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

Zhang, Q.

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Chapter 3 Mass Communication

Mass communication plays an essential role in spreading various messages. Richard Harris (2004, 1) indicates that people now are “swimming in the media sea,” where they find various leisure activities and acquire all kinds of information. For instance, many TV and radio stations provide news broadcasts and entertainment programs specifically designed for mass taste. In the last several decades, with the popularization of the Internet and communication devices (especially smartphones and tablets), mass communication was greatly facilitated, and information became much more easily accessible. Under the influence of mass communication, the world becomes more integrated, and people’s lives are fundamentally changed from a simple style into a diversified one.

The origin of mass communication is associated with the invention of various media forms. Newspapers, as the earliest form of mass communication, emerged in people’s lives in the 17th century (Mitchell, 2007). By the 20th century, further progress in science and technology led to the invention of other media forms. To be more specific, 1906 saw the first public radio broadcast produced by Fessenden (Baudino & Kittross, 1977, 64), followed by Philo Farnsworth’s invention of television in the 1930s (Schwartz, 2000). After that, John Mauchly and J. Presper Eckert introduced the first electronic digital computer in 1946 (Burks & Burks, 1981, 311). Mass communication then tremendously speeded up with these inventions.

Mass communication is instrumental in creating and disseminating nationalism. As already noted by Anderson (1991, 61) in the previous chapter, the printing press³¹ and capitalism contributed to the origin of nationalism. Harold Innis (2007, 126) gives a useful account of the emergence of

³¹ The printing press raises two issues. First, the question of who invented printing technology is controversial. Generally, people consider either Chinese alchemist Bi Sheng or German printer Johannes Gutenberg as the inventors of printing technology. Shelton Gunaratne (2001, 464) argues that Bi invented moveable type printing in the mid-11th century in China, and Gutenberg independently invented this in the West four hundred years later. The most distinctive character of Bi’s invention was repetition instead of design-for-market (Carothers, cited in McLuhan 1962, 34). In contrast, Gutenberg printed many books, including the Bible, in the 15th century, making him known as the inventor of the printing press (Gunaratne, 2001). I agree with Gunaratne that printing technology originates in China. However, concerning the popularization of the printing press, I tend to regard that Gutenberg’s invention greatly accelerated the development of mass communication because Bi’s technology was not widely applied during his time (Anderson, 1991). Second, the printing press is only one channel for mass communication. As I will discuss in detail below, mass communication is carried out by three media types: print media, electronic media, and Internet media, which belong to different categories of technology. The carriers of print media are mainly paper, relying on printing technology. Digital media are visual and audible, depending on various electronic devices. Internet media are based on electronic media with extra Internet access, increasing interactivity among communicators.

nationalism and argues that printing technology that normalized the vernaculars in newspapers created an opportunity for the emergence of nationalism. Billig (1995) contends that mass media reinforce nationalism, as media are where the symbols of nationalism are flagged. In societies with advanced information and communication systems, mass communication becomes more and more significant, and almost everyone in modern society has access to certain forms of mass communication. It accelerates the spread of nationalism in the global realm.

In this chapter, I will explore the theories on mass communication, mass media in communication, and the operations of mass communication in the PRC by addressing the following questions: what is mass communication? How does it originate? How is it presented to people, and in what forms? What are the social functions of mass media? What is propaganda? How is mass communication related to propaganda and politics? How do Chinese mass media develop, and how are they reformed? What is the impact of media reform on Chinese political communication, including patriotic propaganda? How does the Internet facilitate online communication, particularly online expressions of nationalism, in the PRC? How are state nationalism shaped through mass communication in different phases of the reform era to consolidate state legitimacy? How does state nationalism shape popular nationalism to maintain legitimacy? What is the current situation of Chinese nationalism in terms of strength and demographics?

3.1 Theories on Mass Communication

Mass media take different perspectives to inform audiences of updated information in mass communication. In the process, media practitioners establish various discourses to shape public opinion by applying media theories, such as agenda setting and framing. This section discusses the theoretical frame of mass communication, mass media, agenda setting, and framing theories widely used by media practitioners.

3.1.1 Definitions of Mass Communication

The term “mass communication” is understandable in two aspects: mass and communication. Noel Carroll (1998) indicates that “mass” refers to a large audience rather than individuals or several people, and the content of information is to be disseminated at large. A useful definition of

“communication” comes from Manuel Castells (2009, 54): “the sharing of meaning through the exchange of information.” We can phrase this as the interaction between information disseminators and receivers (verbally or nonverbally) for this research. Mass communication does not function in traditional ways, such as face-to-face and person-to-person information exchanges; instead, the communication process is anonymous. Furthermore, this dissemination of information in the form of mass communication is not a dialogue but “predominantly one-directional” (Castells, 2009, 55). Although people conduct mass communication through different media forms, in official communication channels such as national television news, the disseminators who control mass media have dominant discourse power and decide what to or not to publish or discuss.

Harris (2004, 4) explains these constituent terms, “mass” and “communication,” from the perspective of cognitive psychology. Mass communication is “mass” for three reasons: first, audience members are anonymous and diverse, from all walks of life, and their number is huge (Wright, 1959, cited in Harris, 2004, 4). Second, mass communication sources, monopolized by big companies and the states, are institutional and organizational (Harris, 2004, 4). For example, in the US, most mass media are in the hands of private companies, and in the PRC, communication sources, especially sensitive sources, are tightly manipulated by Chinese authorities through propaganda apparatus. Third, economic consideration on advertising that aims to attract a large audience controls the basic functions of the media (Harris, 2004, 4). It is communication (in a two-way sense) because audiences usually give some response. To a certain extent, communication by nature is reciprocal. The statuses of information disseminators and receivers are different in practice. Information disseminators such as big media companies or the government normally control information sources, putting them in a dominant position in the communication chain. Receivers are the targets of disseminated information, and in mass communication, it is possible that disseminators inconspicuously impose certain ideas on the receivers, which may impact their behavior.

Two types of mass communication jointly shape public opinion in the Internet sphere: top-down vertical communication (a traditional way) and multi-end information flows (the current situation). Specifically, top-down vertical communication refers to activities between a small number of information disseminators and a huge number of receivers. The disseminators release information

through specific channels for various purposes, such as notifying, educating, and warning the receivers. After receiving the messages, receivers consciously or unconsciously give feedback to disseminators. In addition, as information disseminators usually monopolize communication sources, receivers have no other channels to obtain such information, and they highly depend on accessing official information.

Thanks to the emergence of Internet media, especially Web 2.0,³² multi-end information flows took dominance. Shifting from passive consumers of media content, audiences have gradually taken on the role of message disseminators, and the original disseminators have also adopted the role of receivers (Vickery, Wunsch-Vincent & OECD, 2007, 64). Due to the nature of the Internet, all Internet users can principally act as a broadcast station (Shirky, 2008). Thus, user-generated content becomes important product of Internet communication, leading to the emergence of participatory culture (Vickery et al., 2007; Jenkins, 2006). Thus, I view information disseminators and receivers as alternative agents in the same communication chain, as they can change their roles from time to time.

Taking the impact of Internet media into account, my definition of mass communication is as follows: information transmission from media companies to a large number of receivers, followed by broad reflections and idea exchanges (both occurring on the Internet) among the receivers. The media content generated by the receivers becomes an information resource for further communication and a barometer to gauge public opinion needed by media outlets and media companies. This definition covers a communication process that entails both multi-end information flows and top-down vertical communication. In democratic countries, media sectors are generally independent without much external influence, but in authoritarian countries, they are directly or indirectly influenced by the state. Although media outlets and media companies dominate communication processes, Internet media prompt receivers to repost and comment on a topic, making online communication swifter and more interactive than traditional media.

³²Web 2.0 is a term coined by Darcy DiNucci (1999), referring to Internet services that focus on user-centered online interactivities.

The process of mass communication as defined above includes three phases: the first is the transmission of information (in the form of mass media content) from information disseminators (media outlets and media companies) to receivers; the second is reflection and discussion among receivers, thus producing user-generated content; and the third phase is monitoring and evaluating public opinion by media outlets and media companies via feedback from user-generated content. The following figure shows this communication loop:

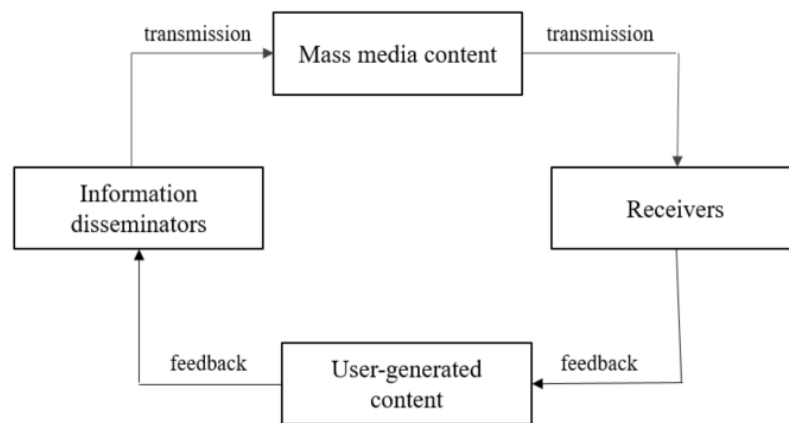


Figure 3.1 Communication loop

3.1.2 Mass Media

Mass media are core channels for the implementation of mass communication. The epithet “mass” applies to media because “they make their products technologically available to large audiences, even if they do not command large audiences” (Carroll, 1998, 188). In the following part, I will discuss the classification, convergence, content, and social functions of mass media.

Media Classification

The forms of mass media fall into three categories: print media, (traditional) electronic media, and a sub-category of the latter: Internet media. The first two types emphasize traditional top-down ways of information dissemination. Internet media provide more possibilities of interaction between information disseminators and audiences, besides improving communication efficiency (digital content usually reaches audiences faster than other media forms). Print media include newspapers,

books, magazines, posters, etc. Traditional electronic media are radio, television, film, etc. Internet media are electronic media that are connected to the network. The devices involve networked computers, smartphones, tablets, etc.

Newspapers take the leading position among the printed forms of mass communication. To create normative news, newspaper journalists have to comply with certain “news values.”³³ The values vary in different countries based on the purpose and orientation of different newspaper offices. Timeliness, accuracy, and objectivity are the basic values for many newspapers (Fuller, 1996). By setting up these values, newspapers cater to audiences’ tastes to attract more attention. Target audiences, content types, and issuing time and frequency form different standards of classification for newspapers. Table 3.1.2 shows different classifications, based on these standards of newspapers in the PRC, with examples:

Standards of classification	Types of newspapers
Issuing time and frequency	Daily newspapers, evening newspapers, weekly newspapers, and monthly newspapers
Content	Health newspapers, sports newspapers, education newspapers, entertainment newspapers, etc.
Target audiences	Women’s newspapers, children’s newspapers, farmers’ newspapers, etc.

Table 3.1.2 Classification of newspapers in the PRC

Among many types of newspapers, the development of each kind of newspaper varies in different periods and places, depending on the economy and culture of areas. Stockmann (2012, 229) indicates that people in rural areas of the PRC are less interested in newspapers than those in urban areas and that people in the developed eastern part of the PRC prefer more marketized newspapers than the less developed western area.

Electronic media that require lower literacy are more user-friendly than print media. Radio, as a

³³ Street (2001, 19) defines news value as “the working assumptions of journalists about the extent to which an event matters and what is significant about it.”

popular electronic media form, provides audiences with pure aural programs. Live broadcast radio transmits breaking news faster than newspapers. With some characteristics of newspapers and radio, television provides audiences with visualized and audible enjoyment, making communication more direct, vivid, and understandable.³⁴ In addition, it has some societal and political functions, as “television is important for enhancing national identity, providing an outlet for domestic media content and getting news and information to the public, which is especially critical in times of emergencies” (Sanou, 2011, foreword).

Media Convergence

Convergence technology generates Internet media by connecting the traditional media (newspapers, radio, and television) with the Internet. More specifically, this technology remediates Internet service and the existing media content, such as text, image, and sound. Technologies are converged for the multi-functionality of one medium because “our culture wants both to multiply its media and to erase all traces of mediation” (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, 5). Bolter and Grusin (1999, 19) contend that remediation is realized through the oscillation between immediacy and hypermediacy. Immediacy represents transparency and authenticity; hypermediacy makes audiences aware of the presence of media they use. For Internet media, interfaces remind audiences of hypermediacy, but the refresh rate of data (visual content) creates immediacy.

Media convergence brings about a huge alteration to mass communication. Henry Jenkins (2006, 15-16) notes that “Convergence alters the logic by which media industries operate and by which media consumers produce news and entertainment.” Audiences have become more active than before in media use. Internet media have set up multiple communication tools connected to the Internet that promise to enhance the interaction between information disseminators and receivers. Although media convergence does not generate more content, it brings about more efficient distribution for content (van der Wurff, 2008). With the Internet, mass media can offer users a more convenient and efficient way to access information and actively participate in current news discussions. Media convergence thus generates more user participation in mass communication than

³⁴ For this point, McLuhan (1964/2003) distinguished two kinds of media: cold media and hot media, based on the definition of media and audience’s participation in media use. He regarded television as cold media, while newspapers as hot media, which is the opposite of my understanding of cold/hot media.

before and creates a “participatory culture” among the audiences (Jenkins, 2006).

Various media devices are the basis for media convergence. Networked computers are the first devices on which users can access the Internet, and they have remained a popular converged channel for mass communication. However, they are not the only access point to the Internet. As Castells (2009, 63) argues, “The Internet from wireless devices becomes the critical factor for a new wave of Internet diffusion on the planet.” The other devices, such as tablets and smartphones, also absorb the advantages of traditional media and surpass them with more efficient, diversified, and interactive content.

Media Content

What kind of content is considered suitable in mass communication? How do information disseminators organize media content into mass communication processes? If information disseminators intend to attract audiences’ attention, the content should be at least related to potential audiences and organized suitably. Media content should not only inform people of information but also bear characteristics of an artwork, specifically, a mass artwork that Carroll defines as follows:

X is a mass artwork if and only if 1. x is a multiple instance or type artwork, 2. produced and distributed by a mass technology, 3. which artwork is intentionally designed to gravitate in its structure choices (e.g., its narrative forms, symbolism, intended affect, and even its content) toward those choices that promise accessibility with minimum effort, virtually on first contact, for the largest number of untutored (or relatively untutored) audiences (Carroll, 1998, 196).

This definition distinguishes three core features of a mass artwork: art, mass delivery, and easy accessibility. First, a mass artwork is a kind of art. Although it may be different from traditional art, it is derived from traditional art forms, carrying related artistic features. Second, a mass artwork is produced through a mass delivery system defined as “a technology with the capacity to deliver the same performance or the same object to more than one reception site simultaneously” (Carroll, 1998, 199). Duplication and the mass delivery system are the prerequisites of a large number of audiences. They help audiences get access to such mass artwork. Third, the most important feature of a mass

artwork is easy accessibility. Distinct from avant-garde art that requires serious investments in time, knowledge, and connoisseurship from audiences, mass artwork is dedicated to producing comprehensible, easy work for a great number of people, including those who have not been trained in the related field before.

Some debates interpret the relationship between avant-garde art, popular art, and mass art. Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel (1967, 83) suggest that popular art is connected to high art in a way that a serious artist focuses on the actual world, draws upon common types, and sharpens his observation through popular artwork. They also point out that “where popular art in its modern forms exists only through the medium of a personal style, mass art has no personal quality but, instead, a high degree of personalization” (Carrooll, 1998, 68). While avant-garde art confounds audiences’ expectations, mass art builds and reinforces them (Carroll, 1998, 193). Carroll (1998, 189) notes that mass art belongs to popular art, but not every kind of popular art is mass art. Two criteria distinguish mass art from popular art and avant-garde art: mass media technology and easy accessibility. For example, vaudeville theatre, popular in the late 19th and early 20th century in the US and Canada, is a famous art form. Yet, since it is not broadcasted to a great many people through mass media, it is not regarded as mass art. Some avant-garde works are broadcast through mass media, but they are also not viewed as mass art either because they are not designed for mass accessibility.

In short, although Carroll does not focus much on the specific content of mass communication (such as news or sporting events), his insight into mass art is highly relevant to what counts as mass communication. Mass art is an important criterion that makes mass communication attractive to an audience. To be mass art, the content of mass communication should bear the following characteristics: the aesthetics of art, duplicability with mass media, ease of comprehension by (relatively) untutored audiences, and a design suitable for mass accessibility. In this way mass communication can make itself a kind of mass artwork to draw audiences’ attention. For example, in Chapter 5 on a government-staged mass media event, the Beijing Olympics, the music, narration, and aesthetic sense of the artistic performance in its opening ceremony make it mass artwork.

Media, as “the extensions of man [*sic*]” (McLuhan, 1964/2003), have several social functions. From the perspective of sociology, Harold Lasswell (1948, 217) identifies three of these functions in mass media: (1) surveillance of the environment; (2) correlation of various parts of society in responding to the environment; (3) transmission of social heritage from one generation to the next. Based on Lasswell’s argument, Charles Wright (1959, 16) adds a fourth one: entertainment. He analyzes the function of mass-communicated news as surveillance of the environment: mass media monitor information dynamics of society and take responsibility to inform people about the situation of their environment. The downside is that such information might solicit an unfavorable response. For example, Wright (1959) indicates that news on disasters offered by mass media may foster panic. Similarly, “uncensored news about the world potentially threatens the structure of any society” (Wright, 1959, 16).³⁵

Mass communication plays an important role in correlating different parts of society. As society is composed of many parts—individuals, associations, various parties, etc.—various views on a particular issue may exist for each of these. Therefore, how to organize all the parts into a whole entity to respond to the environment becomes an issue for “specialized leaders.”³⁶ One approach is through mass communication. Mass media, manipulated by authority agencies with intellectuals and experts, dominates power in the communication through cultural hegemony.³⁷ Yet, what constructs power in communication? Castells (2009, 10) argues that “power is the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favor the empowered actor’s will, interests and value.” In mass communication, specialized leaders, intellectuals, and professionals from the authority agencies are the actors who desire to influence people by creating hegemonic discourses. To some extent, many people’s world views are molded by those with power, but others keep struggling to counter such discourse through their own usage of media. Wright (1959, 18) indicates that to realize the correlation, specialized leaders set a public agenda to guide audiences’ communication act (for details, see the following section on

³⁵ As a counterpoint, Susanne Hoffman (2002) notes that politicians can use disasters for political purposes, i.e., use “social panic” to enforce their vision of social order.

³⁶ Lasswell (1948, 218) indicates that these specialized leaders are the correlators, such as editors, journalists, and speakers, who are the message senders in communication chains.

³⁷ To explain cultural hegemony, Antonio Gramsci (1971, 12) holds that the superstructure levels include civil society and political society controlled by intellectual groups who exercise social hegemony to lower strata: common people

agenda setting theory).

The third function of mass communication identified by Lasswell is to transmit social, cultural heritage from one generation to the next, or rather, to maintain cultural inheritance by educating people. Wright (1959) notes that cultural transmission continues socialization among people. Yet, he criticizes mass production of artistic materials, as huge duplication may incur “a loss of quality” with mass broadcast and depersonalization of the process of socialization by mass media (Wright, 1959, 19-20). In other words, what is taught by mass media is not fit for every individual. If so, hegemonic discourse impoverishes public discussions, which is harmful to the development of society. Although mass media do not offer good education to everyone, they sometimes stimulate audiences’ emotions and inspire their thoughts on many aspects of work and life. Carroll (1998, 276) argues that artworks tend to gravitate universal emotions, including anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise, thus making it possible for people to resonate with what they see through mass media. Therefore, as there are a thousand ways to understand an artwork, they inspire different thoughts of people and further influence their behavior.

Entertainment is an additional function proposed by Wright. Mass media relax audiences with entertaining content. For example, in many newspapers, sports news and entertainment news sections offer information about football matches, new movies, pop stars, etc. In addition, many TV programs, including music concerts, soap operas, and talk shows, are broadcast, bringing audiences to a relaxed and enjoyable mode. For its dysfunction, Wright (1959, 20) argues that mass entertainment “fails to raise public taste to the level that might be achieved by less extensive forms of entertainment such as the theater, classic books, or opera.” Some people believe that as the content of mass entertainment is adapted to fit audiences’ understanding, it loses part of the aesthetics of original art forms. However, this view is rather conservative and is criticized by Carroll and Jenkins for its elitist position. Carroll (1998) values mass art in mass communication. Similarly, focusing on audiences’ participation in media usage, Jenkins (2006) indicates that bottom-up convergence culture shaped by mass consumers offsets top-down delivered culture imposed by media conglomerates, which creates a diversified culture for audiences.

Social functions of mass communication shape people's perception of the world, partly owing to agenda setting and framing of mass media. In the following section, I will introduce the two media theories that construct media content.

3.1.3 Agenda Setting and Framing Theories

Agenda setting is critical to highlight certain topics, serving the communication purposes of the information disseminators. Walter Lipmann (1922/2007, 10) argues that "The only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event." He indicates that mass media that create a pseudo-environment for people are important in shaping people's mental image of the world (Lipmann, 1922/2007). The pseudo-environment created by media covers the reality of the world. Particularly, as people continuously use mass media nowadays, mass communication affects their attitudes or ideologies on various issues (Thompson, 1990). Lipmann (1922/2007) does not use the term "agenda setting," but shows how mass media construct the world image in people's heads and then influence public opinion.

Bernard Cohen (1963, 13) points out that agenda setting does not tell people what to think but what to think about. Yet, the term "agenda setting" did not gain its populace until 1972, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw formally conducted research on a political campaign in the US. As numerous events happen worldwide every day, newspapers cannot cover everything and every detail in news reports. The need for orientation defined in relevance and uncertainty stimulates people to call for an agenda (McCombs, 2010, 54). In this case, media practitioners, or rather, gatekeepers³⁸, have an incentive to select some news items to transfer "the salience from the media agenda to the public agenda" (McCombs, 2010, 5).

Agenda setting theory refers to the mechanism that mass media set the agenda for audiences to focus on certain topics but neglect others by emphasizing those communicators intend to make salient (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). For example, during a serious economic crisis, if two conflicting events take place at the same time (one is exciting news about the championship of a national sports team,

³⁸According to Wilbur Schramm (1964, 85), gatekeepers are the persons who select the news and the reporters who talk to 'news sources.'"

and the other is on a drought disaster that leads to continuous falling of farmers' incomes), gatekeepers would choose to highlight the positive news but cover little or even nothing about economic difficulties encountered by the farmers.

Agenda setting has two levels: issue highlighting and attributes. McCombs (2010) defines a public issue as an object competing for the attention of journalists and audiences. To highlight the issue constitutes the first level of agenda setting, resonating with telling people what to think. Attributes are a group of characteristics that feature the objects, and they compose the second level of agenda setting, affecting audiences' understanding of the objects. As McCombs (2010, 71) suggests, this level tells people how to think about the objects. In other words, agenda setting is incorporated with another media theory: framing.

Scholars give different definitions to framing. Robert Entman (1993, 52) indicates that "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described." Framing focuses on concrete aspects of news reports instead of the whole report. Stephen Reese (2001, 11) defines framing as "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world." From a critical and constructionist perspective, he regards frames as the representation of power, with which social actors such as media practitioners actively construct the social world (Reese, 2010, 19). In this sense, framing contributes to hegemonic political discourse in news texts to shape public opinion.

Agenda setting links with framing at both the first and the second levels. At the first level, object agenda setting selects particular issues that are precipitated by framing, as Entman (2010, 336) suggests that agenda setting can be considered another name for realizing the first function of framing: problem definition; at the second level, agenda setting can be seen as a subset of framing. McCombs (2010, 87) indicates that attribute agenda setting is "a particular frame" illuminating how people "picture topics in the news." Additionally, Coleman (2010, 251) argues that "a frame is the overarching master narrative, under which there can be several attributes." As macro-attributes,

“frames are bundling devices for lower-order attributes” (McCombs, 2010, 91). Although agenda setting and framing have much overlap in terms of functions, some differences still exist on two aspects: agenda setting emphasizes the salience of certain topics, but framing discusses what the topics are; agenda setting focuses on the salience of respective attributes of the objects, while framing explores these characteristics from a holistic and integrated perspective.

Media practitioners employ similar strategies in agenda setting and framing. One strategy is heavy reporting of important/favorable news but little to no trivial/unfavorable news reporting.³⁹ Besides, “the lead story on page 1, front page versus inside page, the size of the headline and even the length of the story” are methods to highlight the topics (McCombs, 2010, 2). What media practitioners select for news release limits the topics that audiences can access, and, in this way, public opinion is potentially oriented. To further achieve the desired or predetermined effect, news editors apply framing devices such as metaphors, catchphrases, and lexical choice. What is more, the format and style of news texts sometimes also affect audiences’ understanding of a particular issue. For example, texts attached with images and videos more vividly depict news details than text-only news. With these strategies, mass media design news content in the way that they aim to set up certain stereotypes in audiences’ heads and then guide their thoughts and behaviors.

3.2 Propaganda in Mass Communication

Propaganda serves the intended purposes of information disseminators in mass communication. Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell (1999, 97) suggest that “The late 19th and early 20th centuries were periods of great expansion of propagandistic activities. The growth of the mass media and improvements in transportation led to the development of mass audiences for propaganda, increasing its use and effectiveness.” It indicates that the development of propaganda and mass communication was at a similar pace. In the meantime, propagandistic activities, to a large extent, exist in mass communication.

Propaganda is a commonly used word in both official discourses and people’s daily lives in the PRC. The CCP has attached great importance to implementing political propaganda since its founding in

³⁹ Media practitioners and/or the government (in authoritarian states) will decide the important issues.

1921. Jacques Ellul (1973, 304) argues that organization is a distinctive character of Mao's propaganda, and "every individual must be put into a network comprising many organizations that surround him on all sides and control him on all levels" in the Mao era. By implementing political propaganda, the CCP confined the people within the frame of organization. As noted in the previous section, among the four functions of mass communication, to realize the third one: the correlation of the parts of society, we mostly need mass communication or propaganda to mobilize the different parts to combine in an integrated community. It might be necessary for propagandists to use propaganda activities to coordinate people in society, as Ellul (1973, 128) argues that "any modern state, even a democratic one, is burdened with the task of acting through propaganda. It cannot act otherwise." Thus, I set up the questions: What is propaganda? How to differentiate propaganda from mass communication? How does it come to people's lives in mass communication? How is it related to politics? What is censorship in propaganda? How does censorship work? I will explore these questions in the following sections.

3.2.1 Definition of Propaganda

Propaganda has a derogatory connotation in the English-speaking world, implying a meaning of cheating, distortion, brainwashing, etc. However, in the Chinese context, propaganda (*xuanchuan* 宣传) is a neutral term, more positively connoted, and broadly used in political and commercial communication.

Despite its bad reputation, there might be some necessity of propaganda. Edward Bernays (1928) emphasizes such a necessity for society by arguing that propaganda leads people's behavior and establishes certain order for society. He argues that in a commodity economy, various products have different prices. To buy the products with the best performance-price ratio, people need to investigate all the prices of the same product. If everyone searches the prices, the market will be jammed (Bernays, 1928). Similarly, in political situations, if nobody guides people's behavior and every individual behaves as s/he wishes, society will be in disorder. "To avoid such confusion, society consents to have its choice narrowed to ideas and objects brought to its attention through propaganda of all kinds" (Bernays, 1928, 11). In this situation, people yearn for the coming of

propaganda (Bernays, 1928).⁴⁰ In addition, Nicholas O'Shaughnessy (2004, 39) notes that the content of propaganda is emotional, and it meets people's emotional demands. He further indicates that "propaganda is seen as a key element in the ability of advanced industrial and post-industrial societies to organize and integrate themselves and exert some sort of authority over their individual publics" (Bernays, 1928, 49).

What is propaganda? Bernays (1928, 20) defines propaganda as "the mechanism by which ideas are disseminated on a large scale, in the broad sense of an organized effort to spread a particular belief or doctrine." He considers that propagandists carry out propaganda on a large scale, a basic element of mass communication. The purpose of propaganda is "a particular belief or doctrine" (Bernays, 1928, 48). This means that a propagandist has an intention to affect the thought of information receivers. Lasswell (1927, 627) gives this definition of propaganda: "Propaganda is the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols." Significant symbols refer to "objects which have a standard meaning in a group" (Lasswell, 1927, 627). In the process of propaganda, for his own purpose, a propagandist shapes or modifies collective attitudes that are amenable to significant symbols.

In addition, Jowett and O'Donnell (1999, 4) define propaganda as "the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist." In this definition, "deliberate" does not refer to a derogatory sense but instead shows that propaganda is full of consideration about the most effective way to impose a certain ideology. The goal of propaganda is to achieve the propagandists' intent, that is, "to create a certain state or states in a certain audience" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, 6). The beneficiaries of propaganda are propagandists rather than audiences. Jowett and O'Donnell's definition (1999) indicates three steps that realize propagandists' goals: first, shape perceptions through languages and images; second, manipulate cognitions by affecting one's beliefs and attitudes; third, direct a specific behavior. Furthermore, Jowett and O'Donnell note what the propagandist should do:

⁴⁰ It should be pointed out that Bernays was rather paternalistic in his view of society.

Beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are desirable end states for propagandistic purposes and determine the formation of a propaganda message or campaign or both. Because so many factors determine the formation of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, the propagandist has to gather a great deal of information about the intended audience (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, 9).

Every government in the world takes advantage of propaganda to accomplish its ends (Smith et al., 1946, 1). By discussing external characteristics of propaganda, Ellul (1973, 61) argues that “propaganda is a set of methods employed by an organized group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its actions of a mass of individuals, psychologically unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated in an organization.” The propagandist is “an organized group” whose purpose is to mobilize audiences to actively join or at least support the activity. This mobilization is mainly realized by controlling public psychology, as individuals need propaganda to gain satisfaction in society (Ellul, 1973).

Propaganda aims to shape favorable political thoughts. In modern society, propaganda is mostly conducted in mass communication to arouse people's emotions and shape their ideas on particular issues. By propaganda, I mean it is the reinforcement of a certain attitude or ideology through mass communication to achieve propagandists' purposes. The attitude is related to public opinion on the authorities, to a proposal from the government, and to the relationship between people and public servants, etc. The propaganda strategy aims to arouse positive public opinion, to oppress objections, or at least to stop those in-between ideas from becoming objections (Lasswell, 1927, 629).

Propaganda is similar to mass communication in some respects, as both of them disseminate information to a large audience by producing information on a large scale (Bernays, 1928). In terms of their differences, communication is multidirectional, while propaganda is one directional, i.e., from propagandists to receivers. Propaganda attaches more importance to the propaganda effect than mass communication. To be more specific, mass communication is a broad concept involving many aspects of certain facts, while propaganda focuses more on the opinion (attitudinal or ideological influence) to prompt people to act in a certain way that propagandists expect. In other

words, a certain attitude that frequently emerges is usually the core content of propaganda, serving propagandists' purposes. The content of mass communication is variable, and information transmission is based on communication technology. Yet, propagandists also conduct propaganda via face-to-face channels besides mass media. For example, patriotic education in Chinese classes is face-to-face political propaganda transmitted from teachers to students. What is more, propaganda has a stronger didactic or paternalistic slant than mass communication.

Propagandists use different types of propaganda for different aims. Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) classify three types of propaganda by colors entailing white, gray, and black, based on the source and accuracy of information. White propaganda is of the highest reliability, convincing audiences of certain facts. For example, a government press conference is typical white propaganda aimed at disseminating official information on special issues.

Black propaganda is related to inaccurate sources aimed at spreading rumors. Jowett and O'Donnell (1999, 15) argue that "the success or failure of black propaganda depends on the receiver's willingness to accept the credibility of the source and the content of the message." The military used black propaganda in the past, but nowadays, it is often used in sensational reporting for political or commercial ends. For instance, when a pop star introduces his/her new movie, his/her team sometimes may create certain topics by announcing a non-existent affair with his/her new partner. In this way, audiences' attention may be first attracted to the scandal and then to the pop star's new movie. This can help his/her new movie attract enough attention to make huge profits. In addition, during the 2016 US presidential election campaign, a large amount of black propaganda appeared on social media such as Facebook, making the term "fake news" popular in many countries. In recent years, false news has frequently emerged on the Internet to influence political decisions, using sensational titles or fake content as a kind of black propaganda.

Gray propaganda falls between white and black propaganda, with the source and the accuracy of information suspended. For example, concerning big accidents, news reporting in the PRC sometimes only covers stories in the beginning without continuous reports or only covers parts of the stories that do not threaten the administration of the government (In many cases, the government

should take the main responsibility of the accidents for its unqualified social management). It is a way to hide the real source of information and divert audiences' attention from the accidents. In short, gray propaganda is used by agents to fight against competitors in the military, politics, or business sectors.

3.2.2 Propaganda and Politics

Propaganda is mainly connected with commerce and politics, as “political parties and interest groups engage legitimately in propaganda exercises” (Street, 2001, 109). Here the interest groups refer to companies that aim to popularize their products. In commercial sectors, companies often use advertisements, or rather, propaganda, to increase sales by highlighting some special functions of products. In addition, in representational forms of politics, such as the PRC politics, the government uses propaganda to guide citizens' thoughts and actions,⁴¹ as politics is considered as the business of politicians and “the sincere and gifted politician is able, by the instrument of propaganda, to mold and form the will of people” (Bernays, 1928, 92).

Strategical use of propaganda helps politicians realize smooth social governance. “If a politician is a real leader, he will be able, by skillful use of propaganda, to lead the people, instead of following the people by means of the clumsy instrument of trial and error” (Bernays, 1928, 112). Censorship is a tactic commonly used by propagandists. Through censorship, propagandists reduce some risks brought by harmful information.

3.2.3 Censorship

Censorship is a way of imposing media control. Like propaganda, it does not just exist in authoritarian countries, but in fact, it is a common phenomenon in mass communication all over the world, as “every state exercises some control over what journalism writes or broadcast” (Street, 2001, 104). Media control through censorship “is fundamental to determining whether regimes survive or fall” (Lorentzen, 2014, 413). Censorship filters content including negative news, politically sensitive issues, violence, pornography, etc., showing the government a positive image and creating an advantageous environment for favorable public opinion.

⁴¹ In countries with consensus-based politics, propaganda is not a requirement for governance, but it exists.

The government and/or media companies censor(s) news information when they find it necessary. By distinguishing hard and soft censorship, Schneider (2012, 157) proposes that censorship is “any authoritative action that actively discourages the construction of certain discursive positions, either prior or subsequent to the expression of the respective discourse.” The government usually initiates the authoritative action. In the PRC, as news presents a critical information form that propagates ideology, policy, and rules, the government spares no effort to control news production and distribution from media outlets. Censorship thus becomes an essential step for the government to monitor news dissemination and regulate public opinion. Besides news, in the digital age, as user-generated messages include various information, the government may also censor sensitive content that arousing social panic or threats to the state.

How to censor the news and user-generated content from mass media? Street (2001) proposes four techniques of news censorship. The first is to use state communications systems. If the state controls media systems, the media systems can more readily represent the interest of the government. The second is to control the distribution of information to journalists by press conferences. The third is to use media centers to manage institutionalized information. The last is to impose pressure on journalism through scrutiny of and complaints about media reporting. In terms of user-generated content, such as news comments and tweets, deleting unfavorable online content is common in the PRC. For example, if netizens post or repost anti-government expressions about a new social media policy, the Internet administration department may delete such content.

As censorship is an effective way for media control, the Chinese government implements strict censorship on media content that involves various types of information, especially those that harm CCP legitimacy (Brady, 2008). However, censorship at the different-level government is not equal. To be specific, censorship conducted by the central government takes priority over that of local governments. Kuang Xianwen (2018) indicates the central government attaches more importance to national guidelines and policies and the image of the central state and leadership, while the local governments focus on social stability and their own images. Dominating in the political system, the central government allows negative news on local governments. Media sectors conduct independent

investigative reporting as a supplementary of censorship on lower-level officialdom, which helps the central government maintain power (Lorentzen, 2014). What is more, no clear official guidelines are available to carry out censorship. Peter Lorentzen (2014, 411) argues that “rather than setting guidelines ahead of time, the Central Propaganda Department (CPD), under the direct control of the CCP’s Central Committee, issues a constant stream of specific directives and guidance regarding what news items can be reported and how to report them.”

In respect of online censorship, the Chinese government established the Golden Shield Project (*jindun gongcheng*, 金盾工程), or rather, the Great Firewall of China (GFW) in 1996 to block foreign websites and web services regarded as threats to public opinion management, including Facebook, Gmail, and YouTube. The GFW stops domestic Chinese reading information that the government deems harmful, but some Chinese people still try to access blocked information via Virtual Private Networks (VPNs). Although those people can jump across the GFW, they cannot achieve it all the time. In some cases, when sensitive political events happen (e.g., the 2009 Xinjiang riots), all VPN services were blocked to ensure social stability.

In addition to filtering sensitive content with GFW, political astroturfing is commonly seen in the PRC (Han, 2015). Employed by the government to guide public opinion (Bandurski, 2008; Han, 2015), a group of web administrators called the “Fifty-cent Army”⁴² (*wumao dang*, 五毛党) carry out astroturfing. Yang Guobin (2009, 50) notes that “their mission, however, is not to promote critical debate but rather to covertly guide the direction of debates following the principles laid down by the propaganda departments of the party.” They act as Internet commentators who delete negative public opinion or write pro-government comments⁴³. For each pro-government comment, they are believed to receive 50 RMB cents. In fact, sometimes, the commentators are paid even less than the average level, which leads to barely enough quantity and generally low quality in the content of comments (Han, 2015, 118). To be more exact, Han Rongbin (2015) argues that the Fifty-cent Army’s astroturfing fails to gain legitimacy for the government.

⁴² The Fifty-cent Army is a group of people working on the Internet to help the government administer online public opinion.

⁴³ It should be noted that writing a pro-government comment is a form of propaganda.

Although people may feel disgusted about censorship by the government, censorship has existed in political communication for a long time. Admittedly, sometimes appropriate censorship can stop rumors and avoid panic among people. For example, during the Japanese Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in 2011, many Chinese people fearfully rushed to buy salt because it was said that salt with iodine was helpful for radiation resistance, but the nuclear incident would pollute sea salt. This led to soaring prices and the depletion of salt stocks in many places in the PRC. Under these circumstances, it may be necessary for the government to censor such information to dispel the rumor, which is important for some overanxious people to relieve their worries after the incident.

Nevertheless, censorship covers truth, incurring fierce opposition sometimes. Chinese netizens find alternative methods to avoid censorship, for example, searching for censored information through VPN and coining various slang to discuss sensitive topics (e.g., using “zf” to refer to *zhengfu* 政府: the government). Overall, excessive censorship will ruin the effect of mass communication and generate dissatisfaction with the government.

3.3 Historical Development and Reform of Chinese Mass Media

Chinese mass media have developed at a fast pace since the 19th century. In the 19th and 20th centuries, many forms of mass media, such as newspapers, cinema, and radio, were successively imported to China from the West. During the 1920s and the 1930s, two major Parties, the KMT, and the CCP, actively established their own media forms to expand their influence. After assuming power in 1949, the CCP established many media forms besides newspapers and reformed the PRC’s media system and institutions, exerting a big influence on media development.

In the PRC, the state ran all forms of media and mainly used them for political propaganda until the launch of media reform in the 1990s. The reform profoundly changed the organization of media sectors by putting many media outlets into the market, but it did not change the state’s control over political communication. In that case, many media outlets lost financial support from the government and had to create revenue by themselves. The media restructuring campaign in 1996 witnessed the start of the conglomeration of media outlets, aiming to consolidate and strengthen the control of key media institutions by the CPD (Zhao, 2008, 104). Yet, the CCP still maintained its

hegemony by securing “command heights” of media sectors (Zhao, 2008, 121). In this section, I will introduce how traditional mass media: newspapers, cinema, radio, and television developed in China and how media reform influenced the media content.

Newspapers

Newspapers did not exist until the late 19th century when western powers extended publishing bases from coastal areas to many parts of China (Xu, 1994, 170). The *Shun Pao* (*Shen Bao* 申报) was the first western-style newspaper distributed in Shanghai in 1872 (Mitter, 2004, 76). In the 1919 May Fourth Movement, when intellectuals introduced Marxism to China, newspapers became important to spread western thoughts (Schwarcz, 1986, 259). The KMT established its Party organ, *the Central Daily News* (*Zhongyang Ribao* 中央日报), in 1928 in Shanghai (Hsu, 2014, 71).

The CCP also spared no effort to establish its own newspapers. Zhao (1998, 14) notes that in the beginning period of its founding in the 1920s, the CCP created organs and non-Party publications under its leadership. The principle for the media was the “mass line” (*qunzhong luxian* 群众路线), i.e., “the media are supposed to report the people’s opinions, concerns, and aspirations and to inform the leadership of the performance of cadres who are working directly with people” (Zhao, 1998, 25). In 1922, the CCP established the first Party organ, *the Guide* (Fang et al., 2002, 198). It reestablished a new system of Party organs, setting a basic guideline for the establishment of following newspapers in 1939 (Fang et al., 2002, 249-250).

Media control is a necessity for the CCP, but it was not the innovation of the CCP and Mao. Tony Saich (1991) indicates that following the policies of the Communist International (Comintern), Henk Sneevliet, as a helper for the formation of the CCP, noted the principle of media control. The CCP then used newspapers and magazines as paramount channels for propaganda after its founding in 1921. Mass media, in any form, had to submit to politics. Mao (1942) delivered a speech at the Forum of Literature and Art at Yan’an in 1942, pointing out that “there is, in fact, no such thing as art for art’s sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics.” This suggests that Chinese literature and art should be embedded with political potential. Mao reemphasized the Party’s domination of media.

The CCP, to a large extent, controlled news media but did not monopolize it. It allowed a few commercial newspapers and radio stations to satisfy the urban taste (Zhao, 1998). During 1949 and 1951, many Party-controlled newspapers were booming with numerous newspapers established, including *Worker's Daily*, *Guangming Daily*, *China Youth News*, and *Health News* and in 1953, the circulation of newspapers increased nearly two times compared with 1950 (Fang et al., 2002, 332).

Mass media were instrumental in propagating various political mass campaigns in the Mao era. In 1957, Mao launched the Anti-Rightist Campaign (*fan you yundong*, 反右运动) to suppress the intellectuals. "Big-character posters (*dazi bao* 大字报)" were a popular propaganda tool for class struggle during that period (Shi, 1997, 84). Following this campaign, Mao initiated the Great Leap Forward Campaign (*da yuejin* 大跃进, 1958-1962) to achieve huge progress in agriculture and industry. In the campaign, "the media played a notorious role" in the exaggeration of food production, leading to the Great Famine in the 1960s (Zhang, 2011, 35). In that period, the reporting of the role models was a distinctive characteristic of news reports. Media practitioners depicted well-known role models such as Lei Feng⁴⁴ and Jiao Yulu⁴⁵ to encourage the masses to cultivate good moral traits (Fang et al., 2002, 397). During the Cultural Revolution (*wenhua da geming*, 文化大革命 1966-1976), the circulation of newspapers had a special feature: most newspapers were suspended, but the total circulation was much increased (Fang et al., 2002, 406). This was because the Party mainly used unsuspended newspapers for positive political propaganda⁴⁶. In addition, repetitive reports were common in the propaganda due to the Party's censorship, because saying what others had published, nobody needed to be afraid of being purged or criticized. The authorities used 80% of the layout of local newspapers to publish articles in official organs (Fang et al., 2002, 406).

The reform and opening up in 1978 boosted the development of newspapers involving Party organs

⁴⁴ Lei Feng (1940-1962) is a Chinese soldier of the People's Liberation Army famous for selflessness and modesty.

⁴⁵ Jiao Yulu (1922-1964) is a CCP cadre praised by Mao for his devotion to the state.

⁴⁶ Regarding positive propaganda as a significant way to educate people, Mao (1961, 59) notes that "We should carry on constant propaganda among the people on the facts of world progress and the bright future ahead so that they will build their confidence in victory." After Mao, the following generations of Chinese leadership also have attached great importance to positive propaganda, as Brady (2008) argues that "'Focus on positive propaganda' has been a phrase like a mantra by successive leaders in propaganda work since 1989."

and commercial publications. The CCP gave some freedom to media sectors in the middle and late 1980s, which, however, aroused some challenges to the CCP's authority. The 1989 Tiananmen Square protests forced the CCP to react to these challenges by tightening the control of the mass media. Positive propaganda was frequently used in mass communication to gain public recognition and maintain stability in society. The implementation of the market economy in the 1990s gave rise to media reform. Besides political themes, media practitioners added commercialized elements to attract a big urban audience. Specifically, they established evening and metropolitan newspapers to offer audiences various kinds of soft news catered for leisure taste.

Cinema

Cinema emerged in China at the end of the 19th century. In 1896, the first foreign film was released in Shanghai, and the first Chinese film, *Dingjun Mountain* (*dingjun shan* 定军山), was made in 1905 (Lu, 1997). The film industry was completely commercialized in the 1920s in Shanghai, featuring period films (Pang, 2002, 22). The 1930s was the golden years of Chinese cinema under the influence of left-wing writers,⁴⁷ shaping the national identity of the filmmakers and the viewers (Pang, 2002, 73). In the 1940s, the development of cinema turned much slower and even stopped because of the anti-Japanese wars.

Inheriting Lenin's conviction, cinema was the most popular mass medium in the 1950s for Chinese propaganda (Chu, 2002; Pang, 2002; Donald & Keane, 2002), serving a political education end. During the Mao era, by establishing role models of worker-peasant-soldiers (*gongnongbing* 工农兵) or low-rank officials, films were broadcast in indoor and open-air cinemas to entertain and educate the masses. In the reform era, mainstream melody films⁴⁸ (*zhuxuanlü dianying* 主旋律电影) were popular in the cinema to rectify people's ideology, shifting the focus on senior Party leaders such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping (Chu, 2002).

With the commercialization and conglomeration of mass media in the mid-1990s, penetrated with

⁴⁷ The left-wing writers refer to in the 1930s, a group of Shanghai intellectuals, led by the celebrated writer Lu Xun (1881-1936), used writing as a cultural force to support the CCP to liberate the Chinese people.

⁴⁸ In the 1990s, films were used to propagate the "main melody" of the CCP, emphasizing patriotism, heroism, collectivism, etc.

political elements, entertainment films went into the market. Filmmakers had to find a balance between the commercialization and propaganda function of the mainstream melody films. One way to solve this problem was to choose an ideology acceptable to most people, such as traditional culture and patriotism, as the main theme of the films (Ma, 2011, 114).

Radio

Radio, broadcasting via loudspeakers in early times, emerged in China in the 1920s. The first radio station was established in 1923 in Shanghai with foreign assistance (Fang et al., 2002, 213). In 1928, the KMT founded the Central Radio Station⁴⁹ in Nanjing (Xu, 1994, 172). Using it as “an ideological weapon” (Howse, 1960, 59), the CCP set up Xinhua Radio Broadcast Station in Yan’an in 1940 and renamed it “China National Radio (CNR)” in 1949.

Radio became a popular mass medium after 1949. It was popular for one reason that it was audible and did not require high literacy. As many Chinese were not well educated in the Mao era, radio was an easier accessible medium than newspapers. In the 1970s and 1980s, radio was commonly used in urban China. From 1949 to 1978, radio was considered the main source of news information, as newspapers were mainly available to the elites (Chen & Liu, 2010, 74). In the 1990s, the popularization of TV sets that met audiences’ aural and visual demands led to radio decline. Radio gradually turned into the weakest medium among traditional media.

In the 21st century, however, radio regains its popularity, especially in urban areas (Fang et al., 2002). The reasons for the fast expansion of radio are: first, with economic development, people’s lifestyles change, calling for the return of radio. Especially in the last two decades, many Chinese families were able to afford a car equipped with in-vehicle broadcasting radio that provides drivers with real-time information such as weather forecasts and traffic jams. Second, radio has generated a special group of audiences who need effective communication without face-to-face interruption. As most radio stations introduce interactive programs, audiences can join such programs to share experiences and express feelings only with their voice, which other media may not offer. Third, the market economy in the reform era boosts the development of advertisement, so the low cost for

⁴⁹ It is now Radio Taiwan International (RTI).

advertising raised the competitive strength of radio. Like newspapers, radio has also established online broadcasting stations that adapt to the new media environment created by the Internet. Although it does not attract so many audiences as television, other media forms will not completely replace it.

Television

Television emerged in the PRC in 1958 with the establishment of Beijing Television (BTV) that later evolved into China Central Television (CCTV) (Chang, 1989). The household penetration rate of television was low until the late 1980s (Cooper-Chen & Liang, 2010). This was because the sluggish economy did not allow the television to reach many families. Yet, by the end of the 1980s, as most families were able to afford a TV set, television became the most popular mass medium and played a leading role in mass communication. Television has been an instrument for the propaganda of modernization, greatly influencing the cultural and political consciousness of Chinese urban citizens (Lull, 1991).

Switching Media Content

The reform in Chinese media sector in the 1990s led to the switch of media content. Before the reform era, news reports were featured with a perfect and positive sense (Chang, 1989, 258), but media commercialization in the 1990s prompted media practitioners to change media content by increasing commercialized, entertaining, or sometimes even negative elements without offending the government. Although taking a large proportion in mass communication, political content was not as overt as before to serve state propaganda.

Nationalism, in this situation, was still an important theme for media content. For example, TV series was a popular type carried out in the reform. In 1990, the first Chinese domestic drama, *Yearnings* (*kewang*, 渴望), was broadcast, and “television functions as an apparatus for objectifying ‘state desires.’” (Rofel, 1995, 313) Although the melodrama was presented in a seemingly apolitical way by focusing on love and moral issues, it still unfolded a political allegory of national identity or nationness (Rofel, 1995). The political content of various television series accounts for the cultural governance of the CCP in visual communication (Schneider, 2012). What was more, media

practitioners designed news programs by reporting negative aspects of society. In 1994, *Focus Report* (*Jiaodian Fangtan* 焦点访谈) was the first news program exposing social issues instead of implementing direct didactic and positive propaganda (Zhang, 2011). “Through such soft news, mainstream propaganda and commercial culture are combining to create an atmosphere of caring about people’s livelihoods and are nurturing a harmonious society” (Miao, 2011, 105). Various entertainment shows gained their popularity in the 1990s, representing the impact of media reform on entertainment TV programs (Zhang, 2011). These “entertainment shows mobilize the audience to pursue happiness and Chinese identity affirmation” (Zhao, 2009, 87). Media content then became more diversified for mass consumption.

Television, the most popular traditional media form, transmits live broadcasts of media events to promote political ideologies since “every nation-state has a political agenda—promoting nationalism or a specific version of cultural citizenship—in the media coverage of such events” (Sun, 2002, 119). In 1997, live broadcasts of media events, for instance, Deng Xiaoping’s funeral and Hong Kong’s return to China, were staged on television for the first time (Fang et al., 2002). After that, almost every significant media event was presented with live broadcasts, including national anniversary celebration parades, mega sports games, and important conferences. As a dominant medium in global households, television plays an essential role in the mass communication of media events (Potter, 2013, 102).

In short, with media reform in the 1990s, Chinese media content shifted from pure political propaganda to commercialized propaganda, becoming more varied to audiences. However, no matter how mass media developed in the PRC, they “are instruments to propagate the Party’s policy and directives, to persuade people about the correctness of a policy, and to tell them a good result of a particular policy” (Zhao, 1998, 26). Although mass media are mostly commercialized nowadays except the front runners, including *the People’s Daily* and Xinhua News Agency, they have to comply with the CCP’s regulations without challenging the authorities. In other words, in terms of political communication, mass media are under the surveillance of the CCP.

3.4 The Internet and Chinese Online Communication

Traditional media present the world to audiences. Yet, based on the traditional media, the Internet innovates mass communication in terms of efficiency and human interaction. It “offers an entirely different channel for understanding what people are saying, and how they are connecting” (Watts, 2007, 489). Online mass communication has gradually become an indispensable part of human behavior, besides traditional ways of communication.

The Internet did not enter the PRC until 1994 (Yang, 2009). With the advent of the Internet, Chinese traditional mass media were successively plugged into the network and established their online websites. Hu Xin (2002, 194) notes that “online media have been seen as an alternative, bring fresh views and more diverse information to the public sphere.” In 1996, newspapers such as the *People’s Daily* and the *Economic Daily* began to publish an electronic edition on the Internet. CNR established its official website in 1998. CCTV went online in 2009 by establishing a website named China Network Television (CNTV), offering web broadcasts. Online versions of traditional media, on the one hand, provide audiences with more channels to access the content of traditional media, but, on the other hand, they shift audiences’ attention to the Internet media.

Apart from the online versions of traditional media, the popularity of the Internet prompted the establishment of big media companies in the PRC. The major news media companies such as Sohu, NetEase were successively established in the late 1990s, largely changing audiences’ way of accessing information. The Internet companies would not challenge the government who exerts a great impact on their business, as Hu (2002, 193) indicates that “rather than taking political risks to make their fortune online, news companies have resorted to more tabloid forms of content including stories featuring violence and sex, as well as sports programs to attract eyeballs and clicks.”

Internet media produce diversified content, including videos, blogs, and opinion pieces, and set up various virtual communities, such as Internet forums, for audiences to exchange ideas. With the spread of enormous content, online mass communication thus became prevalent among media users. Audiences enjoy online content and sometimes act as discourse producers by voicing online opinions. This is similar to what Tai suggests:

The Internet has created the opportunity to allow Chinese netizens to express their opinions on important issues of interest and has thus become a barometer for politicians, government functionaries, and lawmakers among others to gauge public opinion and to consider actions thereafter (Tai, 2006, 205).

Cyberspace creates a place like a public sphere where netizens discuss issues and express emotions, including nationalist sentiments. Jürgen Habermas (1974, 50) defines the public sphere as a space between society and the state: the private life of the masses and the public life of the state controlled by empowered elites.⁵⁰ However, by pointing out that Internet communication “is an ideology of publicity in the service of communicative capitalism,” Jodi Dean (2003, 98) notes that the Net is not equal to the public sphere as conceptualized by Habermas for three reasons: first, the public sphere is not really “public,” as it excludes groups of people such as women and working classes, but the Internet sphere includes anyone who accesses the Web. Second, on the Internet, people lack face-to-face communication that exists in the public sphere. Third, the public sphere is organized by elites to reach a consensus, while the Net is disorganized and seeks contestation. Dean (2003, 105) instead defines the Net as a “zero institution”: “An empty signifier that itself has no determinate meaning but that signifies the presence of meaning.” This is because the Net “enables myriad conflicting constituencies to understand themselves as part of the same global structure even as they disagree over what the architecture of this structure should entail” (Dean, 2003, 106).

Although the Internet facilitates mass communication, it also brings strict regulation on digital content. As contestation and conflict are distinctive characteristics of the Internet sphere (Dean, 2003), cyberspace raises many unpredictable issues for media management and poses more challenges to public administration than before. Maria Petrova (2008) points out that the Internet creates an uncontrollable flow of information and less media freedom in nondemocratic countries.

⁵⁰ Habermas (1974, 49) describes that “by ‘the public sphere’ we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. They then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy. Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion—that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions—about matters of general interest. In a large public body this kind of communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it.” Habermas designates the public sphere with freedom, but the Internet sphere does not enjoy full freedom.

The Chinese government has taken a series of measures to reinforce the control over online mass communication. Zhao (2009, 40-41) identifies proactive strategies in media management as strengthening the role of the CPD and official news, setting up the press spokesperson system, shaping the ideological orientation of Chinese journalists, renovating personnel management, and enrolling well-educated young professionals. In June 2010, the State Council Information Office (SCIO) issued a White Paper on *The Internet in China* to publicize regulations about online mass communication.⁵¹ The White Paper announces that the government affirmed the extensive use of the Internet but forbade many online issues, such as pornography, sensitive political problems, and rumors. In 2011, the government established stricter rules by requiring all media companies to sign the Public Pledge of Self-Regulation and Professional Ethics for China Internet Industry for self-censorship.⁵² In December 2013, the Chinese Supreme People's Court promulgated a law that if Internet users write defamatory messages reposted 500 times or viewed more than 5000 times, they can face an up-to-three-year jail.⁵³ In addition, on 28 February 2014, the CCP established the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission (formerly known as the Central Internet Security and Informatization Leading Group) headed by President Xi Jinping, to supervise the Internet-related issues, which suggests tighter control over online content.

Concerning mass media events, Internet media take a major responsibility for transmitting live broadcasts and providing audiences with various platforms to share and express ideas. As noted in Chapter 1, in the last two decades, the Chinese government has staged a series of mass media events to narrate the dream stories the nation to strengthen citizens' national identity, since "national identity has been the crucial condition for the legitimacy of the modern state" (Poole, 2007, 145). In such staged events, the government designs the event, and media outlets report them to showcase a great China to inspire Chinese audiences' national pride and patriotic sentiments. In abrupt media events, media outlets take the main responsibility for shaping nationalist public opinion by editing and publishing news content. Audiences respond to news information by reading news reports, watching news videos, writing comments, posting threads, etc.

⁵¹ See http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-06/08/content_9950198_7.htm, accessed 7 September 2012.

⁵² See <http://www.isc.org.cn/english/Specails/Self-regulation/listinfo-15321.html>, accessed 27 August 2015.

⁵³ See <http://www.chinanews.com/fz/2013/12-04/5579427.shtml>, accessed 2 January 2014.

People's behavior reflects how they express nationalism. Jan Stets and Peter Burke (2000, 226) argue that "the basis of social identity is in the uniformity of perception and action among group members," embodied in cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral aspects. National identity prompts people to make positive judgments of their nation and take certain actions to defend the nation uniformly. In other words, when news reports stimulate popular nationalism, people may show love for the nation by expressing emotions and organizing or joining street demonstrations. Therefore, we can identify how netizens behave on the Internet as a presentation of public online nationalist sentiments. By examining their online opinion, it is possible to explore nationalism under the influence of mass communication in media events.

3.5 Mass Communication of Nationalism in the PRC

Mass communication of nationalism is critical for Chinese authorities to shape nationalist public opinion and maintain legitimacy. Daniel Lynch (1999, 2) holds that "if a state can control society's communications process, it can structure the symbolic environment in such a way that citizens will be more likely to accept that state's political order as legitimacy." Like any other government, Chinese government attaches great importance to propagating patriotism to maintain its legitimacy (Lynch, 1999, 2). Embedding patriotic propaganda in mass communication, the government deems mass communication of nationalism as a significant theme of its ideological propaganda.

Two important years marking the turning points in the reform era are significant for nationalist communication in the PRC: one is the year 1989 when the Tiananmen Square protests forced the government to shift its propaganda focus to social stability through political indoctrination of the younger generation (Zhao, 2004, 213). From then on, the government implemented patriotic propaganda to educate the Chinese, especially the young generation, to love the nation and act as disciplined and law-abiding citizens. The other year is 2008, when the PRC celebrated its 30th anniversary of reform and opening-up to the outside world, hosted the Beijing Olympics that symbolized the Olympic dream, and survived the world financial crisis. Suggesting "China's rise as a big power" (Ma, 2013), these successes increased the Chinese people's national confidence on the world stage.

Taking the years of 1989 and 2008 as demarcation points, I divide the reform era into three periods to discuss mass communication of state nationalism and popular nationalism in the PRC: the “identity crisis” phase (1978-1989), the “identity building” phase (1989-2008), and the “identity strengthening” phase (2008 till the present).⁵⁴ With different historical backgrounds in the three periods, communication of state nationalism and popular nationalism bear distinctive characteristics. In the following part, I will analyze state nationalism, its propaganda in the three phases, and its influence on popular nationalism. I will also discuss the current inclination and the demographics of popular nationalism.

“Identity Crisis” Phase (1978-1989)

Before the identity crisis phase, Mao Zedong, the most influential and powerful political leader, shaped and consolidated Chinese people’s national identity with his own charisma. Regarding Mao as “the Great Teacher” (*weida daoshi* 伟大导师), the Mao cult was a phenomenon in the 1960s and the 1970s across the PRC (Leese, 2011). Since Mao, who experienced humiliated history in the Qing Dynasty, was a nationalist, his nationalist feelings influenced the Chinese. As noted in Chapter 2, after the founding of the PRC, Mao established socialism and communism as a belief of the people. He advocated more internationalism than nationalism within the frame of class struggle and revolution and used nationalism to encourage the people to work hard for the construction of a socialist nation in the Great Leap Forward Campaign in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Mao, 1965). During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), although the Chinese economy was in good shape with fast GDP growth in 1975 (Russo, 2012, 262), the revolution exerted a destructive impact on Chinese politics. Nationalism was neglected by the authorities and “was even rejected as ‘bourgeois ideology.’” (Ding, 1994, 164)

The crisis of faith emerged as a political issue after Mao’s death and lasted throughout the 1980s. When Deng Xiaoping, the paramount leader at that time, proposed to reassess Maoism to pave the way for economic reform in the late 1970s (Zhao, 2004, 210), the Chinese started to become suspicious about socialism and communism. To cope with the crisis of faith, the CCP led by Deng

⁵⁴ Although Billig (1995, 60) suggested that nationalism should not be explained as “identity,” I argue that an overlap exists between nationalism and national identity, i.e., people’s recognition of the nation.

did not put much emphasis on modeling people's ideology as Mao but proclaimed to shift its core work from class revolution to economic reform in 1978 in the hope to find a way to mobilize collective efforts on economic development. It strived to improve people's living standards and gain popular support through material progress.

The identity crisis increased when socialist movements took place in the Communist Bloc in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, and especially the PRC's Tiananmen Square protests dealt a heavy blow to the CCP leadership. With the major reform emphasis on economic development, "the near-total collapse of public faith in communism threatened an already-eroded state legitimacy and created an opportunity for the popular advancement of alternative visions of China's future" (Zhao, 2004, 211). In other words, the economy-focused policy allowed some people, including liberal intellectuals,⁵⁵ to embrace aspects of Western ideology such as liberal democracy for the PRC. As Zheng (1999, 50) notes, economic development in the PRC "resulted in a new crisis of national and cultural identity, especially among young people and in the intellectual circles." The CCP made certain economic progress throughout the 1980s but did not gain substantive improvement of state legitimacy in politics. People still lacked confidence about socialism and communism, so the crisis of faith continued.

Although Deng put political reform second place after the economic reform in the 1980s, the CCP propagated state nationalism through many ways, including patriotic slogans, posters, and banners. For example, the four Chinese characters "Invigorating China" (*zhenxing zhonghua* 振兴中华) painted on the walls in many places was the most popular slogan in that period (Wang, 2014, 129). In addition, the CCP published many patriotic posters such as "the national flag is hoisted in our hearts"⁵⁶. These were explicit ways to promote state nationalism (Landsberger, 2004).

"Identity Building" Phase (1989-2008)

The appeal for democracy of liberal intellectuals forced CCP leaders to realize the importance of

⁵⁵ Liberal intellectuals in the 1980s were regarded as "enlightenment intellectuals" who drew inspiration from the West and who wanted "to carve out a 'public space' that was independent of the state" (Fewsmith, 2001, 12). Fang Lizhi, a Chinese astrophysicist and activist, was one of the liberal intellectuals.

⁵⁶ See <http://chinese posters.net/posters/e13-251.php>, from Stefan Landsberger's collection, accessed 12 November 2014.

political stability. The CCP then attached much importance to political propaganda besides economic reform. David Shambaugh (2007, 29) suggested that “the CCP has viewed propaganda as education of the masse—a proactive tool to be used in educating and shaping society.”

By promulgating the “Outline on the Implementation of Patriotic Education”⁵⁷ at the beginning of the 1990s, the CCP headed by Jiang Zemin launched a nationwide Patriotic Education Campaign targeting all Chinese, particularly the youth, to boost citizens’ national identity. Zheng (1999, 90) points out that the campaign was launched “to fill the ideological vacuum to strengthen its political legitimacy.” Similarly, Callahan (2006, 185) indicates that the purpose of the patriotic policy is “to control memory as a way of shoring up regime legitimacy.” Thus, in the second phase nationalism, mixed with patriotism, was formally established as an official discourse to strengthen citizens’ identification with the nation and the government. Zhao (2004) has summarized the four aims of the campaign: first, to define the national condition of the PRC; second, to link the communist state with the noncommunist past; third, to explain the communist state as the defender of the PRC’s national interest; fourth, to illustrate national unity as a theme against ethnic unity.

The CPD conducted the campaign in various forms, including textbooks, posters, and patriotic education bases. It adopted “national conditions education” (*guoqing jiaoyu* 国情教育) as core curriculum to instruct primary and middle school students with trauma and humiliation of modern Chinese history. Student textbooks were one of the most important propaganda channels to disseminate patriotic ideology. Besides, the CPD published a series of posters including the “Patriotic Education Propaganda Poster Set” in 1994, the “Amazing” series in 1996, and the “Educational” series in 1994, 1996, 1997, etc.,⁵⁸ in which “love/devotion to the motherland” (*ai/zhongyu zuguo* 爱/忠于祖国) were the keys words. Furthermore, the CPD turned a slogan in the 1980s “Invigorate China (*zhenxing zhonghua* 振兴中华)” into “the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation” (*zhonghua minzu de weida fuxing* 中华民族的伟大复兴) to remind people of glorious national history (Wang, 2014, 129). Concerning the second slogan, “rejuvenation” emphasizes the great power and prosperity of the Chinese nation in the past, inspiring the people to

⁵⁷ CPD formulated the outline. For its Chinese version, see <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64186/66685/4494186.html>, accessed 23 October 2016.

⁵⁸ See <http://chineseposters.net/themes/index.php>, from Landsberger’s collection, accessed 12 November 2014.

work hard for national revival.

The CPD announced 100 patriotic education bases in 1997, encouraging more cities to establish more bases all over the country. As an important part of the patriotic campaign, the bases, including museums⁵⁹, memorials, and scenic spots of “red tourism,” exhibited China’s humiliation in modern history and the CCP’s revolutionary past. The conflation of national history and CCP history narrated in the bases aimed to arouse visitors’ national consciousness and increase their identification with the Party. By 2019 altogether, 473 bases had been set up within the whole country.⁶⁰ Although the campaign mainly targets Chinese youth, the bases expand the teaching functions to all of society. They are available in many cities and open to every visitor. Since Chinese tourism has been greatly popularized in the past decades, more and more Chinese receive such propaganda by visiting the bases, speeding up this way of spreading state nationalism.

“Identity Strengthening” Phase (2008 till the present)

In the third phase, although the reform policy has improved people’s living standards, many social problems, such as cadre corruption and unequal distribution of wealth, continue to annoy people and give rise to public dissatisfaction with the government (Chen & Hao, 2014). Those problems much eroded the relationship between the government and people, exposing some potential threats to the legitimacy of the CCP, as the people sometimes may blame the government for its incompetent management of society.

One way to relieve this tension between the government and the people is to stage mass media events that may not solve the problems but increase public recognition. These events, to a large extent, display commercial elements such as material symbols of urban development to enhance public identification. The market-oriented media make patriotic communication more commercialized than before, so “patriotism has become a striking and recurring element in commercial advertising [...]. And expressions of love for the nation, in turn, have found their way into the official government commercials as well” (Landsberger, 2009, 349). Therefore, commercial

⁵⁹ Anderson (1991) indicates that government institutions use museums to shape people’s sense of an imagined community.

⁶⁰ See http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-09/16/c_1125001631.htm, accessed 18 September 2019.

elements in patriotic communication make this kind of propaganda different from pure patriotic education. To be more specific, commercial elements make propaganda softer than the previous “100% political” propaganda. With consumer-seller dynamics, nationalism seems to be sold well, as it caters to mass audiences’ tastes. Media consumers have by now become socialized into a media system in which commercial elements are ubiquitous (Esarey, 2011), and the audiences, as consumers, have grown accustomed to such commercial elements in their daily lives.

In the third phase, patriotic communication featured a series of staged mass media events aimed at enhancing people’s national identity and government legitimacy. In the events, the government established dream discourses that created different social demands for the people and at times mobilized them to participate in the realization of the dreams. The staged “dream” events are prescheduled and supposed to meet the established social demands. When the social demands are satisfied in the events, the government then gains legitimacy. Distinguished from the former didactic Patriotic Education Campaign, patriotic communication in mass media events is more acceptable to audiences: for one thing, the patriotic content is more concrete, as it is based on the “stories” presented in the events and audiences “experience” certain historical moments with the unfolding of the stories throughout. For another thing, Internet media prompt political communication to become more interactive among audiences than the previous propaganda campaign that followed a traditional “one-to-many” top-down model. Audiences’ participation is much increased in online communication, which influences offline activities (Online communication facilitates the organization of offline activities if accepted by the officials). In some cases (volunteers in media events), the audiences are both passive recipients and active propagandists. This suggests that audiences and propagandists are more balanced in mass media events than in the top-down propaganda campaign.

No matter in what forms state nationalism is propagated and emphasized in political communication, it influences and sometimes is influenced (by) popular nationalism. Chinese popular nationalism reflects people’s internalization of state nationalism. Popular nationalism is a kind of unflagged banal nationalism in people’s daily lives until a stimulus emerges. Abrupt media events take people out of their daily lives by triggering popular nationalism. As such events are unpredictable, it is hard

for the government to lead it positively to meet social demands. As I have argued in Chapter 1, if popular nationalism is too strong and social demands cannot be gratified, it ruins government legitimacy.

What is the influence of political communication, with the joint effort of traditional media and Internet media, on Chinese nationalism in general? Some scholars hold that Chinese nationalism over the past two decades is not rising or even declining. Tang Wenfang and Benjamin Darr (2012, 823) argue that Chinese nationalism will decline with the increasing levels of urbanization and education. Based on the sample survey of nationalist public opinion in the Beijing municipality, Alastair Iain Johnston (2016, 9) also points out that Chinese nationalism does not continuously increase and even declined around 2009. Nevertheless, most scholars believe that Chinese nationalism is on the rise after the launch of the Patriotic Education Campaign (Gries, 2004; Zhao, 2004). I agree with the view that nationalism, particularly online popular nationalism, is rising to a certain degree, as evidence shows that online communication greatly facilitates the spread of nationalist sentiments. Nowadays, it is easier to trigger popular nationalism since information flows much faster than before.

Regarding the demographics of popular nationalism, Johnston (2016, 9) suggests that older generations are more nationalistic in the PRC than younger generations. Similarly, Robert Hoffmann and Jeremy Larner (2013) find that older, female, rural, and poorer people are more nationalistic than other groups, but an exception is that white-collar and university-educated people are also categorized as more nationalistic groups. In terms of online presentation of popular nationalism, young urban male Chinese, who comprise the largest part of Internet users, seem to be more likely to act as the most active nationalist groups who often express nationalist sentiments on the Internet and join street demonstrations.

3.6 Conclusion

Owing to the development of digital mass communication, nationalism has spread rapidly in the past several decades in the PRC. In this chapter, I have given an account of the theories of mass communication, propaganda, Chinese mass media, the Internet, and Chinese patriotic

communication. As a neutral concept, mass communication is multidirectional in the communication process. In contrast, propaganda is one-directional, from the propagandists to audiences, and it is more explicit than mass communication in terms of achieving propagandists' purposes. The two concepts, in essence, have many similar features, such as a large audience. Most of the time, they are intertwined with each other in Chinese media practice. In the digital age, communication of Chinese nationalism does not just rely on traditional ways of propaganda but is more interactively conducted, allowing audiences to participate in politics more frequently than before.

The Chinese mass media, controlled by the state, implemented political communication for politicians' ends before the reform era. In the reform era, media commercialization prompts the media to not only speak for the CCP but also seek their own revenue. This is what Stockmann (2012) terms "propaganda for sale." To sell media content, nationalism is a common resource because audiences tend to read stories that stimulate strong emotions. Although the Chinese media enjoy certain freedom, they are still tightly regulated by the CCP, especially in politics.

Chinese popular nationalism, as a kind of bottom-up nationalist sentiments, is expressed in public opinion, playing an important role in political communication. Abrupt media events involving international conflicts promise to generate popular nationalism. Since the conflicts are normally difficult to be settled within a short period, it is hard for the CCP to satisfy social demands by solving the problems. In this sense, to confine stimulated popular nationalist sentiments within a proper scope seems critical for the CCP to maintain legitimacy. As mass media mainly conduct the communication process of the events, the way they narrate the events influences how audiences express nationalist sentiments, which may further affect CCP legitimacy.

Patriotism is an important theme in Chinese official political communication since it is core to construct and strengthen people's national identity and consolidate the Party's rule. The propaganda of state nationalism is traditionally formulated in an explicit top-down style, such as the Patriotic Education Campaign; in the current national identity strengthening phase, staged media events turn out to be another way to implicitly convey state nationalism. Patriotic propaganda conducted in

mass media events, as a popular way to educate audiences who get used to commercialized media environment, is less explicit than top-down patriotic education.

In government-staged media events, the state takes a leading role to showcase the realization of dreams, meeting with the predetermined social demand established by political propaganda (e.g., the goal of hosting the Olympics that had been propagated by the government and media for a long time was achieved in the Beijing Olympics, see Chapter 5). Mass communication in the form of the visual presentation presented a powerful nation to Chinese audiences who may owe the successes to the leadership of the CCP. Therefore, state nationalism in such events tends to affect popular nationalism in a positive way and further strengthen the legitimacy of the CCP.

In conclusion, as discussed in Chapter 1, three nationalist elements are critical to constructing nationalism in both kinds of media events: boundaries, collective memories, and people's engagement. These elements are either emphasized or neglected by media outlets or companies through communication strategies such as agenda setting, framing of nationalist discourse, and various editing styles. In this way, state nationalism consolidates the legitimacy of the authorities, and popular nationalism maintained at a proper level does not pose a threat to the authorities.