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## **The construction of nationalism in Chinese media events in the reform era: an analysis of online mass communication, 2008-2012**

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## Chapter 2 Nationalism

In his book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (1991, 3) states that “nationness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time.” Nationalism, as an important concept in politics, plays an essential role in shaping the modern world. In this chapter, I discuss the origin, formation, development, and the positive and negative aspects of nationalism by addressing the related questions: what is nationalism? Where does it come from? How does it develop? What are its positive and negative aspects for governance? Who are the actors that create or use nationalism? How do the positive and negative aspects work in reality? In what way is nationalism mixed with patriotism to realize the purpose of governance? What are the Chinese authorities’ attitudes towards nationalism? How is nationalism operated in the PRC?

### 2.1 Theories on Nationalism

Nationalism grows from people’s national consciousness and inspires people to distinguish themselves from “outsiders” or even establish their own “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991). In the Chinese case, nationalism was aroused with the Western powers’ invasion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and Chinese intellectuals played a critical role in spreading nationalism. Nationalism then went from the elites to the populace. Till now, nationalism is still an important discourse in the PRC’s political communication, heavily influencing citizens’ political lives.

#### 2.1.1 Related Concepts

Nationalism, as a political concept, is closely related to other concepts such as ethnic groups, nation, and state, which probably incurs different understandings of the culture and history of a certain group or entity. For example, when discussing China’s history, people tend to consider China as an ancient country with a long history. The most famous statement among both officials and the populace is that “the Chinese nation has five thousand years of civilization (中华民族有着五千年悠久的文明史).”<sup>9</sup> However, this statement about China’s civilization is frequently criticized. Many scholars in area studies do not agree with the idea of a civilization continuous over five thousand years, as this statement does not account for spatial elements, which they reckon are important for

<sup>9</sup> See [http://www.qstheory.cn/zhuanqu/bkqx/2019-06/24/c\\_1124664210.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/zhuanqu/bkqx/2019-06/24/c_1124664210.htm), accessed 21 December 2020.

the development of civilization. As Neil Smith (2010, 25) says, “What counts as an area or even as a border around a certain area has been radically transformed.” He further argues that spatial scales are territorial results of the competition of social forces, and they are mutable in general (Smith, 2010, 31). So, because the area we refer to as the cultural unit of China fluctuated, it is questionable whether we can attribute “five thousand years of civilization” to this cultural unit. Arif Dirlik (2010) points out that the reification of “China” and “Chineseness” has an impact “on the identification of the region and the self-identification of its dominant Han nationality,” and that available trans-dynastic appellations “shaped the civilization process in the region but suggested little by way of the national consciousness.”<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, he indicates that in the Chinese diaspora, “Chineseness becomes a marker even when the populations encompassed by the term are marked by significant historical and cultural differences” (Dirlik, 2010, 17).

From a modernist perspective, the above-mentioned statement of China’s civilization is also problematic. According to some theorists, for instance, Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm, the nation is a modernist concept and never had a long history. Why do people often make such a statement? In the case of China, a possible explanation is that the Chinese word *minzu* (民族) entails two concepts: “nation” and “ethnic groups,” which confuses many people. This ambiguity can be a propaganda tactic used by Chinese officials to create the image of a “great nation” as a cohesive (ethnic) group, set apart from other (smaller and younger) nations, to arouse citizens’ national identity. This and other ambiguities hinder our understanding of what nationalism means. Therefore, it is necessary to first clarify some related concepts, including ethnic groups, state, nation, nation-state, nationalism, and patriotism, and their use in Chinese political communication.

### *Ethnic groups*

Thomas Mullaney (2011) notes that the Ethnic Classification project undertaken by Chinese scholars in the 1950s contributed to the nation-building process of the PRC to construct a “unified, multinational country.” The project realized the ethnotaxonomy of 56 individual ethnic groups (*minzu*, 民族), including the Han nationality, the Miao nationality, and the Hui nationality. “By

<sup>10</sup> See <http://boundary2.org/2015/07/29/born-in-translation-china-in-the-making-of-zhongguo/>, accessed 27 April 2016.

simultaneously surfacing and canonizing the officially recognized *minzu* and sublimating and subordinating the rest, the Chinese state has been remarkably successful in turning the fifty-six-*minzu* model into common sense” (Mullaney, 2011, 122).

In practice, the statement “China’s five thousand years of history” mainly refers to only one of the Chinese ethnic groups, the Han nationality, the largest. Admittedly, from the ancient period till now, the Han nationality has a long history, but this is the history of the Han nationality rather than that of the whole Chinese nation. The ethnic group “Han” is different from the concept of “nation.” The Han nationality has not continuously governed what today is called “China,” and there were some disruptions to the Han rule throughout history, including non-Han dynasties such as the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), governed by the Mongols, and the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), ruled by the Manchus.

An ethnic group is largely related to cultural elements. Within the group, people share many similarities. Specifically, since ancestry is a kind of “myth” (Smith, 1999), they believe in having the same parentage, adopt the same customs, speak the same language, live in the same place, etc. Anthony Smith (1991, 20) notes that “the ethnic group is a type of cultural collectivity, one that emphasizes the role of myths of descent and historical memories, and that is recognized by one or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions.” He also lists the following six main attributes:

1. A collective proper name;
2. A myth of common ancestry;
3. Shared historical memories;
4. One or more differentiation elements of common culture;
5. An association with a specific “homeland”;
6. A sense of solidarity of significant sectors of the population (Smith, 1991, 21).

These attributes comprise common ground shared by members within an ethnic group and thus

arouse a sense of belonging. The shared historical memories are important to construct people's national identity. In Chinese history, ethnic groups have set up a shared myth in historical memories. For example, people of the Miao nationality regard Chi You, the tribe chief of the Jiuli tribe in ancient times, as their common ancestor (Shi, 2014). The Miao people live in a concentrated community and mostly lead their lives by agriculture. After hundreds of years, they have formed their particular culture (with elements such as witchcraft) different than other ethnic groups. In their history, after several migrations because of wars against other groups, the Miao people at last settled in the mountains in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, including some parts of Guizhou, Hunan, and Yunnan provinces. With the myth of ancestry, most members of the group believed in having the same ancestor Chi You, share the same historical narratives (such as wars and migrations), maintain the same culture, and live in the same area, which gives the members the feeling that they belong to the same Miao group rather than to another group.

### *State*

This section deals with the general concept of the "state" from different perspectives. It is necessary to distinguish between pre-modern states and modern states. In pre-modern times, the territory of a state is undefined. States are formed through familial affiliations and religions. Modern states, on the contrary, have a defined territory (although some states have territorial disputes with others) and sovereignty. Pre-modern states can evolve into modern states under certain conditions. For instance, Philip Kuhn (2002) identifies three conditions for China to transform from a pre-modern state to a modern state: first, political participation to strengthen state power and legitimacy; second, political competition with the public interest; third, political control of local interests. In the following part, I shall focus on modern states.

Unlike ethnic groups tied to culture, a state represents a political entity that aims to enforce social safety and stability. There are more than 200 states worldwide, including the PRC, the US, and the United Kingdom (UK). A state's sovereignty endows it with a superior power that lays a foundation for ensuring its independence through the legislation, justice, and administration. This entails the state's threat or use of violence, usually through agencies such as a police force, the military, and prisons. Furthermore, the state takes on responsibilities for its people, including collecting resources,

establishing a common identity, ensuring domestic and foreign security, and creating legitimacy.

Max Weber (2009, 78) defines the state from the perspective of sociology: it is the institution that controls the monopolistic power of legitimate violence within a given territory. When a conflict arises among people, such an institution helps them solve it. In this sense, rather than private agencies, the state would be the accredited central political authority to act in this role. “The state is considered the sole source of the ‘right’ to use the violence” (Weber, 2009, 78). Furthermore, Weber (2009, 78) argues that “the state is a relation of men dominating men.” This relation is established through the legitimacy of violence. Weber (2009, 78-79) categorizes three types of legalization of domination: the first is “eternal yesterday,” that refers to ancient recognition and habitual orientation; the second is “charisma,” which means that the dominators’ glamour makes the dominated people dependent on the dominators; the third is “legality” created by the statute and rules. Some state parties legalize their governing through these three ways, which are important for the leadership to wield political power.

Like Weber, Gellner (1983, 4) attributes the emergence of the state to the division of labor and divides human history into three periods: pre-agrarian, agrarian, and industrial. In the pre-agrarian period, no state existed because the scale of people’s work was too small to allow labor division; in the agrarian period, with the expansion of working scale, labor division was needed to improve production efficiency, and thus, the state was established in most societies to further set up education systems that helped train people for the more sophisticated working requirements; in the post agrarian and industrial age, the state inevitably existed in all societies (Gellner, 1983, 5).

In his book *State in Society*, Joel Migdal (2001, 16) gives his definition of the state as “(1) the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by the territory; (2) the actual practice of its multiple parts.” In this definition, image and practice are the two basic elements of the state. The image of the state as an entity has two boundaries: a territorial boundary demarcating it from other states and a social boundary separating the state from the private or personal area. The practice of state actors fortifies or diminishes the image of the state. Migdal (2001, 32) regards the state as “a contradictory entity”: the image maintains the unification

of the state, but the practice results in the fracture between the state and society.

The state politically influences people in society. Given that people live within a state, we can say that they act as citizens obeying rules and enjoying a set of rights regulated and provided by the state. No matter what ethnic groups the people come from, they are united within the relatively fixed boundary of the state.

### *Nation*

The perspective of primordialism argues that nations arose naturally in ancient times based on shared cultural elements such as language, territory, and religion. Drawing from Charles Darwin's biological selection theory, Pierre van den Berghe (1987, 8) attributes primordial human sociality to what he calls a "genetically selected propensity for nepotism" or "kin selection," based on his belief that the coherence or collectiveness of people increases fitness in society. He also indicates that "the very concept of the nation is an extension of kin selection" (van den Berghe, cited in Smith, 1998, 147). Thus, in van den Berghe's view, ethnic kinship is a central element in the formation of nations in ancient epochs. Anthony Smith (1991) agrees with the primordial view of nationalism, holding that nationalism originates from cultural elements such as ancestry and history.

However, many more theorists contend that the nation is a modernist concept. Gellner (1983, 40) indicates that nationalism is strongly related to the age of industrialism. Regarding nationalism as "a recent development," Anthony Giddens (1985, 116) points out that "both nation and nationalism are distinctive properties of modern states." Similarly, Eric Hobsbawm (1990, 10) argues that the nation "belongs exclusively to a particular and historically recent period. It is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the nation-state ...."

Agreeing with most theorists, I assume that the nation is closely linked to the modern era. In ancient times, people were mostly confined within a limited area due to low productive forces, which did not form a sense of nationhood. Even though sometimes they might have a sense of belonging within a group, it was never national consciousness. Only when it came to modern times, owing to the upsurge of vernaculars and the development of print capitalism, they gradually imagined that they

lived in a shared community with other people they did not know (Anderson, 1991). From this belief, people desired to establish their nation—even through violence, if necessary.

The process of constructing nations went through several phases. At first, only ethnic groups existed (Smith, 1991). Later, the ethnic groups gradually had a desire to establish a state to organize society. After establishing the state, nationalism prompted the idea that each member within a state was from the same nation, which legitimated the existence of the state. To construct the same national identity, people considered that all members within the state shared the same history, lived in the same territory, spoke the same language, and possessed collective consciousness. The boundary of the above elements should be congruent with the political boundary of the state (Gellner, 1983, 1). In other words, a nation is not just a community of the same culture, but more importantly, it should be a political communion. The state is the political shell of the nation (Gellner, 1983, 143), but it is not a prerequisite for ethnic groups to construct a nation. Montserrat Guibernau (2013a, 14) defines a nation without a state as a “human group conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, attached to a demarcated territory, having a common past and a common project for the future and claiming the right to rule itself.” Nations aim to have states, but not all nations succeed at this aim. A defining characteristic of a nation is the ambition of sovereign political rule, even where this rule does not exist.

Scholars give different definitions of a nation from different perspectives. Weber (2009, 176) defines a nation by showing the relationship between a nation and a state: “A nation is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence, a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own.” In addition, Weber and Ernest Renan similarly attach strong importance to the solidarity of a nation. Weber (1978, 922) writes that: “In the sense of those using the term at a given time, the concept undoubtedly means, above all, that one may exact from certain groups of men [*sic*] a specific sentiment of solidarity in the face of other groups. Thus, the concept belongs in the sphere of values.” Likewise, in Renan’s (1994, 17) argument, “a nation is a grand solidarity constituted by the sentiment of sacrifices which one has made and those one is disposed to make again. ... The desire of nations to be together is the only real criterion that must always be taken into account.” Anthony Giddens (1985, 116) defines a nation



as “a collectivity existing within a clearly demarcated territory, which is subject to a unitary administration, reflexively monitored both by the internal state apparatus and those of other states.” Emphasizing the intimate connection between the nation and the state, Giddens (1985, 119) additionally argues that a nation “only exists when a state has a unified administrative reach over the territory over which its sovereignty is claimed.” That is to say, the administrative function of the state is vital to the existence of the nation.

From a cultural perspective, Smith (1991, 14) defines a nation as “a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members.” Guibernau (2004, 141) criticized the element “rights and duties for all members” by pointing out that this definition fails “to offer a clear-cut distinction between the concepts of nation and state.” The combination of the two ensures the construction of nation-states (Guibernau, 2013a). She also indicates that Smith neglects the cases of nations without states, such as Catalonia. To respond to this criticism, Smith (2004, 205) then argues that Guibernau seems to conflate the two concepts when interpreting “the ‘political’ dimension of national identity and its relationship to the concept of the ‘nation-state.’” Furthermore, Smith (2004, 205) contends that his definition of a nation is only political in orientation and tied to the political definition of the modern ideology and movement of nationalism. I do not think Smith explains well why he adds the political element in his definition of a nation. Thus, I agree with Guibernau’s argument that nations are common communities, while states are sets of political institutions.

Anderson (1991, 6) gives a more appropriate definition that a nation “is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” For the people living in a nation, it is impossible to know everyone else within it. They may, however, understand—through their imagination—to live in the same communion as everyone in the same nation, with whom they share some similarities. The imagined nation is limited because every nation has its boundaries. No matter how big a nation is, it would not easily accept people from other nations as members of its own, as it wants to confine itself to a limited territory and hold a sense of self-protection. This is regarded as a kind of “coordination” or “combination” that is used to maintain certain “power” for

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the nation. Russell Hardin (1995, 28) argues that “Successful social coordination, whether intended or not, can create extraordinary power ... Combination for the sake of survival then makes it possible not merely to survive but to thrive and even to plunder.” The magic power is in some sense equal to the sovereignty of the nation. Michael Shapiro (2004) argues that sovereignty is socially constructed through the cultural governance of artistic forms such as drama, music, and film. Sovereignty endows the nation with the independence to set up political institutions, an economic and a military system, etc. Thus, it ensures that people in the nation enjoy political rights smoothly and live more respectably to a certain extent. The nation is a community because it is considered an area where people are treated equally, although this does not usually happen in real life. People cannot see the community, but they are able to feel its existence at any time and define themselves as members of this community.

#### *Nation-state*

Following Anderson, Michael Billig (1995, 63) argues that “Nationalism involves assumptions about what a nation is: as such, it is a theory of community, and a theory about the world being naturally divided into such communities.” In addition, he points out that the nation has political and cultural meanings: the “nation-state” (nation-as-state) and “people living with the state” (nation-as-people) (Billig, 1995, 24). The connection of the two meanings constructs the idea of nationalism, implying that “any nation-as-people should have their nation-as-state” (Billig, 1995, 24). This point of view resonates with Guibernau’s view of the nation-state mentioned above. So, what is a nation-state? How do we distinguish it from the two concepts—the nation and the state? The nation-state is regarded as the final step in the process of nation-building. Guibernau (2004, 132) notes that “The nation-state is a modern institution, defined by the formation of a kind of state that has the monopoly of what it claims to be the legitimate use of force within a demarcated territory and seeks to unite the people subject to its rule by means of cultural homogenization.”

The world system of nation-states is a novel feature of modern nationalism (Duara, 1995, 8). A nation-state is culturally a nation and politically a state, presenting the consistency of the boundary of the nation and the state that is asserted by nationalism (Gellner, 1983). Giddens (1985, 121) points out that “The nation-state, which exists in a complex of other nation-states, is a set of institutional

forms of governance maintaining an administrative monopoly over a territory with demarcated boundaries, its rule being sanctioned by law and direct control of the means of internal and external violence.” He associates nation-states with violence (such as war) but indicates that modern nation-states are “internally pacified” (Giddens, 1985).

There are many nation-states around the world, some of which take the form of a multiethnic state comprising a major ethnic group and other minor ethnic groups. For example, the PRC is a nation-state with the Han nationality dominating the whole population. Prasenjit Duara (1995, 60) suggests that one representation of the political community in imperial Chinese society is exclusively Han-based. This lays a foundation for the current situation of ethnic groups for the Chinese nation-state. As Billig (1995, 21) indicates, “The modern nation-state is the product of an international age” and “introduce[s] order and organization into a world of disorder and inefficient chaos.” Setting up a nation-state within a territory is an important goal for nationalists.

### *Nationalism*

Nationalism develops in two stages in political practice. The first stage is when there is no nation. In this stage, nationalism acts as a force that prompts people to establish the nation they imagine. This usually entails violence to eliminate members outside of this group. When a nation is established, the second stage comes into play. The inhabitants express nationalism by showing love and loyalty to the nation. Whenever the nation is invaded, nationalists within this nation will defend it at any cost.

From the perspective of anthropology, Anderson (1991) regards nationalism as a set of “cultural artifacts” that are created by human beings (instead of a natural cause) and rooted in cultural systems, such as religious communities and dynastic realms. Gellner (1983, 4) argues that the state is a precondition for the rise of nationalism. When ethnic groups intend to set up their nation-state that differs from the old “state,” the idea becomes tied to emotions in their mind. This emotional attachment by the members of the ethnic groups is viewed as nationalism. In this regard, nationalism is an attitude linked to emotions that stimulate ethnic group members to establish their nation-state and defend it.

Gellner (1983, 1) offers this definition of nationalism: “Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.” Here the “political unit” stands for the state, while the “national unit” refers to the nation. The goal of nationalism is to make the boundaries of the two identical. He also notes that “nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones” (Gellner, 1983, 1). In addition, he further explains how nationalism originates and is presented in society as follows:

Nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority and in some cases the totality, of the population. It means the general diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of a reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous impersonal society, with mutually sustainable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of the previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves. (Gellner, 1983, 57)

In Gellner’s view, nationalism attaches much importance to “high culture,”<sup>11</sup> in particular to “a school-mediated and academy-supervised idiom,” because high culture homogenizes every individual in terms of the language and culture. It ensures the social transition from agriculture to modernity, as Gellner (1983, 40) argues that “all this being so, the age of transition to industrialism was bound, according to our model, also to be an age of nationalism, a period of turbulent readjustment. ...”

Another definition comes from Smith (1991,73), who states that: “Nationalism is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation.” It suggests that nationalism acts as an impetus for the establishment of a nation. To this end, nationalism promises to create violence.

<sup>11</sup> Gellner (1983, 54) defines high cultures as “standardized-, literacy- and education-based systems communication.”

Based on the above discussions, I take nationalism as action-oriented, national-identity thinking, represented in discourse (the expression of nationalist opinions) and social behavior (nationalist activities), that shows love and loyalty to an imagined community. Nationalism entails that people define themselves as members of a nation: they identify with the nation by devoting themselves to it. In this way, this frame of thinking does not just remain a mode of thinking, but—more importantly—it leads to certain discourse and action, i.e., the aforementioned expression of love to the nation by airing opinions and by participating in nationalist activities.

“What is my identity (in the world)” may well be a common question that people ask themselves. Peter Burke and Jan Stets (2009) identify three bases of identities: role, person, and group. The role identity is associated with people’s role in society, i.e., their social position (Burke & Stets, 2009, 124). One person can have multiple, parallel roles in society: for instance, a woman can have both “teacher” (as occupation) and “mother” as role identity. The person identity is the set of meanings that define the person as a unique individual (Burke & Stets, 2009, 124). At last, different social groups—for example, religion and club membership—generate group identity. National identity also represents a kind of group identity, as it needs a group of members within a nation to construct such an identity. When the question of identity comes into play in specific situations that prompt a nationalist engagement, national identity is aroused. Once people’s national identity is determined, they identify with or recognize all things attached to the nation, including history, culture, and language. In ordinary life, people have what Billig (1995) calls “banal nationalism,” which helps maintain national identity. If a crisis arises in a nation (such as an invasion from outside groups), people devote themselves to defending the nation. In this sense, national identity thinking has two implications: one is to identify with the nation, and the other is to defend the nation at any cost.

Which elements contribute to national identity thinking? I regard national boundaries, collective memories, and people’s engagement in nationalist activities as keys to build national identity (see Figure 1.1 (b)). Demarcated boundaries are essential to define the territorial scope of various nations and states. Anderson (1991) indicates that the boundary makes a nation limited, an important feature of an imagined community. However, the boundary is not restricted to a territorial dimension; it also

connotes political, cultural, and psychological variances to stimulate national consciousness or imagination. Political boundaries come from government administration. Within a certain scope, the administration of the society by the government establishes political boundaries. Cultural boundaries are formed through the languages, customs, and social behavior of a population. These boundaries also affect the population's way of thinking and distinguish it from that of the other population. Gellner (1983) argues that cultural boundaries should be congruent with political boundaries in a nation-state, and nationalism aims to make the two identical. Without national boundaries, it is difficult for people to distinguish their nation from other nations. When nationalism is stimulated, members of the nation will consciously or unconsciously identify with those within the nation and exclude outsiders. Thus, emphasizing national boundaries illuminates distinct differences between nations and increases nationalism. Territory disputes highlight such differences and arouse nationalism.

Collective memory, sometimes called collective remembering, is a source that works for social and national cohesion. It constructs people's cultural identities (Smith, 1991) and takes a critical position in forming group identities, such as national identities (Barash, 2016). However, memory is a personal experience instead of a collective experience because memory is in "the original sphere of the self" (Barash, 2016). In this sense, "collective memory" does not equal "memory" (Barash, 2016; de Saint-Laurent, 2018). Specifically, collective memory does not mean the immediate remembrances of everyone within a group. It "is the collective past as it is enacted and mobilized in discourses, practices, and artifacts" (de Saint-Laurent, 2018, 158). James Wertsch (2002) indicates that collective memory is "an active process" created through cultural tools such as language and textual narratives. He also notes that in terms of official collective memory, the modern state, by establishing education institutions, plays a critical role in controlling such narratives of collective memory about the past (Wertsch, 2002, 68). The narratives create meanings for people to understand the past of the group (Wertsch, 2002,). History shapes the glorification of the past in such a memory.

The selective use of history provides nationals with a collective memory filled with transcendental moments in the life of the community, events, and experiences that allow people to increase their self-esteem by feeling part of a community, which proved capable of great things

and that might also be ready to become again a beacon to the world (Guibernau, 2004, 137).

I consider that collective memory to some degree equals collective consciousness. Antonio Damasio (2010, 110) defines consciousness, or rather, self-consciousness, as “a state of mind in which there is knowledge of one’s own existence and of the existence of surroundings.” Kay Mathiesen (2005, 248) argues that collective consciousness is plural, aware, and collective by forming a collective subject. He further explains that plural means many people rather than one individual conduct collective consciousness; in the process, people are aware of its content and united to realize the ultimate goals of collective consciousness (Mathiesen, 2005, 248).

Jeffrey Andrew Barash (2016) argues that collective memory is inherited through various symbols, i.e., symbolic embodiments. In the process, mass media play an important role in inheriting collective memory. In a media event, mass media sometimes repeatedly exhibit national symbols, such as national flags, that stimulate national consciousness and further generate national identity thinking. In the PRC, the glorious ancient history and grievous modern history are narratives that arouse Chinese nationalism. Whether they are in the form of pride or humiliation, they are collective memories, generating national identity thinking.

The expression of nationalism calls for people to engage in nationalist activities with a certain stimulus. Nationalism is viewed as psychological sentiments aroused by special stimulus (e.g., nationalist instigation), which takes people away from their daily lives, and thus transfers them from the statement of banal nationalism to that of stimulated nationalism. Affected by the stimulus, people engage in various national activities in society to express nationalist sentiments. The related activities are oral or non-oral, including public discussions, patriotic education programs, street demonstrations, etc. As they symbolize nationalism and can be seen and accessed, it is possible to evaluate nationalism through such engagement.

Boundaries and collective memories are, in some sense, static elements that construct a national sentiment. However, engagement allows people to exchange ideas aroused by nationalism and participate in various nationalist activities, prompting the participants to deeply perceive national

attachment in practice. By engagement, I mean that people's collective actions are presented in nationalist discussions and/or nationalist activities, the result of action-oriented national identity thinking. The discussions and activities can be regarded as direct evidence of nationalist expressions, as engagement in media events enables people to get an immediate experience of the historical sense in their memories.

### *Patriotism*

Patriotism is a term that is inextricably linked with nationalism. Daniel Bar-tal and Ervin Staub (1997, 2) argue that "patriotism reflects a positive evaluation of emotion towards the group and its territory," thus making it a comparable concept to nationalism, as I have previously argued. Furthermore, Morris Janowitz (1983, cited in Billig, 1995, 56) defines patriotism as "the persistence of love or attachment to a country." Similarly, Bar-Tal (1993, cited in Billig, 1995, 56) points out that patriotism is the "attachment of group members toward their group and their country in which they reside." Gellner (1983, 138) even argues that "Nationalism is a very distinctive species of patriotism, and one that becomes pervasive and dominant only under certain social conditions, which in fact prevail in the modern world."<sup>12</sup> However, Billig (1995) suggests that nationalism and patriotism are the same, and patriotism is what nationalists call their own nationalism. To clear up the entanglement between the two and come to working definitions I apply in my research, I will discuss similarities and differences between nationalism and patriotism in the next section.

### *Nationalism vs. Patriotism*

As two powerful forces that write the history of many nations, nationalism and patriotism frequently draw massive attention. There seems to be no clear discrepancy between them, and many people including scholars often use them as synonyms. For example, Zheng and Zhao equal Chinese patriotism and nationalism, as I mentioned in the introduction chapter (see Chapter 1)

Nevertheless, a few scholars still agree to distinguish between the two concepts. For example, George Orwell (1945/2018, 83) indicates that patriotism is "devotion to a particular place and a

<sup>12</sup> Gellner (1983, 138) identifies three distinctive features of patriotism: homogeneity, literacy, and anonymity.



particular life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force upon other people.” Yet, he points out that nationalism is “inseparable from the desire for power” for the nation, which even may not exist (Orwell, 1945/2018, 112). He thus considers patriotism as more positive than nationalism, based on the connection of nationalism with power and violence (Orwell, 1945/2018). Likewise, Louis Snyder (1976) distinguishes patriotism and nationalism by stating that patriotism is defensive, while nationalism is aggressive, implying that patriotism has a justifiable reason to exist, but nationalism does not.

Arguing that “the confusion between patriotism and nationalism has pernicious practical effects,” Maurizio Viroli (1995, 8) makes a deep analysis of the distinction between the two terms. First, he indicates that patriotism is the more ancient term, originating in ancient Rome as “republican patriotism,” referring to a “rational patriotic sentiment that pursues the common good for people in civil society.” The term nationalism emerged in late 18th century Europe, and it emphasizes an unconditional loyalty or exclusive attachment rather than a rational sentiment in pursuit of a common goal (Viroli, 1995, 2). He suggests that “the language of republican patriotism could serve as a powerful antidote of nationalism” (Viroli, 1995, 8). Furthermore, Viroli (1995, 12) notes that nationalism is “attachment to the cultural, ethnic, and religious unity of a people”—which advocates parochial love for homogeneity within a limited scope, for example, culture and politics—but patriotism is “love of common liberty and institutions that sustain it,” which represents a more inclusive form of love. In Viroli’s (1995, 13) explanation of liberty, it is “equal liberty” that means “the possibility for all the members of the republic to live as citizens without being oppressed through denial of political, civil or social rights.” However, I consider patriotism in Viroli’s discussion as situated in an ideal environment. Within the framework of nation-states, where competition exists, it may not be possible to realize ideal love for the nation by patriotism.

Following Viroli’s argument, Ross Poole (2007, 129) indicates that patriotism and nationalism follow two distinct traditions of political thought. To be more exact, patriotism is a virtue of a republican tradition, while nationalism, as a modern concept, is set in a nation-state program. In respect of love denoted by the two concepts, patriotism is more inclusive than nationalism. The love of a patriot for his or her country does not denounce or even antagonize the nations of others, but

the love of a nationalist does (Poole, 2007, 137). By pointing out that patriotism is a benign expression of patriotic loyalty to one's own nation and nationalism a malign expression of a desire to dominate other nations, Peter Hays Gries, Zhang Qingmin, Michael Crowson, and Cai Huajian (2011, 16) suggest that patriotism and nationalism are different in the Chinese context. As discussed in the introduction chapter, the Chinese historical context of humiliation is central to the establishment of Chinese nationalism. They further argue that it is nationalism—and not patriotism—that has a clear impact on Chinese foreign policy preferences (Gries et al., 2011, 17). However, despite suggesting the difference in their article, they do not elaborate on how exactly patriotism differs from nationalism in the PRC.

Although many scholars stress the differences between nationalism and patriotism, I would argue that their similarities take a dominant position, and the difference mainly lies in the degree of aggressiveness that is hard to measure. In most cases, such a difference can be neglected because sometimes patriotism can arouse fierce nationalist behavior even for self-protection. I regard the behavior expressing love for the nation without evoking negative sentiments towards other nations (e.g., singing their national anthem to celebrate a national anniversary) as the representation of patriotism. However, in the context of a competition between nations, it is often difficult to distinguish whether certain behavior reflects a sense of either nationalism or patriotism. For example, in the Olympic Games, competitors pursue a good score for the benefit of their nations, mostly in good sportsmanship, but instances of fraudulent behavior and/or cheating have tainted the event at times. How can we address this behavior? Should we define the perpetrators as “nationalists” because their actions intentionally negatively affect other nations? Or should we call them “patriots,” as they just show love for the nation and do not engender substantive aggression to other nations? Or do other factors, such as lucrative financial gains (prize money, potential sponsor contracts), play a bigger role?

When it comes to international conflicts, the boundary between patriotism (defensive) and nationalism (aggressive) generally becomes blurry. A nation under attack might be more inclined to take on the role of aggressor and counterattack its opponents, provoked or unprovoked, next time. In conflict situations, there are no strict criteria to differentiate between nationalism and patriotism.

However, since both nationalism and patriotism display signs of aggression towards other nations in conflict situations, differentiating between the two is less relevant in international conflict situations. Therefore, as mentioned above, I would regard the two concepts as the same in most cases where two or more nations are involved.

In Chinese mass communication, patriotism is used much more broadly than nationalism, especially in official propaganda. I suspect this is for four reasons: first, when only focusing on topics about the nation, such as most content of patriotic education,<sup>13</sup> the narration that stimulates national pride can be viewed as a way of arousing patriotism. Second, as it is popularly contended that patriotism is more positive than nationalism, people may be more willing to accept ideas of patriotism from a moral and psychological perspective—nationalism is extensively considered parochial, unsuitable for positive propaganda. Third, the Chinese translation of nationalism, *minzu zhuyi* (民族主义), sometimes confuses people, as *minzu* (民族) is associated with two concepts: ethnic groups and nations. In daily use, *minzu* commonly refers to ethnic groups. Thus, it prompts people to attach more importance to ethnic rather than national identity, contrary to official propaganda purposes. In other words, too much emphasis on *minzu* in the sense of ethnic groups invites separatists from minority ethnic groups to divide the nation. Fourth, in China, patriotism (*aiguo zhuyi*, 爱国主义) calls on people to love not only the nation but also their fellow citizens and the government. A slogan like this is included in primary school student textbooks in the 1990s, saying: “love the motherland, the people and the CCP” (*reai zuguo, reai renmin, reai Zhongguo gongchandang*, 热爱祖国，热爱人民，热爱中国共产党)<sup>14</sup>. This aimed to convince people that the nation, the state, the people, and the Party are all the same unit. In this case, the dissemination of patriotism has the function of consolidating the legitimacy of the CCP. Callahan (2010, 26) indicates that the purpose of patriotic education for the CCP is to unite different groups as “Chinese” to gain its legitimacy. He further argues that “the goal of this propaganda campaign is not loyalty to the nation but loyalty to the party-state” (Callahan, 2010, 44).

<sup>13</sup> For example, education of China’s national conditions in many aspects, including history, politics, and economy, is patriotic. The visiting of patriotic education bases is both patriotic and nationalist, as it often involves the conflicting relationship between China and Japan. Such bases especially demonstrate the history of Japan’s invasion of China, which often arouses people’s resentment against Japan.

<sup>14</sup> It emerged in my textbook when I was a Grade 1 primary school student.

### **2.1.2 Origin of Nationalism**

It is tempting to take “nationalism” as derived from “nation.” However, this might be a mistaken idea. “Nation” is mostly regarded as a modern concept. With the advent of print capitalism, people started to imagine a shared community through reading newspapers in the modern era, as the readership experience brought collectivity to those readers (Anderson, 1991). Nationalism became an impetus for people to unite for the creation of their nation. In this light, people first have this emotional attachment/sentiment, i.e., nationalism, and then try to set up the imagined nation. It equals what Hobsbawm (1990) argues: nationalism emerged earlier than nations, and nationalism created nations. Gellner (1983, 55) holds a similar idea that “it is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round.”

Regarding it on a personal and emotional level, we can ask again: where did nationalism come from? As discussed previously, Gellner (1983) argues that the origin of nationalism lay in industrialism, which demanded an educational system. Specifically, in industrial society, high productivity required a division of labor realized through education by literate professionals. Consequently, the state established an educational system that facilitated the unification of language and culture. In some sense, a shared language was one of the key elements that enabled nationalism, as people from different regions often spoke different dialects. Furthermore, using the same language also shortened the psychological distance between unacquainted people and made them feel that they all belonged to the same community.

In addition to Gellner, Anderson (1991) holds that print vernaculars played a critical part in the origin of national consciousness, and the development of print capitalism in the 16th century is a fundamental reason for the development of nationalism. In the beginning, as reading materials were written in exclusive script languages such as Latin (the language for official writing in Europe), it was only possible for social elites to understand such materials. This changed with the advent of capitalism. Economic expansion at an accelerated rate prompted people, particularly merchants, to look for information on markets elsewhere. A good way for them to acquire this information was to read newspapers. In this situation, the demand for newspapers greatly increased. The development of print capitalism entailed the possibility of large-scale production, so people printed more

newspapers to meet commercial demand. As many people in Europe were not able to read Latin, newspapers were largely published in different vernaculars to cater to audiences' reading abilities. Gradually, newspapers became written documents that were not only favored by elites but also by common people.

What was contributed to the emergence of vernaculars that replaced Latin? In medieval Europe, Latin worked as a universal language. However, "The universality of Latin in medieval Western Europe never corresponded to a universal political system" (Anderson, 1991, 40). This situation was changed, leading to the emergence of vernaculars. Anderson (1991) lists three favorable circumstances for the emergence of print vernaculars. The first is that Latin became more Ciceronian in the form (the style from Marcus Tullius Cicero, who exerted a big influence on classical Latin), and its content veered away from everyday life, which made Latin now different from what it was in the medieval period (Anderson, 1991, 39). The old Latin was considered not esoteric "because of its subject matter or style" (Anderson, 1991, 39), but people viewed the new Latin language as sacred due to its written content. Thus, old Latin gradually lost its superiority as a written text. The second circumstance is the Reformation launched by Martin Luther in the 16th century. Reformation promoted the dissemination of Luther's religious book written in German, which the general populace, who could read little to no Latin, favored. Simultaneously, the book provoked people to build up a political state with their own religion. Luther's books became best-sellers, so people's demand for books written in vernaculars profoundly increased, which allowed vernaculars to replace the mainstream Latin language. The third circumstance is that, while the spread of vernaculars as written languages was slow in general, in some instances, it spread at an accelerated rate. This was due to a few monarchs who used certain vernaculars for administrative centralization. As a result of the rise of print vernaculars (at the expense of Latin), the religious imagined community (Christendom), built with the aid of the popularization of Latin, declined little by little; instead, new political imagined communities (nations) emerged through "interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print) and the fatality of human linguistic diversity" (Anderson, 1991, 42-43).

### **2.1.3 Development of Nationalism**

Most theorists (e.g., Hobsbawm, Smith, and Gellner) consider that nationalism originates in Europe. Anderson, however, challenges this view and argues that nationalism originates in America (mainly the US, Brazil, and the former Spanish colonies). He identifies four waves for the development and spread of nationalism from America to Europe and then to colonized Asia.

The first wave was Creole pioneers' American nationalism in the 16th century. Two factors contributed to the rise of Creole nationalism: the tightening of Madrid's control over the Creole and the spread of the liberalizing ideas of the Enlightenment (Anderson, 1991, 50). Anderson (1991) indicates that the Spanish American identity of the Creole living in America was accepted neither by local Americans nor by those born and lived in their own motherland Spain. Their ambiguous identity aroused Creole nationalism. In this process, they were indirectly affected by Enlightenment ideas to distinguish themselves from local people. The provinciality and plurality of newspapers allowed them to imagine a community different from the communities of other people who spoke other vernaculars.

Furthermore, pilgrimage, which meant a "journey" in American administrative organizations, was a key concept to shape nationalist discourse among Creoles. No matter where the Creoles were born and educated, they could not return to their metropolises or the colonies to take an important position in the upper echelons of its bureaucracy. During their pursuit of the position, they got to know many people who had similar experiences. With a feeling of alienation and discrimination, all these people then became companions and thus formed an imagined community. "Pilgrim Creole functionaries and provincial Creole printmen played the decisive historic role" (Anderson, 1991, 65). Consequently, within the imagined community, the Creoles' nationalism emerged for the first time.

Influenced by the American Independence Movement (1765-1783) and the French Revolution (1789-1799), the second wave of nationalism emerged in Europe in the first and middle half of the 19th century and was "a golden age of vernacularizing lexicographers, grammarians, philologists, and litterateurs" (Anderson, 1991, 71). Furthermore, "the energetic activities of these professional intellectuals were central to the shaping of nineteenth-century European nationalism" (Anderson, 1991, 71). Anderson views nationalism in Europe just as a copy of that in America. In the process

of spreading nationalism in Europe, print capitalism standardized vernaculars, which met the nation's requirement that would use a standardized vernacular as its national language. From then on, European nationalism came into being.

The latter half of the 19th century saw the third wave: "official nationalism," which meant the "willed merger of nation and dynastic empire ... stretching the short, tight, skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire" (Anderson, 1991, 86). Represented by "Russification" and "Anglicization," official nationalism emerged where an imagined community threatened the domination of the dynastic empire. Anderson (1991) notes that Czardom implemented the first Russifying measure for Baltic Germans, regarded as the most loyal to Czardom. Czardom forced them to use Russian as a teaching language in schools. Parallel to this, in India, the British East India Company engaged in educating local people in "western" ways besides "eastern," imposing the British ideology and British world view on the Indians and forcing them to identify with British culture.

The last wave emerged in the first and middle half of the 20th century in the colonial countries of Southeast Asia and Africa and reached its peak after World War II. Unlike official nationalism, which was a reaction to popular nationalism, the wave of colonial nationalism was a reaction to imperialism. Intelligentsia played a core role in forming this kind of nationalism, owing to their literacy and bilingualism that allowed them to familiarize western culture and ideology, including nationalism. As Anderson (1991, 118) argues that "the paradox of imperial official nationalism was that it inevitably brought what were increasingly thought of and written about European 'national histories' into the consciousness of the colonized," the colonial educational system promoted young people's colonial nationalism. He takes Indonesia, colonized by the Netherlands from the 17th to the 20th century, as an example: the Dutch imperialist administration established a few schools in Batavia with a centralized hierarchy similar to the state bureaucracy. The government designed the geography of the schools to emphasize this hierarchy. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the elementary schools located in the small towns; then the middle schools were established in the larger towns; on the top, there was tertiary education located in the capital. In this way, these schools fostered a group of young people who could speak both the local language and Dutch, which enabled

them to learn Dutch history and culture. Students from different colony parts got together, allowing them to generate a sense of belonging to the same imagined political community where they learned the same knowledge. By doing so, they gradually turned to be potential nationalists. In addition, students travelling from small towns to large cities in pursuit of higher education, equal to a pilgrimage, were restricted in the colonial territory by the administrative system, which laid the foundation for the establishment of an imagined community. With time passing by, nationalist ideas prompted the students to establish their own nation, and the colony's boundary thus became that of the nation.

#### **2.1.4 Positive and Negative Aspects of Nationalism**

Nationalism that has existed in the world for several hundred years is generally considered a mixed blessing for social progress. To be more precise, while it creates nation-states, it also threatens the stability of existing states (Billig, 1995, 43). It has both positive and negative impacts on the governing of states. Smith listed several benign effects of nationalism:

Its defense of minority cultures; its rescue of “lost” histories and literatures; its inspiration for cultural renaissances; its resolution of [a] “identity crisis”; its legitimation of community and social solidarity; its inspiration to resist tyranny; its ideal of popular sovereignty and collective mobilization; even the motivation of self-sustaining economic growth (Smith, 1991, 18).

Nationalism has three main positive aspects that serve the governing purposes of states. First, nationalism aims to bond everyone in a nation with certain symbols, such as national flags, national emblems, and national anthems, which arouse people's collective consciousness and commitment to the nation. However, these symbols, emerging people's daily lives, just provide banal reminders of nationhood (Billig, 1995, 41). People perceive such nationalism unconsciously. Only when “the orderly routines have broken down” (Billig, 1995, 41), for example, a media event taking place, can people's nationalism be consciously stimulated. As “similarity and difference are the dynamic principles of identification” (Guibernau, 2013b, 16), people view others within the same group as companions and unite with them to devote themselves to constructing and defending the nation. In this way, nationalism endows people with a sense of belonging and increases solidarity.



Second, nationalism serves some psychological functions, as it meets human needs by providing “a way of feeling that we are right” (Searle-White, 2001, 87). The feeling of righteousness and justice brings people power in national conflicts. In addition, it helps people strengthen their national identity (Billig, 1995) and sometimes cures their spiritual emptiness. For example, if people lose their beliefs, nationalism can act as mental support in some sense to build up faith. Thus, people adore the nation by making every effort to support it, demonstrating nationalist loyalty.

Third, a government can use nationalism to enhance its legitimacy when it satisfies a social demand (for details, see Chapter 1). People’s love for the nation inspires them to be concerned about state affairs and support the government when it strives for (and achieves) the nation’s development. This kind of love thus may extend to the government.

Nevertheless, apart from the benign characteristics, pernicious features of nationalism draw the government’s attention too. If nationalist sentiments are too excessive, it can make people xenophobic and obstruct bilateral relations between nations. It then may have negative effects on economic development in the case of an already established economic cooperation between nations. In addition, as many scholars (e.g., Weber, Giddens, and Viroli) associate nationalism with power and violence, they regard nationalism as intrinsically aggressive. Furthermore, it can even threaten the legitimacy of the government. Although the cause (or the resolution) might be complex in an international conflict, people may blame their government for incompetence to avoid or solve the issue when a nation-state is “defeated” by its opponent. The unfavorable characteristics give nationalism a bad reputation in political discourse.

## **2.2 Nationalism in China**

The *Records of the Grand Historian*, written by Sima Qian in 91BC, recounts Chinese history from the Yellow Emperor period to the Han Dynasty and establishes a common myth about the ancestry of the Chinese. Most Chinese people believe that China has a long civilization and they are the descendants of the Yan Emperor and the Yellow Emperor (*yanhuang zisun*, 炎黄子孙). It is generally agreed that the Chinese nation originates from the Yellow River Valley where the Yellow

Emperor (*Huangdi*, 黄帝) and the Yan Emperor (*Yandi*, 炎帝) were said to have defeated the other tribes by joint forces. The emperors united all people within the territory and were regarded as the ancestors of the Chinese. Shen (1997, 6) informs us that this idea came from the late Qing Dynasty when intellectuals deemed the Yellow Emperor a cultural symbol to set up national identity.

Regarding the origin of the Chinese nation, Fei Xiaotong (1989, 1) indicates that “as a self-conscious (*zijue* 自觉) entity, the Chinese nation emerged in the protest against Western powers in the recent hundred years; but as an existing (*zizai* 自在) entity, it was formulated in a thousand-year historical process<sup>15</sup>.” Fei suggests that the Chinese nation already originates in ancient times, with the Han nationality continuously assimilating other ethnic nationalities, but the Chinese people only realized the nation’s existence in modern times when imperialist powers invaded the state. In contrast to Fei, I would regard the nation as a strictly modern, rather than an ancient, entity for the following reason: the territory of the dynasties was usually not fixed in ancient China, so its political boundary was not congruent with the cultural boundary shared by the Han people. This did not make it a nation in the modern sense. However, it is interesting that as the Han nationality became stronger and stronger in the historical process, its influence on other ethnic groups increased. For example, although the Han assimilated many ethnic groups, the myths about the origin of Chinese people would only refer to the Han people’s origin.

### **2.2.1 Rise of Chinese Nationalism**

Nationalism in modern times symbolizes a way for the Chinese to replace Universalism or Sino-centrism in ancient times. China is deeply influenced by Confucianism, which views the state more from a cultural than from a political perspective. Rana Mitter (2004, 117) articulates this idea by stating that “Nationalism in China was an ideological creation that emerged largely in reaction to the perceived inadequacies of a political identity that was based on Confucianism.” Zhao (2004, 43) further explained this point by arguing that “In the eye of traditional Chinese, China was the universe (*tianxia*) and the center of the world. All others were barbarians (*manyi*), outsiders (*waihua*) and tributaries”. Universalism (*tianxia zhuyi*, 天下主义) dominated in ancient China so that people regarded the emperor as the master of the world instead of the master of a nation-state. When

<sup>15</sup> This is my translation.

Western powers invaded China in the 19th century, they shattered “the fictive remnants of Sino-centrism” (Zhao, 2004, 48), forcing the people to seek another ideology to replace *tianxia zhuyi*. Nationalism was to become this new ideology.

In the middle and late 19th century, a group of important historical events consecutively took place in China, arousing the people’s national consciousness: The First Opium War (1840-1842), the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864), the Second Opium War (1856-1860), the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and the Boxer Movement (1899-1901). The First Opium war presents a crucial conflict between China and Britain, forcing the Chinese to realize that the state was not the center of the world and that it could be weak compared to other nations. This war broke out when the opium trade between Britain and China in the 1830s brought a series of problems to Chinese society: a reverse flow of silver payments, the wide emergence of opium smoking, and the dissolution of the former order (Wakeman, 1978, 178-179). Among these problems, Michael Dillon (2010, 44) indicates that “It was this economic crisis rather than righteous indignation at the depredations visited by opium on the health of the Chinese population that created the vigorous official pressure to suppress the sale and use of opium.” The ban of the opium trade, in the end, led to the war in 1840. The war ended in China’s defeat. The government signed the first treaty with Britain, the Treaty of Nanking, involving paying indemnities, ceding Hong Kong to the British government, etc. This was a great humiliation for the Chinese state, shattering its dream of a “central kingdom,” as it had never expected outside “barbarians” to defeat it and force it to sign such an ignominious treaty.

The Second Opium War, also known as the Arrow Incident, taking place on a vessel called the Arrow in 1856, continued the first one. One deep reason was that Britain was not satisfied with China’s attempts to walk away from the Nanking Treaty signed in the First Opium War, which “was a consequence of an ever-expanding British economy” (Wong, 1974, 373). Although it was a war again between Britain and China, other countries that aimed to benefit from the war with defeated China were involved, notably France, the US, and Russia. The British and the French joined forces defeated the Chinese army, leading to the Qing government’s signing the Convention of Peking, an agreement comprising treaties with Britain, France, and Russia. In the Open-Door Policy of the convention, China had to cede more territory to Britain and Russia, allow free entrance to China by

foreigners, legalize opium sales, etc.

The two opium wars profoundly affected Chinese intellectuals' realization of how far China was behind the foreign powers. In addition, it aroused the public's national consciousness, as "the ramifications of the Western invasion were not only China's humiliation and compromised independence but also modern political and technical models and new ideas, including nationalism, for China to follow and adopt" (Zhao, 2004, 48).

The weakness of the Chinese government in the First Opium War incurred the people's dissatisfaction and even led to an uprising: the Taiping Rebellion, which "was in many respects the hinge between China's pre-modern and modern histories" (Kuhn, 1978, 264). The Taiping Rebellion was waged by Taiping Army, headed by Hong Xiuquan<sup>16</sup> and his fellows, who established an unrecognized state, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, in 1851. Resorting to anti-dynastic appeals, the Taiping Rebellion represented the objection to the Manchu rule. Foreign forces did not engage in the anti-Taiping Campaign in the beginning. However, judging that the Taipings' future interests were based on a revitalized and secured China, the British decided to intervene in the Taiping Rebellion to support the government suppressing the rebels (Kuhn, 1978, 303). Thus, the Taipings were put into the anti-imperialist battle to fight against foreign military forces. They became firm quasi-nationalists<sup>17</sup> in unstable China, seeking to establish their own kingdom that was for all (Kuhn, 1978, 276). Although the Taiping Rebellion was suppressed with the death of Hong in 1864, its influence on the Chinese people's national consciousness should not be neglected. In addition, ethnic nationalism advocated by the Taipings became the core pursuit for the revolutionists at the beginning of the 20th century.

In addition to the conflicts with western powers, the war with the neighboring country Japan further stimulated Chinese nationalism. The first Sino-Japanese war in 1894 demonstrated the huge distance of military force between China and Japan and foreshadowed the current conflicts between the two

<sup>16</sup> Hong Xiuquan (1814-1864) is a Chinese religious prophet and leader of the Taiping Rebellion.

<sup>17</sup> I view the Taiping as quasi-nationalists because they intended to establish a kingdom different from a nation-state in the modern sense. Thus, although the Taiping had certain similarities with nationalists in terms of threatening the existing regime and fighting foreign powers, they were not real nationalists who want to build up a nation-state rather than a kingdom.

countries, including current territorial disputes. Both China and Japan introduced reforms in the 1860s but had different results. The Self-Strengthening Movement (1861–1895) failed to strengthen China, while the Meiji Restoration (1868–the 1890s) was a big success, which turned Japan into a modernized industrial state. This success ensured that the Meiji Japan’s imperial power became much stronger than China and other states in Asia, prompting Japan to establish a “continental policy” to conquer its neighboring rivals (Shen, 2005). The main conflict between China and Japan was over Korea, a vassal state of the Qing Dynasty (Dillon, 2010). As in the opium wars with the British, China suffered a total defeat by the Japanese, which gave another big blow to the government and the people. Consequently, the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed, which forced China to cede the Liaodong Peninsula, Taiwan, the Pescadores, and subsidiary islands and pay an indemnity to Japan.

As “Japan’s defeat of China in 1895 brought fears of partition—of China being ‘sliced like a melon’—much closer” (Zarrow, 2005, 44), Chinese people became aware that the threat was not only from distant western powers but also from their neighboring country that they had not thought capable of defeating them. These events involving military and political defeat at the hand of foreign powers led to xenophobic movements within China. One such movement was formed by the so-called Boxers (*yihe tuan*, 义和团), a group of starving, landless and superstitious peasants, many of whom were good at martial arts. Rising in Shandong province in 1900, the boxers were an organization against the Qing government in the beginning and then foreign influence. They turned their slogan “Oust the Qing and Restore the Ming” (*fanqing fuming*, 反清复明) into another one: “Support the Qing and Exterminate the Foreigners” (*fuqing mieyang*, 扶清灭洋) after the government co-opted the movement. The Boxer Movement showed strong xenophobic sentiments, and fiercely attacked Christian missionaries, who could enter China to preach due to treaties such as the Beijing Convention. What was more, the people who had connections with foreigners, particularly Chinese Christians, also became targets of the Boxers. This led to “tens of thousands of Chinese died at the hands of other Chinese only because they were Christians” (Thompson, 2009, 1). The massacre thus triggered the formation of an international coalition: The Eight-Nation Alliance<sup>18</sup>, and “more tens of thousands of Chinese died at the hands of Western soldiers only

<sup>18</sup> The eight nations referred to Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the US, and the UK. Besides these nations, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain also played a part in the invasion.

because they were Chinese” (Thompson, 2009, 1). The defeat of China resulted in the signing of the Boxer Protocol with the eleven nations in 1901. The protocol forced China to pay an indemnity of four hundred and fifty million Haikwan Taels to the nations and prohibit importing arms and ammunition for two years.<sup>19</sup>

This series of events, continuously ending in China’s failure, dealt a heavy blow to the idea of China as the center of the civilized world, *tianxia zhuyi*. Especially the war against Japan heavily shocked the Chinese elites, who advocated “a truly fundamental reappraisal of the culture” (Zarrow, 2005, 1). However, they found a new impulse to stimulate the national consciousness of the Chinese in nationalism. For the rise of nationalism in China, Zhao Suisheng provides his analysis as below:

The collision between traditional centralism and the modern nation-state system and the crushing defeats that China suffered in a series of military confrontations with the West [and Japan] gave rise to nationalism. The wars, unequal treaties, humiliations, and material and territorial losses suffered by Chinese people during a century of contact with foreign imperialist powers were continuous sources of inspirations to Chinese nationalism (Zhao, 2004, 30).

How, then, did this Chinese nationalism develop? As mass communication (mainly newspapers) was introduced to China by westerners in the 19th century, it laid a foundation for the Chinese to imagine their nation. In the meantime, Chinese intellectuals and revolutionaries played a pivotal role in introducing and spreading nationalism, facilitating the establishment of the Chinese nation.

### **2.2.2 Development of Chinese Nationalism**

Chinese intellectuals and revolutionaries, as mentioned above, played a key role in the spread and development of nationalism. Intellectuals introduced nationalism and applied it to the Chinese case. Revolutionaries, led by Sun Yat-sen,<sup>20</sup> who tactically interpreted the meaning of nationalism, made great efforts to realize the ultimate goal of nationalism by establishing a nation-state. In this section, I will examine how nationalism developed in China by looking at important nationalist events and

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust000001-0302.pdf>, accessed 12 October 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) is the first leader of the Nationalist Party and the first provisional president of the Republic of China in 1911.

their themes in different developmental stages of nationalism, i.e., anti-foreignism, anti-imperialism, and reaction to the international environment.

In the late 19th century, Liang Qichao<sup>21</sup> adopted the concept of “nationalism” from Japan and applied it to China for the first time. He argued that China could survive in a world full of competing nations on the condition that the state was powerful enough in economic and military terms. Further, he argued that to build a powerful state, its people had to become powerful first (Liang, 1916/1994). He discussed how people, in general, should perform in society to strengthen the state, and indicated that the development of state sovereignty in Europe—even in the world—benefited from nationalism (Liang, 1916/1994, 5). In addition, he distinguished two kinds of nationalism: big nationalism (*da minzu zhuyi*, 大民族主义) and small nationalism (*xiao minzu zhuyi*, 小民族主义), referring to state nationalism and ethnic nationalism, respectively. In practice, big nationalism comprised nationalist sentiments in China against outside nations, and small nationalism was Han nationalism against other ethnic groups within China (such as the Tibetan nationality). In Liang’s view, big nationalism should mean that the nation should comprise many ethnic groups in addition to the Han nationality for China.

Liang’s ideas provided a general description of nationalism and discussed how it could work in favor of China. Sun (cited in Zheng, 1999, 28) further advocated the idea that a nation-state would aid China: “We now do not have a state to be ruled. What we need to do is to construct a state. After construction of the state, we can govern it.” However, Sun’s view of nationalism was initially different from that of Liang, as Sun attached more importance to the majority of Hans and distinguished them from other ethnic groups. A popular slogan put forward by the revolutionaries was “A Revolution to Expel Manchus” (*Geming Paiman*, 革命排满), showing the Hans’ resistance against the Manchus. This kind of nationalism fell into what Liang defined as “small nationalism” or ethnic nationalism.

Influenced by nationalist ideas of Sun, the 1911 Revolution, entailing the Wuchang Uprising<sup>22</sup> and

<sup>21</sup> Liang Qichao (1873-1929) is a Chinese scholar, politician, and revolutionary whose ideas greatly influenced political reformation and movement in the late Qing and the early 20th century.

<sup>22</sup> The Wuchang Uprising was led by revolutionaries including Xiong Bingkun, Cai Jimin, and Wu Xinghan in 1911.

a series of uprisings across China, overthrew the Qing Dynasty and established the first nation-state, the Republic of China (RoC) in 1912. Chinese nationalism finished nation-building and exerted an influence in the political field for the first time.

After the establishment of the RoC, Sun and other revolutionaries considered that “the political consequence of defining the new nation in terms of Han people alone would be the dissolution of the former Qing empire” (Zhao, 2004, 67). They attempted to “obscure the distinction between Han and other ethnic minorities as one race/nation” (Zhao, 2004, 69). Establishing the idea of the “Doctrine of a Republic of Five Nationalities” (*Wuzu Gonghe*, 五族共和), Sun (cited in Zhao, 2004, 68) argued that “The territories of Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui, and Tibetans should be integrated into one nation. This is called national unity. ... The people in the Republic of China are equals and should not be distinguished by race, class, or religion.”

Following the 1911 Revolution, two separate movements generated two kinds of nationalism, which signified the further development of Chinese nationalism: the New Culture Movement (*xinwenhua yundong*, 新文化运动), generating elite nationalism, and the May Fourth Movement (*wusi yundong*, 五四运动), generating popular nationalism.

The New Culture Movement took place around 1915, with a group of intellectuals led by Chen Duxiu<sup>23</sup>, introducing Western culture and ideologies such as communism, democracy, and science. This movement was supposed to compete with the entrenched traditional culture, i.e., Confucianism. It boosted nationalist ideology among literates, although Chen promoted “democratic nationalism,” i.e., nationalism from people protected by the state (Zarrow, 2005, 135).

The May Fourth Movement (*wusi yundong*, 五四运动) in 1919 directly stimulated popular nationalism and was a turning point in modern history. After World War I, the government signed a humiliating treaty with Japan that forced China to accede to Japan’s demands. The Chinese people saw this as shameful, and it infuriated the nationalists who launched the May Fourth Movement to

<sup>23</sup> Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) is a Chinese revolutionary socialist, one of the founders and the first General Secretary of the CCP.



protest against the government and the humiliating treaty. Anti-imperialism and patriotism were the most popular themes in this movement, with support from elites, students, workers, and merchants. It was the first presentation of popular nationalism and took the form of demonstrations. It spread from elite nationalism to the common people, focusing on such topics as sovereignty, national independence. Dillon (2010, 178) argues that “to all intents and purposes, the May Fourth and New Culture Movements were one and the same, a continuum of political and cultural thought and deed.” The May Fourth era when the two movements took place was distinguished from the late Qing period and the 1930s when the nationalist government was in power, as Mitter (2004, 23) notes that the May Fourth era signifies “a sense of real and impending crisis; a combination of a plurality of competing ideas aimed at ‘saving the nation,’ and an audience ready to receive, welcome, contest, and adapt these ideas.”

In the Warlord era (1916-1928), many parts of China were dominated by different warlords: local powerful military leaders. Zarrow (2005, 87) notes that the law of the warlord system is that “no single unifier could emerge due to the ambitions and jealousy of the others and due to the forces of imperialism,” and therefore national reunification could never be achieved. Under the influence of the May Fourth Movement, Chinese nationalists had a goal to establish a reunified China. The Nationalist Party (*Guomindang*, 国民党, also known as *Kuomintang*, KMT in short),<sup>24</sup> established by Sun in 1894 in Honolulu and led by Jiang Jieshi<sup>25</sup> (also known as Chiang Kai-shek), launched the Northern Expedition with the aid of the CCP<sup>26</sup> in 1926. They defeated the warlords two years later and terminated the secession period of the Chinese nation. Jiang established a new government in Nanjing in 1927 and officially achieved national reunification. Unlike former nationalist movements such as the May Fourth Movement, the Northern Expedition aimed at national reunification rather than on the nation’s independence.

After the reunification of China by the KMT in 1927, the war between the CCP and the KMT broke out immediately, falling into two stages: 1927–1937 and 1946–1950. This war was interrupted in

<sup>24</sup> The KMT was the most powerful Party in China until 1949 when the CCP defeated it.

<sup>25</sup> Jiang Jieshi (1887-1975) assumed leadership of the KMT in 1926 and ruled mainland China until 1949.

<sup>26</sup> Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao founded the CCP in 1921 in Shanghai. Mao, acting as the paramount leader, assumed power in 1935.

1937 when Japan invaded China again. The resulting Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) prompted the CCP and the KMT to ally to fight against outsiders, in this case, the Japanese military. The war resulted in Japan's defeat in 1945, representing the first complete success of Chinese nationalism against foreign invasion. China defended itself with the joint efforts of nationalists (the KMT) and communists (the CCP). The war, however, continued till 1949, when Jiang evacuated to Taiwan with his army. The CCP, led by Mao Zedong,<sup>27</sup> then established a new nation-state, the PRC. Its national strengthening has been a struggle since then.

Based on the previous discussion, I mainly categorize two developmental stages of Chinese nationalism: first, a collective feeling was aroused to fight against outside invaders and establish an "imagined community," i.e., a nation, in place of the old cultural system. Second, when the nation-state had been established in China, its people had a nationalist consciousness entailing love for the nation and motivations to construct a better nation than any other in the world. This echoes Liang's ideas that I have outlined above about economic and military strength and superiority. In other words, nationalism in the Chinese context contains two meanings in different historical periods: nation building and strengthening of the nation.

What are the themes of Chinese nationalism? Hu Shi<sup>28</sup> (1935/2013, 26) suggests that nationalism has three levels of meaning: anti-foreignism, the promotion of inherited national culture, and the establishment of a nation-state. The three meanings also refer to three steps for the development of nationalism, of which the last one is the most difficult: a nationalist movement often stops after the first two steps (Hu, 1935/2013, 26). In Hu's explanation, anti-foreignism embodies aggressive nationalism. Too excessive nationalist sentiments might lead to xenophobia. This level is equal to the first type of nationalism in China that led to its nation building.

Another important theme of Chinese nationalism from the May Fourth Movement (1919) to the Second Sino-Japanese War (1945) is anti-imperialism. However, it does not lose its significance after then: in the Mao era (1949-1976), anti-imperialism was again a major factor in Mao's

<sup>27</sup> Mao Zedong (1893-1975) is the PRC's founding father and the first paramount leader of the CCP (1935-1976).

<sup>28</sup> Hu Shi (1891-1962) is a Chinese philosopher and writer who advocated liberalism. He was also one of the leaders of the New Culture Movement and a president of Beijing University.

nationalism (Zhang, 2014). Mao (1965, 196) suggests that nationalism “is determined by historical conditions” and differentiates China’s nationalism from that of the Japanese aggressors and that of Adolf Hitler, implying that Chinese nationalism is defensive nationalism. Attaching importance to the unification of socialist countries, Mao (1965, 196) asserts that “Chinese communists must therefore combine patriotism with internationalism.” Mao’s “nationalism is neither Han chauvinism nor local nationalism but the nationalism at the level of the Chinese nation, which is consistent with patriotism in essence and has shown its power in practice” (Zhang, 2014, 68). In addition, his “nationalism includes both resistance and construction” (Zhang, 2014, 68). In the phase of striving to strengthen the Chinese nation, it cannot be denied that Mao’s patriotic spirit deeply influenced the Chinese people’s nationalist sentiments. Although Mao heavily emphasized class struggle, the CCP still encouraged the people to construct and strengthen the nation. Yet, this kind of nationalism was not salient, and it was to a certain extent similar to what Billig termed “banal nationalism,” which was usually sensed but not frequently activated.

Following the Mao era, the people attached more importance to nationalism in the Deng Xiaoping<sup>29</sup> era (1977-1989). Specifically, in the Mao era, Chinese society was relatively isolated from the outside world since Western thought and culture were considered bourgeois ideas. However, in the Deng era, as Deng advocated the slogan “the Four Modernizations,”<sup>30</sup> Chinese society became more open to the world. After initiating the reform and opening-up policy in 1978, the Chinese gradually cast an alternative eye on foreign nations. With the rapid development of the economy in the 1980s and 1990s, westernization was widely accepted by many Chinese, so that Western culture, to some degree, even threatened the status of traditional Chinese culture. To counter this situation, Chinese nationalism in the Deng era was mainly a reaction to the international environment, besides a domestic modernization (Zheng, 1999, 47). Chinese nationalism aimed to “use China’s power to revive Confucianism rather than to continue promoting a Western nationalism in China” (Zheng, 1999, 83). In addition, Zheng argues that Chinese nationalism contains three meanings:

First, it is about how the Chinese state should and can be reconstructed in accordance with

<sup>29</sup> Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) was the paramount leader of the PRC from 1978-1989.

<sup>30</sup> “The Four Modernizations” refer to national strengthening in the fields of agriculture, industry, defense, and science and technology.

changing domestic and international circumstances. Second, it is about state sovereignty and people's perception of China's proper position of power in a world of nation-states. Third, it is about people's perceptions of a "just world order," an international system that accords with China's national interest (Zheng, 1999, 14).

Apart from Zheng's argument, Zhao pays more attention to the pragmatism of nationalism. Zhao (2004, 19) suggests that "the content of nationalism was not always attendant in similar situations of modernization, because self-interested political entrepreneurs treat it as a political enterprise and manipulate it in response to changing supply and demand conditions in the political market place." Furthermore, he divides Chinese nationalism into liberal nationalism, ethnic nationalism, and state nationalism. Each of them has its own emphasis: liberal nationalism focuses on the civil rights of participation in government; ethnic nationalism stresses cultural-ethnic identity; state nationalism attaches importance to political-territorial convergence (Zhao, 2004, 21). The different types of nationalism are strategies applied by the government corresponding to the "political market."

Peter Hays Gries (2004, 19) argues that the Chinese "have deep-seated emotional attachments to their national identity." He also notes that "the Chinese identity involves dynamic relationships with other nations and the past and Chinese nationalism involves both Chinese people and their passions" (Gries, 2004, 19). In Gries' view, Chinese nationalism is not an isolated emotional attachment: it is closely connected to other nation-states, such as the US and Japan. In addition, national history, the people, and their emotions play an important part in constructing Chinese nationalism because "the ways Chinese imagined their 'Century of Humiliation' at the hands of Western imperialists in the past have a powerful influence on the nature and direction of Chinese nationalism today" (Gries, 2004, 19). Zheng (1999, 51) indicates that "the end of the Cold War led to the rise of nationalism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and nationalism replaced the old communist ideology in these countries." This case is also applicable to China. In the early 20th century, nationalism sprang from the struggle for China's independence and sovereignty, while new nationalism was mainly aroused to strengthen the nation and legitimize the ruling of the state.

### **2.2.3 Official Attitudes towards Chinese Nationalism**

Nationalism is a mixed blessing that establishes the legitimacy of the government and may sometimes threaten the ruling class. This mainly depends on how strong popular nationalism is. Generally, the Chinese government holds different attitudes towards popular nationalism and uses different strategies to deal with various situations in different periods.

As previously mentioned, in the Mao era, the PRC was almost isolated from the outside world, thus not causing many conflicts with other nations. Stimulated popular nationalism was at a low level. Socialism, in addition, was a common goal shared by other socialist countries, obscuring the differentiation between the PRC and other nations. In the meantime, Chinese authorities held a relatively mild attitude toward nationalism to encourage the people to strengthen the nation. In the Deng era, as the economy was the main goal for national construction, nationalism did not receive much importance either. The authorities strategically used nationalism to deal with the problems existing in modernization and westernization in the PRC.

The Revolutions of 1989 in socialist countries led to the collapse of faith in socialism. In the Jiang era, the authorities advocated nationalism to mitigate this problem. Patriotism became an important political instrument calling for the people to love and devote themselves to the nation and ensuring social stability. From the Jiang era till now, state nationalism is much more emphasized by the authorities than before. With the implementation of the Patriotic Education Campaign in the 1990s (which will be detailed in Chapter 3), state nationalism is broadly enhanced, which also promotes popular nationalism. The government was practical to deal with the related issues aroused by popular nationalism. Mostly the government supports nationalism to show its responsiveness to the public will. Yet, it suppresses excessive nationalist sentiments in some cases because excessive nationalism may ruin foreign relations and bring about economic losses. More importantly, it may also urge nationalists to blame the government for its weakness in diplomacy, which potentially threatens the government's legitimacy.

Under the influence of state nationalism, popular nationalism in the Jiang era was stronger than in its previous eras. Gries (2004, 121) identifies three waves of popular nationalism in the late 1990s in the PRC: the Diaoyu Islands protests in 1996, the China Can Say No sensation, and the Belgrade

bombing protests in 1999. When the Japanese foreign minister declared that the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands were Japanese territory in 1996, Chinese nationalism was immediately triggered. To cope with nationalist sentiments, the CCP “sought both to suppress and to co-opt popular Diaoyu activism” (Gries, 2004, 123). In this way, they adjusted nationalism to a controllable level.

A few nationalists wrote the book *China Can Say No* to express anti-American sentiments. According to Gries (2004), in the beginning, it received official support, yet soon the government found that the book criticized a few leaders and even challenged the hegemony of the CCP. Therefore, the government tried to constrain the spread of popular nationalism by limiting book circulation. This incurred the authors’ objection, who argued that what they expressed in the book was just “popular opinion.” The government took some measures similar to what happened with the 1996 Diaoyu Islands protests: again, they sought to suppress and co-opt popular nationalism.

The third nationalist wave happened on 8 May 1999, when the US bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade and killed three Chinese. This greatly aroused nationalism among domestic and overseas Chinese. As too many fierce protests led to riots of nationalists, the Chinese government first tried to suppress the protests. This, however, did not work, so the government then attempted to appease the nationalists. Gries (2004., 121) argues that for the three big waves of nationalism in the 1990s, the government’s reaction contained both suppression and co-optation, but the proportion of the two was different. Concerning the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands protests, suppression took the domination position; for the *China Can Say No* sensation, the proportion was even; for the Belgrade bombing protests, as popular nationalism was bottom-up and it was a little out of control, co-optation was the main method adopted by the government (Gries, 2004).

Concerning the attitudes towards popular nationalism in recent years, the government has changed its tune from time to time. Before 2008, Zheng (2009, 144) argues that “the state intervened again to control hardline nationalistic voices in order to stabilize China-Japan relations and nationalism against Japan has died down.” However, after 2008, loosening the control of the expression of popular nationalism, the government “has become increasingly reluctant to constrain the expression of popular nationalism and more willing to follow the popular nationalist calls for confrontation

against the Western powers and its neighbors” (Zhao, 2013, 536). This is because the people have a greater desire to express nationalist sentiments with the expansion of communication channels, and the government is more confident of gaining popular support with the rise of China in the international arena. In addition, Zhao (2013) identifies four momentous developments that are reflected by popular nationalism: first, public opinion of nationalism increasingly influences China’s foreign policy; second, nationalist expressions become powerful to attract audiences’ attention to increase the revenue of media outlets; third, state nationalism and popular nationalism have converged; and fourth, nationalism increases domestic, economic, and political uncertainties in the PRC. The complicated relations between popular nationalism on the one hand and domestic stability and foreign relations, on the other hand, make it difficult for the government to choose to promote or suppress (popular) nationalism.

To sum up, after nationalism emerged in China in the late 19th century, it was represented in the following forms: state nationalism, ethnic nationalism, liberal nationalism, and popular nationalism. The elites used ethnic nationalism to resist foreign invasion and overthrow the Qing Empire in the nation-building period. Nationalism was a stimulus for the people to create their imagined political community. After establishing the nation-state, the elites replaced ethnic nationalism with state nationalism to maintain a unitary state. In some sense, state nationalism is the “safest” for the ruling class because it preserves the unity and sovereignty of the Chinese nation. In the reform era, the government has greatly emphasized state nationalism, which also inspired popular nationalism. To keep popular nationalism to a controllable level, the government applies different methods to adjust popular sentiments to maintain social stability and to construct its legitimacy.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

Nationalism is action-oriented national identity thinking that expresses love and loyalty to a nation that already exists or is to be established. Three important elements construct nationalism: boundaries, collective memories, and engagement. Strengthening those elements improves people’s national identity and nationalism. In the PRC, nationalism is expressed by the state and the populace, separately categorized as state nationalism and popular nationalism. State nationalism shapes popular nationalism through various forms of political communication, thus seeking public support

to maintain or strengthen the authorities' legitimacy.

This chapter mainly outlines the origin, development, and positive and negative aspects of nationalism, mainly based on Anderson's theories that I will briefly reiterate here: nationalism, as a modern concept, emerged in the world with the development of print capitalism in the 16th century. Hitherto unconnected people imagined themselves in the same political community through a shared discourse in the form of printed media. From these conditions, nationalism emerged and spread in four waves: Creole pioneers' American nationalism, nationalism in Europe, official nationalism, and nationalism in Southeast Asia and Africa (Anderson, 1991). Under the influences of these waves, at the end of the 19th century, Chinese intellectuals imported nationalism from the West and Japan, which became the major force to overthrow the old Qing Empire.

China's modern history was one of the main impulses that prompted the emergence of nationalism. Elite nationalism later evolved into official nationalism (that I call state nationalism); nationalism expressed by the populace became popular nationalism. In the 19th century, Westerners introduced newspapers to urban China, which laid a foundation for the rise of nationalism among a group of elites, who bolstered the transmission of nationalism by launching the New Culture Movement to disseminate various western ideologies (including nationalism). As China suffered continuous imperialist aggressions, nationalism was actuated to fight against foreign invaders. The people devoted themselves to nation building, and in 1912, they established the first nation-state, the RoC, distinguished from the old Qing Empire. In the period of the RoC, the task of Chinese nationalism was mainly to protest against the Japanese invasion, operated by both the KMT and the CCP. After a long war with the KMT, the CCP established the current nation-state in 1949, the PRC, finishing its nation-building process. As the nation-state was constructed, the CCP government took a series of measures to promote people's nationalism, for example, setting up state-controlled schools and a state-organized propaganda apparatus. Especially in the Patriotic Education Campaign in the reform era, the government made great efforts to enhance state nationalism to legitimize its rule. State nationalism affects popular nationalism to a large extent. If popular nationalism is too strong, the government will have an incentive to adjust it to a stable level. The relation between popular nationalism and the rule of the government is perhaps best expressed in the Chinese saying: "the



water that bears the boat is the same that swallows it up (*shui neng zai zhou, yi neng fu zhou* 水能载舟，亦能覆舟).”