation, the documentary series uses the Internet as its primary platform. Within only one month, the first series received more than 10 million hits.³⁰⁰ Soon after the success of online broadcasting, it was rebroadcast by 84 local televisions in November 2010. In April 2011, the series was rebroadcast on CCTV, the most authoritative state television in China.³⁰¹

When interviewed by *Southern Weekend* (*nanfang zhoumo*), a popular pro-liberal newspaper, Cui interpreted his motivation for producing the series as such.

You see the experience of every unique individual in the war. We do not need to make any judgment. It provides us with a new understanding of the anti-Japanese war that transcends all the previous textbooks.³⁰²

Therefore, in *My anti-Japanese War*, we not only see abundant accounts of ordinary people and anti-Japanese resisters, whose sacrifice and bitterness of life were forgotten in the collective memory of the Chinese nation, but hear, for the first time, the voices of individual prisoners of war (POW) and puppet army soldiers, whose accounts were wiped out of historical records in textbooks, popular films and television series.

²⁹⁸ For the statistics, see <http://tv.sohu.com/s2011/wodekangzhan/>

By the time the second series was broadcast in 2011, 4000 interviews had been completed.

²⁹⁹ To view the first series, see <http://tv.sohu.com/s2011/wodekangzhan/>

To view the second series, see <http://tv.sohu.com/s2011/wodekangzhan2/index.shtml>

³⁰⁰ “Wode kangzhan wangluo shoubo cuilei (The first screening of *My Anti-Japanese War* on the Internet moving audience to tears),” 14 Sep 2010,

<http://ent.huangqi.com/moive/mainland/2010-09/1100248.html>

³⁰¹ “CCTV jilu pindao shoubo wode kangzhan (CCTV documentary channel first broadcasting *My Anti-Japanese War*),” 19 Apr 2011, <http://yule.sohu.com/20110419/n306071138.shtml>

³⁰² Yu Xia, 20 Oct 2011, “Huanyuan lishi quanmao keneng bushi yidaren neng wanchengde (It may be not possible to reconstitute a full image of history by one generation),” *Nanfang Zhoumo* (*Southern Weekends*), <http://www.infzm.com/content/50437>

On the other hand, although the motivation of Cui is to enrich national memory and restore the veracity of history, the effect of the two series may have counteracted his original intention. Despite their popularity, which had over 40 million hits on tv.sohu.com by November 2011,³⁰³ *My anti-Japanese War* has only strengthened popular hatred against Japan, rather than provoking popular reflections on the war. Cui's frustration with the situation was straightforward, admitting that the work would be a failure if it only brought up resentment against Japan.³⁰⁴ After reading pages of feedbacks online, Cui said in disappointment,

It's all resentment. It is not what I had wished to see. I've read hundreds of pieces of feedback [online]. None is rational...I had wished that people could reflect on why that nation came here and made such a catastrophe. I had hoped that people could think hard about history...You should guard against your inherent tendency towards violence, inhumanity, and disrespect for human rights...They can be easily broken [and released]. It exists all over the world.³⁰⁵

It appears that it is still a long way for Cui and his colleagues to see the true success of their works. Nevertheless, their initiative to break down the stylized images of anti-Japanese resistance and introduce diverse personal experience into the war narrative is no doubt a cornerstone on the way.

Besides deep resentment, there are other obstacles to restoring historical veracity and provoking thoughtful reflection. A prominent problem is that there lacks room in the PRC for political criticism and self-reflection on the Chinese nation – including both the political elite and the unenlightened subalterns - and their own responsibilities for the

³⁰³ By November 2011, there were over 40 million click throughs of viewing on tv.sohu.com. At that time, only thirteen of the 30 episodes of series II had been broadcast, but the click throughs for series II already reached 22 million. These figures were given by Cui Yongyuan in the interview with Hebei satellite television (see footnote 363).

³⁰⁴ “Wode kangzhan er fabu; Cui Yongyuan: wo bushi haozhao dajia hen riben (*My Anti-Japanese War II* released; Yongyuan Cui: I'm not calling on people to resent Japan),” 20 Sep 2011, *Beijing Wanbao* (*Beijing Evening*), http://e.gmw.cn/2011-09/20/content_2667415.htm

³⁰⁵ Interview with Cui Yongyuan on *My anti-Japanese War*, *Dushu* (*Reading Book*), Hebei Satellite Television, 29 Nov 2011, video available at <http://www.letv.com/ptv/vplay/1420190.html>

suffering of the nation. Comparing these new images of anti-Japanese resistance fighters with those in classic anti-Japanese films in pre-1949 China, the shortcoming of the new narrative in the post-Mao era is obvious. In films prior to 1949, the most acclaimed works are those of critical realism, that attempt to reveal the socio-political roots of war suffering, not only to blame all suffering and vices on the Japanese.

Eight Thousand Miles of Cloud and Moon (1947) (*baqian lilu yunheyue* 八千里路云和月) and *The Spring River Flows East* (1947) (*yijiang chunshui xiangdongliu* 一江春水向东流) are two of the most outstanding works at that time. Directed by Shi Dongshan, *Eight Thousand Miles of Cloud and Moon* depicts the tragedy of a patriotic young couple during and after the war of resistance. Refusing her cousin's marriage proposal and leaving a comfortable life in Shanghai, college student Jiang participates in the anti-Japanese campaign of a performance troupe composed of patriotic young students. During the eight years of the war, they travel around towns and countryside nationwide to encourage popular resistance. Jiang marries Gao, a like-minded young man in the troupe. Unfortunately, miserable living conditions, the paucity of nutrition, and intensive performances destroy the health being of these young people. After the war, the penniless young couple returns to Shanghai, only to find that the family of Jiang's cousin has made a big fortune and risen to the upper class, through immoral speculation in the war and by framing innocent people as traitors and confiscating their properties after the war. Unwilling to collaborate with the cousin's family, the couple chooses to live in poverty. Tortured by malnutrition and indignant at post-war corruption in society, Jiang's health completely collapses.

The Spring River Flows East is commended as a real epic movie in the history of Chinese films. It has maintained an unbeatable record of revenue from screening of all Chinese films before 1949. When it was first screened in Shanghai in 1947, the total number of audience reached 712,874, taking up to 14% of Shanghai's population at that time.³⁰⁶ The film is about the story of a patriotic and upright young man, and how he

³⁰⁶ Lifan Zhang, 2007, *Junzi Zhijiao Rushui* (*Gentlemen's Friendship Like Water*), http://vip.book.sina.com.cn/book/chapter_41885_27959.html

falls into a corrupt life in the war. Zhang Zhongliang teaches at the night school of a textile factory in Shanghai. He falls in love with Sufen, a female worker in the factory. They get married and anticipate the birth of their first child. The outbreak of the war disrupts the happy life of the ordinary family. Zhang joins a medical team and leaves for the frontline. Sufen returns to the countryside with Zhang's mother and the new-born child.

Zhang is captured in a battle, but manages to escape. Having lost his identity documents and money on the way, Zhang comes to Chongqing (the KMT's provisional capital) as a refugee. He tries to find a decent job, but his experience in fighting against the Japanese is not acknowledged, and he becomes jobless and falls into absolute poverty. In despair, Zhang contacts Wang Lizhen, an upper-class prostitute whom he gets to know in Shanghai. With the help and inducement of Wang, Zhang gets a well-paid job and quickly gets used to the life of the upper class. This is also a painful process of personality transformation. At first Zhang struggles bitterly in his mind, feels indignant at the extravagant life style of the elite in the time of war hardship, and is regretful for what he is doing for his family. Yet finally he gives in.

In the countryside, Zhang's family suffers from all kinds of hardship, as many ordinary Chinese families experienced in the occupied area during the war. Their assets are taken away by the Japanese. Zhang's father is killed, and Zhang's brother escapes to join the guerilla. Eventually the war comes to an end, but it is no longer possible for the broken family to return to the time before the war. Both Sufen and Zhang come back to Shanghai after the war, but they are not reunited. While Zhang continues the luxurious life of the upper class, and amasses huge wealth by confiscating properties of the traitors, Sufen is struggling to make ends meet for the entire family, in the empty hope that Zhang will return some day. At the end of the film, the couple finally meets again, at a lavish banquet where Zhang is the host and Sufen serves as a waitress. Realizing that she has been abandoned, Sufen throws herself in the Huangpu River and ends all of her distress in the spring river flowing east.

The two works are regarded as classics in the history of Chinese films, because in both the early PRC and the post-Mao eras, we seldom see such deep reflections on the origins and causes of war suffering. In both films, war suffering is no longer seen as an affliction imposed by the Japanese invaders. While the protagonists have survived all kinds of hardship in the war, the enduring suffering of the post-war era, which is inflicted by China's unjust socio-political system, finally devours them. This is a point on which the majority of Chinese films and television series kept silent in the early PRC and the post-Mao eras.

In both eras, the touch on the suffering of anti-Japanese resistance fighters and ordinary people in the post-war era, and the backwardness of the unenlightened and disenfranchised Chinese people, has been excluded from the mainstream discourse for political reasons – either through self-censorship or by the banning order of the party-state. Let us have a look again at the legendary image of Li Yunlong, which was presented at the beginning of this chapter. The television series ends at the point when the first military rank awarding ceremony is held in 1955. At the ceremony, Li is awarded the rank of major general, and reaches the glorious height of his life. But the original novel has a different end, which continues till the 1960s. In the Cultural Revolution, Li Yunlong commits suicide, with the Browning given as gift by his friend and rival, KMT general Chu Yunfei.³⁰⁷ The oral history of war survivors in *My anti-Japanese War* also stops at the 1945, 1950 or 1957, with little coverage of later years, though the accounts of these interviewees have been recorded until the 1980s. Cui Yongyuan, producer of the documentary, is conscious of what he is able to do and what he is not. As he said in an interview, “Recovering the full landscape of history is probably something that cannot be completed by one generation.”³⁰⁸

In the post-Mao era, although unconventional images of anti-Japanese resistance fighters are allowed to flourish on screen, serious reflection on the war of resistance still

³⁰⁷ Liang Du, 2000, *Liang Jian (Showing Sword)*, Beijing: Jiefangjun Wenyi Chubanshe (PLA Literature and Art Publishing House).

³⁰⁸ Yu Xia, 20 Oct 2011, “Huanyuan lishi quanmao keneng bushi yidai ren neng wanchengde (It may be not possible to reconstitute a full image of history by one generation)”

comes at the risk of being punished, if it deviates from the official line of political correctness. *Devils on the Doorstep* (2000) (*guizi laile* 鬼子来了), directed by Jiang Wen, is probably the best Chinese film that reflects this war from a Chinese perspective since 1949. It was awarded the Grand Prix at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival, and has been banned from public screening in China.

Through an absurd story, the film questions the national character of the Chinese and tries to provoke a deep reflection on the cause and history of the war of resistance. At the beginning of the film, the villagers live in peace in the Japanese occupied area. One night, a mysterious man breaks into the home of Ma Dasan, and deposits there a Japanese soldier (Hanaya) and a Chinese interpreter (Dong). Not knowing who the mysterious man is, and fearing the Japanese army stationed nearby, the villagers decide to keep the captives. They feed the captives with the best food available, and wait for the mysterious man to pick them up. But the man does not come back.

To deal with the two captives, the villagers fiercely debate. At first they decide to kill them, but are too intimidated to kill people themselves. Finally, they accept the proposal of Hanaya, who has been well treated in custody and becomes sincerely grateful to the villagers. He suggests that the villagers use him to exchange two wagons of grains with the Japanese army. However, Hanaya does not know that his army commander has already thought he is dead and established him as a model hero. Seeing his return, the commander feels shamefully embarrassed, but agrees to honor the agreement Hanaya reaches with the villagers.

On the night of the feast, the Japanese bring food and wine to the village, and celebrate “friendship” with the villagers. In cheers and laughter, as the feast is going on, the commander suddenly orders the soldiers to kill all the villagers and burn down the entire village. Only Ma Dasan and his lover survive, as they are on the way back to the village when the massacre takes place. After the killing, the commander tells his army that the Emperor has just ordered the surrender of Japan.

The KMT army comes and takes over the area. Interpreter Dong is executed in public for treason. On the scene are numerous Chinese onlookers who are laughing in ignorance. Then Ma Dasan is executed in public, surrounded by the same Chinese onlookers who are laughing in ignorance. Ma is decapitated for “damaging international peace”, “disturbing public order” and “generating terror”, as he has killed some Japanese prisoners of war (POW) for revenge. The film comes to the height of its symbolic sarcasm at the end, when the KMT commander orders Hanaya to execute the decapitation. Hanaya, who has been held captive by the villagers and well treated by Ma, finally decapitates him, in a manner that the villagers have explicitly considered as a way to kill Hanaya.

The sarcastic tone of the film subjects to critical scrutiny not only the cruelty of the Japanese, but the ignorance, cowardliness and forgetfulness of the Chinese, and thus the origin of the backwardness of the Chinese as a nation. To the director, the Chinese characters are not just targets of criticism and sarcasm, but a reality to face and reflect on. The character of Chinese peasants is related to the abysmal socio-political environment they live in, which is full of threats, coercion and uncertainty imposed by the cruel Japanese army, the fearful guerrillas, and the corrupt KMT government. In response to the deep reflection and international reputation of the film, the Chinese government has banned its public screening in China.

Conclusion: Changing Images at the Crossroads

Comparing the images of anti-Japanese resistance fighters in popular films, television series and Internet programs between the early and late time of the PRC, we see a fundamental change in the narrative of China’s anti-Japanese war of resistance. In the narrative of the Maoist years, at the core were legendary heroes under the direct leadership of the CCP. Accordingly, in the periphery, it was ordinary people who, under the mentorship of the CCP, grew up to unyielding anti-Japanese nationalists and liberated revolutionaries through the course of resistance.

Therefore, in the traditional narrative, the course of anti-Japanese resistance was closely intertwined with the course of communist revolution. The success of both courses was attributed to the direction of the CCP, and they constituted two indivisible sides of the same narrative. Legendary heroes, the indomitable people, and the embedded hierarchical relations between them and the CCP, constructed the dominant narrative of China's war of resistance in popular culture. The narrative served the political needs of the CCP and popular taste in the early PRC.

In the post-Mao era, the CCP's dominance over the narrative of the anti-Japanese war has been shattered. The penetration of local government, market and a variety of interest groups into the industry of films, television series and Internet programs has reshaped the images of anti-Japanese resistance fighters and their relations to the CCP in the narrative. Not only class enemies, such as KMT generals, warlords, capitalists, members of the local gentry and landlords, but bad elements among the people, such as bandits and prostitutes, have been integrated into the new narrative of the war. Moreover, their relations to the CCP have become independent, not subordinate.

The role of the CCP has also contracted in the new narrative, from absolute leader in the course of resistance, to a supporter, an ally, and even an absentee in the process. In works which CCP protagonists remain leading characters in the resistance, their images become fleshier and more complicated. Loyalty and obedience to the CCP is no longer the primary requirement for being a good CCP protagonist. Instead, the character is now judged by his achievements in leading the resistance against the Japanese. These fundamental changes in the images of resistance fighters are a response to the bankruptcy of communist ideology, changing popular taste in the cultural market, and the differing desires of various sub-populations in society.

On the other hand, despite these changes, the new narrative is not free of political traces of the party-state and communist culture. It is still constrained by stylized images of anti-Japanese resistance fighters, which are inherited from the images of the people's war in the Mao era. Most of these new images lack a deep reflection on the anti-

Japanese war, and are unable to represent the veracity of history. In recent years, some alternative narratives have begun to emerge, which might be able to transcend these shortcomings. But their effects are still limited today, and they are at risk of being punished for political incorrectness. Today China has come to the crossroads of reflecting on the war of anti-Japanese resistance at a more sophisticated level.

Chapter 5 Contestation in the Protecting the Diaoyu Islands Movement: *Baodiao* Activists and the Authority in a Comparative Perspective

In recent years, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute has become one of the major problems that incite Chinese nationalism and exacerbate tensions in Sino-Japanese relations. The anti-Japanese protest of September 2012 is just another incident that escalated the dispute. Sweeping over eighty cities throughout China, this protest bears something new and unusual, compared to the anti-Japanese demonstration in 2005.

Mob violence, in terms of both level and scale, swirled out of control. It led to the sabotage of Japanese factories and department stores, to attacks on Japanese-brand cars, and to mass vandalism.³⁰⁹ Not only Japanese owned business but also ordinary Chinese were victims of brutal street violence. In Xi'an, a Chinese who had a Japanese-brand car was beaten to permanent paralysis.³¹⁰ A woman and her child were stopped by protestors, when driving a Japanese-brand car. The car was smashed, and her child was lost in chaos.³¹¹

Shocked at and ashamed by such mob violence, the Chinese middle class spearheaded the ensuing public condemnation of the protest, expressing their discontent and critiques on social media such as *weibo* (the Chinese version of twitter). This was a dramatic shift of the role of the Chinese middle class in the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute, because in 2003, it was they who had initiated the first expedition to the Diaoyu Islands from mainland China. The expedition and subsequent civil activities, organized by the Chinese middle class and professionals, have brought the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute onto the political agenda of Chinese politics, and altered the set of policies from which the party-state could have chosen.

³⁰⁹ Justin McCurry, 17 Sep 2012, "Japanese firms close offices in China as islands row escalates," *The Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/sep/17/japanese-firms-close-offices-china>

³¹⁰ Report on the attack in Xi'an, 21 Sep 2012, *Beijing Qingnianbao* (Beijing Youth Daily) http://news.ifeng.com/society/2/detail_2012_09/21/17795425_0.shtml

³¹¹ Report on the attack on the woman and her child, 21 Sep 2012, *Nanfang Dushibao Weibo* ("Weibo" (Chinese Twitter) of Southern Metropolis Daily) <http://www.xiancity.cn/readnews.php?id=58069>

This chapter reveals why and how the Chinese middle class and professionals, with their understandings, interpretations and claims of nationalism which are different from state nationalism, intensified the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute and provoked Chinese nationalism in the early 2000s. Their initiatives and strategies not only successfully challenged Japan's administration over the disputed islands, but also weakened the party-state's monopoly over the interpretation of Chinese nationalism and foreign policy towards Japan.

This chapter also compares *Baodiao* (Protecting the Diaoyu Islands Movement) under different socio-political conditions. It shows that street violence is not an intrinsic character of *Baodiao*, but that state-society dynamics in mainland China have inexorably led the movement towards mob violence and social unrest under the banner of Chinese nationalism. There are different kinds of *Baodiao* mobilization in the Greater China area (Taiwan, Hong Kong and China). In all the three contexts, *Baodiao* was initiated from below, in the process of which social activists were contesting with the authority for their respective interpretations and claims of nationalism.

Despite the similar nature of *Baodiao* in the three contexts, the movement nevertheless displays striking differences, particularly in the composition of activists, the strategies they took, and evolution of the movement. This is because, this chapter argues, the movement encountered a different level of repression in the three contexts, and consequently it required a different mobilizing structure for the activists to successfully bring up the challenge. This also explains why leading *Baodiao* activists in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China come from different social backgrounds. It is under the most authoritarian political context (that is, mainland China) that *Baodiao*'s contestation has been derailed, leading to street violence and stifled civil nationalism.

This is the first study that researches *Baodiao* in a cross-contextual comparison with rich resources of memoirs and interviews. This kind of contextualization is new and different from what is found in the existing literature, with its exclusive focus on the

PRC. Such a historical and comparative perspective has an apparent advantage. It not only contributes to a knowledge of how the understandings, interpretations and claims of nationalism, held by the Chinese *Baodiao* activists, differ from what is propagated in state nationalism in China, but also reveals why the way China's *Baodiao* activists construe, express and exploit state nationalism is different from their counterparts in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Overview of the Existing Approaches in Studying *Baodiao*

The Diaoyu Islands, named Senkaku Islands by Japan, are literally eight islets with a total area of 6.3 kilometer squares located in the East China Sea, some 100 nautical miles northeast of Taiwan and 200 nautical miles west of Okinawa. These barren islands are strategically vital to both China and Japan. Economically, it is estimated that the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) related to the islands contain almost 100 billion barrels of oil and rich fishing grounds.³¹² Strategically, China views these islands as part of its strategic front east of the continent.³¹³ Politically and symbolically, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands have become a potential trigger of regional instability and warfare, because neither authoritarian China nor democratic Japan is able to make territorial compromise under increasing domestic pressure. To China, the dispute over these islands triggers its sensitive nerves over the so-called “hundred years of humiliation”, because Japan was the only nation that nearly conquered the entire China in its modern history. Therefore, the territorial dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands is of great economic, strategic, political and symbolic value to both China and Japan.

Traditionally scholars have focused on the legal, historical and diplomatic aspects of the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute. These approaches are useful for understanding the development of the dispute, but they have severe limitations. In legal terms, China

³¹² Jean-Marc F. Blanchard, 2000, “The U.S. role in the Sino-Japanese dispute over the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands, 1945-1971,” *The China Quarterly*, Vol.161, pp. 95-123.

³¹³ Major General Yinan Jin, “Junshi zhuanjia Jin Yinan tan diaoyudao xianzhuang (Military expert Yinan Jin on the status quo of Diaoyu Islands)”, 05 Mar 2008
http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_50e39b4401008on3.html accessed on 15 Aug 2011

claims its sovereignty based on the 1943 Cairo Declaration and 1945 Potsdam Proclamation that “Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.”³¹⁴ This means, according to China’s interpretation as a signatory to the declarations, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands shall be reverted to China along with Taiwan, which was ceded to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki following the 1st Sino-Japanese War in 1895.

Japan refutes China’s claim by insisting that according to the 1951 San Francisco Treaty, it only renounced rights, titles and claims to Formosa (Taiwan) and the Pescadores (Penghu), with no mention of the Senkaku.³¹⁵ Additionally, Article 3 of the treaty stipulates that “Japan will concur in any proposal of the United States to the United Nations to place under its trusteeship system, with the United States as the sole administering authority, Nansei Shoto south of 29deg. north latitude (including the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands), Nanpo Shoto south of Sofu Gan (including the Bonin Islands, Rosario Island and the Volcano Islands) and Parece Vela and Marcus Island.”³¹⁶ Therefore, Japan interprets that it should incorporate the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands under the trusteeship, as stipulated in the article. As a counterargument, China claims that it was not a signatory to the San Francisco Treaty, and therefore China is not bound by it.

Japan further claims that these islands were *terra nullius* (unclaimed territory) legitimately incorporated in its Okinawa prefecture before the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Therefore Japan has no obligation to renounce its sovereignty under the post-WWII treaties. China refutes this argument by claiming that these islands were historically part of China, which Japan stole from China during the late period of the Qing Empire. Therefore, according to China’s claim, the principle of *terra nullius* cannot apply.

³¹⁴ Article 8, The Potsdam Proclamation: (United States, China, United Kingdom) A statement of terms for the Unconditional Surrender of Japan, July 26, 1945.

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1945/1945-07-26a.html> accessed on 29 Aug 2011

³¹⁵ Article 2, Treaty of Peace with Japan, signed at San Francisco, 8 Sep 1951

<http://www.taiwandocuments.org/sanfrancisco01.htm> accessed on 30 Aug 2011

³¹⁶ Ibid, Article 3

Japan then questions the motivations of China and Taiwan in taking up the issue, because neither of them brought up the dispute until the 1969 UN Economic Commission report that indicated the possibility of huge oil and gas reserves in the vicinity of these islands. Such an accusation helps Japan attract international sympathy, but China soon takes its revenge, showing evidence that Japan also did not change its map and incite nationalists at home to incorporate the islands until after 1971.³¹⁷

From a historical point of view, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute is fundamentally not a legal issue. Instead it is an issue of clashes between the old and the new world orders. According to this view, the arguments between China and Japan over legal possession of the islands, based on either historical records or principles of international law, fail to acknowledge that such contentions are rooted in the clash of the Sino-centric international order and the new world order based on European international law. Whereas the Sino-centric international order in East Asia started to wane in the late Qing Dynasty, during the same period, European international law was imposed by Japan, which was actively pursuing de-Asianization and modernity.³¹⁸

Under the Sino-centric international order, the Ryukyus (modern-day Okinawa) was one of the vassal states under China's suzerainty and imperial rule. It was not incorporated in the Chinese empire, because it was not necessary to conquer a vassal state by force and establish direct administration over it, in order to subdue the vassal state under the Sino-centric world order. The unequal relations between the dominant state and the vassal state were sufficient to establish and maintain such an old world order centered on the Chinese empire. Therefore, "outside China proper, it was possible to rule even where there was no mechanism of physical governance in place."³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Deyuan Ju, 2001, *Ribenguo Qietu Yuanliu: Diaoyu Lieyu Zhuquan Bian (The History of Japan's Territorial Encroachment: On the Sovereignty of Diaoyu Islands)*, Beijing: Capital Normal University Press.

³¹⁸ Joyman Lee, 2011, "Senkaku/Diaoyu: Islands of Conflict," *History Today*, 61(5)

<http://www.historytoday.com/joyman-lee/senkakudiaoyu-islands-conflict>

³¹⁹ Ibid.

However, Japan was an exception in the region of East Asia. It stayed out of the Sino-centric tributary system during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868). During the Meiji period (1868-1912), Japan swiftly adopted “the western lexicon into its diplomatic language”, and by so doing, it “was able to undermine China’s central position in Asia during the late 19th century by using the language and force of western international law to replace Chinese legal terms hitherto widely accepted in East Asia.”³²⁰

The outcomes of the WWII in East Asia complicated the issue. Japan lost the war to China, but China could not have been able to win the war without the aid of the United States and the U.S. attack on Japan and its colonies. Compared to Japan, the U.S is a more powerful and authentic imposer of the new world order. This means that, after the WWII, it was impossible for the old regional order in East Asia to be restored. Mired in the Cold War, the U.S. created the San Francisco system that sowed the seeds of the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute between China and Japan.³²¹ Furthermore, the ambiguities of international law mean that even if China and Japan would agree some day to submit the dispute to international adjudication, it would still be impossible to resolve the conflict, because “many definitions and concepts of this modern law are still underdeveloped.”³²²

The study of the diplomatic aspects of the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute focuses on political maneuvers of the two countries at the time of diplomatic crisis. According to Min Gyo Koo, there are five rounds of clashes over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands between the late 1960s and 2005. The first round of dispute (1968-71) was provoked by the United Nations’ report that under the surrounding waters of the islands, there was probably a huge reserve of oil and gas. This was the inception of the dispute. Against this backdrop, the 1971 Okinawa reversion to Japan by the United States immediately led to a flare-up of Sino-Japanese tensions. The second round of clashes (1978) occurred as an interlude in the negotiation of the Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty. This time China

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Kimie Hara, 2007, *Cold War Frontiers in the Asia-Pacific: Divided Territories in the San Francisco System*, London; New York: Routledge.

³²² Unryu Suganuma, 2000, *Sovereign rights and territorial space in Sino-Japanese Relations: Irredentism and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p.162.

even sent a flotilla of armed fishing boats to the disputed waters to claim its sovereignty. The third round (1990-91) emerged in 1990, when Japan authorized a rightist group to build a lighthouse on one of the disputed islands. It provoked strong anti-Japanese reactions in China, which coincided with China's decision to shore up nationalism in the collapse of the communist bloc. The fourth round of clashes (1996) was again prodded by Japan's lighthouse on the islands, which culminated in the drowning of Hong Kong activist Chan Yuk Cheung in the surrounding waters. In contrast to previous clashes, the fifth round (2004-05) was catalyzed by China. A group of Chinese activists landed on one of the islands in March 2004. The simmering bilateral tensions were further antagonized by Japan's authorization of a disputed history textbook. The discontent and distrust on the Chinese side finally erupted in an anti-Japanese mass demonstration in 2005.³²³

Koo's record of Sino-Japanese flare-ups over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands provides a comprehensive chronology of bilateral collisions from the inception to 2005. As seen in his description and analysis, at the diplomatic level, there are few differences between the five rounds of clashes. Each time Beijing and Tokyo put priority on economies and geopolitics, rather than letting nationalist flare-ups grow out of control.³²⁴ Each time when the crisis has cooled down, both countries lack interest in making "any efforts to compromise and negotiate a settlement of the dispute", and prefer to take "a strategy of delaying and deferring settlement of the dispute".³²⁵

What cannot be reflected in this meticulous chronology, and what cannot be explained by the legal and historical approaches, is why the dynamics of the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute have demonstrated different characteristics and consequences in *Baodiao* mobilization, whereas China and Japan were consistent in their political interests and gestures (at least till 2005). Seeing through the lens of *Baodiao* mobilization, state-

³²³ Min Gyo Koo, 2005, "Scramble for the rocks: the disputes over the Dokdo/Takeshima, Senkaku/Diaoyu, and Paracel and Spratly Islands," Dissertation, UC Berkeley.

³²⁴ Min Gyo Koo, 2005, "Scramble for the rocks".

³²⁵ Taylor Fravel, 2010, "Explaining stability in the Senkaku (Diaoyu) dispute," Chapter 7 in Gerald Curtis, Ryosei Kokubun and Wang Jisi (eds.), *Getting the Triangle Straight: Managing China-Japan-US Relations*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press, p. 157.

society dynamics have changed dramatically.

Over the past four decades, there has been little similarity in *Baodiao* mobilization in terms of agents, strategies and consequences. The movement first flourished in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the U.S. in the early 1970s, in the form of student protests that aimed to oppose the U.S. reversion of the islands to Japan. Activists from China were absent in the spotlight at that time, but it does not mean that they did not exist. In the mid-1990s, *Baodiao* activists started to use expeditions to the disputed waters as a means of mobilization. This time, activists from China started to connect and learn from their counterparts in Hong Kong and Taiwan, but it was still the latter who played the main role in the mobilization. It was not until 2003 that activists from China successfully organized an expedition to the islands, relying on mobilization in both the virtual and the real worlds. According to some *Baodiao* activists, these three periods represent the three stages in the development of the *Baodiao* Movement.³²⁶

The success of the third stage is of particular relevance to international concerns over the dispute today. As Taylor Fravel observes four years ago, in the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute, “perhaps the leading source of friction in the dispute over the past two decades has been efforts by citizen activists to land on the islands to demonstrate their countries’ sovereignty claims. These actions then compel governments to get involved in the dispute, increasing the potential for armed conflict.”³²⁷ The mobilization of *Baodiao* activists, along with subsequent state-society dynamics, has changed the political agenda of the party-state as well as the evolution of the *Baodiao* Movement in China.

Yet in the existing literature, the attempt to understand such a dynamic and the characteristics of the *Baodiao* mobilization is far from sufficient, though *Baodiao* has already become a hotbed of intensifying popular nationalism in contemporary China. This is because the existing studies, either from a legal, a historical or a diplomatic perspective, do not try to explain how and why the *Baodiao* activists speak and act as

³²⁶ Zi Min, 2007, *Bainian Fengyun Diaoyudao (The Turbulent History of One Hundred Year: Diaoyu Islands)*, Hong Kong: Contemporary Literature and Arts Press, p.122.

³²⁷ Taylor Fravel, 2010, “Explaining stability in the Senkaku (Diaoyu) dispute”, pp. 151-152

such.

Though some journalistic descriptions of these activists have begun to emerge in recent years, they are far from sufficient. Journalistic accounts take what activists say and do at surface value, without looking into the complicated relations between these activists and the authorities they have to encounter. Such accounts also lack a historical comparative view, thus tending to simplify the policy implications of the movement and remaining unable to explain why the movement displays striking differences in different socio-political contexts.

The historical and comparative study in this chapter will fill this gap. By comparing the socio-political contexts of *Baodiao* in different stages of the movement, it explains both the similarities and the differences in the ways in which *Baodiao* has unfolded under different regimes, and shows that xenophobic nationalism and street violence are not intrinsic characteristics of the *Baodiao* Movement. Only under specific state-society dynamics has the violent mode of mobilization emerged in the movement, as seen in the 2012 anti-Japanese protest in China.

1970-1971: Outspoken Taiwanese Students

Mired in the Vietnam War in 1969, the United States started to negotiate with Japan the reversion of Okinawa. The two states concluded the Okinawa Reversion Treaty in 1971, in which it stipulated that the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands be returned to Japan.³²⁸ Before the conclusion of the treaty, a joint communiqué was agreed in November 1969, signifying that both governments would immediately take consultations regarding the reversion.

When the news reached Taiwan in early 1970, a small team of reporters from *The China Times* (*zhongguo shibao*) went to the disputed islands, and raised a Taiwanese flag on

³²⁸ Agreement Between the United States of America and Japan Concerning the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands, Washington and Tokyo (simultaneously), 17 June 1971
<http://www.niraikanai.wvma.net/pages/archive/rev71.html> accessed on 1 Sep 2011

one of them.³²⁹ According to an interview with *The Lifeweek* (*sanlian shenghuo zhoukan*), this operation was more out of commercial concern than political ambitions. In order to outdo its competitors, Jizhong Yu, the producer of *The China Times*, who used to be a Lieutenant General of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) planned this “surprise attack”.

Yu was very careful to mitigate the political risk of the expedition, because this maneuver was contradictory to the KMT’s policy preference at the time. Both Taiwan and Japan were U.S. protégés in East Asia, facing a direct threat from the communist bloc. In deciding who would go on the expedition, he only selected those reporters who either had close connections with the KMT or came from eminent KMT families.

The reporters set out from Keelung on the evening of 1 September 1970. They entered the disputed waters without encountering any obstruction, because of the shocking nature of their expedition. Staying on one of the disputed islands for two hours, and raising a Taiwanese flag, they returned to Taiwan on 3 September. When the news came out on 4 September in *The China Times*, as planned, both the Japanese government and the Chiang Kai-shek government were indeed shocked.³³⁰

This little spark, ignited accidentally by a profit-seeking newspaper, however, went out of control. It became the starting point of a new wave of social movement in Taiwan in the 1970s. The news catalyzed public opinion, inciting strong anti-Japanese nationalism and discontent with the KMT government. Many mainstream newspapers and magazines joined the chorus, urging the government to take a tougher stance to protect China’s sovereignty (Taiwan regarded itself as the sovereignty of China at that time). These include *The Central Daily News* (*zhongyang ribao*), *The United Daily News* (*lianhe bao*), *The Independence Evening* (*zili wanbao*), *The China Magazine* (*zhonghua*

³²⁹ Yue Yuan, 30 Nov 2010, “*Baodiao* yundong de qiyuan (The origin of *Baodiao* Movement)”, *Sanlian Shenghuo Zhoukan* (*Life Week*), No.607, http://news.qq.com/a/20101208/001076_6.htm, accessed on 1 Sep 2011. Yue Yuan interviewed five leading *Baodiao* activists in Taiwan, including one of the reporters who raised the flag on Diaoyu Islands in 1971.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

zazhi) and *The Outlook (zhanwang)*.³³¹ Besides the media, Taiwan's national and local Congresses, the Legislature and the House of Control also expressed unqualified support for the appeal.³³²

What really changed state-society dynamics and left an enduring influence was the mobilization of college students under the banner of anti-Japanese nationalism and protecting the Diaoyutai (the name of the Diaoyu Islands in Taiwan). Students and alumni of Taiwan's elite universities played a major role in the mobilization, particularly those who had extensive networks and who were actively involved in student publications.

Xiaoxin Lin, a graduate from the National Taiwan University (NTU), was doing his PhD at the University of Chicago in 1970. He was the founder and editor of *The Science Monthly (kexue yuekan)*, a science magazine edited by Taiwanese students in the United States. In late 1970, the magazine had 300 correspondents from more than 50 universities in the States, and claimed to have more than 1000 Taiwanese students in the network.³³³ When Lin was contacted by his colleagues at the magazine and NTU classmates to use this network to mobilize for the *Baodiao* Movement, he did not hesitate to give his support.

The Science Monthly published three special issues on the Diaoyu Islands, and mobilized a nationwide network of students from Taiwan for *Baodiao* in the U.S. This led to the first mass demonstration of Chinese students in the U.S.³³⁴ On 29-30 January 1971, Taiwanese students, along with other overseas students of Chinese origin in the states, protested against the reversion of the Diaoyutai in New York, Washington,

³³¹ Taiwan was regarded as the representative of China at that time.

³³² Yuanjun Liu, 2010, "Kexue yukan yu baodiao yundong (*Science Monthly* and *Baodiao* Movement)" in *Qimeng, Kuangbiao, Fansi: Baodiao Yundong Sishi Nian (Enlightenment, Storm and Reflection: The Forty Years of Baodiao Movement)*, edited by Xiaocen Xie et al., Taiwan: Tsinghua University Press. The electronic copy of the original piece is also available at <http://adage.lib.nthu.edu.tw/nthu/activity/diaoyun/pdf/1-5.pdf> accessed on 2 Sep 2011

³³³ Yue Yuan, 2010, "The origin of Baodiao Movement".

³³⁴ Please note that Taiwan and many overseas Chinese regarded Taiwan to represent authentic China at that time.

Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles and San Francisco. It is estimated that on 30 January 1971 there were more than 2,500 students demonstrating outside the UN headquarters in New York.³³⁵

The intellectual community of overseas Chinese in the states was also fuming. In March 1971, five hundred scholars of Chinese origin presented a joint petition to the Chiang Kai-shek government, urging it to defend the Diaoyutai and refuse any proposal of joint oil exploitation with Japan before the sovereignty was clarified.³³⁶ The petition by established scholars further allayed the students' concerns with political risk, and encouraged radicalization of their activities.

A larger student demonstration took place on 10 April 1971 in Washington and on the west coast. This time, the students not only targeted the Japanese Embassy, but made their petition to the U.S. Department of State and the Taiwanese Embassy in Washington. After the demonstration, the *Baodiao* Movement in the U.S. soon took a left turn. Students were divided into three camps. The leftists and radicals placed their hopes on communist China. The rightists, who were backed up by the KMT, maintained their loyalty to their patron. And the social democrats turned their attention to advancing social reforms in Taiwan.³³⁷

The most far-reaching outcome of the *Baodiao* Movement came from the mobilization of students within Taiwan. In the early 1970s, Taiwan's economy had started to take off, but repression by the authoritarian KMT government on political activities had yet to be lifted. In the meantime, the transition from import-substitution to export-oriented industrialization inflicted a huge cost on the working class and traditional peasants. The moral spirit of society was also in decay. Even worse, Taiwan's international status was

³³⁵ “Minjian Baodiao yundong shi (The popular history of *Baodiao* Movement),” 19 Jun 2008, *Nanfang Zhoumo* (Southern Weekly), <http://www.infzm.com/content/13579> accessed on 2 Sep 2011

³³⁶ Xiaoxin Lin, 2010, “Baodiao lishi de yuanyuan jiqi dui haixia liang'an shehui de yiyi (The origin of *Baodiao* history and its implications for the two societies across the strait)” in *Qimeng, Kuangbiao, Fansi: Baodiao Yundong Sishi Nian* (Enlightenment, Storm and Reflection: The Forty Years of *Baodiao* Movement).

³³⁷ Ibid.

on the brink of collapse. Its seat at the United Nations was facing imminent threat from communist China, and it was losing economic aid from the U.S.³³⁸

It was against this backdrop that the student-led *Baodiao* Movement flourished in Taiwan in 1970-1971. To understand these *Baodiao* students, it must be clarified that the political cost they were facing at that time was substantial. This was in the early 1970s. Taiwan's martial law was not lifted, and university campuses were penetrated by secret agents. Any autonomous student organization for social movement was strictly forbidden. The KMT even recruited student spies to monitor the opinions and activities of dissident students.³³⁹ Therefore the political opportunity was unfavorable for Taiwanese students to initiate the *Baodiao* Movement.

This explains why students from Hong Kong, who were studying in Taiwan but less fearful of the KMT authorities, were the forerunners of *Baodiao* organizing on campuses. On 12 April 1971, some Hong Kong students of the National Taiwan University (NTU) put up a large poster on campus. It was a taboo-breaking act, because at that time, no political slogans were allowed at universities. On 15 April 1971, students of the National Chengchi University organized the first-ever student protest on the streets since the implementation of Martial Law in 1949.³⁴⁰ This activity was also first mobilized by a group of students, who were not Taiwanese but were studying in Taiwan. Of Chinese origin, these students came from all over East and Southeast Asia.

Following the actions of these non-Taiwanese Chinese students, Taiwanese students were emboldened. On the next day of the poster incident at the NTU, a pair of huge scrolls appeared on campus. Filled with nationalist enthusiasm, the scrolls read, "The land of China could be conquered, but it could not be abandoned; The Chinese people

³³⁸ Xin Hui, "Taiwan qishi niandai baodiao yundong dui dangjin de qishi (The revelation of Taiwan's *Baodiao* Movement in the 1970s to today), accessed on 3 Sep 2011 <http://www.chinaelections.org/newsinfo.asp?newsid=188427>

³³⁹ Teresa Wright, 1999, "Student mobilization in Taiwan: civil society and its discontents," *Asian Survey*, 39(6), pp. 986-1008.

³⁴⁰ Liben Qiu, 2010, "Qiaosheng shi taiwan baodiao yundong de xianfeng (Sojourner students were the pioneers of Taiwan's *Baodiao* Movement)" in *Qimeng, Kuangbiao, Fansi: Baodiao Yundong Sishi Nian (Enlightenment, Storm and Reflection: The Forty Years of Baodiao Movement)*.

could be slaughtered, but they would not bow down.” This was a quote from the *May Fourth Declaration*, which represented the continuation of *Baodiao*’s nationalist spirit from the 1919 student movement.³⁴¹

Besides the National Taiwan University, many other major universities joined in this insurrection against the authorities, including National Chengchi University, National Chung Hsing University, Tamkang University, National Taiwan Normal University, National Tsinghua University (Hsinchu City), National Taiwan Ocean University (Keelung), Fu Jen Catholic University, Tunghai University (Taichung City) and Shih Hsin University. The students took various actions to express their discontent and broke political taboos. They organized forums and talks, signed petitions, held demonstrations on campus, presented protest letters to the U.S. and Japanese embassies, wrote letters in blood, and ultimately, marched out of the campuses and went to protest in the streets.³⁴²

The peak of the movement came, when the U.S. was about to sign the reversion treaty with Japan in June. Under pressure from the students, the KMT authorities and the NTU compromised, permitting an authentic student-led *Baodiao* association to be formed. This proved to be a big mistake for the authorities. After hearing that the U.S. would formally sign the reversion agreement on 17 June 1971, the organized students applied for demonstrations in the name of the *Baodiao* association. They threatened that, if the application rejected, they would take action anyway. After the failure of persuasion, enticement, and threats, the KMT authorities approved the application, leading to mass demonstrations outside the U.S. and Japanese embassies on 17 June.³⁴³

³⁴¹ “Taiwan baodiao yundong zhongjian fenzi Wang Xiaobo koushu 1971 nian baodiao qianhou (Taiwan’s leading *Baodiao* activist Xiaobo Wang relates the *Baodiao* Movement of 1971)”, *Nanfang Dushibao* (*Southern Metropolis Daily*), 18 May 2011, accessed on 3 Sep 2011 http://nf.nfdaily.cn/nfdsb/content/2011-05/18/content_24256143.htm; Hongsheng Zheng, “Qishi niandai baodiao yundong de zhengui yichan (The precious legacy of the *Baodiao* Movement in the 1970s)”, 25 April 2011, <http://www.mshw.org/theory/history/2011-04-25/1087.html> accessed on 3 Sep 2011

³⁴² “Qishi Niandai chu Taiwan daonei de Baodiao yundong (Taiwan’s *Baodiao* Movement in the early 1970s)”, *Haixia Pinglun* (*Strait Review*), No.60, 1 Dec 1995 <http://www.wcaddl.org/portal.php?mod=view&aid=53> accessed on 3 Sep 2011

³⁴³ “Taiwan baodiao yundong zhongjian fenzi Wang Xiaobo koushu 1971 nian baodiao qianhou (Taiwan’s leading *Baodiao* activist Xiaobo Wang relates the *Baodiao* Movement of 1971)”, *Nanfang Dushibao* (*Southern Metropolis Daily*), 18 May 2011

After the demonstration, *Baodiao* fizzled out on university campuses in Taiwan. Yet the *Baodiao* Movement in 1970-1971 has been recognized as the first major wave of dissident mobilization that involved college students in post-war Taiwan.³⁴⁴ The role of students in *Baodiao* was taboo-breaking and far-reaching. In the early 1970s, earlier dissident magazines such as *The Liberal China* (*ziyou zhongguo*) and *The Literary Star* (*wenxing*) had ceased to publish. Influential dissident intellectuals had been either purged or ostracized, and independent political parties (*dangwai*) had not yet arisen.³⁴⁵

It was under such circumstances that the student movement of *Baodiao* emerged and changed the social spirit of the time, when Taiwan's youth was labeled as the "silent generation".³⁴⁶ Through *Baodiao*, a new generation grew up. Among these students and young intellectuals, some became radical critics of the KMT, some engaged in building campus democracy, and some others went out of the ivory tower to rebuild society in Taiwan.³⁴⁷ For example, the three victims of the infamous incident of the NTU Department of Philosophy were young scholars and students Chen Guying, Wang Xiaobo and Qian Yongxiang. All of them were actively participating in *Baodiao*. Disillusioned with the KMT and the U.S., they openly criticized the KMT government, and supported leftist student movements and the unification of Taiwan with communist China. This led to their arrest in January 1973, and expulsion by the NTU.³⁴⁸ Chen Guying later became a member of *dangwai* election consultancy group (*dangwai zhuxuantuan*) working with leading activists of the Democratic Progressive Party.

1996: Blood of the Hong Kong Martyr

³⁴⁴ Teresa Wright, 1999, "Student mobilization in Taiwan"

³⁴⁵ Hongsheng Zheng, 25 April 2011, "Qishi niandai baodiao yundong de zhengui yichan (The precious legacy of the *Baodiao* Movement in the 1970s)"

³⁴⁶ Guuying Chen, 1982, "The Reform Movement among intellectuals in Taiwan since 1970," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14(3), pp. 32-47. The spelling of "Guuying" is not a misspelling, as shown in the author name in the article.

³⁴⁷ Xin Hui, "Taiwan qishi niandai baodiao yundong dui dangjin de qishi (The revelation of Taiwan's *Baodiao* Movement in the 1970s to today)"

³⁴⁸ "Taiwan baodiao yundong zhongjian fenzi Wang Xiaobo koushu 1971 nian baodiao qianhou (Taiwan's leading *Baodiao* activist Xiaobo Wang relates the *Baodiao* Movement of 1971)", *Nanfang Dushibao* (*Southern Metropolis Daily*), 18 May 2011

In the first wave of *Baodiao* in 1970-1971, Hong Kong was not a silent harbor. The movement in Hong Kong also featured student mobilization. But in Hong Kong the target of student organization was the British colonial government. The protest in Victoria Park on 7 July 1971, which was organized by the Hong Kong Student Federation, gathered more than one thousand students. The brutal repression of the protest by the colonial government, with 21 students arrested and many more injured antagonized public opinion which had distanced itself from politics since the 1967 leftist riot.³⁴⁹

As in Taiwan, Hong Kong's *Baodiao* had been related to activists who held dissident political opinions. In 1971, the major force of organizing the *Baodiao* demonstration in Victoria Park was comprised of leftist students. Some of these students continued to play a leading role in *Baodiao* till the 1990s, including the Hong Kong Martyr Chan Yuk Cheung, who drowned in an expedition to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 1996.

Graduating from Hong Kong University (HKU) and being a student leader of the Hong Kong Student Federation in 1971, Chan Yuk Cheung had a background representative of this group of *Baodiao* activists. They were leftist students leaning towards communist China in the 1970s. Yet this does not necessarily mean that they were radical communists. It was more or less a symbol of rebellion against the colonial government at that time. For Chan Yuk Cheung himself, it is believed that he became a politician from a party often critical of Beijing after the 1989 Tian'anmen Massacre. Therefore it is held by some scholars that their protest over the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute in the mid-1990s was in some sense a way of embarrassing Beijing.³⁵⁰

Many of Chan's colleagues in *Baodiao* were democratic activists against Beijing by the time of the mid-1990s. Shortly after Chan's funeral in October 1996, Democratic Party

³⁴⁹ United Federation of Hong Kong Students, 1971, "Baowei diaoyutai qiqi dashiwei xuesheng xueran gongyuan (Protecting Diaoyutai and the 7 July protest: students bleeding in park)", 8 July 1971, <http://www.xinmiao.com.hk/0001/20110707.02T.htm> accessed on 4 Sep 2011

³⁵⁰ Phil Deans, 2000, "Contending nationalisms and the Diaoyutai/Senkaku dispute," *Security Dialogue*, 31 (1), pp. 119-31

legislators Tsang Kin-shing and Albert Ho led a group of radical *Baodiao* activists and forced their way into the Japanese Consulate, an action that irritated Beijing and was condemned by it.³⁵¹ Coming from entirely different social backgrounds, Tsang and Ho represent two major forces in Hong Kong's democratic movement. Tsang is a grassroots politician, who became involved in politics because of the Tian'anmen Massacre. Ho represents the middle-class electorate. He graduated from the elitist law school of the HKU, and studied law in the UK. After serving as a legislator for the Democratic Party, Ho joined the more radical League of Social Democrats. Ho was also the President of the Democratic Party, and the Secretary of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China. The alliance was established in May 1989 to support the student movement in China, and has become a major organizer of commemoration of the Tian'anmen Massacre in Hong Kong.

After the early 1970s, mobilization for *Baodiao* stagnated in Hong Kong, but it did not perish and the dynamics of the movement were closely linked to the changing political dynamics in the colony. In October 1990, shortly after Japan claimed that Taiwanese should hold a visa to embark on the disputed islands, a mass assembly of twelve thousand people gathered in Hong Kong, marching from Victoria Park to the Japanese Consulate. This was a time when the reversion of Hong Kong to China was imminent. Against this backdrop, fourteen representatives of the Chinese National People's Congress from Hong Kong wrote a petition letter to the National Congress Standing Committee, urging that the Diaoyu Islands problem should be openly discussed in the National Congress.³⁵² Their petition did not have any substantial effect on the Chinese government's stance and policy.

Hong Kong's breakthrough in *Baodiao* occurred in 1996, when one of the leading activists, Chan Yuk Cheung, drowned on an expedition to the disputed islands. A series of flare-ups in July to September triggered the incident. On 14 July the Japanese Youth

³⁵¹ Joseph Y.S. Cheng (ed.), 1997, "Calendar of events in July 1996-December 1996", xxii, in *The Other Hong Kong Report 1997*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

³⁵² Linian *Baodiao* shijian jizai (Chronicle of *Baodiao* events), accessed on 4 Sep 2011 <http://www.diaoyuislands.org/fwl/1.html>

Federation installed a solar lighthouse on one of the islands. On 20 July Japan ratified the Convention on the Law of Sea, which included the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). On 29 July the Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto officially visited the Yasukuni Shrine. On 28 August, during his visit to Hong Kong, the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Yukihiko Ikeda restated that the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands had been part of Japan's territory, and there was not any territorial dispute. On 9 September, some members of the Japanese Youth Federation returned to the islands and repaired the lighthouse.³⁵³

In response to these "offensive" signals from Japan, China was quick and stern in its public protest, but its threatening words could not allay domestic concerns any more. This was different from what happened in the early 1970s, when the Chinese were obsessed with the Cultural Revolution, and the very few dissident voices from society were easily wiped off by the party-state in absence of exposure to mass media. The Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen threatened that, in response to Japan's activities, bilateral relations would severely deteriorate. The CCP's propaganda machine and military machine both operated. *The People's Daily* and *Wen Wei Po* (Hong Kong) openly attacked Japan. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) showcased blockage and landing exercises on islands off Liaoning Province.³⁵⁴

Yet such a strong response was not out of Beijing's intention to antagonize Japan, which had been China's close economic partner and aid benefactor. This time, Beijing did not break with its conventional strategy in dealing with Sino-Japanese clashes - big words seldom accompanied by great deeds. This was because Beijing's primary concern had been to check domestic activism of anti-Japanese nationalists and defuse international tension. Almost all spontaneous initiatives from society were suppressed or marginalized. In September, 31 journalists and editors from official newspapers, such as *The Workers Daily* (*gongren ribao*) and *Beijing Youth News* (*Beijing qingnianbao*), signed an open declaration, urging the Chinese government to take military action to

³⁵³ Ibid; also see: Erica Strecker Downs and Phillip C. Saunders, 1998/1999, "Legitimacy and the limits of nationalism," *International Security*, 23(3), pp. 133-134.

³⁵⁴ Downs and Saunders, 1998/1999, "Legitimacy and the limits of nationalism"

settle the territorial dispute.³⁵⁵ Meanwhile 257 Chinese citizens presented appeal letters to the authorities, urging the government to dispatch military forces to the islands. None of these initiatives generated a response. Prominent activists such as Tong Zeng, who made his fame in earlier anti-Japanese activities, were forced to leave Beijing during the time of crisis. An attempted student protest at Peking University was also nipped in the bud.³⁵⁶

Taiwan's stance was also conciliatory this time, because of its changing political priority, namely democratization. In the mid-1990s, Taiwan was under the pro-Japan President Lee Teng-hui. After Japan's fitful provocations in July 1996, Lee stated that fishermen should restrain themselves from sailing to the islands in order to avoid conflicts. A semi-official meeting was held between the authorities of Taiwan and Japan, which reached a consensus that the dispute over sovereignty should be shelved, and common exploitation of natural resources should be adopted.³⁵⁷ Taiwan's students did not stand up this time. The only influential action was made by the opposition party MP Jin Jieshou in an attempt to land on the islands. But this action would not have been accomplished without the aid and cooperation of his counterparts in Hong Kong.³⁵⁸

Therefore, in 1996, Hong Kong was the centre of *Baodiao* mobilization in the Greater China area. On 9 September 759 professors and scholars, including the presidents of eight Hong Kong universities, signed a declaration, pressing the Chinese government to take immediate action.³⁵⁹ Large-scale protests burst out on 8 September, 15 September and 18 September.³⁶⁰ Social activism reached a climax when Chan Yuk Cheung, a leading *Baodiao* activist, drowned on 26 September in an attempt to land on the Diaoyu

³⁵⁵ "Zhongguo xinwenjie yaoqiu caiqu junshi xingdong (China's press urging to take military actions)," 7 Sep 1996, *Ming Pao*, collected in *Diaoyutai: China's Territory (Diaoyutai: Zhongguo de Lingtu)*, Hong Kong: Ming Pao Press, 1996.

³⁵⁶ Linian Baodiao shijian jizai (Chronicle of *Baodiao* events)

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Yue Yuan, 30 November 2010, "Di'erbo Taiwan Baodiao yundong (The second wave of Taiwan's *Baodiao* Movement)," *Sanlian Shenghuo Zhoukan (Life Week)*, No.607

³⁵⁹ "Babai xuezhe lianming baodiao (Eight hundred scholars jointly signed to protect the Diaoyutai)," 10 Sep 1996, *Ming Pao*, collected in *Diaoyutai: China's Territory (Diaoyutai: Zhongguo de Lingtu)*, Hong Kong: Ming Pao Press, 1996.

³⁶⁰ Linian Baodiao shijian jizai (Chronicle of *Baodiao* events)

Islands. A demonstration of 50,000 people was organized to honor his death. Donations quickly flew to all sorts of *Baodiao* organizations.³⁶¹

Chan's death did not deter further efforts of political adventurism. Rather it facilitated the formation of a joint *Baodiao* fleet in the Great China area. On 6 October, 300 *Baodiao* activists from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau, departed Taiwan and set off for the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands on thirty ships. It is said that Japan's Coast Guard deployed sixty warships to intercept the expedition.³⁶² "The waters of Diaoyu Islands became the battlefield of the 2nd Sino-Japanese War," related the Taiwanese MP Jin Jieshou, who was among the few who successfully landed on the islands on that expedition.

With the success of this fleet, the second wave of *Baodiao* was dwindling. It became more and more difficult to launch a *Baodiao* expedition because the government of Taiwan had restricted Taiwanese fishermen to provide facilities for the movement. Violators would face hefty fines, and GPS was forcefully installed on fishing trawlers to prevent unauthorized operations.³⁶³ Therefore after 1996 it was only possible to set out such expeditions from Hong Kong, the geographical position of which made successful attempts to approach the islands more unlikely.

2003-2005: Chinese Voice Expressed

In the first two waves of the *Baodiao* movement, influential voices from mainland Chinese activists were nearly non-existent. This does not mean that these activists did not exist. Their voices were silenced either because they were physically purged in the Cultural Revolution or their voices were marginalized in the 1990s.

³⁶¹ Ibid; also see Yue Yuan, 2010, "Di'erbo Taiwan Baodiao yundong (The second wave of Taiwan's *Baodiao* Movement)"; Zi Min, 2007, *Bainian Fengyun Diaoyudao (The Turbulent History of One Hundred Year: Diaoyu Islands)*, pp.80-91.

³⁶² Zi Min, 2007, *Bainian Fengyun Diaoyudao (The Turbulent History of One Hundred Year: Diaoyu Islands)*, pp.92-95

³⁶³ Yue Yuan, 2010, "Di'erbo Taiwan Baodiao yundong (The second wave of Taiwan's *Baodiao* Movement)"

The balance over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands was disrupted again in 2003. Yet this time, it was the Chinese activists, whose voices had been absent, who initiated the new wave of *Baodiao* and brought the movement to a new stage. During 2003 to 2005, they launched several expeditions from China to the disputed islands, along with various forms of social activism.

As in 1996, Beijing was afraid of social mobilization that might damage Sino-Japanese relations and turn into anti-governmental protests. But this time, it failed to extinguish the *Baodiao* movement at home. This is not because, as postulated in the existing literature, Beijing saw the movement as a useful bargaining chip in international relations. The development of history cannot be explained by what turned out at a later stage, as if every stage of the development was perfectly planned and implemented by an omnipotent historical actor. If Beijing could have expected the expeditions and subsequent social activism of *Baodiao*, it would have tried every possible means to nip them in the bud, as it had done, and as it did after 2005.

The *Baodiao* movement successfully emerged in China in 2003 because and only because it was prepared with great attention and organizational skills, combined with the lessons learnt from previous failed experiences and clever strategies of mounting a social movement under an authoritarian environment. Generally speaking, the overall strategy of the activists was to disrupt the status quo by launching an expedition to the islands. In so doing, they took advantage of the shocking effects of such a political performance, and opened a new political opportunity for subsequent social activism.

On 7 April 2003, an open letter, with a detailed plan for the first expedition, was posted on the Patriot Alliance, a non-governmental internet forum, to solicit public donations for the expedition.³⁶⁴ The letter was framed in enthusiastic nationalist rhetoric, and laid out in detail the budget, recruitment procedures, logistics and strategy of the plan. The purpose of the donation was to lease a fishing vessel and buy some communication

³⁶⁴ Jinhua Feng, "Open letter for China's first civilians' *Baodiao* activity" <http://bbs.1931-9-18.org/viewthread.php?tid=10165>, Patriot Alliance, 7 Apr 2003, accessed on 6 Sep 2011

equipment.

Although the letter was prepared by a group of activists, in order to create a credible public image, it was published in the name of Feng Jinhua, a nationally recognized nationalist known for painting graffiti at the Yasukuni Shrine in 2001. Born in 1970, Feng had worked in Japan and earned fame for painting he made in reaction to the Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni shrine. His arrest and trial in Japan had provoked a strong popular reaction in China. Feng's story had been widely circulated in national newspapers (such as *The People's Daily*, and *the International Herald Leader*), local newspapers (such as *The Oriental Times*, and *Shan'xi Commercial News*) and on popular internet portals (such as people.com.cn, sina.com.cn). He was ranked near to the top in the 2001 Award for Person of the Year, which was sponsored by the most popular liberal newspaper *The Southern Weekly* (*nanfang zhoumo*). The founder of the Patriot Alliance Lu Yunfei, who used to be an IT product manager, was also inspired by Feng's deeds to set up this Internet forum.³⁶⁵

Besides the successful strategy of soliciting public attention, these Baodiao activists had a set of skills in managing money, human resources and public relations. This was possible, because they were a group of professionals from various social sectors. They made an effective division of labor on the basis of their respective professional experience and expertise, and assigned different persons to manage general affairs, volunteers, public donations, logistics and even media relations.

To see how professional the management team was, an overview of their routine work in preparing for the expedition is instructive. The list of donors was updated every day, even though it was a time of the SARS crisis.³⁶⁶ The manager responsible for this task was a PhD student studying in Beijing. He went to the banks every day in order to update account information online in a timely fashion. After the expedition, the

³⁶⁵ Author's interview with Yunfei Lu, the founder of Patriot Alliance, January 2009

³⁶⁶ For the list of donors (before February 2004),

see <http://bbs.1931-9-18.org/viewthread.php?tid=10427> accessed on 6 Sep 2011

expenditure was reported to the public online in great detail.³⁶⁷ A mechanism of check-and-balance was established in managing the use of funds. The person who was assigned to oversee this task had been working in the legal profession. Knowing that the base of support was crucial, they created all kinds of opportunities for people with different levels of willingness and determination to get involved, from taking part in the expedition, providing logistic support, giving technical consultation, managing media relations to making a single donation or simply expressing support on the Internet.

The task of dealing with media relations was highlighted in the organization of the expedition. A spokesman was designated in order to prevent chaos in the provision of information and to facilitate cooperation with other internet forums. A media team was organized, and a well-coordinated publicity campaign was launched on various internet portals and forums, through emails and instant chatting tools such as MSN and QQ. These activists even had knowledge of how to circumvent electronic surveillance by the party-state. During the executive meetings to prepare for the expedition, they consciously switched off mobile phones, and took the batteries outside.

Such a high standard of strategic planning, organization skills and attention to details is surprising, if it is evaluated in the political context where the movement arose. Under the CCP's authoritarian regime, people are forbidden to organize autonomous associations and therefore have little experience in social movement. It explains why the *Baodiao* Movement was not able to emerge in China until 2003.

On 22 June 2003, Feng and some other activists started the first expedition to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands from Yuhuan, a county in Zhejiang Province. Although their attempt to land on the islands was blocked by the Japanese coast guards, their dramatic action achieved the planned effect, which was to surprise the Chinese government and provoke intense public debate at home. The news of China's first expedition to the

³⁶⁷ See Expenditure Detail Report <http://bbs.1931-9-18.org/viewthread.php?tid=18466>, Patriot Alliance, accessed on 6 Sep 2011

disputed islands immediately became the headline on internet portals.³⁶⁸

Encouraged by the first expedition, some other Chinese *Baodiao* activists organized two more expeditions, in October 2003 and January 2004. The success of the first expedition also created a new space for political activism. After the first expedition, these *Baodiao* activists quickly occupied the new space. In July 2003, they initiated an internet campaign to boycott Japan's bid for the Beijing-Shanghai high-speed railway. Within only one week, 87,000 signatures were collected. They printed out all signatures and presented them to the Ministry of Railway. This kind of political activism, combining mass mobilization on the Internet and political performance in real life, proved to be an effective means of mobilizing social support and soliciting media attention in authoritarian China.

On 4th August 2003, some construction workers and local residents were harmed by poisonous gas leaking from Japan's abandoned chemical weapons in North China. Among the victims, one died and several others became handicapped. Seeing this, the Patriot Alliance launched another online campaign, appealing for the victims and denouncing Japan. Inspired by the success of the July campaign, this time they set the target up to one million signatures. To their surprise, within only one month, more than 1.12 million signatures had been collected.

On 18 September, the memorial day of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, these *Baodiao* activists carried the printed signatures to the Japanese Embassy in Beijing. Six activists, who called themselves "volunteers" in order to signal that their action was not politically "organized", presented themselves to the Japanese Embassy, with each "volunteer" wearing white (the color of mourning) and carrying a big white box of

³⁶⁸ For media report, for example, see, "Woguo shiwu ming aiguo renshi chuhai baowei diaoyudao" ("The story of 15 patriots' voyage to defend Diaoyu Islands"), *Zhongguo Qingnianbao (China Youth Daily)*, 23 June 2003, accessed on 8 Sep 2011 <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/1026/1931091.html>; "Zhongguo Baodiaochuan wancheng sange mubiao anquan fanhang" ("China's Baodiao ship accomplished three set goals and safely returned"), *Beijing Wanbao (Beijing Evening)*, 26 June 2003, accessed on 8 Sep 2011 <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/junshi/1076/1937726.html>

printed signatures.³⁶⁹ Their petition certainly did not receive a response from the Ministry, but their political performance immediately caught the attention of the international media.

These activists did not give up their plan to land on the disputed islands. This time they conceived a more strategic plan. Knowing that another group of *Baodiao* activists was expressly preparing for an expedition, they managed to keep their own plan secret and diverted public attention to that group.

On the night of 22 March 2004, they secretly set out to the East China Sea from Leqing, a different coastal county in Zhejiang Province. Remembering the lessons from the failed landing in the first expedition, they developed more pragmatic tactics. When the Japanese coast guards were approaching, they had seven activists to charge ashore in two small canoes, which were quick and able to evade the coast guard.

Their tactics succeeded. For the first time, *Baodiao* activists from mainland China successfully made a political landing on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. The landing and their arrest by the Japanese police became a big diplomatic headache for the Chinese and Japanese governments, because such an emergency forced both governments to take firm actions in order to live up to their nationalist credentials.

However, while Japan first warned that the detainees would be handed over to the Japanese prosecutor for their violation of the immigration law, the arrested activists were eventually deported, after rounds of overt and covert diplomatic negotiations between the two governments. On Beijing's side, although it openly protested Japan's "illegal" detainment of the Chinese activists, complaining that it was an infringement on China's sovereignty,³⁷⁰ the CCP nevertheless tightened control over these "troublemakers" after their release. This was to appease Tokyo and avoid further

³⁶⁹ Author's interview with *Baodiao* activists, January 2009

³⁷⁰ "Waijiaobu fayanren jiu rifang fanghuan qiming zhongguo gongmin fabiao tanhua" ("Spokesman of Foreign Ministry Address to the Release of Seven Chinese Citizens by Japan"), 29 Mar 2004, accessed on 8 Sep 2011

http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2004-03/29/content_1388681.htm

disruption to the bilateral relations from society.

After the landing in March 2004, all expeditions from China to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands have been forcefully stopped by the authorities. As in Taiwan in 1996, the Chinese fishermen were warned not to lease vessels to the *Baodiao* activists. “Watch fire, watch water, and watch *Baodiao*” became a slogan of propaganda in fishery villages. Monitoring these activists and suspicious actions was assigned as a political task for local officials.

Not only expeditions to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, but other kinds of political activism were suppressed. On 31 August 2004, the Patriot Alliance started a second online campaign against Japan’s bid for the Beijing-Shanghai high-speed railway. Only after one day, their web server was suspended, and their internet forum was forced to close down for two months.³⁷¹

The lethal blow to these activists came after the 2005 anti-Japanese demonstration. Starting in February from an online campaign against Japan’s bid for the United Nations Security Council, anti-Japanese nationalism soon spilled over into the streets, sweeping more than twenty Chinese cities. As the Patriot Alliance was the only identifiable civic organization of active nationalists, the authorities suspected that it had been engaged in mobilizing the mass demonstration. The fact is not able to verify at the moment, as neither governmental materials are available nor any of the activists admits this.

As a result, these activists were harassed by the security branches of the government. Some were placed under house arrest, and some others were detained at the time of the protest. After 2005, most activists stopped active engagement in *Baodiao*, and turned their efforts to less politically sensitive issues such as charity. Like the social democrats after Taiwan’s *Baodiao* in the early 1970s, most of these activists have been engaging in rebuilding society – from supporting the education of poor children, to raising funds for the comfort women and retired soldiers of the 2nd Sino-Japanese War, for whom the

³⁷¹ Ibid.

authoritarian government did not take its responsibility to provide. The efflorescence of the *Baodiao* Movement ended in China.

Why *Baodiao* Has Become Violent in China

The three stages of the *Baodiao* Movement are interconnected. In the first stage, Hong Kong students in Taiwan and the U.S. were the forerunner of mobilization, who inspired Taiwanese students to stand up under the KMT's rule of terror. The first stage had also prepared some leading activists for the second stage of the movement in the mid-1990s. The drowning martyr Chan Yuk Cheung was a student activist in *Baodiao* in 1971, when he was a leading figure of the Hong Kong Student Federation.

Some prominent Hong Kong activists in the second stage became an important source of inspiration for the Chinese *Baodiao* activists in 2003. Among the fifteen persons on the first expedition to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands from China, two were from Hong Kong. The two persons were Luo Jiu and Zeng Haifeng, both of whom served on the Action Committee for Defending the Diaoyu Islands. Moreover, Luo Jiu is a grassroots democrat of the League of Social Democrats.

The most distinct feature shared in the three stages is that *Baodiao* unfolded in the context of contestation between rival claimants to governmental authority, regardless of whether it was in the CCP's China, in the KMT's Taiwan, or in Hong Kong under the British colonial rule. Besides their nationalist claims, the *Baodiao* activists in all of the three contexts demanded a right of political participation, and made a challenge to the government regarding who was the qualified representative of the Chinese nation.

Even in the most authoritarian context of the three, that is, in China under the rule of the CCP, the contentious nature of the *Baodiao* Movement was clear, and most of the leading *Baodiao* activists are conscious of this. Although the political environment does not allow the *Baodiao* activists to link the movement with a dissident movement and although tough repression makes these activists very cautious in framing their goals and

strategy, the Chinese *Baodiao* activists have had a strong sense of how to use political participation to influence China's foreign policy.

It is impossible to take back the Diaoyu Islands on our own...The purpose of our expeditions and landing on the islands is to create conflicts, so that international society can see that there exists a dispute over the islands...We are helping the Chinese government to gain international recognition if it can take back the islands some day.³⁷²

Apparently, "helping the Chinese government" is a deliberate choice of wording, because the Chinese government has never asked for its citizens to help "gain international recognition" in the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute. As we will see in the next sections, it is the spontaneous activities of the Chinese citizens that have reshaped the policy choice of the Chinese government. A more accurate interpretation of "helping the Chinese government" means demanding and exerting the right of political participation in influencing foreign policies. This is the discourse that some leading *Baodiao* activists try to avoid using in order to facilitate the movement.

"Civic rights must be separated from *Baodiao*. The goal should be clear – taking back our interests in the Diaoyu Islands and defending national interests. Do not intermingle it with other purpose." Li Nan, the spokesman of China's *Baodiao* Movement spoke firmly to the author. But he also admitted frankly, that "something can be done, but it cannot be said...otherwise it will obstruct the entire cause."³⁷³ Apparently, for such activists as Li, they were conscious of the civic core of the *Baodiao* Movement, but for strategic purpose, they chose to overemphasize the statist interest of the movement.

Feng Jinhua, the symbolic leader of these activists, framed the motivation of *Baodiao* in a most straightforward way.

³⁷² Author's interview with Lu Yunfei, founder of Patriot Alliance

³⁷³ Author's interview with Li Nan, January 2009

Why have we done this? You know, it is impossible to take back the territory of the Diaoyu Islands through our expeditions...The fundamental purpose is to claim our rights. Every Chinese has the right to express his opinion of the state's policy, diplomacy and economic performance. He has the right to change something. China will have a brighter future if every Chinese has that consciousness. This kind of consequence is more important than that of protecting those tiny islands.³⁷⁴

In an article in *China's Diaoyu Islands (zhongguo diaoyudao)*, an e-Journal published by the *Baodiao* activists, Feng made a candid and provocative declaration on the meaning of the *Baodiao* Movement. As the title of the article suggests, “*Baodiao* is a civil rights movement to defend state sovereignty”,

In view of the Chinese people, Sino-Japanese diplomacy should serve (the interests of) the Chinese rather than the convenience of diplomats or the welfare of the Japanese. Not seeing this, the better it is for Sino-Japanese relations, the worse it is for the Chinese people...The policy of unconditional and unilateral friendship (of the Chinese government) has stoked the rise of ultra-rightist groups in Japan, and inflicted tremendous damage on the Chinese people. The Chinese government should reflect hard on its mistakes of Japan policy, and hear more from the public...The government in social transition suspects *Baodiao*, and fears that *Baodiao* will incite social turmoil and threaten political stability. Not only *Baodiao* but other civic activities and social activists, such as the problems of land acquisition, disputes in medical affairs, environment protection and human rights, are strictly surveilled and controlled. *Baodiao* is situated in the same political context as these activities. Therefore the present atmosphere for *Baodiao* is not optimistic.³⁷⁵

Despite this common feature of civic contestation in *Baodiao*, there are significant

³⁷⁴ Author's interview with Feng Jinhua

³⁷⁵ Jinhua Feng, “*Baodiao* shi wei hu guojia zhuquan de minquan yundong (*Baodiao* is a civil rights movement to defend state sovereignty)”, *Zhongguo Diaoyudao (China's Diaoyu Islands)*, electronic magazine (unclear publication date).

differences in terms of agency and forms of mobilization in the three stages. Unlike in Taiwan and Hong Kong, *Baodiao* in China did not burst out in the form of student demonstrations. Nor was it led by experienced dissident politicians, who were backed up by political parties. The variations can be explained by different levels of authoritarianism in the three political contexts, which result in differences in the propensity of the authorities to repress, and in mobilizing structures available to the *Baodiao* activists.

Of the three cases, Hong Kong had the most liberal political context. Although that democratization in Hong Kong did not start until the early 1980s, and despite the fact the process followed the executive-legislative model, which did not involve a significant role of local elites and mass participation,³⁷⁶ Hong Kong had had a vibrant civil society and a relatively high standard of freedom of press before starting democratization.

In contrast, Taiwan in the early 1970s and China in the early 2000s were both under a regime of one-party authoritarianism. Yet the levels of authoritarianism still differ in the two cases. In Taiwan, though the KMT had a tight control over university campus in the early 1970s, it was not as supersensitive as the CCP to repress elite university students in the 1990s.

The political taboo was different in the two contexts. While the KMT had to show some respect for intellectuals and elite students under the conservative culture of Confucianism, the CCP regarded elite university students as the foremost challenger to the regime, bearing in mind the experience of the Tian'anmen Massacre in 1989. As a result, in China, any kind of political mobilization has been strictly forbidden on campuses. The only exception was the 1999 anti-American demonstration after the U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, a state-sanctioned protest.

³⁷⁶ Siu-Kai Lau and Hsin-chi Kuan, 2000, "Partial democratization, 'Foundation Moment' and political parties in Hong Kong", *The China Quarterly*, Vol.163, pp. 705-720

In 1996, when the *Baodiao* Movement was flourishing in Hong Kong, some students of Peking University applied for an anti-Japanese protest permit, and used the emerging internet tools to call for support from peer students. It was a time when computers and the Internet were just introduced to China. Only three research institutes in Beijing - Peking University, Tsinghua University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences - had university-wide internet forums. Yet their online call received active responses from students of all three institutes.

After their application for protest was rejected, the students at Peking University held a sit-down demonstration on the great lawn on campus, in order to express their great anger and discontent. They did not rush to the streets, as the elder generation of students did in 1989, simply because they could not. Even at a time when streets were already filled with angry anti-Japanese protestors, as seen in both 2005 and 2012, students' participation was still strictly banned, and the university campuses were kept silent by all sorts of means.

The difference in the authorities' propensity to repress has an effect on the mobilizing structures of the *Baodiao* Movement. It is acknowledged that regime type is a major variable that helps to explain mobilizing structures in social movements. In contemporary democracies, formal organization is a major structure of mobilization. But in regimes "where intermediate associations are underdeveloped and associations beyond state control are illegal", informal networks, "the ecology and ecology-based networks and communications is the only means that social movement can count on".³⁷⁷

This is why we see that *Baodiao* mobilization was backed up by formal organizations and experienced politicians in Hong Kong in 1996, the best developed pro-democracy system of the three political contexts. In contrast, *Baodiao* in Taiwan in the early 1970s had little organizational base, and it was limited to informal means of mobilization such as networks of alumni, friends, colleagues, and the ecological base of university campus.

³⁷⁷ Dingxin Zhao, 1998, "Ecologies of social movements: student mobilization during the 1989 prodemocracy movement in Beijing," *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(6), pp. 1493-1529.

In China, which was the most repressive context of the three, even such informal means were paralyzed for mobilizing a social movement.

Therefore, successful mobilization in China required a larger amount of resources, which is a paradoxical requirement, because the more authoritarian the regime is, the more difficult it is to acquire resources of mobilization. This explains why the attempt to mobilize for *Baodiao* by college students failed in 1996. In fact, any attempt by other social groups to engage in organized *Baodiao* activities were also stopped by the authorities. In November 1996, when eleven Chinese activists tried to participate in the United *Baodiao* Conference in Macao, they were prohibited from leaving China.

For the *Baodiao* Movement to emerge in China, it had to rely on some new mobilizing structures that were able to circumvent traditional means of surveillance and provide more resources for mobilization. The opportunity ultimately came in early 2003. The first half year of 2003 was a rare window for social mobilization. On the one hand, the Internet revolution had just changed the rules of game, which made it possible to gather intelligence and resources nationwide for the *Baodiao* mobilization. At the end of 2002, China's internet users exceeded 59 million.³⁷⁸ On the other hand, though the CCP had begun to tighten control over the Internet, the surveillance online was not as much tight as today. The Great Firewall, China's Internet censoring and surveillance system, was not put into use until September 2003.³⁷⁹ The Internet police, whose duty was to guide public opinion by posting misleading information online, was not formed until after the anti-Japanese demonstration in 2005.³⁸⁰

With a large population of Internet users and a period of relative Internet freedom, the

³⁷⁸ China Internet Network Information Center, 2010, *Zhongguo Hulian Wangluo Fazhan Zhuangkuang Tongji Baogao (Statistical Report of China's Internet Development)*, January 2010, p.10, accessed on 19 Aug 2011, <http://www.cnnic.cn/uploadfiles/pdf/2010/1/15/101600.pdf>

³⁷⁹ Qinglian He, 2005, "Jindun gongcheng: weiquan zhengzhi xia de gaokeji guaitai" ("Golden Shield Project: the high-tech abnormal fetus under authoritarian politics"), *Deutsche Welle*, 30 March 2005, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,1535010,00.html> accessed on 5 Sep 2011.

³⁸⁰ Jonathan Watts, 2005, "China's secret internet police target critics with web of propaganda," *The Guardian*, Tuesday 14 June 2005, accessed on 7 Sep 2011 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2005/jun/14/newmedia.china>

Internet provided a new mobilization structure for *Baodiao*. It was through the web networks that *Baodiao* activists were able to liaise with activists all over the country and launch publicity campaigns for the movement. As a result of nationwide mobilization, the Chinese *Baodiao* activists came from diverse social and professional backgrounds. While the activists in Taiwan in the 1970s were mainly university students and intellectuals, most of the Chinese activists were middle class professionals - such as IT specialists, entrepreneurs, managing directors, salesmen, film directors and accountants, with some college students and unemployed personnel from all over the country.

Among them, some were experienced nationalist activists, while for some others it was the first time for them to participate in a social movement. Connected through the Internet, this mixed feature of the *Baodiao* activists enabled them to acquire a considerable variety of resources (such as funding, organization skills, and experience), which was crucial to initiate a social movement under the authoritarian regime. Unlike in Taiwan in the early 1970s, the *Baodiao* Movement in China did not receive much support from college students and the intellectual community. In fact, those leading activists consciously excluded college students from the movement in order to reduce political risk.³⁸¹

When *Baodiao* evolved into street politics, all the aforementioned differences led to a fundamental divergence in the outcome. In Hong Kong, because the movement was organized by dissident political parties and the student federation, the protests were well managed. In Taiwan under the authoritarian rule of the KMT, the *Baodiao* mobilization was based on university campuses, so it was able to regulate the behaviors of protestors through the university system. Those students who were actively engaged in the movement were fearful of chaos and violence in the protests, because it would be used by the KMT government as a pretext for punishment.

Under the authoritarian rule of the CCP, however, neither political parties, nor NGOs,

³⁸¹ Jinhua Feng, 16 Apr 2003, "Open letter for China's first civilians' *Baodiao* activity (Supplementary)," Patriot Alliance, <http://bbs.1931-9-18.org/viewthread.php?tid=10637>, accessed on 6 Sep 2011

nor student organizations, were permitted to exist as an organized force to lead the protest. This means no organized force was able to manage the movement and restrain violence when the public were encouraged to vent their anger on the streets. The only semi-organized force of the *Baodiao* activists, which initiated the first expedition and online campaigns in 2003-2004, was too weak to take a leading role and check mass violence.

Consequently, violent outbursts of anti-Japanese nationalism have been growing in China in recent years. This is because anti-Japanese sentiments have been inflamed, but regulated channels for expressing public opinion are repressed. It has created a power vacuum, available to seizure and exploitation by any kind of organized force. Therefore, as we see in the anti-Japanese demonstration in September 2012, the protestors raised placards that expressed admiration for Mao Tse-tung and called for the return of Bo Xilai, an elitist CCP demagogue who was one of the most powerful and controversial political figures in China. It was a new development in the mobilization of China's anti-Japanese nationalism, yet it was not so surprising.

For the CCP, the policy implication of this development has been apparent. Its choice to contain anti-Japanese nationalism has become very limited in face of the policy dilemma. If it allows organized civilian forces to develop and lead *Baodiao* and other kinds of nationalist movements, the popular anger towards Japan may turn against the CCP someday, under the leadership of the same organizations. Because the *Baodiao* Movement is fundamentally a contest between state and society to represent the claims of nationalism and advocate a different agenda for foreign policy, a strong civilian organization emerging from the movement is anything but what the CCP would like to see. However, if the CCP forbids organized civilian force, then a power vacuum emerges, which will be eventually occupied by other kinds of organized political force. This is particularly dangerous, when the political elites are engaged in fierce power struggles.

Certainly the CCP can try to mitigate the risk by showing off its nationalist credentials.

That is, showing to the public that the party-state is sufficiently strong and determined to defend the national interest and satisfy the popular demand for punishing Japan. But in a time when state-society dynamics require the CCP to live up to its own words, such a choice requires substantial behavioral changes that may cause more problems than what it wishes to accept.

Put simply, in order to quell the nationalist appeals at home, the CCP has to display teeth and muscles abroad. This mechanism has changed and will continue to influence the behavior of the CCP in the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute, even though it will heighten tensions in the region that is contradictory to the party-state's strategic interest. To prove this point, the next two sections compare the CCP's policy before and after the *Baodiao* mobilization in 2003-2005. It also provides an analysis of the implications of these changes for the regime.

Policy Change: A Soft Image and Conservative Policies before 2003-2005

"We have achieved many of our goals. China's surveillance vessels entered the waters surrounding the Diaoyu Islands just a few days ago. It is the first time that China publicly showed off surveillance vessels in the disputed waters. We had never openly admitted we were patrolling the Diaoyu Islands." One of the leading *Baodiao* activists said proudly to the author in January 2009.

The event he referred to is the entry of two Chinese marine investigation vessels in the territorial waters of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands on 8 December 2008. In response, the Japanese government immediately urged the Chinese government to provide an explanation, and a guarantee that such an incident would not recur.³⁸² The Chinese government responded that it was a normal activity to patrol China's sovereign waters, and that China would retain authority to decide when to dispatch surveillance vessels

³⁸² Press Conference by Minister for Foreign Affairs Hirofumi Nakasone, December 9, 2008 http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm_press/2008/12/1209.html, accessed on 19 Aug 2011

again.³⁸³

Interpreted in a traditional way, the incident is just another piece of evidence that China has been increasingly aggressive in the West Pacific. Through a closer investigation, however, it shows something interesting that is overlooked in the previous studies. That is, the Chinese government used to cover, rather than show off its activities in the disputed waters in the East China Sea, to the domestic public. According to the functional logic that the CCP purposefully stoked nationalism to boost legitimacy, this is paradoxical, because covering up its actions would damage, rather than boost, the CCP's nationalist image at home.

Before the rise of China's *Baodiao* Movement, the Chinese government had taken two measures to defend the national interest in the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute – diplomatic denunciation and pragmatic maneuvers in the East China Sea. Neither of the measures was aimed at boosting the nationalist image of the CCP. Though denunciation of Japan inevitably stoked anti-Japanese nationalism at home, it was because people felt that the stance of the government was too soft, not because they were convinced of the nationalist credentials of the party-state.

Such a diplomatic denunciation, as usual, was lodged as a passive reaction to an incident instigated on the Japanese side in order to appease domestic anger in China. It was regarded by the Chinese public as empty and soft, lacking substantial action in defense of national interests. Consequently, making a denunciation did not boost the nationalist image of the CCP, but generated widespread discontent with the CCP's soft image at home, as witnessed in the open declarations and petition letters in the 1996 Diaoyu/Senkaku crisis, and in the goals of *Baodiao* expressed by Feng Jinhua, one of the leading activists of the movement.³⁸⁴ Popular indignation at China's diplomacy thus became a trigger for the *Baodiao* Movement in China.

³⁸³ Zhuli Zhang, 2008, "Xunhang 300 wan pingfang gongli, zhongguo haijian jiaqiang zhengyi haiyu guanxia" ("Patrolling three million square kilometers: China marine surveillance enhancing management on disputed waters"), 15 Dec 2008, accessed on 19 Aug 2011 <http://military.people.com.cn/GB/8221/51755/141011/141119/8516728.html>

³⁸⁴ See footnotes 250, 251 and 271.

The Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute was already on the radar of the Chinese government. In 1978, before the signing of the Sino-Japan Peace and Friendship Treaty, a flotilla of armed fishing boats was sent to the surrounding waters, which was explained by the then Vice Premier Geng Biao as “an accident”. Deng Xiaoping made his famous speech on the Diaoyu Islands problem when visiting Japan in October 1978. “Both China and Japan agreed not to touch this problem in the negotiation of the treaty, but someone wanted to make troubles in order to prevent us from developing a relationship. I believe it is a wise choice for both governments to shelve the problem. It does not matter to shelve it for a while, and even for ten years. Our next generation will be smart enough to find a mutually acceptable solution.”³⁸⁵

The incident was shelved by China and Japan, and the treaty was concluded. Nevertheless, Deng’s pragmatism did not guarantee a smarter solution. Instead the Sino-Japanese relations have been in trouble with heightened tensions over the islands since the mid-1990s. In the summer of 1996, in response to Japan’s actions on the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, the CCP’s mouthpiece, *The People’s Daily*, published an editorial on the front page, under the title “Japan, do not do stupid things!” The editorial reasserted China’s sovereignty, accused Japan of its provocative actions, and warned of reviving Japanese jingoism.³⁸⁶ In September, the spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry reiterated the same thing in the editorial when making a public response.³⁸⁷

On the other side, however, if we look at China’s maneuvers in the East China Sea, which did not appear in newspapers headline or in the state press conference before 2003, we see a different China – one that was both assertive and pragmatic in pursuing material interests in the disputed waters. China had been far ahead of Japan in exploiting energy resources in the East China Sea. This brings up an interesting paradox. Why didn’t the CCP use these pragmatic maneuvers to boost its nationalist image at

³⁸⁵ Cuiping Sun, 2009, “1978 Diaoyudao shijian de lailong qumai (Trace the 1978 Diaoyu Islands Incident)”, *Dangshi Wenhui (Essays of Party History)*, No.10, pp. 11-15

³⁸⁶ Editorial, 30 Aug 1996, “Ribei, biegan chunshi (Japan, do not do stupid things)”, *Renmin Ribao (People’s Daily)*, <http://media.people.com.cn/GB/22114/123348/123357/7296123.html>

³⁸⁷ Quoted from Peter Hays Gries, 2004, *China’s New Nationalism*, p.122

home? Why didn't it show off its advantages over Japan in exploiting the East China Sea to the domestic audience?

The only explanation is that it did not want to and it did not need to. From the two measures that the CCP had used to deal with the dispute, it shows that the CCP was more interested in acting freely, independent of the pressure of both domestic public and international opinion, rather than in using the dispute to stoke anti-Japanese nationalism at home. The benefit of such a strategy is apparent. It minimizes the influence of society on the CCP's choice of policies, and maximizes the CCP's maneuver space in seeking pragmatic interests, providing some leverage to pressure Japan yet without substantial risk of damaging bilateral relations.

Therefore, in dealing with the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute and the problem of the East China Sea, showing assertiveness and building a nationalist image was previously not on the CCP's agenda. It was not until the rise of *Baodiao* in China in 2003 that the CCP had to adapt its behavior in a way that displayed more assertiveness before its the domestic audience.

Because the CCP's soft image was misunderstood at home, which resulted from the cover-up of information and the suppression of institutionalized channels for popular opinion, Chinese nationalism in state propaganda and in popular appeals differed sharply before the rise of *Baodiao*, in terms of their intensity, substance and emotional attachment. Whereas state nationalism was dry and passive, popular nationalism was fervent, having strong appeal and being emotional. Compared to the voice from society, the CCP's denunciation was much softer and more defensive in nature.

One open declaration mentioned above, which was signed by 31 journalists and editors from official newspapers, urged the Chinese government to take immediate military action against Japan. When asked whether he was afraid of political pressure, the organizer of the open declaration responded indignantly, asking "is my love for the

country a crime?”³⁸⁸ In *China Can Still Say No*, a banned book and a sequel to the 1996 bestseller *China Can Say No*, the authors expressly advocated a policy of “containing Japan”, which urged China to alienate Japan from its Asian neighbors, use Japan as a pretext to expand military expenditure, and finally, reunify with Taiwan to contain Japan.³⁸⁹ Such assertive and even aggressive policy recommendations contradicted both the rhetoric and interest of the party-state.

This huge disparity between state nationalism and popular nationalism was the socio-political background against which the *Baodiao* Movement emerged in China. The CCP’s empty denunciation was a direct trigger of the provocative actions of the Chinese *Baodiao* activists, who were dissatisfied with its softness and conservatism. Therefore they attempted to do something dramatic in order to change the status quo. Nevertheless, what these activists did not see was that the CCP had been very assertive in maximizing pragmatic interests in the disputed waters.

Scholars of international law agree that the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute and the problem of delimiting the East China Sea are closely related.³⁹⁰ Because the East China Sea is less than 400 nm wide between China and Japan, in order to maximize national interests, the two countries apply different approaches under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to delimit their maritime borders. Whereas Japan advocates the principle of equidistance, China claims the principle of natural prolongation of the continental shelf. According to this principle, China’s continental shelf extends to the Okinawa Trough. As the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands are located at the edge of the continental shelf fronting the Okinawa Trough,³⁹¹ the ownership of these islands is a crucial factor to determine the maritime interests of both countries.

³⁸⁸ “Zhongguo xinwenjie yaoqiu caiqu junshi xingdong (China’s news establishment urging to take military actions)”, 7 Sep 1996, *Ming Pao*, collected in *Diaoyutai: China’s Territory (Diaoyutai: Zhongguo de Lingtu)*.

³⁸⁹ Qiang Song et al., 1996, Chapter 2 in *Zhongguo Haishi Neng Shuobu (China Can Still Say No)*, Beijing: Zhongguo Wenlian Chubanshe (The Publishing House of the China Literature Association).

³⁹⁰ Reinhard Drifte, 2008, “Japanese-Chinese territorial disputes in the East China Sea – between military confrontation and economic cooperation”. Working paper, Asia Research Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/20881/>

³⁹¹ Ibid

Despite the existence of territorial disputes, China had been taking an active role in exploiting energy resources in the East China Sea. According to Drifte, although Japan had de facto control of the disputed islands, it abstained from taking concrete measures in exploring resources in the disputed waters for logistic and political reasons. In contrast, China started resource exploration in Japan's claimed Exclusive Economic Zone since the early 1990s. The Pinghu oil and gas field was discovered in 1982. It was prepared for exploitation in 1992, and was fully operational by 1998. The two pipelines connecting the Pinghu field to China were even financed by Japan. In 1999, the Chunxiao gas field group was found only 4.8km from Japan's alleged median line. The group encompasses four gas fields - Chunxiao, Tianwaitian, Duanqiao and Canxue - among which the geological structure of Chunxiao and Duanqiao extends into Japan's side of the median line.

Along with China's exploitation of oil and gas is increasing frequency of its research vessels' entry into Japan's claimed territorial waters. The number of "unauthorized" entries of Chinese research vessels, reported by the Japanese Coast Guard, increased from four in 1991 to thirty-three in 1999, with a growing frequency in the waters surrounding the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands since 1996. The tensions arising from China's incursions caused Japan to suspend a 17.2 billion Yen official development assistance (ODA) loan to China in August 2000. The suspension seemed to take some effect, because China agreed to work out a prior notification system with Japan. In return, Japan released the loan in September.

After six rounds of negotiation between September 2000 and January 2001, a vague agreement was reached, but its implementation was weak, with different interpretations held on each side. China's "illegal" incursion continued in Japan's claimed waters, particularly around the waters of Okinotorishima and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, sometimes with disinformation provided and sometimes without any prior notification at all.³⁹² It is reported that in 2003, eight incidents of illegal operation were detected in

³⁹² The information in this paragraph, starting from "According to Drift" to this point is summarized

Japan's claimed EEZ without prior notification. In the three months from January to April in 2004, such detected incidents already increased to eleven.³⁹³

Not only the so-called research vessels, which were suspected to be conducting resource investigation, but Chinese warships have started to operate in the disputed waters since the 1990s. In May 1999, twelve Chinese warships were found in the adjacent waters of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. In July 1999 and March 2000 respectively, China conducted a full-scale antisubmarine maneuver in the waters.³⁹⁴ In November 2004, a Chinese nuclear-powered submarine intruded into Japan's territorial waters, and did not surface, which violated international law. Japan believed that these Chinese naval vessels had been conducting military exercises or collecting intelligence in Japan's territorial waters.³⁹⁵

In contrast to China's growing projection in the East China Sea, few of these investigations, incursions and operations were publicly reported at home to help the CCP build its nationalist image. It was not until the summer of 2003 that reports of Chinese vessels in the disputed waters started to emerge in domestic media. Still, the frequency and discourse of such reports differed from the later period.

On 1 July, one week after China's first *Baodiao* expedition, many major Chinese news portals cited a report from *Reference News* (cankao xiaoxi), a newspaper under the CCP's Xinhua News Agency. Entitled "Japanese P-3C Aircrafts Monitor a Chinese PLAN Warship in Okinawa", the report disclosed, by citing a U.S. Chinese newspaper, that the Chinese PLAN warships had been frequently operating in Japan's surrounding waters since 1999. The report also admitted, again by citing an international source, that

from Drifte, 2008, "Japanese-Chinese territorial disputes in the East China Sea"

³⁹³ James J. Przystup, 2004, "Japan-China relations: not quite all about sovereignty – but close", *Comparative Connections*, 6(2), pp. 123-34,
<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=122534>

³⁹⁴ Drift, 2008, "Japanese-Chinese territorial disputes in the East China Sea"

³⁹⁵ Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2007, "Section 3. China, Part I Security Environment Surrounding Japan" in *Defense of Japan 2007 (Annual White Paper)*, accessed on 19 Aug 2011
http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2007.html

the purpose of the PLAN warship “Dongdiao 232”, which was discovered 80 km east to Okinawa in September 2002, could be to collect intelligence on the American bases in Japan.³⁹⁶ In mid-August, *Reference News* again posted a report, by citing an international source, that Japan had protested to the Chinese government against the entry of the surveillance ship “Xiangyanghong 9” into its Exclusive Economic Zone.³⁹⁷

While these reports started to cover the military and intelligence actions of the Chinese government in the disputed waters, the information was allegedly cited from international sources. This was the style of how China was starting to provide media coverage of its operations in the East China Sea. As it did not contain first-hand interviews and descriptive details, such reports were not very useful in boosting the CCP’s credentials in defending the national interest. As seen in the next section, more straightforward and emotional representations of the CCP’s nationalist image would soon emerge.

In sum, the CCP refrained from using its assertive and pragmatic actions in the territorial dispute to build a nationalist image at home. This was out of strategic calculation - to avoid infuriating Japan and to give itself more maneuver space in international bargaining. Two outcomes ensued.

First, by emphasizing Japan’s instigation and by withholding information of China’s operations, the domestic audience was given a black-or-white impression that China had been a victim, whereas Japan was an aggressor in the dispute. This inadvertently provoked rising popular nationalism that urged the Chinese government to take a tougher stance in international society.

It also led to a second outcome. Because the Chinese government was regarded as soft and unable to defend the national interest, making empty threats without substantial

³⁹⁶ “Ribei P-3C xunluoji zai chongsheng jianshi yi zhongguo haijun jianting” (“Japanese P-3C aircrafts monitors a Chinese PLAN warship in Okinawa”), 1 July 2003, accessed 1 Jan 2012 <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2003-07-01/10461257027.shtml>

³⁹⁷ 19 Aug 2003, *Cankao Xiaoxi (Reference News)*, accessed 1 Jan 2012 <http://www.ncsb.gov.cn/gongzuodongtai/2003/200308/2003082002.htm>

actions, it increased people's distrust in, rather than their support for, the party-state. In this sense, the CCP's two-faced approach in dealing with the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute damaged rather than bolstered its nationalist image.

This is contradictory to the ivory-tower-style inference that the CCP had been using anti-Japanese nationalism and the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute to enhance its legitimacy. The CCP did try to use nationalism to enhance legitimacy since the 1980s, but it was just a general strategy. The effects of the strategy, and the intention of the CCP on different issues and at different times, have varied. Pragmatism, rather than using nationalism for certain kind of purpose, is the guiding principle of the CCP's calculation and action.

What is really dangerous is that a deep misperception of China's foreign policy has been manufactured, which has put the CCP under domestic pressure to behave in a more hawkish way in dealing with international disputes. Because in reality, the CCP's pragmatic policy was not as soft as in the eyes of the Chinese, this may lead to over-performance and over-reaction of China in dealing with international crises, particularly in East and Southeast Asia where the Chinese public think that their government used to yield too much.

Even China's assertive military elite have seen such a danger. As Chinese Rear Admiral Yang Yi worriedly expresses, there is a huge discrepancy in the perceptions of China's foreign policy. Whereas the public at home blames the government for being too soft, incapable of defending national interest, the international society perceives China's foreign policy as hawkish.³⁹⁸ Unfortunately, Admiral Yang and his colleagues do not seem to realize that it is the CCP's two-faced approach and the suppression of information in the past years that has led China to this dangerously conflictual situation.

China's two-faced approach was driven by its diplomatic pragmatism and a political

³⁹⁸ Yi Yang, 2011, "Anquan huanjing fasheng bianhua, zhanlue siwei xu kaichuang xin tiandi" ("Security environment has changed; new strategic thinking required"), 16 Dec 2011, available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2011-12/23/c_122466222.htm

tradition of shielding information from the public. The benefit is short-term, either to maintain stable Sino-Japanese relations, to extract economic assistance from Japan, or to exploit natural resources in the East China Sea. But the cost is long-term, as we have seen in the deterioration of the regional security structure in East Asia since the 2000s.

Policy Change: A Nationalist Image and Assertive Policies after 2003-2005

The successful mobilization of *Baodiao* in 2003-2005 has changed the policy options of the CCP. Whereas the CCP's major concern used to be pragmatic flexibility, it has to show off its nationalist credentials in order to contain the *Baodiao* movement and avoid being criticized in the rising expectations of the public.

All these started with an experiment of a small internet forum. The Patriot Alliance, through which the Chinese *Baodiao* activists were organized, was set up in May 2002. Initially, it did not have any plan of *Baodiao*. Inspired by Feng Jinhua's "heroic" deeds, an IT product manager Lu Yunfei set up this web forum, hoping to connect with like-minded persons.

At the beginning, these nationalist activists had only a vague idea of the purpose of the forum - taking some concrete actions on Japan-related affairs. After some activities, such as holding commemorations at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial and at the Marco Polo Bridge in Beijing, these activists felt disappointed. "We thought it was far from enough to hold commemorations. It only brought some psychological comfort to us, but had no effect on the Japanese government," said Lu Yunfei to this author.

Hoping to accomplish something new and influential, in early 2003, the Patriot Alliance decided to emulate Hong Kong *Baodiao* activists and organize an expedition to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. The success of the first expedition immediately brought public attention and reputation to this group of activists. Before the CCP took firm actions to ban the expedition after March 2004, a window of opportunity was created for nationalist mobilization. Two figures were indicative of their public influence. In the

first Internet campaign they organized to boycott Japan's bid for the Beijing-Shanghai high-speed railway, a total of 87,000 signatures were collected within one week. In a subsequent online appeal for the Chinese victims of Japan's abandoned chemical weapons, within one month more than 1.12 million signatures had been received.

For the CCP, the rise of *Baodiao* was a surprise attack. Between the success of the first expedition and March 2004, there was a period to observe the situation and make pragmatic adjustment. Seeing that the rise of *Baodiao* could be used as a bargaining leverage with Japan, the CCP also realized the risk of letting the nationalist mobilization grow out of control. A delicate balance had to be maintained between managing the CCP's nationalist credentials, controlling the *Baodiao* Movement, and dealing with Sino-Japan relations during this period. Thus the *Baodiao* expeditions and nationalist mobilization were allowed for a short time.

One possible explanation for this toleration was the rising tension in Sino-Japan relations. Since the late 1990s, the bilateral relations have been in deterioration. Particularly after the hawkish Koizumi took up the premiership in 2001, Japan's foreign policy became more provocative.³⁹⁹ Between 2001 and 2006, Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine once every year.⁴⁰⁰ In 2001 the Japanese government approved a conservative textbook glossing over the Japanese invasion and atrocities during the WWII. The textbook controversy further acerbated relations between Japan and its East Asian neighbors.⁴⁰¹

However, the rising tension in Sino-Japanese relations should not be taken as the sole explanation. The term of Koizumi's premiership continued until 2006, whereas the CCP's attitude towards the *Baodiao* Movement was changing in 2004 and 2005. In fact Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in 2006 was the most controversial one, because it was the first time that he had visited the shrine on an anniversary of Japan's surrender

³⁹⁹ Henry Laurence, 2007, "Japan's proactive foreign policy and the rise of the BRICs", *Asian Perspective*, 31(4), pp. 177-203

⁴⁰⁰ "Koizumi shrine visit stokes anger", 15 Aug 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/4789905.stm>

⁴⁰¹ "Japan textbook angers neighbours", 3 April, 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/1257835.stm>

in WWII.

This shows that the CCP's policy towards the *Baodiao* Movement was more likely to be based on the estimated political cost and threat to the regime, rather than on the political benefit in international bargaining. This is clear because it was after two sensational incidents of high political risk that the CCP started to tighten control over *Baodiao*.

The first incident occurred in the fourth expedition to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. It was the first time that the Chinese *Baodiao* activists successfully landed on the islands. Yet the landing in March 2004 created big trouble for China and Japan, because the emergency forced both governments to perform a firm action of claiming sovereignty. The seven Chinese activists who landed on the islands were arrested by the Japanese police. Whereas Japan first warned that the detainees would be handed over to the prosecutor for violating immigration law, these activists were eventually deported under diplomatic pressure. But this did not allay the anger of the Chinese, as “deportation” implied it was an “illegal entry”.

The Chinese government openly protested against the “illegal” detention, accusing Japan of infringing on the sovereignty of China and human rights.⁴⁰² However, after this incident, a strict ban was implemented, such that any expedition from China to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands was prohibited. After March 2004, every attempted expedition to the disputed islands was stopped by force. Other forms of nationalist mobilization were also placed under more strict control by the authorities.

The second incident was the anti-Japanese mass demonstrations of 2005. The demonstrations were ignited by the online campaign against Japan's bid for the permanent membership in the UNSC. The campaign had been acquiesced to by Beijing, and major commercial portals such as sina.com were allowed to provide web servers for it. The campaign collected a total of 42 million different signatures, among which the

⁴⁰² “Waijiaobu fayanren jiu rifang fanghuan qiming zhongguo gongmin fabiao tanhua” (“Spokesman of MoFA speaks about the Japanese release of seven Chinese citizens”), 29 Mar 2004, http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2004-03/29/content_1388681.htm

Patriot Alliance contributed only 3.84 million.

When nationalist fever in the virtual world spilled over to the streets, it generated a great fear of political turmoil. From 26 March to 16 April, the largest demonstrations since 1989 swept more than twenty major Chinese cities, including Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chongqing, Chengdu, Beijing, Wuhan, Shanghai, Nanjing and Tianjin. In each city, first, an anonymous call for demonstrations, with the route plan and starting time, was widely spread through various internet forums, instant chat tools and mobile phones.

Although the Patriot Alliance was not the organizer of the demonstrations, these activists were questioned and detained by the police and security agencies, because the authorities were not able to identify other organized force of nationalists. These activists were soon released due to a lack of evidence. All the leading activists this author has interviewed denied playing a role in organizing the demonstrations, but some of them admitted that some activities such as collecting signatures in the central business district of some cities might have led to some “development beyond our expectation”. The demonstration resulted in a second forced closure of the Patriot Alliance. Some activists have been blacklisted on the surveillance roster of local authorities.

After the demonstrations, the *Baodiao* Movement quickly subsided in China. Yet it was also through this process that a new discourse of anti-Japanese nationalism revolving around the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute constructed a nationalist image of the CCP. The rising expectation from the public, stoked by the Baodiao activists, had imposed a great amount of pressure on Beijing to show off its nationalist credentials.

The CCP quickly learnt to adopt some new behavioral modes. Instead of passively lodging protests to Japan, it started to make publicity of its efforts in asserting sovereignty over the disputed islands. In December 2004, the State Post Bureau issued the first postcard with the print of the Diaoyu Islands.⁴⁰³ In October 2005, the first stamp

⁴⁰³ “Zhongguo shouci faxing yi diaoyudao fengguang wei zhuti de mingxinpian (China first issued

including the image of the Diaoyu Islands was issued.⁴⁰⁴

In the mass media, it also began to openly discuss the Chinese vessels' regular patrols in the disputed waters. For example, on 27 Feb 2006, *International Herald Leader* (*guoji xianqu daobao*) under the Xinhua News Agency, published an exclusive interview with the political commissar of the Chinese Marine Surveillance Corps. The report could be read as a display of Beijing's muscle in defending the national interest,

From 7 July 2004 to the end of 2005, the Marine Surveillance Corps has dispatched 146 sorties aircraft and 18 sorties surveillance vessels to patrol the East China Sea. During this period, we made 807 minutes' video materials, took 7232 photos, and spoke to Japanese counterparts on their vessels for over 500 minutes, which demonstrates our determination and efficacy in defending the maritime interests of the nation.⁴⁰⁵

Such reports with concrete statistics from authoritative sources effectively informed the readers of how well Beijing has been defending the national interest. It remakes the image of the Chinese government, from a passive respondent to an assertive defender of the nation, and strengthens the legitimacy of the CCP on that basis.

The 2010 collision of a Chinese fishing trawler and two Japanese naval vessels in the waters of the disputed islands provided a new lens through which to observe the CCP's new image in the mass media. On 7 September, the three ships collided, when the Japanese Coast Guard tried to intercept the fishing trawler. The Chinese captain was arrested and faced potential prosecution.⁴⁰⁶ This incident immediately escalated into a

Diaoyu Islands postcard)", 28 Dec 2004, <http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2004-12-28/08464648023s.shtml>, accessed 1 Jan 2012

⁴⁰⁴ "Dui diaoyudao wenti houxu fazhan de ruogan jianyi (Suggestions for development of the Diaoyu Islands problem)", <http://www.chinaelections.org/newsinfo.asp?newsid=187780>

⁴⁰⁵ "Zhongguo donghai jianshi riben diaochachuan (China monitors Japanese investigation ship in East China Sea)", 27 Feb 2006, *Guoji Xianqu Daobao (International Herald Leader)* http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2006-02/27/content_4233133.htm

⁴⁰⁶ Justin McCurry, 2010, "Japan-China row escalates over fishing boat collision", 9 Sep 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/09/japan-china-fishing-boat->

diplomatic contest. During the short period (7-25 September) when the captain was detained, the spokeswomen of the Chinese Foreign Ministry held eight press conferences, denouncing Japan's behavior. The Assistant Minister Hu Zhengyue, the Vice Minister Song Tao, the Minister Yang Jiechi and the State Councilor Dai Bingguo urgently summoned the Japanese Ambassador Uichiro Niwa.⁴⁰⁷

Such public gestures and media reports during this crisis subverted the CCP's traditional image and behavioral mode. It has become more assertive and more performative, targeting the domestic audience. In the press conference on 17 September, not only making verbal denunciations, the Chinese Foreign Ministry confirmed that both the Marine Surveillance Corps and the Fishery Administration had recently dispatched vessels to stop Japan's oceanic investigation and protect Chinese fishing trawlers in disputed waters.⁴⁰⁸

On 21 September 2010, an online report was widely disseminated, disclosing that the Chinese and Japanese warships had been confronting one another for hours in the Chunxiao Oil Field. Citing an old report without an identifiable publication date, the news vividly described how two Chinese warships were bravely confronting forty-two Japanese aircrafts in the oil field in the East China Sea, and how they were able to repel the Japanese from China's territorial waters. Moreover, this piece of news was full of theatrical description, casting doubt on its veracity. It cited the revealing anecdote of an anonymous witness, who alleged that he saw the patrolling operation of the Chinese warship fleet.

At 11.30am, 9 September, we were having our meal and taking a rest. Suddenly we saw the patrol fleet of our Chinese Navy...There were five warships in the fleet...with three slowly operating around the platform, like a mother gently

[collision?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487](#)

⁴⁰⁷ “Zhongguo zhengfu de dui ri zhengce” (“The Japan policy of the Chinese Government”)

http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2007-03/28/content_5907524_3.htm

⁴⁰⁸ “Waijiaobu zhengshi paiqian haijianchuan zai xiangguan haiyu jiaqiang zhifa” (“MoFA verified marine surveillance ships dispatched to strengthen law enforcement in related waters”), 17 Sep 2010, <http://world.huanqiu.com/roll/2010-09/1110869.html>

caressing her frightened children! Our excitement was beyond words! Long live our country! Long live the People's Liberation Army!⁴⁰⁹

On 23 September, Ship No 201 of the Fishery Administration started a thirteen-day patrol in the waters of the disputed islands. *Global Times* (huanqiu shibao), a major CCP mouthpiece under the Xinhua News Agency, sent journalist Cheng Gang onboard to make an on-scene report. After Cheng's return, China Central Television (CCTV) made a special program of Cheng's experience, and Cheng was interviewed by the CCTV's star talk show host and the program was broadcast to national audience.⁴¹⁰

On 22 November, two months after the release of the Chinese captain, the liberal *Southern Daily* (nanfang ribao) published an article with the title "The Diaoyu Islands: We come whenever we want". The article told a heroic story of Ships No. 310 and No. 201 of the Fishery Administration, which overcame the troubles created by the Japanese patrol vessels, and successfully operated around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.

According to the report, it was the fourth time that the Chinese Fishery Administration patrolled the disputed islands since September. In the report, the most theatrical part was a vivid description of a brief dialogue between the Chinese and the Japanese when they were confronting one another at sea. Asked when the Chinese patrol fleet would leave the waters, the Chinese responded,

"The Diaoyu Islands are China's sovereign land. We will perform normalized patrol of the waters."

"What is normalized patrol?" asked the Japanese.

⁴⁰⁹ "Zhongri junjian cengzai chunxiao youtian duizhi shige xiaoshi" ("Chinese and Japanese Warships Used to Confront in Chunxiao Oil Field For Ten Ours"), 21 Sep 2010, <http://news.qq.com/a/20100921/001922.htm>

⁴¹⁰ "Woguo fu diaoyudao yuzhengchuan jizhe tan zao rifang lanjie jingli" ("The journalist onboard the fishery administration ship to the Diaoyu Islands talked his experience of being intercepted by the Japanese"), 13 Oct 2010, <http://military.people.com.cn/GB/42964/57826/12940793.html>

“It means that we come whenever we want. We can come here every day.”⁴¹¹

The dialogue, along with other evocative reports on China’s actions in the East China Sea since 2005, shows a trend of the changing image of the Chinese authorities before a domestic audience. The CCP has learnt, and has to learn, how to construct a nationalist image of itself in the face of rising tensions in the territorial dispute. Perhaps more importantly, it has to change the priority of its policies under the pressure of the *Baodiao* Movement. That is, to put pragmatism aside and stress the symbolic meaning of its actions, as we have seen today. Such a policy change has a worrying part – that the CCP’s stress on performing a nationalist image will not alleviate domestic pressure of nationalism in the long term. It is simply a means of convenience to relieve pressure for the CCP, but may force it to pay a much higher cost in the near future.

Conclusion

The *Baodiao* Movement in China is primarily a civilian nationalist movement that aims to pursue the right of political participation, influence the state’s foreign policies, and compete with the party-state for a different interpretation and claim of Chinese nationalism, not a means of expediency for the CCP to boost regime legitimacy. This is also the common character of *Baodiao* in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China throughout different stages of the movement.

The evolution of *Baodiao* reflects the state-society relations in which the movement has unfolded. The differences in *Baodiao* in composition of activists, structure of mobilization and consequences of activism are explicable in terms of the political context of the movement. Whereas it relies on political parties, student organizations and university campus for mobilization in Taiwan and Hong Kong, the authoritarian environment in China requires a higher level of resource mobilization for the movement

⁴¹¹ “Diaoyudao, women xianglai jiulai” (“Diaoyudao, we come whenever we want”), 22 Nov 2010, *Nanfang Ribao* (*Nanfang Daily*), http://epaper.nfdaily.cn/html/2010-11/22/content_6898959.htm

to emerge. Therefore the leading activists in initiating the movement are mainly composed of middle class professionals whose resources, sophistication and professional expertise can compensate for the lack of organizational support.

It also explains why violence has burst out in anti-Japanese demonstrations in China in recent years. While anti-Japanese sentiments have flared up, they lack regulated channels and organizational bases for venting public opinion. The CCP does not tolerate the existence of an organized civic force that has the potential to challenge its rule. The experience of the Tian'anmen Massacre makes the CCP more repressive towards mobilization on university campuses than the KMT authorities in Taiwan, which were able to contain the nationalist movement through student organizations. Consequently, the CCP has no civilian ally to check the violent and xenophobic eruptions of anti-Japanese nationalism. This has created a power vacuum, available to be seized and exploited by any kind of organized force, particularly at a time of internal political crisis. This is what we have seen in the midst of the downfall of Bo Xilai and elite power struggle in September 2012.

The repressive environment also accounts for why the *Baodiao* activists in China are very careful to frame their discourse and strategy, and to distance themselves from political dissident movements. As the spokesman of these activists said in an interview to this author, "Civic rights must be separated from *Baodiao*. ... Do not intermingle it with other purpose." This rational reaction of the Chinese activists, which is bounded by the structural constraints in China's state-society relations, drives the development of the *Baodiao* Movement in a conservative direction. Although some leading activists such as Feng Jinhua are not afraid of speaking out about civic rights in a straightforward way, his words do not suggest that the *Baodiao* Movement is likely to evolve into a well-organized dissident movement. This is different from the evolution of the movement in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

As a result, the statist goal of the movement has been overemphasized, and the civic discourse has been downplayed. It does not mean that the Chinese activists are

brainwashed by the CCP. On the contrary, it shows evidence of conscious and strategic choice. On the other hand, the mobilization of the *Baodiao* activists has also influenced the policy choices of the party-state. This became possible under an authoritarian regime by creating international conflicts through surprise activities, by bringing up the shelved issue to the spotlight in mass media, by pushing it onto the political agenda of the party-state, and ultimately, by influencing the set of choices that the authoritarian state has had.

Since the rise of *Baodiao* in 2003-2005, the CCP has changed some behavioral modes in dealing with the territorial dispute with Japan. Instead of making empty denunciations and covering up its actions in the East China Sea, China has begun to publicize, strengthen and acclaim its actions in the disputed waters to build a nationalist image for the CCP. The style of media coverage has also shifted from vague citations from foreign sources to theatrical descriptions and in-depth interviews with informants from authoritative sources. Compared to its traditional double-dealing approach, these changes have been reshaping the image of the CCP before its domestic audience, from a soft respondent to an assertive defender of China's national interests.

This is to relieve nationalist pressure on the CCP and to undermine the legitimacy of organized social mobilization from below. Yet the long-term outcome of this change for the CCP does not imply optimism. What is really dangerous is that a deep misperception of China's foreign policy has already been manufactured in the mind of the Chinese people, due to the CCP's double-dealing approach and the cover up of information in the past years. While the CCP's action is regarded as soft and empty at home, in reality, its pragmatic policy is not as soft as in the eyes of the Chinese public. This will lead to over-performance and over-reaction for China to deal with international crisis, particularly in East and Southeast Asia where the Chinese think that their government used to yield too much. The CCP will have to pay an expensive cost in the long-term.

This chapter is not arguing that the rise of the *Baodiao* movement is the only factor or

the most important one that has led to the change. Other factors, such as China's growing concern with energy security, the sectoral interest of the Marine Surveillance Corps, the Fishery Administration and the People's Liberation Army, are also worth considering. It also does not imply that Japan has no responsibility for inciting Chinese nationalism or aggravating the crisis. In this chapter, the author focuses on *Baodiao* on the Chinese side, and shows it is a critical aspect for understanding the rise of Chinese nationalism and its policy implications. Future research on any other aspect of the issue will benefit from the research undertaken in this chapter.

This chapter, again, proves the central argument of the thesis: On the one hand, Chinese nationalism from above and Chinese nationalism from below are necessarily different. In different sub-populations, popular nationalism is comprehended and represented with different meanings, interpretations and claims. On the other hand, the picture presented in the thesis is not an authentic and autonomous bottom-up dynamic, because every bottom-up initiative and every aspect of that initiative, still bears the traces of the party-state. Such traces can play an important role in influencing the bottom-up initiative, the development of Chinese nationalism, and policy implications of Chinese nationalism. It is the evolution of socio-political dynamics, not the content of Chinese nationalism (either from below or from above), that determines what kind of force it will serve for China's domestic politics and international behavior.

Chapter 6 The Party Line or Personal View: China's Outspoken PLA Officers in the Mass Media

In Chapter 3 and Chapter 5, the thesis surveyed the understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese peasants, intellectual activists, and middle class professionals, who autonomously initiated and participated in two sensational nationalist movements. The Civil Reparations Movement and *Baodiao* Movement have profoundly influenced the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism and Sino-Japanese relations today. The two chapters not only debunk a narrowly top-down picture of Chinese nationalism, showing the differences between popular nationalism and state nationalism, but also display the differences in sub-populations in terms of their understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism.

It further questions, the extent to which such bottom-up dynamics of sub-populations are authentic and autonomous, and explores how the party-state has been penetrating these dynamics, though on the surface these dynamics were indeed initiated and operated by social activists. It finds that the historical influence of communist culture and political mobilization, and the embedded power relations under an authoritarian regime, have both played a role in shaping the processes and consequences of these dynamics. It has influenced such dynamics through harsh repression and reconstruction of the subjectivity of the activists. Therefore, such bottom-up dynamics and sentiments of Chinese nationalism are not as purely authentic and autonomous as assumed in most existing studies. Chinese nationalism from below, its various means of mobilization and consequences still bear the traces of the party-state.

This chapter focuses on the top echelon of the social hierarchy in the Chinese society, and provides a further piece of evidence to corroborate the major argument of the thesis. It looks at one of the most mysterious groups within the Chinese elite, the high-ranking officers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and analyzes why and how this group has incited anti-American nationalism in China through their understandings, interpretations and claims diverging from the Party line. Because the identity of the

military elites has an overlap with the agency of the party-state, it implies that the state should also be understood in a disaggregated fashion in understanding nationalism from below.

It makes a unique contribution to the study of contemporary Chinese nationalism and the Chinese military. In most studies of Chinese politics, outspoken PLA officers are rarely an engaging topic, because they were confined to secretive military institutions and invisible in the public sphere. In recent years, however, Chinese military officers have made their debut in the mass media, and their popularity with the public is impressive. Their appearance on television and in broadcasting, in newspapers and magazines, and their writing of bestselling books and blog posts, differs qualitatively from their occasional public appearances in the past. The dissemination of their opinions is supported by the mouthpieces of the party-state and pro-liberal newspapers and magazines as well. Some of these PLA officers have even risen to become star public intellectuals, with acclaim from populist nationalists. Some military officers manage to maintain active blogs with millions of hits, and their books on national strategy have become bestsellers on the cultural market.

What is more intriguing is that, with the increasing exposure of PLA officers in the open media, they have made many heterodox statements which deviate from the officially stated line of the party-state. In particular, they have raised concerns with respect to China's policy towards the United States and related security issues in East Asia. While the Chinese top leadership shares a consensus that maintaining cooperative relations with the external world (particularly the U.S.) is mandatory for China's ascendancy to world power,⁴¹² these PLA officers do not hesitate to lash out both at the U.S. and at China's policy towards that country.

The military are typically viewed as hardliners across the world. However, given that communist China has a tightly-controlled media system and a tradition that "the party

⁴¹² David Lampton, 2008, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, pp.27-32.

controls the gun”, this new phenomenon is of both academic and policy interest, as many statements from these military officers appear to be their personal viewpoints. Moreover, these viewpoints are no longer limited to internal briefings and discussions of the party and the military, but are starting to penetrate the public sphere. This occurs against a political backdrop where China’s civilian leadership today has little military experience and relies on a fragile legitimacy.

The new phenomenon of PLA officers speaking out in the mass media raises a number of questions. First, through what channels are their views being aired to the public and how much mass exposure do these views receive? Second, how consistent are the views being aired with the prevailing Party line? Third, why has the appearance of such heterodox statements by PLA officers become possible in the tightly controlled media system of authoritarian China? Fourth, what impact do these views have on public opinion, and what influence does public opinion have on elites and policy decisions?

These four questions, if taken together, represent an extensive research agenda. This will contribute to understanding China’s civil-military relations, the influence of domestic politics on foreign policy, and the prospects for China’s shifting international strategy. For the purpose of the thesis and given the limit of space, in this chapter, the author addresses the first two questions with data collected from public sources, and speculates briefly on the other two.

The Rise of Outspoken PLA Officers and Changes in the Linkages between the PLA and the CCP

Before analyzing the PLA’s appearance in the mass media, in order to understand the new phenomenon and its internal dynamics, as a backdrop of the chapter, this section takes a look at the linkages between the PLA and the CCP, and the existing arguments on how changes have emerged in these linkages. According to the conventional view in the literature, with the political-military party gurus passing away in the post-Deng Xiaoping era, the Chinese leadership has lost military credentials, and the military has

also lost their power of intervention in party decisions.⁴¹³ Therefore, the nature of China's civil-military relations has been changing.⁴¹⁴

One distinctive feature of this change is that the civil and military elite have bifurcated, as a result of which the Chinese military elite today are "less willing and able to intervene in elite politics, barring severe cases of internal political and/or social chaos that threaten regime survival."⁴¹⁵ Consequently, the role of the PLA in elite politics has been markedly reduced.⁴¹⁶ Due to modernization and professionalization of the army, it is commonly held that now the PLA "largely stays out of domestic politics." "The PLA's involvement in politics is diminishing; the military are returning to the military camps."⁴¹⁷

Nevertheless, there is disagreement with the effect of such a change. In a prescient study on the PLA's role in national security policy-making in 1998, Swaine finds the Chinese military have significant influence over foreign policy-making, in both formal and informal ways. He predicts that such an influence is "probably on the rise", and that "the overall ability of the civilian leadership to resist military encroachment on the foreign policy subarena...is almost certainly declining."⁴¹⁸

⁴¹³ David Shambaugh, 1999, "China's post-Deng military leadership," Chapter 2 in *China's Military Faces the Future*, James Lilley and David Shambaugh (eds.), Armonk, N.Y.: Washington, D.C.: M.E. Sharpe, pp.11-35.

⁴¹⁴ David Shambaugh, 2001, "Commentary on civil-military relations in China: the search for new paradigms," Chp.2 in *Seeking Truth from Facts: A Retrospective on Chinese Military Studies in the Post-Mao Era*, Rand Report, pp.39-49; David Shambaugh, 2002, "Civil-military relations in China: Party-army or national military?", *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, No.16, pp.10-29.

⁴¹⁵ Michael D. Swaine, 2 November 2005, "Civil-military relations and domestic power and policies," paper presented at the Conference on Chinese Leadership, Politics, and Policy, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, p. 3.

<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/Swaine.pdf>, accessed on 19 Sep 2010

⁴¹⁶ Michael Kiselycznyk and Phillip C. Saunders, 2010 (August), "Civil-military relations in China: Assessing the PLA's role in elite politics," *INSS China Strategic Perspectives 2*, National Defense University

⁴¹⁷ Qi Zhou, 2008, "Organization, structure and image in the making of Chinese foreign policy since the early 1990s," PhD Dissertation, John Hopkins University, pp.114-120

⁴¹⁸ Michael Swaine, 1998, "The role of the Chinese military in national security policymaking," revised edition, *Rand Report*, p.x and pp.31-36.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/2007/MR782-1.pdf, accessed on 7 Aug 2011

The PLA's encroachment on China's foreign policy, particularly policy towards the U.S., is not only a result of generational change in the Party leadership, but of an increasing willingness of the military to change the rules of the game. There is an interesting quote in Lampton's book, which reflects such a change in an incisive dialogue. In an interview between Lampton and a PLA general, the uniformed officer vividly said,

Change the game – not to play the old way – you [the United States] can sell weapons to Taiwan. If you [Taiwan] buy one ABM, we'll deploy [more missiles] – the same amount. For the U.S., we will, for instance, sell weapons you don't like and sanction U.S. companies that sell [weapons to Taiwan]. *My way is to change the rules. Renegotiate a new agreement.*"(italics added)⁴¹⁹

In recent years, the process of policy-making in China has also been undergoing fundamental changes. The number of actors has been increasing. These new actors have generated new problems and exerted new pressure on the leadership who used to dominate the arena of foreign policy-making.⁴²⁰ Accompanying the rise of new actors is the change in the media sector, which was unleashed by the CCP's decision to grant it financial autonomy, and invest heavily in the infrastructure of the Internet.⁴²¹

The convergence of these changes increases the capacity of new actors to launch policy campaigns, and to exert influence over the preferences of the public. This is particularly interesting, because the Chinese regime has very limited institutional channels for political participation for new actors. This new means of making publicity is also seized by outspoken PLA officers, who express their nationalist views in the mass media, stoke chauvinist Chinese nationalism, and manufacture public opinion that may be reflected back to the top leadership.

⁴¹⁹ David Lampton, 2010 (June) "Power constrained: sources of mutual strategic suspicion in U.S.-China relations," *NBR Analysis*, p. 17.

⁴²⁰ David Lampton, 2001, *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, p.4; Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, 2010 (September), *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*, SIPRI Policy Paper.

⁴²¹ Susan Shirk (ed.), 2011, *Changing Media, Changing China* New York: Oxford University Press

The changing character of the Chinese leadership, the raised willingness of the PLA, and the emergence of new means and an active opinion market, all of these factors have affected the linkages between the PLA and the CCP. Whereas the effects of these changes on elite politics and foreign policy-making are debatable, the existence of such changes and the fact that they have an influence on the linkages between the PLA and the CCP are clear.

In the rest of this section, there is an overview of the three changes in detail, and an analysis of how and why these changes are likely to have an influence on the linkages between the PLA and the CCP. In so doing, it provides a socio-political backdrop for the major argument of this chapter. This is also the first attempt in the existing literature that analyses the structural changes in the linkages between the PLA and the CCP from these three perspectives. Finally, one caveat should be recalled. This chapter does not attempt to assess how much political influence outspoken PLA officers have on the decision making of the Chinese leadership. Other kinds of empirical data are needed to assess the impact, and collecting such data deviates from the purpose of this thesis as a whole.

Leadership Turnover – the PLA’s New Opportunity

Leadership turnover in the CCP provides the PLA with an unprecedented opportunity. With the end of the era of political strongmen, the PLA elite have become a political leverage as well a political investment for the weak leadership, who have insufficient authority and a fragile basis in the legitimacy of rule. In return, this can give the military room for maneuver to exert influence on policy, although that in the supreme decision-making body of the Party (i.e. the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee), there are only two members coming from the military (the two vice-chairmen of the Central Military Commission). Therefore it is premature to conclude that the military has lost power to intervene in elite politics and foreign policy-making.

Past Chinese leaders were all military men, who developed strong ties with their subordinates and gained loyalty in the military. The top Chinese leadership today does

not have men with military backgrounds. This is one development that signals the decoupling of military-civilian relations in China. Yet such decoupling does not guarantee that the PLA has distanced itself from the political sphere. Neither does the process of modernization and professionalization of the PLA. This is for two reasons.

First, it is a misperception that the PLA used to be interventionist in politics. The PLA was deeply involved in politics in the time of Mao (for example, in the Cultural Revolution) and Deng (for example, in the Tiananmen Massacre). However, it was because the then party leaders had ordered it, not because the PLA sought it to advance its sectoral interest or ambition.⁴²² Therefore the PLA had never really gone out of the military camps in the era of political strongmen. Its interest and ambition had been subordinate to the order of the party leaders, who were founding fathers of the Chinese army.

Second, the process of modernization and professionalization is a double-edged sword for civil-military relations. On the one hand, the process can foster the separation between the army and party organizations. On the other hand, it nurtures the sectoral interest, political ambition, and qualified personnel of the PLA. This can boost the willingness of the PLA to intervene in policy-making.

In the wake of the “Arab Spring” in the Middle East, in March 2011, the Chinese political leaders immediately raised the salary of the entire military, which is seen as an indication of the CCP’s weakness and lack of confidence in its legitimacy.⁴²³ Back to the time of the Chinese President Jiang Zemin (1993-2003) and Hu Jintao (2003-2013), cultivating personal ties with the PLA through appointment and promotion was a vital strategy for their political survival and continuing political influence after their

⁴²² Ellis Joffe, 1996, “Party-army relations in China: retrospect and prospect,” *The China Quarterly*, Vol.146, pp. 299-314.

⁴²³ “Chinese military starts to raise salary, up to 40% for low level officers (Zhongguo jundui quanmian jiaxin, shiguan zuigao zhang sicheng)”, 2 March 2011, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/simp/china/2011/03/110302_pla_salary.shtml accessed on 7 Aug 2011

resignations.⁴²⁴

However “it might be too simplistic to assume that these military appointees will owe loyalty to the current CMC (Central Military Commission) chairman” who promotes them at the last step because “most of them advanced their careers through ordinary step-by-step promotions” and “may have strong residual allegiances or patron-client ties” to preceding CMC chairmen.⁴²⁵ “Lack of life-and-death friendship made in the war, the Chinese top leadership today can hardly have credibility and absolute loyalty as the supreme commander of the military....The discrepancy in behavior between a hawkish army and the political leadership is impossible to erase. Their relationship is an ordinary one of mutual interest.”⁴²⁶

Because the Chinese leadership today have little military experience, and have to court the military for support in political struggle for maintaining its legitimacy of rule, the political elite can be restrained by the military elite in making policy decisions. This means that the role of the PLA in elite politics will not necessarily diminish, and its influence over policy-making is not necessarily dwindling. As the late pioneer of PLA studies Ellis Joffe incisively pointed out fifteen years ago, “[t]he new situation contains the potential for unprecedented military influence on the make-up of the Party leadership and on its policies.”⁴²⁷

Professionalization and Generational Shift – the PLA’s New Willingness

The willingness of the PLA to intervene in policy-making is a more complicated problem. The rising educational level and generational shift of PLA officers is a major factor contributing to the growing willingness of the military to air their views on policy.

⁴²⁴ You Ji, 2001, “Jiang Zemin’s command of the military,” *The China Journal*, Vol.45, pp. 131-38; Zhiyue Bo, 2011 (Jan-Mar), “Hu Jintao’s generals,” *East Asian Policy*, pp. 45-51

⁴²⁵ Cheng Li and Scott W. Harold, 2007, “China’s new military elite,” *China Security*, Vol.3, No.4, p.70

⁴²⁶ Xiao Wang, 4 Aug 2011, “Political observation of the PLA (Renmin Jiefangjun de zhengzhi guan cha)”, http://www.21ccom.net/articles/gsbh/article_2011080442442.html, accessed on 7 Aug 2011

⁴²⁷ Ellis Joffe, 1996, “Party-army relations in China: retrospect and prospect”, p. 309.

At the end of the Cultural Revolution, the education level of PLA officers was unacceptably low. Deng Xiaoping saw it as a most urgent problem to raise the PLA's education level and transform the Chinese army into a modern force.⁴²⁸ Major transformation of the PLA's education system was undertaken in the 1980s. Deng's two successors, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, were both concerned with ameliorating the quality of the PLA so that it could win local wars under informatized conditions.⁴²⁹

The modernization and professionalization of the PLA has trained a new generation of military officers. As an unexpected outcome, the new officer corps is becoming more willing to be outspoken than their predecessors, as their knowledge structure and foreign expertise are catching up. A study by Li and Harold shows that in the time of the post-17th Party Congress, China's military elite are "among the best-educated and most well-trained specialists ever to lead Chinese forces."⁴³⁰

Professionalism and expertise have boosted both the confidence and the ambition of PLA officers to influence policy-making. On some occasions, the remarks of these outspoken PLA officers deviate, and even contradict the doctrine of China's stated and long-term policies. This has two implications. First it means that their influence over policy making should not be over-estimated. Because their views are more likely to be on the sideline in the Party, they are incentivized to take an outspoken manner to air policy recommendations. But my emphasis here is on the second implication. The emergence of outspoken PLA officers and their deviance from the Party line implies a strong willingness of the military professionals to intervene in policy-making, in both foreign and domestic affairs, even at the cost of breaking political taboos.

In July 2005, Major General Zhu Chenghu, dean of the Defense Affairs Institute at the

⁴²⁸ June Teufel Dreyer, 1996, "The new officer corps: implications for the future," *The China Quarterly*, Vol.146, pp. 315-335.

⁴²⁹ Thomas Skypek, 29 February 2008, "Soldier scholars: military education as an instrument of China's strategic power", *China Brief*, 8(4), available at http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=4734&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=168&no_cache=1#.VS1dKfnF8f0, accessed on 15 Oct 2011

⁴³⁰ Cheng Li and Scott W. Harold, 2007, "China's new military elite", p. 63

National Defense University, made a remark on the worst-case scenario of U.S.-China relations at an official briefing to a group of Hong Kong correspondents. His remark immediately stoked an explosive reaction from within China and overseas.

If the Americans draw their missiles and position-guided ammunition on to the target zone on China's territory, I think we will have to respond with nuclear weapons...We Chinese will prepare ourselves for the destruction of all the cities east of Xi'an. Of course the Americans will have to be prepared that hundreds of cities will be destroyed by the Chinese.⁴³¹

General Zhu's remarks obviously contradict Beijing's longstanding position of no-first-use doctrine. Beijing quickly distanced itself from this blunt statement⁴³² and killed the career of the troublemaker.⁴³³ According to the author's interview with the general in the summer of 2011, he thought his intention and remarks were distorted in the media, and the Chinese government had been unaware that he would make such remarks.⁴³⁴ General Zhu was not recommending a nuclear war. Neither did his statement stand for the Chinese government. This "blunt" military man was trying to use doublespeak and brinkmanship to influence both China's U.S. policy and America's China policy, both of which were apparently out of his reach.

Not only China's U.S. policy, but also its domestic policy has been under critique from the military. In April 2011, General Liu Yuan, the political commissar of the General Logistics Department, called for China to return to his father's "new democracy" (as opposed to Western democracy) at an intellectual forum in Beijing. Liu's father, Liu Shaoqi was the President of China from 1959 to 1968. He used to be the anointed successor to Mao Tse-tung, but was brutally purged by Mao and died in custody in

⁴³¹ Joseph Kahn, 15 July 2005, "Chinese general threatens use of A-bombs if U.S. intrudes," *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/15/international/asia/15china.html> accessed on 7 Aug 2011.

⁴³² Stephanie Lieggi, 2005 (December), "Going beyond the stir: the strategic realities of China's no-first-use policy," http://www.nti.org/e_research/e3_70.html accessed on 7 Aug 2011.

⁴³³ "Chinese general punished for nuclear gaffe", *The China Post*, 23 December 2005, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/asia/2005/12/23/74089/Chinese-general.htm> accessed on 7 Aug 2011.

⁴³⁴ Author's interview at a lunch talk, summer 2011, Singapore

the Cultural Revolution.

The intellectual forum was organized to discuss *Changing Our View of Culture and History* (*gaizao wo'men de wenhua lishiguan*), a book of General Liu's longtime friend and political advisor, Zhang Musheng, who is a left-leaning intellectual. At the forum Liu did not conceal his discontent with domestic politics and spiritual vanity in contemporary China. In the preface Liu wrote for the book, which has been widely circulated online, he even made an audacious statement, saying that “[a]ctually, all the Party’s General Secretaries have betrayed and recanted many things – both inside and outside the country, both in recent times and in the past.”⁴³⁵

Moreover, the study of the Chinese military should not neglect the group of “princeling generals”. One political consequence of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) is that a large number of young male offspring of the revolutionary military officers joined the PLA at a time when joining the army was a privilege, compared to being sent to the countryside. With this cohort of military men entering their fifties and sixties, a group of so-called “princeling generals” has risen in the PLA.⁴³⁶

Meritocracy, along with nepotism, has contributed to their success in climbing up the ladder of power.⁴³⁷ This new socio-political phenomenon will have enduring effects on the evolution of Chinese politics. The existence of this group increases both the capacity and the willingness of the PLA elite to influence China’s policy. This is not only because these princeling generals are embedded in a personal network with political and military elite, but because they share a strong “heritage complex” to defend their fathers’

⁴³⁵ The full transcript of the intellectual discussion (in Chinese) at the forum is available at, http://www.21ccom.net/articles/sxpl/sx/article_2011043034557.html accessed on 7 Aug 2011. The English quote is excerpted from Jeremy Page, “‘Princeling’ general attracts notice with criticism of party,” accessed on 7 Aug 2011

<http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2011/05/23/chinese-general-attracts-notice-with-criticism-of-communist-party/?mod=WSJBlog>

⁴³⁶ Zhiyue Bo, 2006, “Princeling generals in China: breaking the two career barriers?” *Issues & Studies*, 42(1), pp. 195-232.

⁴³⁷ Zhiyue Bo, 2006 (March), “A new cohort of princeling generals in China’s PLA: meritocracy vs. professionalism (II)”, *EAI Background Brief*, No.279, accessed 7 Aug 2011 <http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/BB279.pdf>

political legacy - the regime of the party-state.

Mass Media and the Internet – the PLA’s New Capacity

With the opening of new opportunities and the increasing willingness of the PLA to influence policy making, the rise of commercialized mass media and the Internet provides a means for outspoken PLA officers to extend their influence beyond the military barracks. This chapter is not discussing the traditional means of internal briefing, intelligence reports and intra-party discussions. It focuses on the role of mass media and new media. This is not only because it is a new arena for the PLA to exert influence, but because this arena is at the junction of the Party, the army and society, which offers a unique perspective from which to observe the changing nature of socio-political dynamics in China.

In recent years, China’s mass media has become a new realm where politics are being debated before the audience outside the Party, which may render broad implications for policy making and political transformation in the long term.⁴³⁸ Besides traditional channels to express opinions to the political leadership, such as policy papers and intelligence reports, PLA officers can now seize mass media and the Internet to propagate their thoughts to the public. Today the most outspoken PLA officers are star commentators on television and broadcast, authors of bestseller books, invited columnists for popular newspapers and magazines, and sometimes, even popular bloggers.

These outspoken PLA officers mainly come from military universities or think tanks. Some of them are retired military strategists, but most are active officers. Although few combat commanders are visible in the mass media, they are not entirely disappearing. Overall, the scholarly background of these military officers does not mean that their role is minimal. Through personal networks in the army, training institutions where they teach, and exposure in the mass media, they are well placed to pass on their views to the

⁴³⁸ Thanks John Sidel for pointing out this to me.

general public as well as to the political elite and civilian officials. Sometimes, active high-rank officers also seize the media to express their policy recommendations for foreign and domestic affairs.

Some of the senior officers come from families in the military profession. Their fathers fought in the anti-Japanese war of resistance and the Chinese civil war. They grew up in the housing compounds in the military barracks in the Cultural Revolution, an experience which shaped a shared identity and way of thinking. A few of these officers are “princelings”, whose father or father-in-law was among the top leadership of the PLA and the CCP. Such a family background gives them an extended network in military and political elite.

Most of the mid-level officers teach at China’s most distinguished military institutions, which are responsible for training younger generations of combat commanders. In recent years the CCP has realized that knowledge of national security is necessary for training senior civilian officers as well. Since 2001, the National Defense University (NDU) has been designated as a training base for provincial-level officers and ministers. From 2006 to 2010, forty high-rank civilian officers were trained there each year.⁴³⁹ Many of the outspoken PLA officers are professors at this university. They may not be directly involved in the high-level, institutionalized foreign policy process,⁴⁴⁰ but most of the next generation PLA elite will emerge from the pool of students of these officers. Among China’s 57 highest-ranking military officers in 2007, almost all attended the NDU or other military academies to obtain degrees or mid-career training.⁴⁴¹

With the rise of new media is the growing attention of the Chinese leadership to public

⁴³⁹ Liang Shen and Jiangning Zhang, 23 Apr 2009, “Qibai shengbuji guanyuan shouxun guofang daxue beihou (700 provincial level officers and ministers trained at the National Defense University: what’s behind)”, *Nanfang Zhoumo (Southern Weekends)*, <http://www.infzm.com/content/27423>, accessed on 23 Aug 2011

⁴⁴⁰ Michael D. Swaine, 2012 (winter), “China’s assertive behavior part three: the role of the military in foreign policy,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No.36, and 2012 (spring) “China’s assertive behavior part four: the role of the military in foreign crises”, *China Leadership Monitor*, No.37.

⁴⁴¹ Cheng Li, 2010 (summer), “China’s midterm jockeying: gearing up for 2012 (part 3: military leaders)”, *China Leadership Monitor*, No.33.

opinion. As China has moved beyond the era of charismatic leadership, in the field of foreign policy making, domestic factors have become an intervening force.⁴⁴² China's foreign policy makers believe that the media and the Internet reflect somewhat authentic public opinion. This is an unfortunate misperception. Information from such sources as the Internet, which the Chinese leadership hopes to rely on, is skewed towards extreme nationalist emotion.⁴⁴³ Yet this new feature of Chinese politics endows the PLA with new capacity to influence decision making. Through shaping public opinion, which is exceptionally responsive to nationalist and reformist views, the military officers can expect to make an indirect influence over policy making.

Methodology and an Overview of the Chapter

This chapter surveys four types of Chinese media – television and broadcast programs, newspapers and magazines, bestselling books, blog posts and websites. In the studies of the Chinese military, information transparency and reliability of news leaks has been a notorious problem, though access to military analysts has substantially improved since the 1990s.⁴⁴⁴ Unlike previous studies on the PLA, this chapter does not rely on information collected from academic articles or news leaks from Hong Kong, which are either unavailable to most of Chinese audience or are questionable in reliability.

Instead this chapter draws on open-source materials that have been watched, read and debated by millions of Chinese, not internal reports or academic articles being circulated and read by only a limited number of academics or military staff. In so doing, the chapter has a selection bias of empirical materials, because the mass media encourage and highlight the most outspoken speakers. However, for the purpose of this research, this is a positive factor, because it is precisely the views of these most outspoken PLA officers that penetrate into the public sphere and influence public

⁴⁴² Yufan Hao, 2006, "Dilemma of openness: societal pressure in China's foreign policy making," *EAI Working Paper Series I*, http://www.eai.or.kr/data/bbs/eng_report/2009051310341545.pdf accessed on 7 Aug 2011.

⁴⁴³ Susan Shirk, 2007, "Changing media, changing foreign policy in China"

⁴⁴⁴ Allen Whiting, 1996, "The PLA and China's threat perceptions," *The China Quarterly*, Vol.146, pp. 596-615

opinion. As Susan Shirk points out, the information gathered from such sources may be skewed, but it is precisely this skewedness of information that affects the perceptions and choices of policy-makers.⁴⁴⁵

In the rest of the chapter, it first uses three sections to describe and analyze the major channels that outspoken PLA officers have used to air their viewpoints. They include television and broadcasting, newspapers and magazines, bestselling books, blogs and websites. The substantive viewpoints of these officers will be investigated, which focus on the U.S. and related security issues. Choosing such a focus is not only because the U.S. is identified by Chinese military strategists as the top rival, but because the most intense security problems in the region, such as the East China Sea dispute and the South China Sea dispute, are regarded by them as a fundamental U.S. problem. Then the chapter analyzes how and why the expressed views of these PLA officers follow or deviate from the Party line. A conclusion will follow.

Creating a Public Image on Television and in Broadcasting

The emerging public image of the Chinese military officers has been tied to the emergence of popular military programs on television and in broadcasting. As all television and broadcasting stations are controlled by the party-state, the appearance of military officers on these programs should be subject to the permission or acquiescence of the Party. Rear Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong, a star commentator on China Central Television (CCTV), spoke frankly in an interview in 2004 of the Party's intention to guide public opinion. It was one year after Zhang made a talk show on the U.S.-Iraq War on CCTV Channel 4.

When a war breaks out, the government has to take some measures that may not be understood by the public. Through scientific and objective commentaries of the experts, the pressures on the government can be alleviated...The public has the right to know what is going on, but using foreign reports directly will mislead the

⁴⁴⁵ Susan Shirk, 2007, "Changing media, changing foreign policy in China", p. 60.

public.⁴⁴⁶

There is no doubt that these military officers, who have made appearances in the mass media, especially in the state-owned media, have a political commitment to guiding public opinion, but they are not puppets manipulated by the Party. In the age of information, competing sources are available, and the audience is not easy to fool. The PLA officers have to sell their viewpoints, knowledge and even personalities in the media in a smart way in order to become genuinely popular.

Outspoken PLA officers, even the most conservative ones, who are keen to line up their media remarks with the Party line, find it very difficult to acquire guidance from the Party. The favorite military commentator of the CCTV, Rear Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong claims that “unconditional political loyalty to the Party, rather than knowledge, is the most important qualification for a television commentator.” But in reality, even Zhang has no particular way of knowing the guidance from the Party, and he can only gauge the Party’s intention through public speeches made by representatives of the Ministry of Defense or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It becomes “very terrible” to him that on such sensitive issues as the Diaoyu Islands dispute, there is “no guidance from the top”, as he has admitted in a recent interview.⁴⁴⁷

More importantly, there is a structural tension between the military and the civilian government. Whereas the best strategy of the Chinese government is to construct an image of the U.S. according to the changing needs of the time, it is hard for the military to change its harsh tone towards the U.S. from time to time, regardless of whether it is driven by genuine belief, budgetary concern, or political commitment. Therefore, the views of PLA officers, as expressed on television, cannot be reduced to those of the Chinese government.

⁴⁴⁶ “Yizhan zhounian qishi: Zhang Zhaozhong zaoyu huatielu (Revelation at the anniversary of Iraq War: Zhang Zhaozhong’s Waterloo)”, 21 Mar 2004, *Liaowang Dongfang Zhoukan (Oriental Outlook)*, http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2004-03/21/content_1376747.htm accessed 15 Aug 2011.

⁴⁴⁷ Interview with Real Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong by *Zhongguo Xinwen Zhoukan (China Newsweek)*, No.579, 11 Sep 2012 <http://newsweek.inewsweek.cn/magazine.php?id=5987&page=1>

Compared to the changing rhetoric of the government, PLA officers have been more consistent in expressing their perceptions of the U.S. in the mass media. Defense Review Week (*fangwu xinguancha*) is a popular military talk show broadcast every weekend on CCTV Channel 7. To test whether military commentators modify their views in line with the immediate needs of the Party, the author watched all U.S.-related programs of January 2011, when Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Washington.

Whereas the official mouthpieces of the Party depicted Hu's trip in a rosy rhetoric of U.S.-China friendship, strategic trust and mutual benefit,⁴⁴⁸ the tone of military commentators on Defense Review Week did not soften. When asked why the U.S. was seeking to reduce USD 78 billion of military expenditure in the next five years, Senior Colonel Cheng Hu responded determinedly,

The ultimate goal of the United States is to guarantee sufficient funds for high-tech military R&D. It is not seeking an absolute advantage for the present or in the next ten years. It is seeking an absolute advantage in the next ten to twenty years.⁴⁴⁹

Following Cheng, Colonel Li Li commented,

It will reallocate the bulk of money to NASA and the Missile Defense Agency, which will play an important role for U.S. dominance in a global strategic configuration.⁴⁵⁰

This was on 29 January 2011, only one week after China had been touting its partnership with the U.S. during President Hu's state visit. Even shortly before the visit, military commentators saw no reason to sing the praises of the U.S. In the program on 8

⁴⁴⁸ "Kaichuang zhongmei huoban hezuo xinjumian zhilv (A trip opening up a new scene for Sino-US partnership collaboration)", 22 Jan 2011, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/13792056.html> (official website of *People's Daily*); "Shuxie zhongmei guanxi de xinpianzhang (Write a new chapter of Sino-US relations)", *Xinhua News Agency*, 22 Jan 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2011-01/22/c_121012450.htm accessed 15 Aug 2011.

⁴⁴⁹ *Fangwu Xinguancha (Defense Review Week)*, CCTV, 29 Jan 2011, <http://military.cntv.cn/program/fwxgc/20110129/110874.shtml> accessed 15 Aug 2011

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

January 2011, Rear Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong explained why the U.S. deployed aircraft carriers in the following way,

The United States deploys aircraft carriers for only two purposes – military deterrence and waging a war...If one aircraft carrier cannot deter the opponent, it deploys two; if this fails again, it deploys three and initiates a war. There is not much to study in U.S. strategy. It is simply the trick of carrots and sticks.⁴⁵¹

Defense Review Week is not the only popular program that invites serving military officers to comment on international affairs. Focus Today (*jinri guanzhu*) is a daily program broadcast at the “golden hour” (9.30 pm) on CCTV Channel 4.⁴⁵² Every day it invites two experts to make comments on foreign affairs and strategic issues. Table 1 is compiled by the author, by watching video materials from Focus Today’s official website. It shows the total number of programs available for analysis, the total number of days when one or both of the commentators are PLA officers (serving or retired), the total number of appearances that PLA officers make on the program, and the total number of U.S.-related programs in each month.

Table 1

	Programs (day)	PLA officers (day)	PLA officers (appearances)	U.S.-related programs (day)
May 2011	30	26	26	12
June 2011	28	23	25	14
July 2011	30	26	31	17

Source: compiled and categorized by the author from Focus Today’s website.

From the statistics, we can see a high ratio of appearance of military officers in this program. The number of PLA officers, by appearance, is greater than the number per

⁴⁵¹ *Fangwu Xinguancha (Defense Review Week)*, CCTV, 8 Jan 2011, <http://military.cntv.cn/program/fwxcg/20110108/107908.shtml> accessed 15 Aug 2011

⁴⁵² Video programs available at <http://cctv.cntv.cn/lm/jinriguanzhu/index.shtml> accessed 15 Aug 2011

day, indicating that on some days both commentators are from the PLA. The discussions in the program follow current international affairs, but U.S.-related issues are often the theme of discussion. A breakdown of the content of U.S.-related discussions sheds light on how the image of the U.S. is constructed in such a program, and communicated to the Chinese public.

Table 2

	May 2011	June 2011	July 2011
U.S. intervention in South China Sea and East Asia		11	11
Arms Sales to Taiwan	1		4
Meeting Dalai Lama			1
U.S. Dollar Crisis			1
Anti-terrorism	8		1
U.S.-China Strategic Relations	3	4	8
U.S.-Russia Relations		1	
Arms R&D	1		

Source: compiled and categorized by the author from Focus Today's website.

It is no surprise that the program in May 2011 revolved around U.S. anti-terrorism operations, because in that month, Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan. In June and July, the South China Sea dispute and Sino-U.S. strategic relations in East Asia became the most discussed topics, under the titles such as,

- Strengthening military deployment and watching the Asia Pacific: Who is the U.S. guarding against? (4 June 2011);
- Is the U.S. behind Vietnam's provocation in the South China Sea? (10 June 2011);
- What is the intention of the U.S. and Japan in blaming regional tension on China? (22 June 2011);
- Are U.S.-Japan-Australia joint war games aimed at 'jointly curbing' China? (8

July 2011);

- War games in the South China Sea again: the U.S. seeks to persuade ASEAN to confront China (16 July 2011);
- The South China Sea, arms sales and the Dalai Lama: is U.S. China policy changing or not? (25 July 2011)...

The coverage of these eye-catching discussion topics in the program is extensive, and the information provided by these military commentators is consistent. That is, the United States is a hegemonic power that threatens China's regional security and national aspiration.

Such a consensus on the U.S. threat is amplified and spread by other means in the mass media. The Yi'nan Military Forum (*yinan junshi luntan*) is a weekly talk show broadcast on China National Radio (CNR), where Major General Jin Yi'nan gives strategic analysis of current military affairs on China and all over the world.⁴⁵³ Initially held in 2006, this is the first military commentary program in China that is named for an individual military officer. In the program, the image of the United States is both calculated and provocative.

To the U.S., the Diaoyu Islands is a chess piece in the Far East. It exploits its value, but will not let itself be bound to it. Nor will the U.S. pay a high cost for it... The more discord there is in Sino-Japanese relations, the more advantages the U.S. can play out. If the fissure in Sino-Japanese relations is reparable, the U.S. will try every means to tear it apart, but not to the uncontrollable degree that the U.S. itself may be dragged in.⁴⁵⁴

This is how General Jin commented on the U.S. role in the Diaoyu/Senkaku crisis. On

⁴⁵³ It is a sub-program of CNR's *Guofang Shikong (Defense Time and Space)*. The official website of the program is <http://mil.cnr.cn/jmhd/gfsk/>. For a brief introduction of the program, see its blog: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_50e39b440100om6y.html accessed 15 Aug 2011

⁴⁵⁴ Yinan Jin, 5 Mar 2008, "Junshi zhuanjia Jin Yinan tan diaoyudao xianzhuang (Military expert Yinan Jin on the status quo of Diaoyu Islands)", http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_50e39b4401008on3.html accessed 15 Aug 2011

another occasion, Jin lambasted the U.S. *China Military Power Report* as such,

What the U.S. is doing has a lot to do with its Cold-War logic, which is dominated by the only-one-winner mentality. One's win is bound to be the loss of the other, and the world can only accommodate one winner...It is not only a Cold-War logic, but also an imperialist logic.⁴⁵⁵

Like their colleagues on television, the military officers invited to talk on radio appear in groups. Military Watch at Evening Peak (*wan'gaofeng guanjunqing*) is a daily CNR program that has been broadcast since 2009 at the "golden hour" (6.15 p.m.). The purpose of the program is to provide timely coverage and analysis of military news. The group of commentators for the program is composed of 30 military experts from "the army, navy, air force, second artillery force, armed police and industry of defense technology, including both university professors and serving generals."⁴⁵⁶ A quick survey of the program's website shows that these experts include Major General Jin Yi'nan, Major General Luo Yuan, Rear Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong, Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo, Major General Jiang Chunliang, and a dozen colonels and senior colonels.⁴⁵⁷

Becoming Popular in Newspapers, Magazines and Bestselling Books

Outspoken PLA officers have become omnipresent in newspapers and magazines, ranging from official mouthpieces to liberal newspapers and commercial magazines. In *Global Times* (*huanqiu shibao*), the international face of the Party's mouthpiece, the military voice on the U.S. threat is assertive. In a dialogue with U.S. officers held at Tsinghua University, according to the report of *Global Times* on 23 April 2011, Rear Admiral Yang Yi declared that the U.S. was the greatest threat to China, when he was

⁴⁵⁵ Yinan Jin, 2 Apr 2009, "Mei paozhi <zhongguo junli baogao> shi dianxing de lengzhan siwei (U.S. *China Military Power Report* represents a typical Cold-War logic)", accessed 15 Aug 2011 http://www.cnr.cn/military/tebie/jyn/gjjq/200904/t20090402_505292244_3.html

⁴⁵⁶ The blog of *Wan'gaofeng Guanjunqing* (*Military Watch at Evening Peak*): http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_50e39b440100om75.html accessed 15 Aug 2011

⁴⁵⁷ The official website of *Wan'gaofeng Guanjunqing* (*Military Watch at Evening Peak*): <http://www.cnr.cn/junshi/jmhdd/gfsk/wgf/index.html> accessed 15 Aug 2011

asked by a U.S. officer. “It is the U.S....The U.S. is the only power that has the capacity to threaten China’s security in full range.”⁴⁵⁸

Liberal newspapers and commercial magazines, such as *Southern China Weekly* (*nanfang zhoumo*), *Life Week* (*sanlian shenghuo zhoukan*), *New Beijing News* (*xinjingbao*), *Oriental Daily* (*dongfang zaobao*) and *China Weekly* (*zhongguo zhoukan*), have also shown an effervescent interest in publishing the views of outspoken military officers. Unlike the Party’s mouthpiece such as *Global Times*, liberal media may not intend to lambast the U.S. directly, but the image of the U.S. represented there is hardly positive as well.

Outspoken PLA officers are able to sell liberal media an image of the U.S. as a malicious hegemonic power in a way that is acceptable to the readers. In an interview with *Life Week*, Major General Qiao Liang starts with a question of China’s aircraft carrier and marine interests, but then he shifts to make remarks on the global financial regime. Framing the issue in an authentically academic manner, General Qiao shows that, in the current financial regime built on the hegemony of U.S. dollars, control over waterways and flows of goods is much less important than control of flows of capital. According to him, the U.S. has built a colonial-style financial empire, and all of U.S. military operations have been serving this purpose. Wielding the power of setting prices and stopping China from acquiring high technology and strategic assets, the U.S. is exploiting China’s sweatshop workers, wrecking China’s environment and plundering China’s assets by making U.S. treasury bonds the only investment tool available to China.⁴⁵⁹ Apparently, this is a more advanced version of the U.S. conspiracy theory than the bankrupt ideology of the CCP could have offered to attract an audience.

⁴⁵⁸ Wen Wang and Fei Huang, 23 April 2010, “Wo shaojiang jibian mei gaoguantuan, zhiyan mei shi zhongguo zuida weixie (China’s rear admiral debating with U.S. high officers, declaring U.S. being China’s largest threat)”, <http://mil.huanqiu.com/Observation/2010-04/790183.html>, accessed 23 Aug 2011.

⁴⁵⁹ Ran Zhang, 17 Jun 2011, “Haiyang liyi xuyao hangmu: zhuanfang junshi zhanlue zhuanjia Qiao Liang (Marine interests need aircraft carrier: interview with military strategist Major General Liang Qiao)”, *Sanlian Shenghuo Zhoukan* (*Life Week*), Vol. 636, <http://www.lifeweek.com.cn/2011/0617/33650.shtml> accessed 23 Aug 2011

Besides newspapers and magazines, bestselling books are another vehicle for PLA officers to influence the image of the U.S. in the eyes of the public. It is not new for China's military officers to publish books on defense issues and national strategy, but now, for the first time, serving military officers are becoming incredibly popular in China through their widely-read books. To a large extent, their success does not rely on the "ideological correctness" of their views, but on the popularity of their works in the market. It means that the political influence of their views in the mass media now depends on their commercial success. The rest of this section describes the three most representative books of the past ten to fifteen years.

The most influential one is *Unrestricted Warfare*, written by two then senior colonels of the PLA Air Force. First published in 1999 by the PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, this book warns of the coming age of using non-traditional means to threaten international security. According to the authors, unrestricted warfare means "warfare which transcends all boundaries and limits". In such an era, the goal of warfare is "to use all means whatsoever...to force the enemy to serve one's own interests."⁴⁶⁰

This kind of war means that all means will be in readiness, that information will be omnipresent, and the battlefield will be everywhere. It means that all weapons and technology can be superimposed at will, it means that all the boundaries lying between the two worlds of war and non-war, of military and non-military, will be totally destroyed...⁴⁶¹

The book does not offer a specific agenda for any country or actor to wage or resist unrestricted warfare. However the dramatic outcome of an unauthorized printing of the book in the U.S. has rendered it controversial. Soon after the tragedy of September 11, an unauthorized English translation of the book, with a fabricated subtitle "China's

⁴⁶⁰ Liang Qiao and Xiangsui Wang, 2011(1999), *Chaoxian Zhan (Unrestricted Warfare)*, Chapter 2 "Zhanshen de miankong mohu le (The War God's face has become indistinct)". The translation of English is taken from FBIS's translated book, pp.50-57.

⁴⁶¹ Liang Qiao and Xiangsui Wang, 2011(1999), "Lun xinzhazheng (Preface to part one: on new warfare)" in *Chaoxianzhan (Unrestricted Warfare)*. This translation of English is taken from FBIS's translated book, p12. I have doubled checked the translation when citing from FBIS.

Master Plan to Destroy America” and an astonishing picture of the burning World Trade Centre on book cover, appeared in the U.S. In later Chinese editions, both authors indicated that they had fallen victim to a plot that had tried to destroy the career of Chinese military strategists.⁴⁶²

Although we have already discerned some traces, it is very shocking to us that now we can confirm that we the authors of *Unrestricted Warfare*, have fallen victim to an unrestricted war waged by some country against us.⁴⁶³

Evidently, here “some country” refers to the U.S. Soon an article started to be circulating on the Internet under a shocking title, “U.S. CIA plotting to kill Chinese hawks by using the Internet”. The article claims that one of the two authors, Wang Xiangsui, had been forced to leave the army, and the other one, Qiao Liang, had been marginalized, due to the publication of this book.⁴⁶⁴

This chapter does not intend and has no information to judge whether this is indeed an unlimited war against Chinese military strategists by the U.S. or a third party, or whether this is an unlimited war against the image of the U.S. by Chinese strategists, or against Sino-U.S. relations by a third party. The interesting point is that, though *Unrestricted Warfare* does not target the U.S. as a specific threat, the aftermath of this book has successfully constructed the U.S. as an evil-doer sabotaging China’s rise and threatening its national security.

In 2010, two other non-fiction books, written by serving PLA officers, became

⁴⁶² See the prefaces to the 2nd and the 3rd Chinese editions. Liang Qiao and Xiangsui Wang, “Zhonwen zaiban zixu: women de minyun bei gaibian (Preface to the 2nd Chinese edition: our destiny has been changed)” in *Chaoxianzhan (Unrestricted Warfare)*, accessed 17 Aug 2011, http://vip.book.sina.com.cn/book/chapter_155457_104004.html; “Zhongwen sanban zixu: wuchu bujian chaoxianzhan de zongji (Preface to the 3rd Chinese edition: traces of unrestricted warfare can be seen everywhere)” in *Chaoxianzhan (Unrestricted Warfare)*, accessed 17 Aug 2011 http://vip.book.sina.com.cn/book/chapter_155457_104005.html

⁴⁶³ Liang Qiao and Xiangsui Wang, “Zhongwen sanban zixu (Preface to the 3rd Chinese edition)”

⁴⁶⁴ Jian Zhong, 2010, “Mei zhongqingju tumou wangluo jiaoshao zhongguo yingpai (U.S. CIA plotting to kill Chinese hawks by the Internet)”, accessed 17 Aug 2011 <http://www.globalview.cn/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=21481>

sensational bestsellers. In early 2010, Senior Colonel Liu Mingfu of the National Defense University published *China's Dream: Major Power Thinking and Strategic Posture in a Post-American Era*. Unlike the first edition of *Unrestricted Warfare*, this book was published by a commercial publishing house, and targeted a popular audience from the very beginning. It is said that the manuscript had been bid for by dozens of commercial publishers, because they believed its sensationalist views would generate significant profits.⁴⁶⁵ “According to Colonel Liu, the America era is receding and the China century is dawning. Throughout the century, all that happens in the world comes down to U.S.-China rivalry. The ultimate goal for China is therefore to uproot the United States as a hegemonic power and to create a brave new world without any hegemony.”⁴⁶⁶

Although Liu's rhetoric seems very offensive, a closer look at his underlying rationale reveals the more defensive nature of his hostility towards the U.S. “In the book, Liu presents an interesting list of eight things that China will not do to the United States. They are: 1) the Chinese are not the Japanese before 1945 and they will not launch a Pearl Harbor attack on the U.S.; 2) the Chinese are not the Germans between the two world wars and they will not fire the first shot at the U.S.; 3) the Chinese are not the Russians before 1991 and they will not fight a Cold War against the U.S.;...7) China will not launch any peaceful evolution campaign against the U.S.; and 8) China will not enter into any alliance whose mission is to contain the U.S. At the end of the list Liu asks, ‘Can the United States make China feel at ease in these eight areas?’”⁴⁶⁷

Senior Colonel Dai Xu's *C-Shape Encirclement: China's Breakthrough in Domestic*

⁴⁶⁵ Phillip C. Saunders, April 2010, “Will China's dream turn into America's nightmare?” *China Brief*, 10(7),

http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36217&cHash=2f34909bc2, accessed 17 Aug 2011

⁴⁶⁶ This quoted summary of Liu Mingfu was made by Yawei Liu through personal communication. I am very grateful for his permission to let me use this. The reference is: Mingfu Liu, 2010, *Zhongguo Meng: Hou Meiguo Shidai de Daguo Siwei yu Zhanlue Dingwei (China's Dream: Major Power Thinking and Strategic Posture in a Post-American Era)*, Beijing: Zhongguo Youyi Chubansongsi (China Friendship Publishing House).

⁴⁶⁷ This quotation of Liu Mingfu was made by Yawei Liu through personal communication. I am very grateful for his permission to let me use this.

Plights and International Threats entered the spotlight in the same year. Compared to the discourse in *China's Dream*, Colonel Dai is pessimistic in the face of China's GDP fetishism and corrupted spirit. Not baffled by GDP growth, he argues that it is not the figures, but the quality of GDP that will be ultimately transformed into power in international society. He understands that the GDP of the U.S. and Japan are upheld by high-technology industries, such as information science, aeronautics, manufacturing and biotechnology, which are profitable and convertible to military power in war time. In contrast, China's GDP is sustained by real-estate bubbles and cheap products manufactured in sweatshops, which rest on exploitation of the Chinese people, and cannot be converted into military power.⁴⁶⁸

In his view, the threat of the U.S. is dauntingly imminent, as China has been encircled geopolitically by the U.S. and its allies, leaving only a small exit to the North East. The imperialist ambition of the U.S. predetermines that its strategic goal is to dominate the world and clear the obstacles on its road to domination. "So it must contain you, sabotage you, and tear you down."⁴⁶⁹ Furthermore, "A third wave of partitioning China led by the West is in conception...In the next 10-20 years, by around 2020 to 2030, there will be slaughter and plunder that is plotted and targeted against China."⁴⁷⁰

Manufacturing Public Opinion through Blogs and Websites

Compared to the blogs of academics in institutes of higher education, blogs written by serving or retired PLA officers are rare. The website sponsored by *The People's Daily*, people.com.cn, hosts the largest blog alliance of military experts.⁴⁷¹ On this website, fifteen to twenty serving and retired military officers contribute regular blog entries, which are accessible to readers nationwide.

⁴⁶⁸ Xu Dai, 2010, *C Xing Baowei: Neiyou Waihuan xia de Zhongguo Tuwei (China's Breakthrough in Domestic Plights and International Threats)*, Shanghai: Wenhui Publishing House. Excerpts of the electronic copy available at http://vip.book.sina.com.cn/book/index_120427.html, accessed 17 Aug 2011

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 35-36

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 32-34

⁴⁷¹ <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/60833/71270/6054353.html> accessed 19 Aug 2011

These officers include star military commentators on television and in print media, such as Major General Jin Yinan, Rear Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong, Senior Colonel Dai Xu and the author of *Unrestricted Warfare*, Professor Wang Xiangsui, as well as some less well-known military intellectuals. They are selected from a list of fifty to sixty military experts whose opinions are frequently reported or quoted in the media. Their interviews, articles and even transcripts of public lectures are carefully compiled on the website.⁴⁷²

Allowing and encouraging military experts to write blogs on such an authoritative website could be a propaganda strategy for influencing public opinion. For example, when the South China Sea dispute escalated in the spring of 2009, the website immediately published a special focus, with contributions from these military bloggers, under the title “The South China Sea in Turbulence, China Facing Harsh Challenges”.⁴⁷³ In the special focus, these experts provided multiple perspectives of the issue, but their perceptions of the U.S. role in the dispute were identical. That is, the invasion by the U.S. oceanic surveillance ship *Impeccable* into the Chinese waters was intentional and unacceptable. The frequent U.S. presence in the Chinese waters challenged China’s sovereignty and threatened China’s national security.

In terms of strategy for the South China Sea dispute, they recommended a much tougher policy. “The U.S. should better restrain itself from getting involved...China will not hesitate to take military action when necessary.”(Rear Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong) “The most effective means to avoid a bigger tragedy is to release war energy through small-scale conflicts.”(Sen. Col. Dai Xu)⁴⁷⁴ These voices, when gathered together, were mutually reinforcing, and could influence public opinion as a whole.

For the Chinese state, which is of fragile legitimacy and dependent on global trade, any miscalculation concerning regional armed conflict could lead to unexpected regime collapse. It is hard to imagine that the Party would have released a clear signal for these

⁴⁷² <http://military.people.com.cn/GB/8221/51756/index.html> accessed 19 Aug 2011

⁴⁷³ <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/60833/72591/9018510.html> accessed 19 Aug 2011

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

military experts to recommend war, which is contradictory to its claimed doctrine of peaceful rise. Although the leadership may hope that the words of military experts have a deterrent effect on the U.S. and on neighboring countries, they would not wish to see that they go too far, becoming a troublemaker or playing unrestrained brinkmanship. The fate of Maj. Gen. Zhu Chenghu, who was punished in 2005 for making an unauthorized statement on nuclear deterrence towards the U.S., is a clear barometer of the leadership's political will.

Unlike other channels for public exposure, the Internet opens up a relatively free platform for these uniformed men to express their personal views on domestic issues. In a blog post written on 14 March 2009, with the title, "The Two Meetings are Not a Teahouse", Senior Colonel Ma Jun openly voiced discontent with the representatives of the Chinese National Congress. In China, the Two Meetings (*lianghui*) refers to the National People's Congress and the People's Political Consultative Conference held in March each year. "These low-quality proposals sound like gossip in a teahouse. But the Two Meetings should be the place to discuss policies!"

Senior Colonel Dai Xu, one of the most active anti-U.S. PLA officers, is famous for not hiding his sharpness in criticizing domestic problems. "The National People's Congress is a collective representative institution to discuss policies...The most important thing is to represent the electorate and express the opinions of the electorate."⁴⁷⁵ He is also the most diligent military blogger. His blog has over 1.1 million hits at china.com.cn,⁴⁷⁶ more than 4.1 million at caogen.com,⁴⁷⁷ and above 4.1 million at sina.com.cn.⁴⁷⁸ In these blogs, Colonel Dai writes poems that satirize the corrupt and sycophantic atmosphere of the Chinese bureaucracy,⁴⁷⁹ advocates social justice and checking power abuse,⁴⁸⁰ and

⁴⁷⁵ Jun Ma, "Lianghui bushi chaguan (The Two Meetings are not teahouse)", <http://blog.people.com.cn/blog/c9/s53351,w1237003022691181> accessed 20 Aug 2011

⁴⁷⁶ <http://blog.china.com.cn/daixu> accessed 20 Aug 2011.

⁴⁷⁷ <http://dx.caogen.com/> accessed 20 Aug 2011.

⁴⁷⁸ <http://blog.sina.com.cn/daixu2010> accessed 20 Aug 2011. This blog has not been updated since Aug 2010.

⁴⁷⁹ <http://blog.people.com.cn/blog/c1/s48177,w1249133745902981> accessed 20 Aug 2011

⁴⁸⁰ Xu Dai, "Gongzheng shi guojia qiangda de qidian (Justice is the start point of national strength)", <http://blog.people.com.cn/blog/c1/s48177,w1243338027255571> accessed 20 Aug 2011

criticizes real-estate bubbles and their devastating effects on industry, the environment and national security.⁴⁸¹

Those who are not invited to write blogs on people.com.cn can open their blogs on a commercial website, such as sina.com.cn, blshe.com, or blog.china.com.cn. But the number of such military bloggers is small. According to the author's research, less than ten military officers are maintaining or have maintained blogs on commercial websites. Among them, Maj. Gen. Qiao Liang and retired Sen. Col. Wang Xiangsui have active blogs.⁴⁸² This may indicate that the two authors of *Unrestricted Warfare* were indeed purged after the publication of their sensational book. They may feel free to write blogs because they have little to lose now.

A second type of military bloggers includes Maj. Gen. Luo Yuan and Sen. Col. Meng Xiangqing.⁴⁸³ Their blogs have been inactive since 2010, when an internal notice was issued to forbid serving military officers from blogging.⁴⁸⁴ Yet there is still some leeway, and thus we see a third type of military bloggers, who are most media savvy, such as Rear Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong and Sen. Col. Dai Xu. The total number of hits of Colonel Dai's three blogs on commercial websites is close to 10 million.⁴⁸⁵ But the most astonishing statistics come from the superstar, Rear Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong. From January 2009 to August 2011, his blog at qq.com had over 61.7 million hits and over 23.6 million visitors.⁴⁸⁶ The readership of some articles on his blog was above or close to one million. The blog, as a new channel of mass exposure, has substantially amplified the influence of Admiral Zhang.

⁴⁸¹ Xu Dai, 21 Aug 2007, "Fangdichan zhicheng buqi zhongguo jueqi (Real estate cannot uphold China's rise)", <http://blog.people.com.cn/blog/c9/s48177.w1187671793382487> accessed 20 Aug 2011

⁴⁸² Liang Qiao's blog: <http://blog.sina.com.cn/qiaoliang99>
Xiangsui Wang's blog: <http://blog.china.com.cn/wangxiangsui/> accessed 20 Aug 2011

⁴⁸³ Xiangqing Meng's blog: <http://mengxiangqing.blshe.com/>;

Yuan Luo's blog: <http://blog.sina.com.cn/zhenshanhu> and <http://luoyuan.blshe.com> accessed 20 Aug 2011

⁴⁸⁴ For the existence of this regulation, see Maj. Gen. Yuan Luo's farewell letter on his blog: <http://luoyuan.blshe.com/post/637/567019> accessed 20 Aug 2011

⁴⁸⁵ See footnotes 245-247.

⁴⁸⁶ Zhaozhong Zhang's blog: <http://622006681.qzone.qq.com/> accessed 21 Aug 2011

Besides the articles published on official websites and personal blogs, there are a good many articles, videos, and transcripts of lectures of outspoken military officers, which are widely disseminated in China's vibrant virtual world. Among these officers, Air Force General Liu Yazhou, the Political Commissar of the PLA's National Defense University and son-in-law of the late Chinese President Li Xiannian, is the most prominent and controversial figure. He has published a series of provocative essays on national strategy and Sino-U.S. relations, as well as on political reform in China.⁴⁸⁷

Like other PLA strategists, General Liu sees the U.S. as a global hegemon that intends to block China's rise to world power. Unlike his peers, however, he does not believe that the U.S. is in decline, or that China is competent to challenge the U.S. in the 21st Century.

We should not assume that the U.S. takes China as its principal opponent because China takes the U.S. as its principal opponent. We should not assume that the U.S. sees China as its principal opponent in overall strategy because the U.S. sees China as its principal opponent in ideology. The U.S. still sees China as one regional opponent.⁴⁸⁸

Contrary to the shared view of his fellow strategists that the U.S. has shifted its strategic focus to East Asia, General Liu insists that America's strategic centre has been and will continue to be in Europe.⁴⁸⁹ While claiming to be an "authentic nationalist" himself⁴⁹⁰, his aspiration to the American spirit is effervescent. In an address to middle-level military officers at the Kunming Air Force base, General Liu applauded three "formidable" characteristics of the U.S. – its elite selection system, its magnanimity and

⁴⁸⁷ Yazhou Liu, 2001, "Duitai zuozhan: zhanlue pinggu (War against Taiwan: a strategic evaluation)"; 2001, "Da'guo'ce (The grand national strategy)"; 2005, "Da zhanlueguan zhi mei ri zhong sanguo yanyi (Grand strategic view: three kingdom game)"; 2005, "Xinnian yu daode (Faith and morality)"; 2010(2001), "Xibulun (On the West)", *Fenghuang Zhoukan (Phoenix Weekly)*, 5 Aug 2010.

⁴⁸⁸ Yazhou Liu, 2001, "Duitai zuozhan (War against Taiwan)"

⁴⁸⁹ Yazhou Liu, 2001, "Da'guo'ce (The grand national strategy)" and 2005, "Da zhanlueguan (Grand strategic view)"

⁴⁹⁰ Yazhou Liu, 2005, "Xinnian yu daode (Faith and morality)"

tolerance, and its great power of spirit and morality.⁴⁹¹

General Liu's applause for the U.S. is closely linked to his ambition to enhance China. It is out of the same ambition, not in pursuit of liberal right, that he talks provocatively of political reform.

The drive for reform has been exhausted. We need a new drive. All the problems China is facing today can find the root in political regime...The core of political reform is democratization, especially intra-party democratization.⁴⁹²

What determines the fate of a nation is not only its military and economic power...National survival makes it imperative for us to advance political reform...A transition from authoritarian politics to democratic politics will inevitably take place in the next ten years...Political reform is the historical mission endowed on us. We have no way to retreat.⁴⁹³

The last quote is from "On the West", a treatise written by General Liu ten years ago. So his ambitious prediction that political reform would "inevitably" occur "in the next ten years" is already bankrupt. Nevertheless the reprint of some excerpts of this treatise in *Phoenix Weekly* (*fenghuang zhoukan*) in August 2010 stoked a huge wave of public interest. It was regarded that the article was a signal released from some elements in the top leadership or military hawks.⁴⁹⁴ In order to contain the explosive consequences, *Phoenix Weekly* hastened to publish a statement, "clarifying" that the article had been written ten years ago, and had not been proofread by General Liu when published this time.⁴⁹⁵ The real motivation for publishing this sensitive article at the time thus seems bizarrely ambiguous.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Yazhou Liu, 2001, "Duitai zuozhan (War against Taiwan)"

⁴⁹³ Yazhou Liu, 2010(2001), "Xibulun (On the West)"

⁴⁹⁴ <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5879758,00.html> accessed 22 Aug 2011.

⁴⁹⁵ *Fenghuang Zhoukan* (*Phoenix Weekly*), 9 Aug 2010, accessed 22 Aug 2011
<http://www.doc88.com/p-98136705877.html>

Following or Deviating from the Party Line?

To summarize, the viewpoints of outspoken PLA officers, as expressed through various channels in the mass media, are consistent in terms of the image and intention of the United States. The U.S. is regarded as the foremost rival that maliciously intends to block, derail and delay China's rise, and is a major threat to China's national security. Despite such a consensus, there are variations in their views concerning whether antagonism between the U.S. and China is inevitable in the new century. The discord is mainly about whether the U.S. is receding or still in its prime; whether China will supersede the U.S. in the new century or will be encroached upon by the West; whether the U.S. targets China as its foremost threat as China targets the U.S.; whether the U.S. is an evil-doer or also an advanced model to be emulated.

The consensus of outspoken PLA officers is also consistent with Beijing's viewpoints on the surface. Although there are more and more exchanges in economic, cultural and even military spheres since the normalization of U.S.-China relations, the old days when the U.S. was viewed by China as a "beautiful imperialist" are gone forever. As Nathan and Scobell summarize in their recent *Foreign Policy* article, Beijing still sees "the United States primarily through a culturalist, Marxist, or realist lens". From such a perspective, the U.S. is regarded as "militaristic, offense-minded, expansionist, and selfish", a capitalist power that uses "cheap Chinese labor and credit to live beyond their means", and an offensive realist state that "cannot be satisfied with the existence of a powerful China."⁴⁹⁶ Therefore the viewpoints of these PLA officers, as exposed to the public, seem to echo the Party line in the nationalist propaganda and its longtime fear of U.S. intention and capacity.

However, a close investigation, as demonstrated in this chapter, reveals that these PLA officers are more likely to use media channels to express their personal viewpoints or sectoral interests. The successful emergence of such deviations, between the expressed

⁴⁹⁶ Andrew J. Nathan and Andrew Scobell, 2012, "How China sees America: the sum of Beijing's fears," *Foreign Affairs*, 91(5), pp. 35-36.

views of outspoken PLA officers and the Party line, in the tightly controlled media system of authoritarian China, is an outcome of changing socio-political dynamics in contemporary China. It is not because the Party sent these officers to do this job in order to educate and influence public opinion, though it might be the reason or pretext for their appearances in the mass media, which acquires the permission or at least some acquiescence from the Party. In one word, these outspoken military officers are not puppets of the Party, who are ordered to take the “low road” in order to support the “high road” of formal Party statements. Despite some superficial convergence with the Party, their views are heterodox in nature, compared to the Party’s acknowledged line of policy.

Two aspects of their appearances in the mass media make this clear. First, it is obvious, from their remarks and statements to the public, that they are not only dissatisfied, but increasingly impatient with China’s foreign policy, which in their eyes is soft and lacks intelligence. Their recommendation for policy change is more creative and offensive in nature, often deviating from the Party’s officially stated line and diplomatic practice. Second, no longer content with confining themselves to the foreign policy arena, they have begun to make public critiques of domestic policy. Outspoken PLA officers have made relentless critiques of the government’s domestic policies, including rampant corruption, low-quality policy proposals to the National Congress, degenerate bureaucracy and power abuse, and the failure of industrial policy.

One indicator of the relative autonomy of the PLA elite in making such public appearances is that sometimes the party-state is completely unaware of their actions and remarks. It is very likely that the CCP would have opposed to or stopped them if it had knowledge in advance. In recent years, one of the most sensational actions of the “autonomous” PLA was the J-20 flight test in January 2011. This “scientific experiment”, which took place only several hours prior to the meeting between the Chinese President Hu Jintao and U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, was a bold display of force by the PLA. China’s civilian leadership was apparently not apprised of

this dangerous political performance, which was a shock to U.S. visitors.⁴⁹⁷

According to former U.S. Ambassador Jon Huntsman, who was present during the crisis, it showed a clear divide between the Chinese civilian leadership and the military.⁴⁹⁸ In two recent articles on the Party-PLA relations in *China Leadership Monitor*, Swaine argues that, *despite* the oligarchic nature of the collective leadership of the Party and the removal of the PLA from the most powerful decision-making bodies, the PLA still has considerable autonomy in “purely military” issues, such as deciding military tests and military operations outside the mainland. In view of Swaine, this maneuver space can enable the PLA to have a significant influence on China’s foreign relations.⁴⁹⁹

In the view of this author, it is *because of*, not *despite*, the PLA’s lack of strong institutional leverage in the oligarchic collective leadership to impose their will on policy making, that recent years have witnessed their growing outspokenness in the mass media, and their tendency to manipulate such “purely military” issues to campaign for their political agenda. Paradoxically, both measures are the “weapons of the weak” of China’s mighty military force, which has been guarded against and constrained, and meanwhile has been appeased and courted by the civilian leadership.

In late 2013, the PLA elite made another astonishing soft “coup” that challenged the Party’s absolute dominance in making grand strategy, and campaigned for the interest of the military as a whole. Led by Air Force General Liu Yazhou, the once avid commentator on political reform and U.S. spirit, the National Defense University (NDU) produced a 92-minute documentary *Silent Contest (jiaoliang wusheng)*. Using a Cold War style discourse, the film sternly warned of the U.S. vicious plans for ideological infiltration and political subversion.

It has been speculated that the documentary had been prepared for an internal military

⁴⁹⁷ Elisabeth Bumiller and Michael Wines, 11 Jan 2011, “Test of stealth fighter clouds Gates visit to China”, *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/12/world/asia/12fighter.html>

⁴⁹⁸ Jon Huntsman’s talk at the National Committee of U.S. China Relations on 23 May 2012

⁴⁹⁹ Michael D. Swaine, 2012 (winter), “China’s assertive behavior part three: the role of the military in foreign policy”

audience, but judging from the way it was leaked to the Internet, its ultimate purpose was clearly political, not educational. The video was first circulated on the Internet on 26 October. On 31 October, the Ministry of Defense's spokesman refused to comment when asked to verify the video. Since that time, it has become unavailable on domestic websites.⁵⁰⁰ Yet the film has still been available on foreign websites such as YouTube, and its international influence has continued to grow.

Since Xi Jinping ascended to the presidency, it is clear that he has tried to tighten political control in ideology in order to strengthen the rule of the CCP. A more confrontational position has also been taken by the Chinese government in dealing with regional disputes. However, Xi is aware that the stability of Sino-U.S. relations is crucial for China and the survival of the CCP, which can be seen in his public address from 2012 to 2014 when meeting with high profile U.S. officials.⁵⁰¹ The core of Xi's strategy on Sino-U.S. relations has never changed.

The production and leaking of *Silent Contest* was unlikely to be a state action, but was more likely to have been an over-performance by the military elite to gain political credentials within the Party and the Chinese public. The discrepancy in General Liu Yazhou's views and actions, between his pro-democracy treatises emerging online since 2005 and the conservative political propaganda in *Silent Contest* in 2013, reflects the realism, not the paranoia, of this political general. Whereas there is little evidence that General Liu's earlier treatises have to do with the support of other military elites, the birth of *Silent Contest* clearly indicates that these outspoken PLA elites are not a group of unorganized military intellectuals, because the film is an output of multiple military branches that requires horizontal collaboration with the NDU.

A second important indicator of deviation from the Party line is the growing presence of these PLA officers among critics of China's domestic policy. Besides the reformist-

⁵⁰⁰ Jingjing Huang, 17 Nov 2013, "‘Silent Contest’ silenced", *Global Times*, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/825489.shtml>

⁵⁰¹ Zeng Wei, 11 Jul 2014, "Xi Jinping zhongmei guanxi zhanlue dingwei: hujing, huxin, hezuo (Strategic orientation of Sino-U.S. relations: mutual respect, mutual trust and cooperation)", <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2014/0711/c1001-25271373.html>

minded General Liu Yazhou, General Liu Yuan, the political commissar of the General Logistics Department, is another rising opinion-maker. Having barely survived horrendous persecution in the Cultural Revolution, General Liu, the son of the purged Chinese President Liu Shaoqi, ambitiously made his way into politics and bided his time.

The time came in early 2011, when Liu Yuan was promoted to a full-rank general of the PLA, and the turmoil in domestic politics made him believe it was the right time to voice his political agenda. Yet it proved to be a bad decision, not only because there were fundamental flaws in this utopian agenda, but because he chose the wrong time to bring it up.

This is why in April 2011, an intellectual forum was organized in Beijing to discuss a book of the left-leaning intellectual Zhang Musheng, Liu's close friend and personal advisor. This forum can be seen as the debut of Liu Yuan in the public sphere, which is rare for a serving PLA officer in a key position. Led by General Liu, a group of the most distinguished PLA intellectuals attended the forum, including Major General Zhu Chenghu, Qiao Liang and Luo Yuan. At the forum, these outspoken PLA officers engaged in an intensive debate with both liberal and leftist public intellectuals.

The third indicator is that the strategic thought of these PLA elite is more diverse and offensive than what the Party has had. In an increasingly conflict-laden region, the Party has started to incorporate new thinking from military strategists, while the Party's own strategic thought remains unchanging in official propaganda.

For example, the concept of "strategic opportunity period" was first proposed in the 16th Party Congress report in 2002. This is an advanced version of "hiding brightness and biding time", requiring China to take advantage of the first twenty years of the 21st century, a period of relative peace and development, to develop its economy and technology.⁵⁰² After ten years, this concept remains as a major strategic concept,

⁵⁰² For a brief definition of strategic opportunity period, see the Party's official website:

advocated and propagandized by the Party. On 23 July 2012, in one of the most important speeches made by President Hu Jintao to his ministers and provincial governors, such a strategic doctrine was reiterated and reemphasized.⁵⁰³

However, to some outspoken PLA elites, China's "strategic opportunity period" has already passed. In their view, the civilian government is too obsessed with the illusion of a strategic opportunity period.⁵⁰⁴ Instead, they propose new thinking on China's grand strategy,

Although China has grown to be an economic and military power, its thought lags far behind...the changes in international struggle, and even behind the changes of itself. We lack a comprehensive plan (of both strategies and tactics) for our national security and interests.

We should not understand 'hiding brightness and biding time' as to act with tolerance or maintain stability...The instability of your opponent is a favorable condition for you...We should learn to make use of troubles and even create troubles for rivals in international politics...We have long followed the principle of non-intervention. Non-intervention can be an official doctrine, but it cannot be a principle of action.

We should realize that we have a multitude of means...War is not the only means of fighting. You can deploy the army. You even can wage an 'inadvertent assault'. But you should be able to make yourself blameless...This is real master of the game.⁵⁰⁵

These remarks should be taken seriously by China observers, because if they had had,

<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/134999/135000/8104208.html>

⁵⁰³ See the speech on *People's Daily*

http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2012-07/24/nw.D110000renmrb_20120724_1-01.htm

⁵⁰⁴ "Nanhai wenti yu zhongmei boyi (South China Sea problem and Sino-U.S. gaming)", Interview with Liang Qiao by *Guoji Xianqu Daobao (International Herald Leader)*, published 26 July 2012, also available at Liang Qiao's blog: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_5d98f6740102dz22.html

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

they would not have been shocked by China's use of new strategic thought in recent international incidents. For example, on 12 July 2012, Major General Jin Yi'nan made a new policy recommendation for the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute in his radio program, which immediately stoked explosive reactions. He suggested that in dealing with the dispute, the Chinese government should link it to the status of the Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa). He suggested warning Japan that even today its occupation of Okinawa has not been legally supported.⁵⁰⁶

Another example is the recent establishment of Sansha City by the State Council. As an attempt to gain more leverage in the South China Sea dispute, this maneuver has actively involved the military. To China's neighboring countries and the U.S., such a new strategic thinking, as advocated by outspoken PLA elites, is more troublesome than the kind of A-bomb deterrence inadvertently made by Major General Zhu Chenghu. This is because, under any circumstance, the threat of first use of nuclear weapons and destroying hundreds of U.S. cities will most likely remain as a means of deterrence. However, making endless troubles for rivals and playing chess by unusual rules are easier to implement and more difficult to handle.

This is not the kind of conventional thinking and practice of China in dealing with international relations in the past two decades. It has been nurtured by Chinese military strategists for the past decade. The prototype of such thinking was already visible in 1999 in *Unlimited Warfare*, if not earlier. Now, with the new opportunity in civil-military relations, a growing willingness of the military elite to stand out, and the availability of new channels in the mass media, outspoken PLA officers are presenting and campaigning for what they have been thinking for years before the public, the top leadership of China, and international society.

In so doing, some of these outspoken PLA officers have materially benefited, by publishing bestseller books or giving well-paid public lectures, in a role similar to that

⁵⁰⁶ Yinan Jin, 24 Aug 2012, "Ribei qiangzhan liuqiu, qi guishu ying shoudao guoji shehui guanzhu (Japan seizes Ryukyu, the possession of which should deserve the attention of international society)" http://mil.cnr.cn/jmhdd/ywj/201208/t20120824_510674958_3.html

of public intellectuals in a commercial knowledge market. But this is not the primary motivation that drives them into this business, which does not necessarily compensate for the political risks they are taking. This is particularly true for senior officers whose expressed views are deviating from the Party line.

As one of the most outspoken PLA generals, the rationale that Major General Jin Yi'nan uses to explain his actions may be worth considering. To him, the political risk of being exposed in the mass media can only be motivated by one thing – a strong sense of responsibility for promoting China's hegemony of discourse so that it can compete with the BBC, CNN, FOX and NHK.⁵⁰⁷ Such a rationale may be seen as doublespeak by cynics, because it implicitly shows off General Jin's deep loyalty to the party-state.

However, the record does show that some senior PLA officers, such as Major General Zhu Chenghu and Qiao Liang, have been punished, not rewarded, for their outspokenness and heterodox views. Even Real Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong, the one who is keenest to follow the Party line and receives most exposure in state-controlled media, complains about the political risk of making remarks in public, because there is no explicit guidance from the Party.

Therefore, it is the political ambition to shape public opinion and influence China's policy-making that motivates these PLA officers to come to the spotlight. Such an ambition comes from socio-political changes in China's military and Party relations. On the one hand, it expresses a sincere sense of professional responsibility for the state, for the national interest, and for advancing the sectoral interests of the military in China's reconfigured political arena. On the other hand, that is not all there is to this story. The ambition is also out of the human drive for personal advancement and self-realization. By making themselves outspoken and unique in the mass media, outspoken military elite are setting themselves as role models, in contrast to those corrupt and mediocre Party officials, who are regarded as grave-diggers of the party-state.

⁵⁰⁷ Yinan Jin, 28 Dec 2007, "Yinan junshi luntan xuyan (Prologue to *Yinan Military Forum*)", http://www.cnr.cn/junshi/ztl/ynlt/ydyn/200908/t20090811_505427727.html accessed 15 Aug 2011

Conclusion

The emergence of outspoken PLA officers reflects some fundamental changes in China's civil-military relations in the post-strongman period and the information age. The turnover of the leadership provides the PLA with an unprecedented political opportunity. Whereas the weak leadership needs the PLA elite as political leverage to consolidate authority in the Party, this relationship of exchange can give the PLA leverage to expand its influence over policy and politics.

The rising educational level and generational shift of PLA officers contribute to a growing willingness of the PLA elite to air their views and intervene in policy-making. The modernization and professionalization of the PLA has brought to the front stage a new generation of military elites who are “among the best-educated and most well-trained specialists ever to lead Chinese forces.” Professionalism and expertise have boosted both the confidence and the ambition of PLA officers to influence policy-making. The Cultural Revolution and its aftermath have resulted in the coincidence that a group of “princeling generals” are emerging in recent years, who are boldly ambitious and determined to defend their fathers' political legacy.

Along with these changes in political opportunity and ambition, the rise of commercialized mass media and the Internet provides a means for outspoken PLA officers to extend their influence beyond the military barracks. Unlike the traditional means through which personal views are circulated within a limited number of audiences in the PLA or Party system, the mass media and new media have amplifying effects. The media extend the influence of the PLA elite directly to Chinese society, and is likely to indirectly influence policy-making by the leadership by reshaping public opinion.

From the analysis of outspoken PLA officers in the mass media, some preliminary conclusions can be drawn. First, the emergence of outspoken PLA officers has required

the permission or at least the acquiescence of the Party. Second, their views are being aired through a multitude of means in both traditional and new media, ranging from the most strictly controlled, such as television and broadcasting, to the most open, such as the Internet, from the most conservative media, such as the Party's mouthpieces, to the most liberal ones, such as the most successful commercial newspapers.

Third, despite some convergence with the Party, their views are heterodox in nature, compared to the Party line and stated policy. Because many of their expressed opinions and actions are entirely beyond the Party's awareness, are running ahead of the Party's strategic thought, and are penetrating into the sphere of domestic policy, it is more likely that these PLA officers have seized the channels of mass media to express their own viewpoints and campaign for military interests as a whole.

This is driven by a sense of responsibility for the party-state and by the political ambitions of the PLA. For some senior military strategists, instead of keeping in silence, they would rather take the risk of being punished for crossing the boundary, which is conventionally set by the civilian leadership. This is illustrated in a number of cases, such as the reprimand of Major General Zhu Chenghu for his A-bomb deterrence speech, the reprimand of Major General Luo Yuan for his implicit criticism of China's Taiwan policy,⁵⁰⁸ the punishment of the two authors for publishing *Unlimited Warfare*, and the stated motivation of Major General Jin Yi'nan.

As argued along similar lines in previous chapters, it is the differences in the motivations, interests, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism vis-a-vis the U.S. as a world hegemon that makes outspoken PLA elite popular in both state-controlled media, and commercial and liberal ones. It is *because of*, not *despite*, such differences and conflicts that this group is distinct and powerful in occupying the field of discourse and stirring up anti-U.S. nationalism in contemporary China. Their critiques of China's domestic politics, which are sincere as this chapter shows, help

⁵⁰⁸ Quoted in Michael D. Swaine, 2012 (spring), "China's assertive behavior part four: the role of the military in foreign crises"

them to gain popularity and political capital that is necessary to expand their influence in the public and in policy-making circles.

On the other hand, despite their deviance from the Party line, it is apparent that their views have been influenced by the military and Party system in which they were educated, trained and socialized. On the surface, their views are consistent with the Party line in nationalist propaganda, and convey deep fear of the U.S. in the Party elite. The consistency is not simply a result of opportunistic efforts to court the will of the Party. The viewpoints of outspoken PLA officers, as expressed through various channels in the mass media, are consistent in terms of the image and intentions of the United States. It is the similar kind of knowledge structure and socio-political position that determines what kind of framing these military officers can use to advance their political agenda and policy recommendations.

Because the ultimate purpose of outspoken PLA elites is political, it is the evolution of socio-political dynamics, not their expressed views at the moment, that will determine what kind of force they will exert in China's domestic politics and international behavior. Whereas their anti-U.S. propaganda, which is more persuasive and effective than that of the Party, may lead to heightened anti-U.S. nationalism in China and growing tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, it does not necessarily mean that these PLA elite are paranoid fascists and belligerent warmongers. Whereas their critiques of domestic politics, which help them to win unprecedented popularity in the public, may be facilitating anti-corruption campaigns, it does not necessarily mean that these PLA elite will become a forerunner of China's democratization in the future. It would be reckless to leap to either conclusion.

The emergence of these outspoken PLA officers opens a new window through which China observers can peer into subtle changes from within. Further research is required to substantiate some speculations in this chapter, and follow up the evolution of this important dynamic under China's authoritarianism. To end this chapter, at a time when mounting political appeals are becoming a new feature of the PLA, the author finds the

following anecdote is particularly interesting. When asked whether the Pentagon intended to influence Obama's China policy by publishing *The China Military Power Report*, Major General Jin Yi'nan responded, "In this regard, they have a larger political ambition...The ultimate purpose of U.S. military leaders is not to target China, but to target the Obama administration. They are calling into question some policies of the U.S. government."⁵⁰⁹ Isn't the U.S. military a mirror image of the PLA?

⁵⁰⁹ Yinan Jin, 2 Apr 2009, "Mei paozhi <zhongguo junli baogao> shi dianxing de lengzhan siwei (U.S. *China Military Power Report* represents a typical Cold-War logic)"

Chapter 7 Conclusions and Policy Caveats

In Chapters 3 to 6, the thesis provides four cases, which range from the bottom to the top of social hierarchy in Chinese society, on the role of different understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism in shaping the substances of contemporary Chinese nationalism. By looking at state-society dynamics in producing nationalism and incentivizing the use of nationalist appeals by the state and various interest groups, the thesis explains how and why nationalism has become an ideology for Chinese who have abandoned communism and do not take for granted what is propagandized by the party-state.

It shows that *because of, not despite of*, the existence of such differences in the understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism between state and society, and between sub-populations in society, Chinese nationalism has been reinforced through the interactions between the state, market and various social actors. The contents and appeals of Chinese nationalism are diversified, capable of capturing a sympathetic audience and powerful in mobilizing different parts of society. Therefore, the power of Chinese nationalism does not come from the state's monopoly of interpretations and claims as an orthodox ideology, but from the power of nationalist discourse to empower social actors, and to have their voices expressed and heard at national and symbolic levels.

Chapter 3 shows how new remembering of the anti-Japanese war of resistance has emerged from the interactions of different and sometimes conflictual understandings, interpretations, and claims of Chinese nationalism. The new commemoration of war, constructed on the victimhood of Chinese people, has become a driving force for anti-Japanese nationalism in China. Arguing against the conventional wisdom that sees the new remembering as the outcome of elite myth-making or purely bottom-up dynamics, this thesis shows that war suffering has its own life and it can survive in a society much longer than commonly assumed. The process of preserving, transforming and

expressing war suffering in national discourse is a complicated process of mutual reinforcement and restriction between a variety of actors.

War suffering did not perish in the Maoist period. On the one hand, it was preserved, spread and transformed by victims and their families at the bottom of society, by unwritten means such as storytelling, life hardship, and loss of social networks and change of family status in the community. On the other hand, even in the Maoist years when Japan was not a target of anti-foreign nationalism on the political agenda of the CCP, the expression of war suffering was already exploited by the party-state, from time to time, as a resource for political mobilization. Through mobilizations and techniques of socialist campaigns such as “speaking bitterness”, mass assemblies and meetings, model stories, amateur drama performances, and official investigations, the historical memories preserved and reproduced today still bear the traces of the party-state and its communist culture.

In the post-Maoist period, changing socio-political conditions allow war victims and their descendants to air grievances and suffering with new opportunities. Their alliance with the intellectuals, who have different understandings, interpretations and claims of nationalism and Sino-Japanese relations, empowers the bottom of society and makes it possible for their unheard voices to transcend the boundaries of locality. In this process, bottom-up initiatives have encountered the top-down patriotic project of the party-state, which attempted to encourage and exploit the discourse of Chinese nationalism to fill in the ideological vacuum after the collapse of communism. Thus war suffering at the local level has been exploited again in the post-Maoist years, but this time it has been nationalized to serve the political agenda of the CCP. State nationalism and popular nationalism hence have converged, producing a strong resentment against Japan after six decades since the end of war, through the joint endeavors of Chinese war victims, intellectuals and the state.

Therefore, there does not exist a purely authentic process of elite myth-making or bottom-up dynamics. The new remembering of the anti-Japanese war of resistance was

not born out of a narrowly top-down process. It was neither initiated, nor dominated, by the Chinese political elite. The different motivations, interpretations and claims of war victims, local activists, intellectuals, and the party-state, along with the political legacy of the Maoist period, have constructed the expression of war grievances in the post-reform era. They enable the expression in certain ways, and restrict it in other ways in today's public discourse.

Following Chapter 3 on how historical memories of war suffering have been preserved, transformed and nationalized, Chapter 4 provides an original survey of the images of anti-Japanese resisters in Chinese films, television series and Internet programs. By examining changes in the narrative of China's war of resistance, as represented in such cultural products, and by comparing them between the early PRC and the post-Mao era, Chapter 4 explains how and why changes as such have occurred and evolved with the changing state-society dynamics.

Cultural products are reflection of politics in reality. Cultural products for mass entertainment have played an important role in constructing grand narratives in modern societies. As revealed in Chapter 4, the disparities and tensions between sub-populations and the party-state in the understandings, interpretations, and claims of Chinese nationalism, are not only represented in political mobilization and social activism in the real world, but also reflected in cultural products of mass entertainment as well. Taking the early PRC as a reference point of time, it is evident that a fundamental change has occurred in the visual representation of anti-Japanese resistance in the post-Mao era.

In the early PRC, the narrative of anti-Japanese resistance is entirely constructed around the theme of communist revolution led by the CCP. The course of anti-Japanese resistance and the course of communist revolution are two indivisible sides of the same coin in propaganda. While at the core of the narrative are legendary heroes under the direct leadership of the CCP, in the periphery, it is ordinary people who grew up thanks to the liberation movement of the CCP, and who became brave anti-Japanese resistance fighters and revolutionaries. The relations between these actors and the CCP reflect the

revolutionary nature of the narrative, as all of these images are arranged in hierarchical order in terms of their relations to the CCP.

In the post-Mao era, the old narrative has been replaced by the new narrative that represents diversification of anti-Japanese resistance fighters and shatters the hierarchical relations in the old narrative. Such a change is possible because a variety of actors with different motivations, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism have seized opportunities in an emerging cultural market and penetrated the industries of films, television series and the Internet. This structural change in China's state-society dynamics has reshaped the images of anti-Japanese resistance fighters and their relations to the CCP in the narrative.

In the new narrative, both the class enemy, such as KMT generals, warlords, capitalists, members of the local gentry and landlords, and "bad elements" in the people, such as bandits and prostitutes, are integrated into the mainstream images of anti-Japanese resistance fighters. The role of the CCP has also contracted, from absolute leader, to supporter, ally and even absentee in the course of resistance. Even in the works where CCP protagonists remain as leading character, the standard of judging good CCP protagonist has changed as well. Loyalty and obedience to the CCP is no longer the primary requirement, which is replaced by achievements in leading the course of anti-Japanese resistance.

These changes have subversively reconstructed the relations between anti-Japanese resistance fighters and the CCP, as the images of these fighters are becoming more independent, no longer subordinate to the leadership or guidance of the CCP. The new images have won wide popularity in Chinese society, and also become a profitable theme in the industry of mass entertainment. On the other hand, these new images are not free of traces of political culture and constraints of the early PRC and the post-Mao era. These changes are not simply a process of de-politicizing the images of anti-Japanese resistance and returning to historical veracity, but one of re-politicization, which is still unable to represent the veracity of history.

Chapter 5 investigates the role of the Chinese middle class and professionals in the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. It reveals why and how their understandings, interpretations and claims of nationalism, which are different from state nationalism, intensified the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute and incited Chinese nationalism in the early 2000s. This chapter also compares *Baodiao* (Protecting the Diaoyu Islands Movement) under different socio-political conditions, and explains why state-society dynamics in mainland China have led the movement to mob violence and social unrest under the banner of Chinese nationalism. It is the first study that researches *Baodiao* in cross-contextual comparison with rich resources of memoirs and interviews.

There are different kinds of *Baodiao* mobilization in the Greater China area (Taiwan, Hong Kong and China). In all the three contexts, *Baodiao* was initiated from below, as a means of mobilization through which social activists contest the authorities over different interpretations and claims of nationalism. The evolution of *Baodiao* reflects state-society relations in which the movement has been unfolding. The differences of *Baodiao* in composition of activists, structure of mobilization and consequences of activism cannot explained by the political context of the movement.

In China, the *Baodiao* Movement has been primarily a civilian nationalist movement that aims to pursue the right of political participation, influence the party-state's foreign policies, and compete with the CCP for different interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism, rather than a means of expediency for the CCP to boost regime legitimacy. Their initiatives and successful mobilizations have weakened the party-state's monopoly over the discourse of Chinese nationalism, and influenced policy choices of the party-state towards Japan.

This became possible under China's authoritarian regime, because these activists have used a combined strategy of creating international crisis by surprise activities, therefore bringing the shelved issue of the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute to the spotlight in mass media, and ultimately forcing the dispute onto the political agenda of the party-state. Since the

rise of *Baodiao* in 2003-2005, the CCP has changed behavioral mode in dealing with the territorial dispute with Japan. Moreover, these changes cannot be entirely attributed to the changing stances of Japan or China's growing interest in natural resources in the disputed waters. Such changes attempt to reshape the image of the CCP, from a soft respondent to an assertive defender of China's national interests, in the eyes of domestic audience.

Yet the repressive environment also makes Chinese *Baodiao* activists very careful in framing their discourse and strategy, and distancing themselves from political dissident movement. Consequently, the civic nature of the movement is purposefully downplayed by the activists themselves, and repressed by the party-state as well. Instead the statist goal of the movement has been overemphasized by both sides. This does not indicate that Chinese activists are brainwashed by the CCP. On the contrary, it is their conscious and strategic choice under the socio-political conditions of the PRC.

Chapter 6 looks at the highest echelon of the party-state. It studies the rise of outspoken PLA officers, who were previously confined to secretive military institutions and invisible in the public sphere, against the changing linkages between the PLA and the CCP. It explains how and why such a group of Chinese military elites are able and willing to launch media campaigns in the mass media to stoke anti-American Chinese nationalism. Because the identity of the military elites has an overlap with the agency of the state authority, it implies that the state should also be understood in a disaggregated fashion in understanding nationalism from below.

Since the passing away of Deng Xiaoping, the nature of China's civil-military relations has fundamentally changed, as civil and military elites have bifurcated, and the era of strongmen has ended. These changes in civil-military relations provide an unprecedented political opportunity to the PLA elite, who are more confident and willing to intervene in policy making as they are the generation of the best educated and most well-trained in the Chinese military.

This development of military ambition coincides with the emergence of “princeling generals” who joined the PLA in the Cultural Revolution, and are ambitious and determined to defend their fathers’ political legacy – the regime of the CCP. Along with these changes, the rise of commercialized mass media and the Internet provides a means for outspoken PLA officers to extend their influence beyond the military barracks, and deliver their influence directly to Chinese society.

Although the emergence of outspoken PLA officers requires the permission or at least acquiescence of the CCP, the views aired by the military elite are essentially heterodox and departing from the Party line and stated policy. Some of their expressed opinions and actions are entirely out of the CCP’s awareness, some are running ahead of the CCP’s strategic thought, and some others are trying to penetrate into the sphere of domestic politics. Therefore, it is more likely that the PLA elite have seized the channels of mass media to express their own viewpoints and campaign for military interest as a whole.

In so doing, these military elite are driven by a sense of responsibility and political ambition, sometimes at the risk of being punished for crossing the boundaries, which are conventionally set by the civilian leadership. Like in previous chapters, it is the differences in the motivations, interests, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism between these military officers and state propaganda that make outspoken PLA elite popular in both state-controlled media, and the commercial and pro-liberal ones. Their critiques of domestic politics help them to gain popularity and political capital that further expand their influence in the public.

On the other hand, despite their deviance from the Party line, it is apparent that their views have been influenced by the military and Party system in which they were educated, trained and socialized. On the surface, their views are consistent with the Party line in the nationalist propaganda, and transpire deep fear of the U.S. in the Party elite. It is the similar kind of knowledge structure and socio-political position that determines what kind of framing these military officers can use to advance their

political agenda and policy recommendations.

Taken together, the four empirical chapters provide a systematic study of the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism through the lens of state-society dynamics. By investigating different sub-populations across the hierarchy of Chinese society, and researching representations of changing dynamics in the cultural market, this thesis finds that not only between nationalism from above and nationalism from below, but between different sub-populations, nationalism is comprehended and represented with different meanings, interpretations and claims.

It then explores how such differences have shaped contemporary Chinese nationalism as such. In particular, it focuses on how initiatives from below interact with the authoritarian state and the demands of the market, the processes of which determine both the substances and forms in the expression of Chinese nationalism. It argues that *because of, not despite of*, the existence of such differences in the understandings, interpretations and claims of Chinese nationalism between state and society, and between sub-populations in society, nationalism has become an arresting ideology that fills in the vacuum left by the bankrupt ideology of communism, capturing sympathetic audiences and proving powerful in mobilizing different parts of society.

What the thesis presents is a complicated picture. On the one hand, it debunks and complicates a narrowly “top-down” picture of Chinese nationalism. On the other hand, it does not present a simple picture of authentic and autonomous “bottom-up” dynamics that have led to the rise of Chinese nationalism. As found in the thesis, bottom-up initiatives still bear the traces of the party-state, through the unequal power relations embedded in socio-political conditions, through the historical legacy of communist culture, and through the construction of the subjectivity of social actors. Such traces have played an important role in the development of contemporary Chinese nationalism.

In this process, top-down and bottom-up mobilizations of nationalism are different from each other and sometimes contesting with each other, but they are not essentially rival.

In top-down mobilization, the party-state attempts to rebuild legitimacy, and reduce social and political conflicts in the jurisprudence. In bottom-up mobilization, though different groups of society seek to inject their own meanings, interpretations and claims into nationalism, the groups studied in the thesis only attempt to revise and amend the meaning of nationalism at national and symbolic levels, rather than to subvert and abandon the discourse of Chinese nationalism as a whole. This essentially differs from religious and ethnic separatism that employs ethnic nationalism as the means of mobilization within religious and ethnic minority groups.

In this thesis, neither religious nor ethnic separatism is considered. This is not a simple strategy of precluding rival relations between top-down and bottom-up mobilizations, but for the sake of academic and practical concerns. The rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism, which has inspired intensive debates among academics and policy advisors, refers to the phenomenon of growing anti-foreign nationalism which is regarded as having the ambition and potential to challenge the Euro-centric civilization and the U.S. hegemony. Although religious and ethnic separatism in Tibet and Xinjiang (i.e. Tibetan and Uyghur nationalism) deserves special attention for China's internal stability, its challenge to international security mainly comes from potential spill-over effects if China is embroiled in ethnic unrest and turmoil in the future. Given the main concern with contemporary Chinese nationalism in the international and academic contexts, and given the practical consideration to focus one thesis on one problem, it is a strategic choice to preclude religious and ethnic separatism in this thesis.

This choice of research subjects (i.e. excluding religious and ethnic separatism) leads to the impression that the explanation offered in the thesis only applies to certain outcomes, such as the kind of dynamic stability demonstrated in the empirical chapters of this thesis. This is a misimpression. The dynamics of mutual constitution of top-down and bottom-up nationalist claims could lead to an outcome of conflict and disorder (e.g. ethnic violence and civil wars) as well as order and stability. In fact, the explanation this thesis offers is a process-oriented explanation, not an outcome-oriented one.

Here is an illuminating example. As discussed in the section “Why nationalism can incite popular passion and appeal” in Chapter 1, the mutual constitution of different top-down and bottom-up nationalist claims can also lead to outcomes of civil conflict, violence and instability. Knowing the danger and cost associated, people participate in large-scale ethnic violence, not because they are duped by elites who provoke conflict to gain, maintain or increase their hold on power. Rather ordinary folks follow because they are strategic actors, motivated by all kinds of purposes that are not necessarily ethnic nationalist (e.g. desires to loot, to revenge or fear of tit-for-tat). Hence for ethnic nationalism to become a useful tool of mobilization to provoke large-scale violence and ethnic conflicts, it also requires the mutual constitution of top-down and bottom-up claims, interpretations and understandings, as described and explained in detail in this thesis for contemporary Chinese nationalism. The major difference, for the scenarios of large-scale ethnic violence and the scenarios of contemporary Chinese nationalism, is the composition of nationalist claimants and participants. Those who participate in large-scale ethnic violence are usually young men who are ill-educated, unemployed or underemployed. In contrast, the claimants and participants under the study of this thesis represent a much broader category of society, including the middle class and the elite.

To clarify, let me reiterate what the thesis has argued and what it has not. The thesis argues that the mutual constitution of top-down and bottom-up nationalist claims, interpretations and understandings forges a symbiotic relationship between state and society. As a result, it has made nationalism into an effective tool of mobilization and social integration, which the state (or elite) alone would have failed to manufacture. However, this thesis does not argue that these claims, interpretations and understandings are in fundamental rivalry. In most scenarios, they are different and sometimes they contest with each other. But the bottom-up nationalist claims do not subvert or abandon the discourse of top-down nationalism as a whole, though they try to capture and reinterpret the latter. To illustrate this point, all kinds of Chinese nationalists studied in this thesis challenge the party-state’s monopoly over the claims and interpretations of Chinese nationalism, but they do not subvert or abandon Chinese nationalism as a whole, nor do they tolerate any challenge from religious and ethnic separatism to the

Chinese nation-state.

If top-down and bottom-up nationalist claims are in essential rivalry, then subverting claims and mobilizations from bottom are repressed. This can be seen in the development of Tibetan or Uyghur separatism in contemporary Chinese nationalism. In general, these essentially rival claims of nationalism do not arrest much interest of this author. In these scenarios of essential rivalry, top-down and bottom-up nationalist claims do not accommodate each other, because they operate in two parallel fields, each of which can be explained by the mechanism of mutual accommodation and top-down and bottom-up symbiosis proposed in this thesis. For example, consider how Tibetan and Uyghur exile elites employ ethnic nationalism to advance their political agenda, and how bottom Tibetan and Uyghur nationalist claimants in China understand, interpret and respond to the provocation of their elites overseas. Symbiotic relations and mutual accommodation can be observed in this top-down and bottom-up dynamics as well, but not in the rival relationship between the Chinese government and the Tibetan/Uyghur separatist nationalists (whether the elites or the masses).

To summarize, the symbiotic relations and mutual accommodation between top-down and bottom-up nationalist claims can lead to ethnic violence and civil conflict as well as social integration and dynamic stability, depending on the direction of top-down nationalism as a whole. Top-down and bottom-up nationalist claims are not oftentimes in essential rivalry, though they are always different, and sometimes contest with each other. When they are in rivalry, the subverting nationalist claims and mobilizations from below are necessarily repressed by the state, as long as the state retains sufficient power of repression. In fact, it may not be accurate any more to define such rival relations as top-down and bottom-up dynamics, because for these rival relations to emerge, it would require at least two groups of elite – one producing orthodox nationalist claims for the nation-state, and the other manufacturing subversive ones. As illustrated in ethnic separatist movements, it would be hard to imagine a picture of purely, authentically, autonomously “bottom-up” separatist nationalism without the provocation and involvement of the elite of ethnic minority.

Therefore, the prerequisite for top-down and bottom-up mobilizations of nationalism to reach mutual accommodation is the absence of alternative elite group who are both able and willing to bring consequential rivalry against the nation-state and state legitimacy into the relations with the state or the ruling elite. The ensuing problem then becomes this one: Through what mechanisms would such mutual accommodation be more or less effective in achieving the goal of the state? As this thesis has argued, the symbiotic relationship between state and society is crucial for producing the homogenizing power of nationalism. The success of nationalism as a mobilizing discourse not only depends on the state's intention and capacity to exploit the interests and claims from bottom, but also on the degree of autonomy and spontaneity of the claims and interests advocated by social groups.

This renders some operational mechanisms that are necessary conditions for reaching mutual accommodation when there is no alternative elite group who intends to compete for the legitimacy of rule. First, the state needs to have both the intention to inspire nationalism and the capacity to utilize and constrain nationalist claims from below. If the state does not have the intention to build or rebuild legitimacy on nationalism, it is unlikely for social groups to find resonance at the national and symbolic levels, even though they have incentives to campaign for their own understandings, interpretations, and claims of nationalism. This is one of the reasons why contemporary Chinese nationalism did not emerge as a significant socio-political phenomenon until the bankruptcy of the communist ideology. Likewise, if the state has strong intention to exploit nationalism, but state capacity is too low to utilize and constrain nationalist interests and claims from below, it is also difficult for the state to transform nationalism into an active political force.

In order to utilize nationalist interests and claims from below, it requires some degree of autonomy and spontaneity from social groups to advance their nationalist claims, which may deviate from the state's original plan in campaigns for nationalism and may not have necessary nationalist dimension at all. This necessary condition further requires

the existence or emergence of some public space and information for social actors to take the initiatives, organize themselves, formulate and express their claims and interpretations. As seen in the Chapters on the Civil Reparation Movement (Chapter 3) and the *Baodiao* Movement (Chapter 5), before the early 1990s when the party-state started its patriotic campaign, Chinese war victims and a small group of civic activists were already initiating to commemorate war suffering and demand war reparation. But their activities were unable to leave enduring influences in the repressive political environment. Likewise, the *Baodiao* movement did not successfully emerge in China until 2003, because in the first two waves of the movement (i.e. the early 1970s and the mid-1990s), *Baodiao* activists from mainland China were physically purged and their voices were marginalized by the state. Without different understandings, interpretations, and claims of nationalism from below, and without a liberalizing society and a market that open public space and gather new information for the expression and mobilization of bottom-up nationalist claims, state nationalism could hardly generate widespread popular appeal and turn into an effective mobilizing ideology. Neither the indoctrination of state nationalism, nor the appeals from the duped and seduced, can work to this effect.

Meanwhile the state needs to retain a certain level of capacity to constrain nationalist interests and claims from below, so that the development of bottom-up nationalist claims and mobilizations will not endanger the legitimacy of the state. The level of capacity depends on the socio-political structure and historical-political legacy of a state. As argued in the thesis, there are not purely authentic and autonomous “bottom-up” dynamics that have led to the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. In the context of contemporary China, bottom-up initiatives bear significant influences of the party-state mainly through two mechanisms – one is the unequal power relations embedded between state and society, and the other is the historical legacy of communist culture. Both mechanisms have been at work in regulating and constraining the autonomous and spontaneous mobilizations of nationalism from below, making contemporary Chinese nationalism as such as we have seen. By physical repression, resource allocation, media censorship, and reconstruction of the subjectivity of social actors, the Chinese party-state has successfully penetrated the processes of generating bottom-up nationalist

claims and mobilizations, filtering the most subversive part of nationalism from below before it comes into the public discourse.

The study of this thesis not only makes a theoretical push in the general field of nations and nationalism, it also sheds light on a new direction to studying contemporary Chinese nationalism. Using mixed methods, it analyzes and explains the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism through Chinese politics behind it, from the social groups at bottom of society to the top of its social pyramid. Unlike propositions deriving from arm-chair theoretical inductions and sketchy empirical surveys, the findings of this thesis have important policy implications.

Above all, we should be careful not to draw too much from the phenomenon of rising Chinese nationalism when making China policy. The complicated dynamics that determine the substances and forms of Chinese nationalism shows that, it is the evolution of socio-political conditions and state-society dynamics, rather than the substances and explicit claims of state nationalism or popular nationalism, that will determine what kind of force Chinese nationalism is likely to act as in China's domestic politics and international behavior. The rest of this concluding chapter summarizes five caveats, all of which are derived from the research in this thesis, for making China policy.

The First Caveat

For Chinese and Japanese statesmen who hope that time will ultimately wash away the remembering of war suffering and hatred caused by the 2nd Sino-Japanese War, this is an empty wish and it would better be abandoned. War suffering has its own life. It does not end with the passing of the war generation. Rather it can be transformed and nationalized, through the joint endeavors of victims, their families, social activists, intellectuals, and the state. Moreover, when war suffering has been transformed and nationalized, the actual sufferers of war and their families, who are usually the

subalterns of society, are no longer able to determine how their suffering can be redressed in the complicated processes of political bargaining.

In today's China, such processes of transformation and nationalization have been completed. It means that the best time for reaching deep reconciliation and wiping out the scars of war suffering is unfortunately missed. As a result, war suffering of the Chinese people in the 2nd Sino-Japanese War has become a political symbol in the collective memory of the nation. Since political symbol is immortal, if the political symbol of war suffering is not properly dealt with, it would be unrealistic to expect that generational shift or friendlier policies towards Japan will reduce hatred and resentment towards Japan in Chinese society.

The Second Caveat

For both Chinese and Japanese governments, if they want to build more stable and reliable bilateral relations, more practical strategies with foresight should be taken to facilitate deep reconciliation between the two nations. The kind of policy and diplomacy they adopt will have far-reaching implications for regional security and the prospects of both nations. The foremost lesson that both governments should learn from the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism is this: It would be impossible to reach deep reconciliation between two nations unless bottom-up initiatives could emerge and interact with top-down processes. This is the mechanism that accounts for the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. It is through the same mechanism that deep reconciliation between China and Japan, and long-term stability of the region could be achieved.

Since the restoration of Sino-Japan relations, the problem of war compensation has been used as diplomatic leverage between the two countries. Although the Chinese government had officially renounced the right to demand compensation, the Japanese government has supported China's industrialization through ODA and low interest loans as a form of implicit compensation. Through these mechanisms, Japan has also gained

priority when making access to the Chinese market and certain industries of special importance.

On the intergovernmental level, this strategy has been successful, creating a win-win situation for both governments, and satisfying economic needs of elites from both nations. However, it is essentially a short-sighted policy of expediency, not a long-term strategy with foresight. Today this policy is no longer suitable for the needs of both nations and governments. Apparently this policy lacks moral ground. Since it is unfortunate that justifications on moral grounds only fall on the deaf ears of politicians, let me establish the point on the ground of instrumental rationality: Such a policy is counterproductive in instrumental sense as well.

This is the reason. Such a policy does not take into account growing appeals, expressed grievances, and differing claims of Chinese sub-populations in inspiring contemporary Chinese nationalism. It hence fails to understand and properly tackle the causal mechanisms that have produced contemporary Chinese nationalism. It might be counter-intuitive to China and Japan scholars, but it is the brutal fact: More ODA and low interest loans Japan has contributed to China's industrialization, the tensions are more aggravating between Chinese social actors and their government in the understandings, interpretations, and claims of Chinese nationalism. As this thesis reveals, it is exactly such differences and tensions that has inspired the rise of nationalism in contemporary China.

It is not a wise strategy to achieve intergovernmental economic gains on the ground of implicit war compensation. After all, reconciliation between two governments is not deep reconciliation. Only reconciliation between two societies is. Shunning responsibility for Chinese war victims and refusing to compensate for the grievances from bottom, it will only lead to distrust and hatred in Chinese society, fueling the grievances embedded in anti-Japanese nationalism. Whether or not the Japanese government has realized this, grievances and hatred will never be compensated for by official aid and lending at the intergovernmental level. Such policies are only an

expediency to facilitate intergovernmental relations and national economy. Grievances need to be redressed, and hatred to be appeased. To accomplish deep reconciliation, both Chinese and Japanese governments should not ignore the real source of Chinese nationalism – that is, the competing understandings, interpretations, and claims of nationalism from Chinese society, and their inherent tensions with the party-state.

The Third Caveat

With the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism, the CCP's control over nationalism has been weakened, compared to the Maoist years. Therefore it is unrealistic for international society to expect that the Chinese government will be able to contain nationalism at home. There is simply no way for the CCP to monopolize the understandings, interpretations and claims of nationalism in increasingly liberalizing society. What the CCP can do is to regulate and check violent outbursts of Chinese nationalism, and play a lesser role in inspiring nationalism. From time to time, the CCP can also be asked to make efforts to alleviate tensions in bilateral relations, but it cannot be counted on to ameliorate bilateral relations in the mid- or long-term.

To clarify, it is not to say that the CCP has no responsibility for or has not played a role in the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. It has in both senses. But today it is unable to dictate the direction of its development, which depends on evolving state-society dynamics in contemporary China. It is also not to say that the CCP is weak. The CCP may have been weakened in some aspects, but it is not weak.

In fact, state repression and social control still constrain the ways in which Chinese nationalism can be expressed. Looking back at the evolution of anti-Japanese nationalist movements since the 1980s, the CCP has used a combined strategy of physical violence, psychological threat and social marginalization to regulate mobilization and nationalist activism. Whenever some kinds of bottom-up mobilization prove to be effective, they are soon stopped by the Chinese government. As a result, the boundaries between the permissible and the forbidden are continually redrawn. It has effectively prevented the

emergence of professional activists in Chinese society.

The Fourth Caveat

Following the third caveat, it leads to the fourth one that with the decline of the CCP's control over nationalism, the party-state is likely to become more assertive before domestic audience in order to curtail both liberal and illiberal nationalism at home. This is one major factor that has led to Beijing's changing policy in the East China Sea. It does not mean, however, that Beijing is becoming more prone to military confrontation. It means that Beijing has to behave more assertively so that it can undermine the justification and pressure from popular nationalism.

As seen in Chapter 5, before the rise of *Baodiao* in 2003-2005, the CCP had refrained from informing domestic audience of its assertive and pragmatic actions in the East China Sea, not concerned with building a nationalist image at home. This is a reflection of its strategic calculation to avoid infuriating Japan and give itself more maneuvering room in international bargaining. However it is contradictory to the functionalist proposition that the CCP used to exploit the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute and anti-Japanese nationalism at home to enhance legitimacy. The contradiction has generated at home a conventional misperception of China's foreign policy as being soft and conceding, hence putting the CCP under domestic pressure to deal with international disputes in a more hawkish way. This kind of pressure is particularly dangerous, because in reality the CCP's pragmatic policy was not as soft as it appeared to be at home. Pushing the CCP to be less soft and conceding will actually lead to China's over-performance and over-reaction in dealing with international crisis, particularly with regards to issues that the Chinese perceive their government used to yield too much.

The *Baodiao* movement in 2003-2005 is an illuminating case. Its successful mobilization from mainland China has changed the set of policy options for the CCP. Whereas the major concern of the party-state used to be pragmatic flexibility, since that the CCP has to show off nationalist credentials in order to contain the *Baodiao*

movement and avoid being criticized in face of rising expectation of the public. This logic of action has added uncertainty to regional stability. Moreover, the effect of such a policy change is not something that the CCP will be able to control, regardless of its intention and interest.

The transformation of Beijing's policy has kicked off a domino effect, and changed the perceptions of China's intention and capacity in international society. With China's growing projection of power and influence in the region, it becomes more likely for international society to see it as a revisionist state, and for Chinese at home to expect more substantive outcomes from the assertive performance of the state. Therefore, the CCP will be more and more tied up by its own nationalist image in order to appease domestic nationalism. Meanwhile it will encounter more and more constraints in making foreign policies that aims at resolving disputes with neighboring countries. These constraints are detrimental to China's fundamental interest – maintaining a peaceful and supportive international environment for its modernization. In the future, even though the CCP wishes to avoid military confrontation, it will become very difficult (if not impossible) for the CCP to control the political dynamics that ultimately lead to conflicts. Confrontation or accommodation has become something that will not be determined by China's intention and capacity alone.

The Fifth Caveat

The last caveat concerns international security. Evidence is insufficient to decide whether Chinese nationalism is ultimately good or bad for international security. A practical study on its policy implications should consider the entire portfolio of China – such as its interests, intentions, capacities, historical record of its international behaviors, opportunities and constraints, rather than deduce from the logic of competing IR theories. Moreover, it should also consider the portfolio of each actor that influences and is influenced by Chinese nationalism. They include state actors and non-state actors. The interests of actors should also be defined in both short- and long term.

At the end of this thesis, let me illustrate examples of three state actors - the United States, Japan and China. A state actor must first specify its own grand strategy in order to understand policy implications of Chinese nationalism. For the United States, its own grand strategy shapes the way how the U.S. national interests will be influenced by Chinese nationalism. A growingly nationalist China would mean different things to the U.S. if it would choose the strategy of neo-isolationism, selective engagement, or primacy.⁵¹⁰

In the view of neo-isolationists, the U.S. would be better off to retreat from its overstretch in East Asia and maintain national defense only on the homeland through nuclear deterrence. In contrast, if U.S. strategists opt for selective engagement, then any major regional conflict (e.g. a crisis in the East China Sea) would be critical for the U.S. security. In this scenario, the U.S. should make serious commitments to defending Japan's claims in the East China Sea. If necessary, the U.S. should also encourage Japan's military buildup for the balance of power. Such a grand strategy would change the U.S. strategy towards Japan as well – because the U.S. has to decide whether it is willing to see a normalized Japan that is no longer in need of the U.S. presence on its territory.

If the U.S. chooses the strategy of primacy, believing that it should and could behave like a benign hegemon to promote peace worldwide, then its responsibility for assisting allies would be very different from that in the two aforementioned situations. If the U.S. further believes that its responsibility is not only to maintain peace and defend allies, but also to democratize China (a utopian ambition in the view of most realists), it would become more complicated to infer policy implications of Chinese nationalism, compared to the scenario that the U.S. is only interested in maintaining present power structure in East Asia.

⁵¹⁰ For an overview of different schools of U.S. grand strategy, see Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, 1996/97, "Competing visions for U.S. grand strategy," *International Security* 21(3), pp. 5-53.

Therefore, before discussing policy implications of Chinese nationalism for the U.S., the prerequisite is to ascertain what kind of grand strategy the U.S. would choose, and how the strategy would be in the U.S. interest in short- and long term. However, in complex and ever-changing reality, the foremost difficulty would be this: The U.S. is not clear what its grand strategy would be as well. As a result, the U.S. is likely to put the burden of choice on other state actors, and design its national strategy in reaction to the moves of other states.

This logic of ambiguity in determining grand strategy can also apply to Japan. In the 20th century, Japan lost two opportunities to become the hegemon of East Asia, one in the WWII by ambitious overstretching, and the other in the post-WWII era by over-restraining its economic influence. At the beginning of the 21st century, the likelihood of direct Sino-Japanese confrontation is increasing. Japan comes to face a third test to choose grand strategy for the nation.

For Japan, it would be a worst strategic choice to play the cyclical game of escalation and de-escalation in territorial disputes with China. The reliability of the U.S.-Japan security alliance is dubious. The U.S. commitment to Japan is ambiguous, and the U.S. determination to maintain hegemonic presence in the region in face of China's growing strength is questionable. After all, the U.S. force can hardly deter China's assertive moves in the region when the CCP is in face of growing Chinese nationalism at home. Therefore, Japan's best strategy would be to strengthen its own military capacities and raise its own international status, rather than rely on the ambiguous guarantee of the U.S. By assuming more responsibilities in East and Southeast Asia, Japan could present itself as an independent and reliable power to the region, hence a sought-after ally for other countries in face of China's rising hegemony in the region.

By adopting such a strategy, it is not necessary for Japan to turn belligerent. In fact, it is a strategy of avoiding over-reaction in the long term. For the best interest of Japan, the East China Sea dispute and rising Chinese nationalism should be used as a leverage to achieve the goal of raising Japan's international status, not as an expediency of

provoking anti-Chinese nationalism and remilitarization. Japan could and should be more confident in its soft power in the Asia Pacific. The burden of WWII could also be turned into an asset of Japan's soft power, if it would take more effective actions to appease bottom-up anti-Japanese nationalism in its former colonies and occupied areas. In so doing, Japan needs to reconsider policy implications of its conventional intergovernmental aid and support, and focus on collaboration with civil organizations in victim countries. Moreover, Japan would be strategically benefited if it could convince other countries (particularly South Korea) that its dispute with China is essentially different from the territorial disputes it has with other Asian neighbors. Such a strategy of assurance would be feasible, if Japan could isolate and redefine the dispute with China at the level of grand strategy, no longer confining it as a dispute concerning territory and sovereignty.

Finally, let me address the strategic options for China. The rule of the CCP greatly complicates China's strategic interest. Unlike most state actors in the region (except for North Korea), China lacks a solid base of legitimacy. Therefore its primary strategic interest is to balance between the desire for regime security and the growing aspiration for projecting power and influence in the region. Compared to China's regional competitors, this is a more complicated goal to achieve. Therefore, theoretically, China requires superior skills of diplomacy and a more effective government based on meritocracy, compared to those competitor states. But this is exactly what China is in short of. It is also unlikely for China to make up the deficiency in foreseeable short term.

Put it in a simple way, China is in urgent need of talents. However, China's education system does not produce such talents, and in the world market of talents, an authoritarian regime does not have competitive advantage to attract and utilize such talents (due to factors such as bureaucratic inefficiency, inflexible command-and-feedback system, and ambiguous and unfair rewarding system). As a result, it would be very difficult for China to be equipped with the kind of strategic talents that it is in urgent need of. This practical obstacle has far-reaching policy implications. Whereas the

primary strategic interest of the CCP is to balance between regime security and its growing appetite for regional power and influence, it can mess things up.

If the CCP were able to control Chinese society as it had done in the Maoist era, this would not be a big problem for international society. However, as the CCP's capacity has been weakened in this regard, there could emerge some kind of devastating downward spiral. That is, the more insecure the CCP feels at home, the more necessary it feels to perform assertively before domestic audience. The more assertively China performs, it makes the problem appear more serious to international society, leading to escalating tensions and expectations for assertiveness at home. The downside of the vicious cycle is apparent. For the CCP's long-term security, it requires a friendly, or at least a peaceful international environment, in which China is regarded as a respectful power and a reliable negotiator. But it has become more and more difficult to satisfy such a requirement, as the legitimacy of the regime is bound up with its assertive performance in international society. The time when the CCP could dictate foreign policy making is gone, and it is not prepared to deal with the new situation with required strategic foresight and diplomatic skills.

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