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State-Centric or State-in-Society: National Identity and Collective Memory in the Linkage Politics of Chinese Foreign Relations

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STATE-CENTRIC OR STATE-IN-SOCIETY: NATIONAL IDENTITY
AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN THE LINKAGE POLITICS OF
CHINESE FOREIGN RELATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

STATE-CENTRIC OR STATE-IN-SOCIETY: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN THE LINKAGE POLITICS OF CHINESE FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ning Liao

Old Dominion University, 2014

Director: Dr. Qiu Jin

This dissertation, with a standpoint of disentangling China's diplomacy "inside-out," explores the Chinese state-society relationship in domestic-foreign-policy interaction. With its analytic focus resting on the collective memory of national humiliation in modern Chinese history and the derived national identity, this project delves into the linkage between the ideational impetus of the diplomatic decision-making of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the way that the authoritarian regime claims its internal and external legitimacy.

In the state legitimation, collective memory and national identity are instrumentalized to enact the moral justification of the CCP's political authority and to justify China's persistent quest to regain a rightful place in the international arena. In the belief system of Chinese foreign policy ideas, these historical institutions shape the conception of the state interests and the goals of national foreign policy. The normative and purposive meanings and the affective dimension of these ideational factors have given ground to the ethical agenda of China's diplomacy. The CCP's policy calculation in its external legitimation can go against the moral standards by which domestic audience assesses its diplomatic performance. In the interrogation of the discrepancy between the state's foreign policy behavior and the CCP's role playing claimed for its

memory-based legitimacy, the “scripts” of Chinese diplomatic drama derived from historical institutions have empowered the agency of the Chinese populace to contend with the authoritarian state.

To My Parents

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It has been a long trek for me to complete this dissertation and my doctoral program. Over these years, I have accumulated enormous debts. As my doctoral study is drawing near its conclusion, writing this final piece gives me an opportunity to reflect upon the support and assistance that I have received from various individuals and institutions and to proudly acknowledge them. More than making it possible for me to finish this project and program, they brightened my days when I was travelling an arduous but fruitful journey.

Every dissertation is a product of the efforts of many people working together to guide a novice scholar, and this one is no exception. First and foremost, I am privileged to have on my dissertation committee three professors for whom I feel profound respect and admiration. However inadequate my words must be, I am particularly indebted to Dr. Qiu Jin, one of the most important persons that I have been working with in my academic endeavor. I could not have wished for a more helpful and congenial advisor. As the Chair of the committee and my supervisor when I came to ODU, Dr. Jin has been a constant source of guidance, encouragement, and inspiration, which has carried me throughout my entire career as a Ph.D. student. Drs. Francis Adams and David Selover offered me constructive suggestions and critique at various stages of my dissertation project, for which I want to express my deep appreciation. Dr. Jie Chen, who chaired the committee before he left ODU, also provided me with invaluable input at the initial phase of my dissertation writing and supported me in many ways in my doctoral program.

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Outside of ODU, I also have profited from the good counsel of a group of scholars, whose willingness to read through the papers written by a Ph.D. student from

another university and graciously provide their feedback showed me the meaning of dedicated scholarship. In this regard, my research benefited greatly from the concrete and critical comments offered by Drs. Aileen Baviera, Wayne Bert, Edward Friedman, Daniel Metraux, Alister Miskimmon, Ben O'Loughlin, Laura Roselle, Reinhard Wolf, and Brantly Womack. Their illuminating insights and thought-provoking suggestions on earlier drafts of my dissertation chapters were instrumental in the revision of my work. In the past years, Drs. Kevin Cai, Lisa Fischler, Kerstin Hamann, Wei-chin Lee, Xi Lian, Mary Meyer McAleese, Tina Kempin Reuter, Shelley Rodrigo, and Jonathan Strand also gave me a rare luxury in my academic life with their superb mentoring.

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Completing a doctoral program, especially the writing of a dissertation, can be a painful process. Fortunately, I have been part of a vibrant community of graduate colleagues and a company of camaraderie, which have made my hard struggle a rewarding process. Ren Wang, my roommate in the first four years of my doctoral study, accompanied me through many rough times. Although we are in distinct academic fields, Wei Li, the other roommate in my last three years at ODU, is never reluctant to provide accommodation and timely help when I need it. The friendship from Weichu Xu, Jianyuan Sun, and Kirby Hom has turned the sometimes tiresome journey of a doctoral program into an exciting growth of lively experience. Tao Li is the person who has endured my sorrows and shared my joys. His care, generosity, wit, as well as sharp criticism, which has always been right on target and pushed me to focus on my priority, has been an incessant source of companionship and affection.

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Chinese standard, I am not a filial son (and grandson). I have lived so far away from my parents in the past seven years and did not share their responsibility of taking care of my grandma. Their unending support and unconditional sacrifice spanning more than three decades are something that I can never describe with words and pay back. Therefore, it is to them, my beloved parents, that I dedicate this dissertation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
Chapter	
I. NATIONAL IDENTITY AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY: IDEATIONAL VARIABLES OF CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS.....	1
RESEARCH BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND SIGNIFICANCE	6
LITERATURE REVIEW	19
RESEARCH FRAMEWORK, DESIGN, AND METHODS	37
CHAPTER OUTLINE	58
II. CHINESE NATIONALISM AND THE LEGITIMACY ENHANCEMENT OF AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME	64
PERFORMANCE-BASED OR IDEOLOGY-BASED: THE SOURCES OF THE CCP'S REGIME LEGITIMACY	67
NATIONALISM: AN OFFICIAL IDEOLOGY REVAMPED FOR REGIME LEGITIMACY	78
III. MASTER HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS: STRATEGIC NARRATIVES IN THE STATE LEGITIMATION	89
PATRIOTIC EDUCATION: THE SOCIAL PRAGMATICS OF STRATEGIC NARRATIVES	91
REMEMBERING OR FORGETTING: THE SELECTIVE PARADIGMS OF NARRATED MEMORY	101
AN AGGRIEVED OR ACCOMMODATIONIST STATE: RECEPTION OF THE VICTIMIZATION DISCOURSE	112
IV. MEMORY-ENCODED AND IDENTITY-CONSTITUTIVE NORMS: EMOTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN CHINESE FOREIGN RELATIONS	125
SELF-OTHER INTERACTION: CULTURAL-INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF THE NATIONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION.....	128
"IDEATIONAL CAUSALITY": STATE'S PURPOSIVE ACTION GUIDED BY SOCIAL NORMS	136
IDENTITY PREDICAMENT: THE COGNITIVE SCAFFOLD OF COLLECTIVE EMOTION	145

Chapter	Page
V. MOBILIZATION VERSUS CONTESTATION: CONSTRAINTS OF NATIONALISM ON BEIJING'S FOREIGN POLICY MAKING	159
TRAUMATIC COLLECTIVE MEMORY: ALWAYS READY ON-DEMAND?	161
STATE-CENTRIC OR SOCIETY-DRIVEN: INTERACTIVITY IN THE CONTESTED ARENA OF MEDIA ENVIRONMENT	174
"LOGIC OF CONTENTION": THE SUBVERSIVE DIMENSION OF TRAUMATIC MEMORY	186
VI. CONCLUSION: NATIONAL TRAUMA, VICTIMHOOD IDENTITY, AND CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY IDEAS	195
COLLECTIVE MEMORY: AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT OF REGIME LEGITIMACY ENHANCEMENT	198
DIVERGENCE OF ROLE CONCEPTIONS: THE EXTERNAL LEGITIMATION OF A "FRUSTRATED GREAT POWER"	206
ENABLING OR CONSTRAINING: THE DUAL EFFECTS OF TRAUMATIC MEMORY	215
BIBLIOGRAPHY	224
APPENDICES	249
APPENDIX 1 COPYRIGHT PERMISSION OF ASIAN RESEARCH SERVICE	249
APPENDIX 2 COPYRIGHT PERMISSION OF FUDAN JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES	250
APPENDIX 3 COPYRIGHT PERMISSION OF SPRINGER	251
APPENDIX 4 COPYRIGHT PERMISSION OF JOHN WILEY AND SONS	255
VITA	262

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Theoretical Framework	42

CHAPTER I

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY: IDEATIONAL VARIABLES OF CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

*[Foreign] policy is the extension of China's
domestic policies.*

—*Qian Qichen, former Chinese Foreign Minister*¹

*As scholars, we devote our lives to the creation,
refinement, and application of ideas. If we really
thought ideas were irrelevant, our lives as social
scientists would be meaningless. Our exploration of
the impact of ideas on foreign policy is also a
search for personal meaning and relevance in our
own lives.*

—*Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane*²

Understanding the intricate process of a government's foreign policy making is a challenging undertaking, especially in a country like China where the information pertaining to this "black box" is often asymmetrically distributed between the state and society. Prior to the era of reform and opening-up to the outside world, inquiries into and public participation in the foreign affairs of the People's Republic of China (PRC) were deemed as crossing the "red line" in Chinese politics, inasmuch as the formulation and implementation of foreign policy were the prerogative of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Today's China is no longer cloistered behind the Bamboo Curtain. Although "foreign relations" remain *the* most sensitive and tightly controlled

¹ *Beijing Review*, January 15-21, 1990.

² Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, ed. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 30.

area of Chinese governance,”³ the domestic environment of Beijing’s diplomatic decision-making is taking on a new face. Amidst the socioeconomic transformation that is occurring at a breakneck pace, the totalitarian state has transformed itself into a “resilient” authoritarian regime working in a transnational society.⁴ The relentless forces of modernization and globalization have unleashed a myriad of non-state actors. Operating as a loose conglomerate outside the inner circle of the foreign policy establishment, newly-emerging players on China’s diplomatic stage, such as nationalist activists and commercialized media, have repeatedly engendered popular mobilizations that are not fully coordinated or meticulously planned by the authoritarian state. The PRC state is increasingly porous to these societal actors that have acquired the liberty of partaking in foreign policy making. This palpable tendency of China’s diplomacy begs an obvious question: In an autocratic state where public opinion is traditionally viewed as an insignificant factor in the diplomatic decision-making process, how does the policy calculation at the top level have to wrestle with those impromptu forces arising from the bottom? There must be variables in the interlacing of domestic and international politics that drive the foreign policy behavior of the Chinese state and the CCP’s diplomatic decision-making. Charting out how these dynamics play out in the domestic-foreign-policy interaction, or the linkage politics of Chinese foreign affairs, is indispensable to a panoramic view of China’s diplomacy.

In contemporary world politics, the need to understand China’s emergence on the global stage, which has challenged the conventional wisdom of international politics, has

³ Jisi Wang, “International Relations Theory and the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy: A Chinese Perspective,” in *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh (Oxford, UK & New York, NY: Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press, 1994), 483, emphasis in original.

⁴ Andrew J. Nathan, “Authoritarian Resilience,” *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 1 (2003): 6.

never been more pressing. Despite the explosive growth of scholarly inquiries, media coverage, and public and policy debates about China's ever expanding foreign relations, many Western observers consciously or unconsciously base their arguments on China's stunning economic strides and rapid military modernization and the impact of its foreign policy behavior on the regional balance of power. As a common theme in the literature on China's rise is its inevitability, Westerners tend to get carried away with provocative book titles such as *The New Chinese Empire* and *When China Rules the World*.⁵ Opting for the hegemonic dominance of an ascendant power as a simple explanation for a more self-confident and nationalist China, these bestsellers miss the domestic factors that are crucial to the formation of the preferences and objectives of the diplomatic policymakers in Beijing, or in a broader sense, the internal social determinants of the Chinese state's diplomatic interest and behavior. Without a systemic exploration of these purportedly "epiphenomenal" factors that are granted the status of "unexplained variance" and hence are sidestepped in the prevailing scholarly accounts of international relations (IR),⁶ China's diplomacy will remain a puzzle of complexity and contradictions. As Susan Shirk, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, astutely argues, the central challenge in interpreting the implications of China's behavior on the world stage is not the assessment of its material strength, but a thorough understanding of its intentions:

The question of whether China is a threat to other countries cannot be answered just by projecting China's abilities—its growth rates, technological advances, or military spending—into the future as many forecasters do. Strength is only one part of the question. Intentions—

⁵ See Ross Terrill, *The New Chinese Empire: And What It Means for the United States* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2009); Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2009).

⁶ Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," 4 and fn 4.

how China chooses to use its power—make the difference between peace and war.⁷

As a prerequisite to deciphering China's intentions, one needs to trace the origin, content, and nature of the ideas held by its foreign policy makers and the audience for their diplomatic performance. Decoding Chinese foreign policy beliefs relies on the unpacking of the mix of sociopolitical dynamics underlying Beijing's bent for self-assertion, which is plainly visible in the twists and turns that Chinese foreign relations have endured since the global financial crisis broke out in 2008. Among other diplomatic deadlocks currently experienced by the PRC, the face-off between Beijing and Tokyo in the East China Sea is thrusting the two historically adversarial actors ever closer toward a point of military conflict. As the decades-long territorial dispute intensifies, the combustible relations between these two East Asian powers haunted by war memories makes this a propitious time to examine the causal pathway in which domestic ideational factors shape their foreign policies.

With this orientation, the dissertation will provide a sociological, culture-based explanation of China's diplomacy. The empirical focus of this project is the impact of nationalism on the international behavior of the Chinese state, which has become ever more pronounced if it is examined in the domestic-foreign-policy interaction. In exploring this thematic issue, analytic emphasis is put on the indigenous social-cultural predispositions in the enterprise of Chinese nationalism and the institutional processes, whereby the causal effects of these dynamics lead to the formulation of the goals and choices of the PRC's foreign policy. Moving away from the theoretical approach and analytic lens adopted by most of the current research, this dissertation attempts to dissect

⁷ Susan L. Shirk. *China, Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics Could Derail Its Peaceful Rise* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10.

collective memory and national identity, two historical institutions underlying Beijing's foreign policy decision-making, and to chart out the mechanism by which the ethical agenda of the CCP's diplomatic performance is tethered to the regime legitimacy of the authoritarian state. Explicating the interaction between the actor of the PRC's diplomacy and its audience invites us to take a renewed look at the state-society relationship of a nondemocratic polity, which has traditionally been absent in most, if not all, of the scholarly literature on the linkage politics of foreign affairs.

As an introduction to the dissertation project, this chapter aims to lay the conceptual groundwork and establish a theoretical framework for the analysis of the ideational factors underpinning the CCP's diplomatic decision-making and China's foreign policy behavior. It will outline the theme of the study, offer an overview of the relevant literature, and delineate the structure of the dissertation. The first section of the chapter presents the background and objectives of this research, the major puzzles to be solved in this study, and the intellectual significance of this project and its implications for the foreign policy analysis and the study of Chinese politics. The elaboration of the major limitations that hamper the existing research on the impact of Chinese nationalism on the PRC's external behavior suggests prospective contributions that this dissertation would make to the current scholarship. The second section consists of two parts of literature review. The first part is a synopsis of the IR theories that are related to the domestic politics of foreign relations and the literature of comparative politics concerning the relationship between state and society. In the second part, the review is narrowed down to the specific scholarly field of memory study, as collective memory is selected as a key cultural cue in the realm of identity politics to excavate the interlinking of Chinese

domestic politics and foreign relations. The third section of the chapter sketches out an overarching analytic framework and details two distinct lines of inquiry that will be compared and contrasted in the examination of the impacts of nationalism on Chinese foreign policy making and the state's external behavior. This section also proposes the research methods that are employed to answer the research questions. Following the outline of the research design, the fourth section delineates the structure of this dissertation and previews the major arguments of the ensuing chapters.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND SIGNIFICANCE

It is hardly controversial that the foreign policy pathway that China is taking in the new millennium has dramatically departed from those of its past when it was marginalized to the periphery of the international community. Following the abrupt end of the Cold War, Beijing has defied enormous odds stacked against it on both the domestic and international fronts. While pockets of positive views regarding China can be found around the world, misgivings and uncertainties abound in the global community about how the awakening oriental dragon will behave and how it will deploy its newfound might in the so-called "China's century."⁸

One of the primary sources of the apprehension over China's foreign policy behavior is its incoherent and contradictory diplomatic profile. In the immediate aftermath of the Tiananmen incident in 1989, the PRC found itself beleaguered in the presumably worst, albeit brief, diplomatic crisis that it had ever encountered in the post-Mao era. Ever since then, Beijing has been pursuing a "peaceful rise" (*heping jueqi*)

⁸ "Special Report: China's Century," *Newsweek* May 9, 2005. Also see Michael Elliott, "The Chinese Century," *Time* January 22, 2007.

strategy, an accommodationist stance aimed at forestalling an anti-Chinese encircling coalition. The Chinese government has devoted tremendous resources to improving and promoting its national image. Almost every two years, China's quest to boost its popularity is marked by a well-publicized media event: the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2010 Shanghai Exposition, the Miss World contest in 2012 in Ordos. Even though the PRC has been unrelenting in its efforts to unleash its "charm offensive,"⁹ its other face is equally evident, which has puzzled, frustrated, and pained those who have worked hard to build a strategic relationship with China. Beijing's truculent posture in defense of the so-called "core national interests," as fashioned in the historical maritime disputes in the South and East China Seas that has put the PRC at odds with its neighbors, and its muscular position showcased in the global economic downturn have taken the limelight away from its diplomatic achievements.¹⁰ Along with the waxing ambition of the PRC state, the acerbic turn of Beijing's diplomacy has caused jitters in the international community, with some foreign officials and media coverage portending the imminence of an "assertive and even arrogant" China, which does not bode well for peace and cooperation in the Asia Pacific.¹¹

Putting aside its merits or demerits, this observation, to a large extent, is rooted in the roiling sense of anxiety that has been fed in many political capitals about Chinese nationalist hubris, which is perceived to be driving Beijing's foreign policy in an inflexible direction. Since this dynamic became an explosive element of Chinese foreign relations in the 1990s, the study of Chinese nationalism has experienced a flurry of

⁹ Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

¹⁰ Suisheng Zhao, "China: A Reluctant Global Power in the Search of Its Rightful Place," in *Emerging Power in a Comparative Perspective* (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 101-30.

¹¹ Hannah Beech, "Fierce and Friendly: China's Two Diplomatic Faces," *Time* January 18, 2011.

scholarship. Although the literature that addresses the impacts of nationalism on the PRC's foreign policy behavior varies in focus and substance, a majority of the scholarly work is, to one degree or another, aimed at solving this puzzle: "Is Chinese nationalism threatening?" For most of the research in the China watching community, the answer to the question seems to reflect an underlying assumption that Chinese nationalism, particularly the anti-foreign strain at the popular level, is aggressive, disruptive, and frightening.¹² From the perspective of domestic politics, this position reinforces the belief that popular nationalism is a destabilizing force of Chinese politics. This line of logic is, however, inconsistent with the empirical findings that Chinese urban citizens who have stronger nationalist feelings tend to be more supportive of the CCP regime.¹³ The positive correlation between the expressed nationalist sentiments and the Chinese populace's attitudinal support of the authoritarian state is overlooked by the current works on Chinese nationalism when sound alarm bells regarding popular nationalism.

Meanwhile, it should be noted, when China's "peaceful rise" strategy or "charm offensive" is bogged down in squabbles with Japan—one of the severe diplomatic tests faced by the newly anointed CCP leadership—popular nationalism is indeed a major concern in Beijing's policy calculation. As has increasingly been shown in the past

¹² See, e.g., Shirk, *China, Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics Could Derail Its Peaceful Rise*; Jessica Chen Weiss, "Autocratic Signaling, Mass Audiences and Nationalist Protest in China," *International Organization* 67, no. 1 (2013); *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014); Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004); "China's 'New Thinking' on Japan," *China Quarterly* 184(2005): 835-50; Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); "Foreign Policy Implications of Chinese Nationalism Revisited: The Strident Turn," *Journal of Contemporary China* 22, no. 82 (2013): 535-53; Erica Strecker Downs and Phillip C. Saunders, "Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands," *International Security* 23, no. 3 (1998-1999): 114-26; Allens Whiting, *China Eyes Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989); David Shambaugh, "Containment or Engagement of China? Calculating Beijing's Response," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996): 180-209.

¹³ Jie Chen, *Popular Political Support in Urban China* (Washington, D.C. and Stanford, California: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2004), 31, 106-08.

decade, the internal force of nationalist sentiments does strengthen the need for the regime to cater to the most mobilized, restive, and engaged segment of the Chinese populace. But this reality and the underlying assumption of the current scholarship on Chinese nationalism give rise to a paradox: In an autocratic political system lacking the mechanisms that would allow the translation of the will of the citizens into government policies, how can state leaders be compelled by popular nationalist demand to alter the course of their foreign policy?

To unravel this puzzle and the discrepancy between the empirical findings of the Chinese popular political support and the underlying assumption of the mainstream scholarship of Chinese nationalism, students of Chinese foreign policy need to delve into the normative content of Beijing's foreign policy making and uncover the linkage between the ideational impetus of the PRC's diplomacy and the basis on which the authoritarian state claims its regime legitimacy. Without examining the causal effects of the idiosyncratic ideational factors in the conception of the goals of Chinese foreign policies and the interaction between the policymakers and the audience for China's diplomacy, a fuller explanatory account of the CCP's ultra-sensitiveness to the domestic popular nationalism and the convergence between the state-sponsored nationalism and popular nationalism cannot be reached.

To achieve this fuller account is the intent of this dissertation. It does so by putting at the center stage of this project the historical sources and social foundation of the belief system of Chinese foreign policy, where the PRC state's diplomatic goals are defined and its international behavior is reasoned. This normative paradigm is allied to a causal process in which the foreign policy beliefs held by the Chinese elites and masses

are translated to the CCP's conduct of foreign affairs. Along this line of reasoning, theoretical assertions on the PRC's abrasive diplomacy would be vacuous if they are not coherently situated in such an ideational framework ingrained in the indigenous cultural environment and Chinese cognitive system. Scrutinizing this contextual element in the linkage politics of Chinese foreign relations requires what Paul Cohen calls the "insider cultural knowledge" that is "hidden ... in a Chinese cultural milieu."¹⁴ Acquiring such subtle background knowledge, which is difficult for Western scholars, is sorely needed to dig out the historical and cultural roots of the PRC's diplomacy. In an attempt to join the intellectual effort to redress the impoverished understanding of the social-cultural underpinnings of China's foreign policy behavior,¹⁵ this study gives higher priority than Western-centric scholarship to the cultural and historical context of the PRC's diplomacy, in which the ideational factors shaping the CCP's foreign policy making are formed and transformed.

What, then, are the ideational factors in Chinese culture—or to be more specific, Chinese political culture—that are most significant in motivating Beijing's diplomatic decision-making and that thus need to be on the radar screen monitoring the PRC's foreign policy behavior? Let us first borrow Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar's definition of political culture: the "particular social construction in every society of what counts as 'political.' In this way, [it] is the domain of practices and institutions, carved out of the totality of social reality, that historically comes to be

¹⁴ Paul A. Cohen, *Speaking to History: The Story of King Guojian in Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 232-33.

¹⁵ For an exemplary of this intellectual effort, see Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012).

considered as properly political.”¹⁶ In the realm of Chinese political culture, a historically-informed ideational factor that is constructed in the social practice of foreign relations is national identity.¹⁷ With regard to its formation, IR scholar Yaacov Vertzberger offers an enlightening clue in his elaboration of the cultural effects on foreign policy making: “At the core of culture, in most cases, are broad and general beliefs and attitudes about one’s own nation, about other nations, and about the relationships that actually obtain or that should obtain between the *self* and *other* actors in the international arena.”¹⁸ The relationship between the national “self” and the foreign “other” is a distinctive social-cultural environment, where the Chinese “way of being” in the international society and the modal character of its nationhood is constructed. This historical experience leaves an imprint on a nation’s identity. An empathetic and interpretive understanding of the way that the Chinese “self” perceives itself and reaffirms its desired values in the social interaction with the foreign “other” can help us comprehend the historical and contextual process of China’s foreign policy making, in which the ideational constructs “hidden” in the Chinese political culture define the national interests. To this end, tracing the causal chain—wherein the substantive appeal and normative significance of national identity are connected to the goals of the national

¹⁶ Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar, “Introduction: The Cultural and the Political in Latin American Social Movements,” in *Cultures of Politics, Politics of Cultures: Re-Visioning Latin American Social Movements*, ed. Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).

¹⁷ Allen Carlson expounds the similar argument. In his critique of the current scholarship, Carlson points out the obsession with typology of Chinese nationalism has created a confusing labyrinth of terminology and that many “types” of nationalisms actually mean the same thing. To ensure the independent explanatory power of nationalism, Carlson recommends a conceptual move toward an analysis of national identity. See Allen Carlson, “A Flawed Perspective: The Limitations Inherent within the Study of Chinese Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (2009): 24-32.

¹⁸ Yaacov Y. I. Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds: Information Processing, Cognition, and Perception in Foreign Policy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 268, emphasis added.

foreign policy, which in turn shape the state's behavior and decision-making¹⁹—is a building block of the holistic theoretical framework that this dissertation attempts to establish. With such an analytical scaffold, one can ascertain the cognitive and affective dimensions of Chinese nationalism and the social-cultural underpinnings of China's discontent as represented in its foreign relations.

In accordance with the logic of traditional rationalist accounts of IR theory, which posits that the role of identity and other cultural factors is subordinate to the causal force of concrete conditions such as the military and economic capabilities of the state in driving national leaders' diplomatic decision-making,²⁰ the social-cultural variables in the realm of domestic politics that complicate the picture of Chinese foreign policy making is “window-dressing” for “hard” interests of rational actors. This strain of materialist outlook forecloses some valuable avenues for empirical research and theoretical insights that have the promise of taking us away from somewhat myopic views of the PRC's diplomacy to those “deeper” social norms determining the national interest and state action. To amend this conceptual imbalance, this dissertation borrows the analytic lens of political sociology in its investigation of China's foreign policy behavior. According to this alternative approach that views states as social rather than rational actors, the vision of national leaders in their foreign policy making reflects the collectively-held beliefs that have “historically [come] to be considered as properly political” and have hence been ingrained in the Chinese mindset. In the cultural environment that serves as

¹⁹ This is an increasing focus of sociological constructivism. See William A. Callahan, “History, Identity, and Security: Producing and Consuming Nationalism in China,” *Critical Asian Studies* 38, no. 2 (2006): 184.

²⁰ Peter J. Katzenstein, “Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security,” in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York, NY, 1996), 26.

the “lifeworld” upon which the state’s foreign policy behavior is construed,²¹ state leaders, in their policy choices, are obliged to fulfill the social needs defined by national identity and adhere to the ethical standards embedded in social convention. In the Chinese populace, these inter-subjective understandings of how the state should behave in self-other interactions on the international scene are constituted in the national identity, thereby rendering some foreign policy actions socially acceptable but others unacceptable. As a primary objective of this study, identifying these motivational elements of Chinese national identity is a significant step to grasp the normative component of the PRC’s foreign policy behavior.

In the excavation of the impacts of nationalism on Chinese foreign relations, another ideational construct that requires “insider cultural knowledge” is collective memory. This cultural foundation of nationalism is the prime “raw material” through which national identity is embodied. As John Gills puts it in his illustration of the co-dependent relationship between the construction of memory and collective identity,

The core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely, a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity. We are constantly revising our memories to suit our current identities. Memories help us make sense of the world we live in.²²

In essence, the collective commemoration of the past of a nation is a cultural conduit, which identifies the group boundary between the self and the other with a sense of history and furnishes the national community with an ontological reference system for the present use. This process is summarized by Anthony Smith as the role nationalism

²¹ Neta C. Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge, UK & New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 59.

²² John R. Gills, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 5.

plays in “rediscovering and reinterpreting the communal past in order to regenerate the community.”²³ The three-layered discovery of historic deposits, which all involve the construction of collective memory and national identity, provides an illuminating lens to unlock the inner mystery of the ideational foundation of Chinese foreign policy behavior. By inspecting each of these layers in the Chinese historical and cultural context, this dissertation aims to spell out an intellectual pathway to elucidate why nationalism is so central to the authoritarian regime and its foreign policy making.

An oft-cited puzzle about Chinese nationalism is why the contemporary Chinese can be so xenophobic—or in Chinese parlance, so patriotic—under an authoritarian regime. In cases where the CCP encounters diplomatic crises, particularly those related to historical grievance, why does the Beijing regime have a domestic populace pushing for a hard-nosed stance? Untangling the enigma accords importance to the relevance and importance of the Chinese public recollection, which is rediscovered by the CCP in its effort to sustain the memory-based legitimacy of the authoritarian regime. In a nationalist attempt to frame the perception and nurture the feelings about the nation, memory, given its interlinking with nation, is an instrumental symbol of fusing national identity. Smith puts this point succinctly, “no memory, no identity; no identity, no nation.”²⁴ As a micro foundation of the state-building project, the public remembrance, which communicates the sense of a shared destiny based on a common past,²⁵ is always marshaled in the political claim-making of the government to legitimize the regime. Such popular mobilization is a political endeavor that the CCP has been actively engaged

²³ Anthony D. Smith, “Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations,” *Nations and Nationalism* 1, no. 1 (1995): 19.

²⁴ *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 383.

²⁵ See, e.g., Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

in, which links the moral justification of the regime legitimacy to its diplomatic performance that is consciously judged by the Chinese populace. Due to the central role of collective memory in China's diplomacy, the CCP's intentional reordering of certain deposits of national history is crucially important in the interrogation of the ideational motivation of its foreign policy making.

A second group of research questions pertinent to collective memory is how this ideational actor is reinterpreted to forge the national identity that can enhance the internal and external dimensions of the PRC state's legitimacy. To carve out this process in the linkage politics of Chinese foreign affairs, this research will unearth the content of the Chinese collective memory that has become the focal point in the CCP's regime legitimacy enhancement. If viewed as a communicative device for projecting nationalist discourse, collective memory can be seen an example of what Anthony Giddens terms the "narrative of the self: the story or stories by means of which self-identity is reflexively understood, both by the individual concerned and by others."²⁶ In the narration of the autobiographical narrative of the Chinese nation, several aspects of memory construction manifest the reflexive understanding of its modern history that has made the "nationalist aspirations of the present appear authentic, natural and comprehensible."²⁷ The issues that will be addressed in the dissertation include: What is the fundamental plotting schema that connects seemingly discrete historical stories in a cause-and-effect manner for the legitimation of domestic and foreign policy? Within such narrative paradigms,

²⁶ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 243. In a similar vein, some cultural sociologists view the stories that social actors tell of themselves as "ontological narratives," which are used to make sense of and to act on in their lives. See, e.g., Margaret R. Somers, "Deconstructing and Reconstructing Class Formation Theory," in *Reworking Class*, ed. John R. Hall (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 73-105; George Steinmetz, "Reflections on the Role of Social Narratives in Working-Class Foundation," *Social Science History* 16, no. 3 (1992): 489-516.

²⁷ Smith, "Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations," 16.

which historical events take precedence over others in the rich legacy of collective memory? Who are the self and the other among the protagonists of these events? What role identities are attributed to the adversarial actors and what are the implications of the group categorization in the story-telling? The upshot of answering these questions that are germane to the reinterpretation of national history is to account for the communicative process in which the rework of collective memory of modern Chinese history is subsumed to the CCP's domestic and foreign policy agendas.

To ascertain the potential promise that collective memory holds in the analysis of Chinese foreign policy, this dissertation also pays focused attention to the emotional appeal of collective memory in regenerating Chinese national community. The communication of memory, as noted by sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel, is often anchored in the symbolic representation of some past events that can readily incite the collective emotion of pride, pain, or shame.²⁸ In the articulation of these dramatic events, meanings attached to a particular streak of collective identity are instantiated in the self-other interactions and the perceptions of foreign relations are formed. While inspiring affective reaction of group members, the emotional tropes of memory, represented through such chosen symbols as national traumas and victories, cast an indelible shadow over a nation's conception of its interests and hence its foreign policy behavior. In the Chinese public remembrance, the traumatic memory of foreign incursion and aggression in its modern history is central to regenerating the national community in emotionally-charged disputes with the foreign "other," which deliver plausible historical analogies that energize necessary actions to achieve the social needs inherent in the collective identity.

²⁸ Eviatar Zerubavel, "Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past," *Qualitative Sociology* 19, no. 3 (1996): 290.

As the emotional tag of national identity are forcefully translated to state action, grasping the conceptual and behavioral implications of the affective reaction of the Chinese in-group members that is animated in these incendiary events is a critical step to understand the impacts of traumatic memory on the PRC's foreign policy behavior. By looking at the interaction between the CCP's diplomatic decision-makers and the Chinese populace, who has a set of role expectation of the Beijing regime in the drama staged on the foreign relations front, this research hopes to offer a robust inquiring basis to figure out whether national trauma is merely a means for the CCP to garner public support for its foreign policy, or if it is in fact an independent variable driving actual policy choice.

The effort of testing how the ideational variables condition the policy options in the CCP's diplomatic decision-making suggests a more balanced perspective in conceptualizing the state-society relationship under the authoritarian regime power, which is what this study aims to produce in its analysis of the linkage politics of Chinese foreign affairs. The conventional wisdom of the foreign policy formulation in the nondemocratic setting, as will be elaborated later in the literature review, is located in the state-versus-society framework in which foreign policy is reduced to a product of an arbitrary dictate from above. Since the state is viewed as a unitary actor that is autonomous from social forces, its foreign policy is more or less a coordinated strategy designed to cope with the external environment and reflects the particular views on national interests held by state leaders. Such a state-centric outlook becomes tenuous when one ponders how an authoritarian regime like the CCP is be so responsive to the opinion of nationalist activists, whose emotional demands can diverge from the state leaders' policy preference. However, if the state's power is not equated with its

autonomy from society but is treated as a political force working through society, the state-society dichotomy can be transformed into a symbiotic relationship in which the two sides are “mutually empowering.” Put another way, the autonomy of the state is embedded in a given society.²⁹ It is upon such an epistemological basis that this dissertation conducts the research on the ideational factors of Chinese nationalism, an arena where the political claim-making of, and strategic interactions between, the CCP leadership and domestic societal actors end up reshaping both the state and society in the domestic-foreign-policy interaction.

Situated in the recursive relationship between the state and society, the study of the production and consumption of collective memory provides a fresh visual angel to look at the normative consensus reached between the nationalist ideologues and their mass audience in the internal and external legitimation of the PRC state. Motivated by this key issue in the linkage politics of Chinese foreign relations, the projection and reception of the historical narratives highlighting the Chinese nation’s trauma bridge the popular demands inherent in the national identity with the state capacity to accomplish the identity-informed interests on the world stage. In this regard, the dissection of the fulfillment of the CCP’s role expectation on the performance stage of the PRC’s diplomacy represents an instructive route for empirical research on the conditions under which the state-society synergy is more likely to occur in the foreign policy making process, which has not yet been fully explained by students of Chinese politics.

²⁹ Joel S. Migdal, Athl Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, “Introduction: Developing a State-in-Society Perspective,” in *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World*, ed. Joel S. Migdal, Athl Kohli, and Vivienne Shue (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1-4. Also see Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001); “The State in Society,” in *New Directions in Comparative Politics*, ed. Howard J. Wiarda (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002); Xu Wang, “Mutual Empowerment of State and Society: Its Nature, Conditions, Mechanisms, and Limits,” *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 2 (1999): 231-49.

Indubitably, the state does not always run in step with society on the foreign relations front. In addition to the positive linkage of state and society in the enterprise of Chinese nationalism, the survey of the negative linkage yields informative insights on a peculiar form of popular engagement with foreign policy making in an autocratic state, which can be further mutated into the popular contention in the realm of domestic politics. Given that foreign policy making has traditionally been one of the most centralized area of policymaking in Chinese governance, the research on the transmission of popular nationalist demand to the decision-making circle of China's diplomacy is conducive to the plausibility probe of China's political liberalization. Put in a broader scope, although political participation in China is often seen as *sui generis* in comparative politics, a quick glance around today's world suggests that organizing collective actions in the political opportunity structure of nationalism is not a novel strategy of savvy protesters to challenge the despotic power of illiberal regimes. Due to the significance of authoritarian regimes in world politics and foreign policy analysis, empirical findings of the ingenious ways of political liberation in the repressive political systems are profitable for the comparative study of contentious politics and for an adequate appreciation of the impact of public opinion in the foreign policy decision-making of nondemocratic states.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The correlation between the domestic imperatives and the external settings of a state's foreign policy making has been one of the defining research questions in foreign policy analysis.³⁰ In the early 1960s, James Rosenau, perhaps more than anyone else,

³⁰ According to Neack et al, the literature on foreign policy analysis can be roughly divided into two categories of scholarship. The first one is often referred to as "comparative foreign policy (CFP)," which is

drew the theoretical issue of linkage politics “along the domestic-foreign frontier” to the attention of political scientists.³¹ Since then, scholars anchored in various sub-branches of IR have conducted their examinations of the internal-external linkage of foreign affairs in diverse fashions.³² As Paul Huth points out in his diagnosis of the domestic determinants of interstate territorial disputes, “the critical theoretical task confronting scholars in the field of international politics is to develop generalizable propositions about state behavior based on the premise that foreign policy leaders are attentive to the incentives and constraints generated by both their domestic and international environment.”³³ Most notably, the simultaneous impact of internal and external inputs on the foreign policy making is aptly labeled by Robert Putnam as a “two-level game,” wherein the interactions of a government with its foreign counterparts are constrained by domestic constituents who may support or oppose the agreement being negotiated. As Putnam expounds in an iconic article on the linkage politics of a state’s foreign relations,

At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and politicians seek power by

aimed to “move away from noncumulative descriptive case studies and to construct a parsimonious explanation of what drives the foreign policy behavior of states.” The second group is the oft-cited “foreign policy analysis (FPA),” featuring as “a broad set of approaches bound together by common focus on studying foreign policy and acceptance of eclecticism in theory building.” Cited from Laura Neack, Jeanne A. K. Hey, and Patrick J. Haney, “Generational Change in Foreign Policy Analysis,” in *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation*, ed. Laura Neack, Jeanne A. K. Hey, and Patrick J. Haney (Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 2-3.

³¹ For two pioneer works of this thematic issue by Rosenau, see James N. Rosenau, *Linkage Politics: Essays on the Convergence of National and International Systems* (New York: Free Press, 1969); *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier: Exploring Governance in a Turbulent World* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Along with other political scientists, Wolfram Hanrieder also emphasized the need of study of the linkage politics of foreign policy. See Wolfram F. Hanrieder, “Compatibility and Consensus: A Proposal for the Conceptual Linkage of External and Internal Dimensions of Foreign Policy,” *American Political Science Review* 61, no. 4 (1967): 971-82.

³² Among others, see Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003); Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006); Laura Neack, Jeanne A. K. Hey, and Patrick J. Haney, eds., *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995).

³³ Paul K. Huth, *Standing Your Ground: Territorial Disputes and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 7.

constructing coalitions among these groups. At the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments.³⁴

This logic of the interconnectedness of domestic and international forces, however, is not universally shared within the literature of foreign policy analysis. While great strides have been made in the studies of foreign policy in scope and depth, the salient lack of a “systematic, sustained and comparative inquiry,” explicitly identified by James Rosnau in the 1960s,³⁵ remains in the arena of national-international linkage. One of the primary reasons of such intellectual fragility is that the dominant paradigms of IR theory, particularly neorealism and neoliberalism, privilege the effects of anarchic international structure on the instrumental rationality of state behavior.³⁶

Against this backdrop, among the three “images” of international politics presented by Kenneth Waltz, attention is overwhelmingly given to the “third image”—the international system consisting of state units that are functionally undifferentiated.³⁷ As Waltz boldly posits, “A theory of international politics ... can describe the range of likely outcomes of actions and interactions of states within a given system and how the range of expectations varies as systems change.”³⁸ Given that the external constraints stemming from the anarchic international structure are identified as the key variables in most foreign policy projects, suffice it to say that systemic theories are inadequate to probe the

³⁴ Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 434.

³⁵ Rosenau, *Linkage Politics: Essays on the Convergence of National and International Systems*, 2.

³⁶ Among others, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979); David A. Baldwin, ed. *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993); Robert Powell, “Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate,” *International Organization* 48, no. 2 (1994): 313-44; Robert O. Keohane, ed. *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1986).

³⁷ According to Waltz, the “first image” of international politics is the human nature at the individual level, and the “second image” is the structure of separate states. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1959).

³⁸ *Theory of International Politics*, 71.

complicated process of the diplomatic decision-making process operating inside a country, which involves a bewildering variety of internal inputs, and the outcomes of specific behavior of individual states that are assumed to react to similar systemic stimuli.³⁹ This reveals why Waltz himself nullifies the utility of his theory in “[explaining] the particular policies of states,” as he believes that “a theory of international politics” cannot be confused with “a theory of foreign policy.”⁴⁰ Similarly, in acknowledging the shared weakness that neorealist and neoliberal accounts are susceptible to in their interpretation of the behavior of the major global powers at the end of the Cold War, Robert Keohane, a representative of neoliberalism, also writes that “[more] research will have to be undertaken at the level of the state, rather than the international system.”⁴¹

A corollary of such skewed inquiry in the study of foreign policy behavior is the deliberate detachment of the domestic sphere of politics. The ontological primacy given to the anarchic context of unitary states lends support to a rationalist, or materialist, perspective of states’ foreign relations. With a premium placed on the variation in the system-level constraints that are virtually faced by all the security-seeking state actors, their behavior is accordingly viewed as the decision-makers’ strategy to cope with the international environment. Shifts in the distribution of power among states and their relative positions in the international system cause the change in their foreign policies. Insights flowing from the rationalist model typically bear the assumption that external restraints, which foreign policymakers can neglect only at the risk of failure, directly

³⁹ *Theory of International Politics*, 122.

⁴⁰ *Theory of International Politics*, 121.

⁴¹ Robert O. Keohane, “Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge after the Cold War,” in *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. David A. Baldwin (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 295.

shape the state behavior, and domestic normative environment and ideational motivation of states' diplomatic actions are therefore relegated to a minor role in the foreign policy analysis.⁴² To be more specific, this analytic bias has led to an overlook of the conception of state interest, which is informed in the formation and transformation of national identity that is constructed in the social interaction of state actors, as well as individual perception and preference that are highly associated with the priority of foreign policy making. To the extent that identity, ideology, and norms, among other ideational factors, are viewed as derivative of the material variables of national foreign policy and simply serve the instrumentality of rational actors, these social-cultural elements of a state's diplomatic goal are conceived of as relatively fixed and exogenous variables in the research traditions of foreign policy analysis and thus are lack of independent explanatory power in fathoming the state's conduct of its foreign policy.

That being said, a slew of recent work by some IR scholars take a different tact in querying the role of domestic variables, or in Waltz's typology, the second image of international politics, with the assumption that foreign policy results from the constant interaction of internal and external forces. The most prominent strain of this scholarship is neo-classical realism. This group of scholars contend that, while the formulation and implementation of foreign policy is primarily driven by a country's relative material power in the anarchic international system, external settings have to be filtered through various actors of internal politics—decision-makers' perceptions, the ease of mobilizing social resources, and state structures, to mention a few—before they can finally be

⁴² Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," 4. For examples of how the ideational factors is marginalized in realist and non-realist scholarship, see Stephen Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978). Kenneth A. Oye, ed. *Cooperation under Anarchy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

translated to a state's diplomatic behavior. Because state-level factors act as intervening variables between international structure and the dependent variable of foreign policy output, understanding the relationship between power and policy requires an exhaustive scrutiny of both international and domestic contexts of the state's foreign policy behavior.⁴³

Unlike neoclassical realists' adherence to the determinist logic centering the anarchic structure of the international system and the states' material capability in shaping the contour of foreign policy, another variant of IR scholarship, *innenpolitik* theories argue that internal elements place more imprints in foreign policy making.⁴⁴ Scholars in this camp suggest that it is the pressures within states, rather than those outside, that drive the diplomatic decision-making. Starting from the premise that societal interests have a stake in the foreign policy choice, this domestic politics approach views the priority setting of international affairs as state leaders' response to these interests. As the state's diplomatic decision-making can be constrained, and perhaps even distorted, by societal interests and pressures, domestic considerations are seen by *innenpolitik* advocates to have greater gravity in the final choice of foreign policy than do neo-classical realists.⁴⁵ A quintessential notion of IR influenced by the basic tenet of the

⁴³ For an in-depth discussion of neoclassical realism see Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 144-72. Representative works of neoclassical realism include Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, eds., *The Perils of Anarchy: Contemporary Realism and International Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995); Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Randall L. Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998); William Curti Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions During the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

⁴⁴ For the notion of *innenpolitik* theory, see Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 146-48.

⁴⁵ The literature in this regard is substantial and diverse. See, e.g., Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, "Beyond Realism: The Study of Grand Strategy," in *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*, ed. Richard

innenpolitik account is democratic peace. This thesis, in explaining why democracies do not fight each other, reasons that the domestic institutions discourage national leaders in democratic states from waging war against each other at the expense of human lives and public expenditure. Restrained by state structures, these leaders do not resort to military conflicts for political gains, but rather propagate democratic values that are conducive to peace among these states.⁴⁶

Implicit in the theory of democratic peace is the assumption that autocracies enjoy a wider degree of latitude than their democratic counterparts in dealing with foreign affairs, in that leaders of nondemocratic regimes are relatively free to conduct foreign policy without internal constraints arising from below. National leaders of democracies have to face the threat of electoral punishment. When public opinions diverge from their policy preference, these leaders often claim that domestic "audience costs" tie their hands in international negotiations.⁴⁷ By contrast, those attributes that facilitate the impact of

Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 3-21; Peter Gourevitch, *Politics in Hard Times: Comparative Responses to International Economic Crises* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Benjamin O. Fordham, *Building the Cold War Consensus: The Political Economy of U.S. National Security Policy* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1988); Etel Solingen, *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Steven E. Lobell, *The Challenge of Hegemony: Grand Strategy, Trade, and Domestic Politics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009); Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

⁴⁶ For some of the leading scholarly works on democratic peace thesis, see, e.g., Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch (1775)," in *The Enlightenment*, ed. David Williams (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 377-98; Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part 1," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 12, no. 13 (1983): 205-35; "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part 2," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 12, no. 4 (1983): 323-53; *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1997).

⁴⁷ See, e.g., James Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (1994): 577-92; James D. Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands Versus Sinking Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (1997): 68-90; Alastair Smith, "International Crises and Domestic Politics," *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 3 (1998): 623-38; Kenneth A. Schultz, "Looking for Audience Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 1 (2001): 32-60; Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University

domestic public opinion on the foreign policy making process—such as an autonomous media sector, decentralized state institutions, and above all, a meaningful electoral mechanism accorded to a democratically elected government—are largely absent in autocratic settings.⁴⁸ Under such circumstances, leaders can pursue those policy options that go against articulated or anticipated public opinion without risking future retribution by voters.⁴⁹ Given the assumption of foreign policy making in autocratic settings as insulated from societal constraints, the linkage politics of these states' foreign relations has languished as the "residual category" in much of the scholarly literature lying at the intersection of international politics and comparative politics.

The prominent autonomy of the state from pressures emanating from below and the undeserved treatment of societal forces in the diplomatic policymaking process readily fit into the analytic paradigm of statism in comparative politics. On the basis of the premise that the authority of the state is the determining factor of political life, analytical priority of this approach is accorded to the nature and composition of the state, as well as its functions and ability to withstand challenge from within and from the outside. In the one-way relationship between the state and society, the state, as the locus of political power rather than the secondary variable derivative of the society, is equipped

Press, 1960); Christopher F. Gelpi and Michael Griesdorf, "Winner or Losers? Democracies in International Crisis, 1918-94," *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 3 (2001): 633-47; Helen V. Milner, *Interests, Institutions, and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Bahar Leventoglu and Ahmer Tarar, "Prenegotiation Public Commitment in Domestic and International Bargaining," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (2005): 419-33.

⁴⁸ Among others, see, Phillip J. Powlick and Andrew Z. Katz, "Defining the American Public Opinion/Foreign Policy Nexus," *Mershon International Studies Review* 42, no. 1 (1998): 29-61; Douglas C. Foyle, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Elite Beliefs as a Mediating Variable," *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1997): 141-69; Peter J. Katzenstein, "International Relations and Domestic Structures: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States," *International Organization* 30, no. 1 (1976): 1-45.

⁴⁹ See Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Studying Substantive Democracy," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 27, no. 1 (1994): 12.

with the inherent power to reinforce societal convergence and deference.⁵⁰ Since most policies are imposed on society from above, societal forces exert few, if any, impacts on the policymaking of the state. Even in the cases where the interests of the state and of society conflict with each other, the collectivity of state officials are able to shape societal preferences, so as to align them with their own preferences that can be translated into “authoritative actions.”⁵¹ These statist arguments, which reflect the political situations under some authoritarian regimes featuring a strong state vis-à-vis a weak society, depict a unitary actor that has overwhelming power to effectively regulate, penetrate, and organize society.

Some other scholars in the statist school, who can be labeled as “neo-statist” theorists, revise the state-centric vision mentioned above with a more nuanced approach that takes into consideration the state’s interaction with domestic and foreign society. Rather than dwelling on the debate about whether the state has an independent impact on society, Theda Skocpol, one of the notable representatives of “neo-statists,” underscores that a comprehensive gauge of the role and significance of the state cannot be achieved without plumbing both the domestic context and the international environment of the state’s governance. While maintaining and manipulating domestic sociopolitical order, the state has to maneuver for survival and advantage in its foreign relations. It is in their domestic and international policy pursuits that the states’ autonomy and their capacities are embedded.⁵² Although states may be able to “formulate and pursue goals that are not

⁵⁰ John Dearlove, “Bringing the Constitution Back In: Political Science and the State,” *Political Studies* 37, no. 4 (1989): 528.

⁵¹ Eric A. Nordlinger, *On the Autonomy of the Democratic State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 7-9.

⁵² Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 19, 8. For a representative work of the state’s “embedded autonomy,”

simply reflective of the demands or interests of social groups, classes, or society,” Skocpol confesses, their conduct of policy initiatives is constrained by various factors, domestic and international, that yield disproportionate impact on the state autonomy.⁵³ As such, in the study of “how states affect political and social processes through their policies and their patterned relationships with social groups,” Skocpol maintains, investigators should look “more microscopically at the ways in which the structures and activities of states unintentionally influence the formation of groups and the political capacities, ideas, and demands of various sectors of society.”⁵⁴ Moving beyond the purely state-centric views, according to which states are far from being an integral part of a larger whole, neo-statists have come to realize that the state is a weighty actor, but not a unitary or monolithic one, as state officials need to cooperate or contend with other actors in their “goal-oriented activities.”⁵⁵ This approach is epitomized in the caution counseled by Skocpol and her colleagues in the concluding chapter of their edited volume *Bringing the State Back In*, a must read in the scholarship of statism, that “[studying] state action should not entail either glorifying state power or overestimating its efficacy.”⁵⁶

An important thematic issue that can serve as an appropriate annotation to the state-society interaction is collective memory, the production and consumption of which can bring about both intended and unintended consequences to the state when it seeks to construct a supportive discursive environment of its domestic and foreign policy

see Peter B. Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: State and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). Forrest Colburn offers a laudable review of two important works of the scholarship of statism. See Forrest D. Colburn, “Statism, Rationality, and State Centrism,” *Comparative Politics* 20, no. 4 (1988): 485-92.

⁵³ Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” 9-20.

⁵⁴ “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” 3, 21.

⁵⁵ “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” 21.

⁵⁶ Peter E. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, “On the Road toward a More Adequate Understanding of the State,” *ibid.*, ed. Peter E. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, 365.

initiatives. A perusal of the literature on collective memory reveals differing thematic focus in memory study, resulting from variegated theoretical lenses and analytic tools drawing on diverse disciplines,⁵⁷ including sociology, political science, anthropology, psychology, and neuroscience. Due to the marked difference in terminology, interests, and methods in these fields, there has not yet been a coherent concept of memory that is widely accepted in distinctive research paradigms. Despite the fragmented scholarship, two caveats need to be addressed, which would be helpful for one to delve into the critical dimensions of memory that are highlighted in differing approaches.

At the basic conceptual level, it would be worthwhile to distinguish individual memory on the one hand and collective memory on the other. While the former refers to the recollection of events that are entirely made up of personal experiences, the latter is exclusively contextualized in the social environment that affects the way people remember the past. Just as Maurice Halbwachs, whose seminal work on collective memory is generally credited with the foundation in this field, concisely puts it, “it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, reorganize, and localize their memories.”⁵⁸ Rather than the sum total of the recollections of individuals who comprise a social group like a national community, collective memory provides the “social frameworks” in which individuals place their thoughts and engage in the act of remembrance.⁵⁹ It is within these “clearly demonstrable long-term structures,”

⁵⁷ For example, see Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 177. Among others, also see

⁵⁸ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.

⁵⁹ Ibid. For the comparison between the “individualist” and “collectivist” versions of collective memory, see Jeffrey K. Olick, “Collective Memory: The Two Cultures,” *Sociological Theory* 17, no. 3 (1999): 337-45; Jan-Werner Müller, “Introduction: The Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory,” in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*, ed. Jan-Werner Müller (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3.

which “are stubbornly imperious to the efforts of individuals to escape,” that members of a national in-group are endowed with the normative and affective underpinnings to interpret their national history, and that their perception and behavior toward the out-groups are vigorously shaped.⁶⁰

Another issue one needs to be aware of is the fine line between memory and history. Collective memory, as observed by some historians, is less about the objective chronology of the past than the public vision of the history that is felt, thought, and interpreted in a given social entity. Historical events are often reduced to single-dimensional pictures in memory construction, in which the complex and multifaceted historical process is prone to be reworked into a simplistic theme.⁶¹ The representation of collective memory thus often involves mythmaking through the story-telling of the national history. Anne Rønning describes the mythical enactment of the past in her discussion of the writing of postcolonial history,

Memory is a collective myth shared by a group ... These memories are not personal, but inherited through storytelling with its concomitant distortion of detail. Memory and history are constructions of the past, though the factual elements of mythology are often difficult to identify. Such myths, by a ‘glorification’ of the past, contribute to linking past and present in the formation of a contemporary stance, and can have a therapeutic effect.⁶²

⁶⁰ Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 28. Also see Thomas Berger, “The Power of Memory and Memories of Power: The Cultural Parameters of German Foreign Policy-Making since 1945,” in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*, ed. Jan-Werner Müller (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 80; Erica Resende and Dovile Budryte, “Introduction,” in *Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases and Debates*, ed. Erica Resende and Dovile Budryte (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 4.

⁶¹ See, e.g., Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire,” *Representations* 26(1989): 7-24; Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999). Anthropologist Pamela Ballinger notes that academics with interests in collective memory “study the operation of memory, rather than produce an ‘objective’ history of events” Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5.

⁶² Anne Holden Rønning, “Some Reflections on Myth, History and Memory as Determinants of Narrative,” *Coolabah* 3(2009): 149.

Applied to the case of China, the distinction between memory and history is made by Cohen in his path-breaking work on the Boxer Movement in China. In elucidating the plural modes of “knowing the past,” Cohen argues that the Boxer Movement, in addition to being history-as-event, gave rise to a myth that connects the popular consciousness of the past and present social agendas. As he contends,

The Boxers as *event* represented a particular reading of the past, while the Boxer as *myth* represent an impressing of the past into the service of a particular reading of the present. Either way a dynamic interaction is set up between present and past, in which the past is continually being reshaped, either consciously or unconsciously, in accordance with the diverse and shifting preoccupations of people in the present.⁶³

In the process of transforming what happened in the past into what is actually believed to have happened, the mythmaking endeavor helps to form a formulaic version of historical events in the collective mentality, which ratifies the historiography endorsed by the mythologizers. “Once assertions about the past enter deeply into people’s minds (and hearts),” Cohen contends, “it is arguable that they acquire a truth of their own At the very least such assertions are true statements about what people *believe* and therefore must occupy a central place in any history of human consciousness.”⁶⁴ The production and consumption of collective memory is therefore conducted in a discursive setting, in which the agents of memory actively impinge upon the “objective” history as facts and reconstruct the history as experiences, so that people can use the history as myth in perceiving the relationship between the past and the present.⁶⁵

⁶³ Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), xii, emphasis in original.

⁶⁴ *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), 212, emphasis in original.

⁶⁵ For the literature on how memory overshadows history, see, among others, Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse,” *Representations* 69(2000): 127-50; Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life* (Sioux Falls, SD: EZReads Publications, 2010); Steven Knapp, “Collective Memory and the Actual Past,” *Representations* 26(1989): 123-49.

Proceeding with the above issues concerning collective memory, one can recognize three focused areas of memory study: the nature of collective memory, the contingency of memory, and the contestation over memory. Just as Elizabeth Jelin boils down in her three-fold definition of memories,

First, memories are to be understood as subjective processes anchored in experiences and in symbolic and materials markets. Second, memories are the object if disputes, conflicts, and struggles Third, memories must be looked at historically ... which is to say that meanings attached to the past change over time and are part of larger, complex social and political scenarios.⁶⁶

In terms of the subjective nature of collective memory, Jeffrey Olick strikes a cautionary note reminding us that “memory is a process and not a thing, a faculty rather than a place. Collective memory is something—or rather many things—we *do*, not something—or many things—we *have*.”⁶⁷ As indicated in the differentiation of individual and collective memories mentioned above, collective memory can be seen as a process of “existential fusion,” whereby the integration of “our own personal biography with the history of the groups or communities to which we belong” becomes “an indispensable part of our social identity.”⁶⁸ In the transference of individual to group identity, the emotional ingredients of the historical myths, such as shame and revenge, which are selectively exaggerated in the representation of history, often serve as the cognitive foundation to define who is the national “self,” who is the foreign “other”, what it means to be an in-group member, and who the group’s enemies are. It is in this

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2003), xv, emphasis in original.

⁶⁷ Jeffrey K. Olick, “From Collective Memory to Sociology of Mnemonic Practices and Products,” in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 159.

⁶⁸ Zerubavel, “Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past,” 290.

subjective process of valorizing group membership that collective memory and national identity are intertwined and become the central forces of nationalism.⁶⁹

The function of collective memory in enhancing public allegiance and affiliation to the nation accounts for the statist manifestation in the domestic-foreign-policy interaction. Authoritarian leaders, as noted by Jack Snyder, tend to prompt nationalist myths when they are exposed to legitimacy crises and growing demand for political participation.⁷⁰ While directing domestic grievance toward foreign entities, collective memory reifies the normative values ingrained in the national identity. In such cases, what the state leaders are doing is to employ public remembrance in an instrumental manner. In Jack Levy's account, "[they] ... select from historical experience those cases that provide the greatest support for their preexisting policy preferences that provide the greatest support for their preferred policies, whether they be driven by views of the national interest or partisan political interests."⁷¹ As a result, the unified and deferential society that is cohered around the shared national symbol "frees diplomatic decision-makers to pursue the national interest autonomously of domestic constraints."⁷²

Not only can collective memory enable foreign policy behavior of the state, it is also capable of constraining the autonomy of the state's decision-making, to the extent that societal actors can join the mythmaking efforts in interpreting the past. In this regard,

⁶⁹ See, e.g., Jack David Eller, *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict: An Anthropological Perspective on International Ethnic Conflict* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. For an example of how German collective memory becomes central to an understanding of the forces of its nationalism, see Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich, *The German Predicament: Memory and Power in the New Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

⁷⁰ Jack L. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York, NY: Norton, 2000), 7.

⁷¹ Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield" *International Organization* 48, no. 2 (1994): 282.

⁷² David Skidmore and Valerie M. Hudson, "Establishing the Limits of State Autonomy: Contending Approaches to the Study of State-Society Relations and Foreign Policy-Making," in *The Limits of State Autonomy: Societal Groups and Foreign Policy Formulation*, ed. David Skidmore and Valerie M. Hudson (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 8.

perhaps the most salient form memory can take—which arouses what Roger Morgan calls the “public psyche” that runs deeper than public opinion in emotionally connecting the general populace to the national image presented on the foreign relations front—is that of national trauma.⁷³ This form of collective memory, as Jeffrey Alexander defines, “occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.”⁷⁴ The populace of the victim states, under such circumstances, can become the memory agents. The desire to re-seize the power taken from their states and concern that the veracity of the claims of trauma will be questioned can work as a “symbolic power” in their political claim-making on the foreign relations front, which in turn, affects the legitimation of the states’ foreign policy.⁷⁵

The findings of the study in traumatic memory reflect the other two aspects of Jelin’s three-fold definition of memory. While being a subjective process, collective memory is also a site of contestation, in which societal actors as memory agents can be empowered to constrain the autonomy of the state, whose effort in crafting the discursive environment of its foreign policymaking is counterpointed by bottom-up forces. In elaborating the collective memory of trauma, Jenny Edkins has forcefully argued,

The way in which [historical] events ... are remembered is fundamental to the production and reproduction of centralized political power. However, memory is central not only to the production of these forms of power but also to their contestation: certain types of memory, of catastrophic events,

⁷³ Roger Morgan, “Images, Identities, and Foreign Policy,” *Government and Opposition* 36, no. 4 (2001): 583. For an example of most recent research on the collective memory of national trauma, see Erica Resende and Dovile Budryte, eds., *Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases and Debates* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013).

⁷⁴ Jeffrey C. Alexander, “Toward a Theory of a Cultural Trauma,” in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, et al. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 1.

⁷⁵ Müller, “Introduction: The Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory,” 25.

for example, provide specific openings for resistance to centralized political power.⁷⁶

As such, the construction and consumption of memory, “always fragile and provisional,” is concomitant with social contestation and power struggles.⁷⁷ As manifested in the “politics of memory,” which is closely related to the power distribution in the “mnemonic communities,” the crucial issue of attaching meanings to the past is not what is represented in the memory, but how the historical events are interpreted and perceived by the constructors and consumers of memory, or simply put, “it is who wants whom to remember what, and why” that matters.⁷⁸ Revolving around this question arising in the context-sensitive process of memory construction, collective memory is treated either as a dependent variable or an independent variable along with two primary strands of perspectives of how the memory works.

The presentist perspective, as articulated in the constructionist, interest-based, and pragmatist models of memory study, underscores the present sociopolitical purposes in searching for the “usable past.”⁷⁹ Scholars employing this analytic approach, however extreme or understated, have a common analytic focus on the current situations in which collective memory, viewed as an independent variable, is intentionally and intensely constructed. The instrumentalist manipulation of memory enables political actors to

⁷⁶ Jenny Edkins, “Remembering Relationality: Trauma Time and Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present,” in *Memory, Trauma, and World Politics*, ed. Duncan Bell (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 101.

⁷⁷ Duncan Bell, “Introduction: Violence and Memory,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38, no. 2 (2009): 351.

⁷⁸ Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1393; Zerubavel, “Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past,” 289.

⁷⁹ James V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 40.

forge a past that is compatible with contemporary circumstances.⁸⁰ On the other hand, as some scholars point out, “our current psychological state shapes our thinking about historical events in the same way that historical events shape our current thinking.”⁸¹ Collective memory, with its inherent cultural values that can be animated through the representation of its featuring symbols, supplies ethical standards and frames of reference for the present. Unlike presentist advocates, scholars maintaining this cultural perspective treat collective memory as an independent variable of the political behavior conducted in the “mnemonic communities.” They do not believe that public remembrance is as malleable as presentist scholars would contend. According to them, collective memory is a stable cultural entity that does not need to be reified or objectified, and hence is subsumed within a specific cultural milieu that is constituted by common practices and representations.⁸² Such a “cultural system” that exists independently of the instrumental purposes of memory construction is a reservoir of the moral sources of the present behavior.⁸³ In this sense, the preference of political actors and their policy choice

⁸⁰ See, e.g., George Herbert Mead, “The Nature of the Past,” in *Essays in Honor of John Dewey*, ed. John Coss (New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co, 1929), 235-42; Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983); David R. Maines, Noreen M. Sugrue, and Michael A. Katovich, “The Sociological Import of G. H. Mead’s Theory of the Past,” *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (1983): 161-73; John E. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*; John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Diane L. Barthel, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁸¹ James W. Pennebaker and Amy Gonzales, “Making History: Social and Psychological Processes Underlying Collective Memory,” in *Memory in Mind and Culture*, ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009), 110.

⁸² Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1981), 1-62, 162-94; Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 79-92.

⁸³ For the illustration of the “cultural system,” see Barry Schwartz, “Memory as a Cultural System: Abraham Lincoln in World War II,” *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 5 (1996): 908-27. Regarding the scholarship with the cultural perspective in the memory study or the literature informing this perspective, see, e.g., Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New York, NY: Doubleday,

are historically conditioned in the normative paradigm stemming from the collective memory.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK, DESIGN, AND METHODS

With an effort to interpret the social-cultural predispositions underlying the PRC's often incomprehensible, sometimes even disturbing, external conduct, this dissertation seeks to amend the deficiency in the current scholarship that takes analytical precedence over the outcome of Chinese foreign policy rather than the process of the preference formation and policy choice. In an attempt to transcend the epistemological limits of the conventional approach of looking at a state's diplomatic behavior from outside, this study features a standpoint of disentangling the PRC's diplomacy "inside-out." The exploration of the impacts of popular nationalism in the linkage politics of Chinese foreign affairs is focused on how collective memory and national identity are constructed in the CCP's domestic and foreign policy agendas; how they are ingrained in the cognitive system of the Chinese populace; and how these historical institutions influence the perception and behavior of political actors. Scaling up to the analytical structure, addressing these thematic issues that have thus far not yet been fully attended, or only acknowledged obliquely, in the scholarship of the Chinese domestic-foreign-policy interaction cries out for a clearly-defined framework. With such a theoretical scheme, one can flesh out more meaningfully the foreign policy ideas that are embedded in the

[1790] 1940); Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York, NY: The Free Press, [1915] 1965); Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition* (New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); Michael Schudson, *Watergate in American Memory. How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past?* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1992); "The Present in the Past Versus the Past in the Present," *Communication* 11, no. 2 (1989): 105-13; Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, [1982] 1996).

enterprise of Chinese nationalism and the way that these ideational variables prescribe and proscribe the CCP's diplomatic decision-making and the PRC state's foreign policy behavior.

A key nexus in the linkage politics of a state's foreign relations is regime legitimacy. National leaders in any state, be it democratic or autocratic, all take upon themselves the mission of augmenting the legitimacy of their regimes. As illustrated in Figure 1 (on page 40), the entry point of the current research consists of two dimensions. Internally, the legitimacy of the PRC state depends on the popular support for the incumbent regime of the CCP leadership. Externally, the international status acquired by the PRC state also bestows upon the CCP the legitimacy it needs to secure its existence. These two aspects of regime legitimacy are highly related to the collective memory of foreign invasion and subjugation in the modern Chinese history. During the so-called "century of national humiliation" (*bainian guochi*), which started with the Opium War (1839-42) and lasted until 1949 when the PRC state was founded, China was forced to be a semi-colony inflicted by foreign aggression and subjugation. The role-playing nature of the Communist state, as manifested in its agency of leading the Chinese people in wiping off national humiliation, is a commemorative resource for reifying the moral foundation of the CCP's internal legitimacy. On the other hand, the PRC state's status aspiration also subscribes to the vengeance motif of the traumatic memory. To what extent China's status aspiration is fulfilled in the conduct of the PRC's diplomacy is a major sign of the CCP's external legitimacy.

Scrutinizing how the collective memory of national trauma is recovered and reinterpreted in the regeneration of the Chinese national community is a critical step to

comprehend the way that regime legitimacy modes and drives the formulation of the CCP's foreign policy. This research puts the analytic focus of the political endeavor of the CCP in enhancing its regime legitimacy on the cultural representation of the traumatic memory in the regime's national-building project. As a communicative technique in the state's historical mythmaking, collective memory is narrated through the representation of the selected symbol of national trauma that is inherent in the public remembrance. This constant theme of the nationwide patriotic education campaign, staged by the Chinese propaganda state from the early 1990s onward, is examined with an analytic lens of political communication. To be more specific, the study of the construction of Chinese collective memory centers on the master historical account highlighting the historical trauma suffered by the nation. Canvassing how the victimization discourse is framed in the internal and external legitimation of the state will bring a heuristic understanding of the pragmatic function of the CCP's strategic narratives, which, in the form of the master historical accounts, is projected to mobilize popular support for an authoritarian regime and to justify the regime's pursuit of a global status that is commensurate with China's historical glory.

As mentioned above, collective memory is reflected in the autobiographical narratives of a nation's self-identity. The interpretive analysis of traumatic memory provides an important guideline for the investigation of Chinese national identity, which comprises the belief system where the Chinese foreign policy ideas are formed and the PRC's diplomatic behavior is reasoned. In this dissertation, the content of Chinese national identity is composed of two aspects of meanings and social values. The normative meaning of the national identity, as instantiated in the traumatic memory of

national dismemberment and territorial concession, is sublimated as the “principled beliefs” in sovereign whole and territorial integrity,⁸⁴ an ethical standard that Chinese foreign policymakers must continuously uphold. The purposive aspect of national identity derived from the national trauma has also been institutionalized as a social norm, which leads to the goal-orientation of national foreign policy.

Apart from these two veins of meanings, Chinese national identity has its affective dimension, which has made the state-projected master historical account appealing to the collective emotion of the in-group members. According to the role theory in the IR scholarship, a state’s external behavior is influenced by both its own role conception and the status prescribed by the foreign “other.”⁸⁵ Since the interactive environment of the international society is not within the firm control of the “self,” the disparity between Chinese national conception and the role prescription of an authoritarian state traditionally held by the “other,” particularly those reigning powers in the hierarchical international system, calls into question the purposive elements of Chinese national identity. In the antagonistic intergroup interactions, the sabotage of the China’s tenacious struggle for a deserved international power status by the foreign “other” readily animates an inveterate collective emotion, which shapes the in-group members’ perception and behavior of in their interaction vis-à-vis the foreign out-groups. The emotional representation of national identity, coupled with its normative and purposive content, constitutes the belief system of Chinese foreign policy ideas, where the priorities and preferences in the diplomatic decision-making process are formed and translated to the state’s external behavior.

⁸⁴ Goldstein and Keohane, “Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework,” 9.

⁸⁵ K. J. Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy,” *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1970): 240-43.

Returning to the entry point of the research program, the CCP's regime legitimacy is highly related to the PRC's external behavior. The normative and purposive meanings of Chinese national identity as well as its affective dimension have given ground to the ethical agenda of Beijing's foreign policy making and the criterion with which the Chinese populace assesses the CCP's conduct of foreign affairs. The incompletion of the regime's diplomatic performance, as judged by the domestic audience, to its role identity as the defender of national pride and interests threatens to erode its internal legitimacy. Since China's status aspiration is contingent upon the role prescription of the foreign "other," reworking the PRC's national image is often needed to secure a positive external environment that is conducive to its domestic socioeconomic development. But this agenda of external legitimation requires a mode of policy calculation that can go against the moral standards of China's diplomacy. It is such internal-external conflicts, caused by the distinctive orientations of the CCP's regime-legitimation project, that have given rise to the inconsistent profile of China's foreign policy behavior.

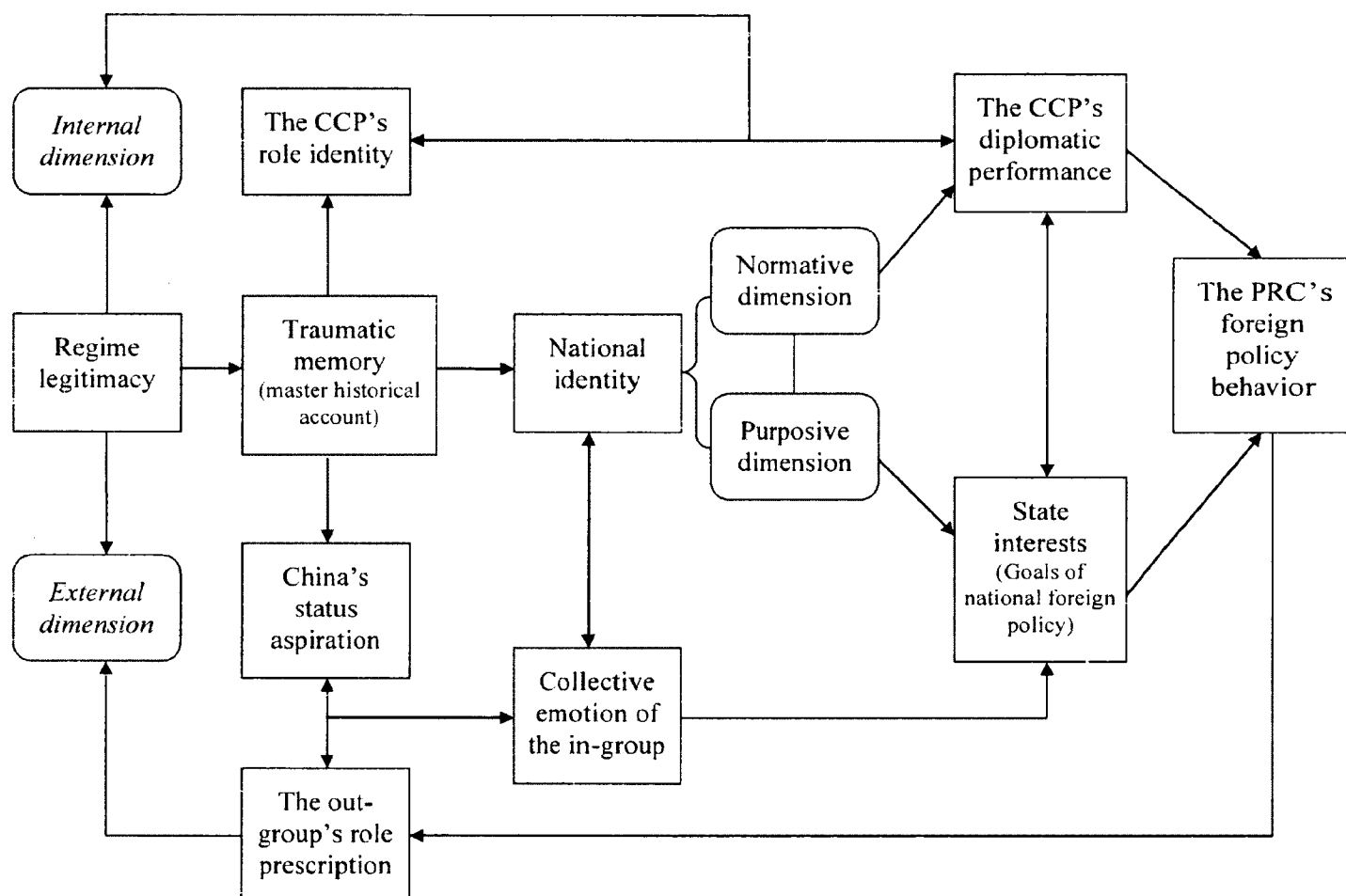


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

Located in the intersection of comparative politics and international politics, this dissertation includes two major lines of inquiry. The first analytic mode is rational choice approach, according to which ideas can be instrumentalized by strategic actors to further self-interested agendas.⁸⁶ Along this line of reasoning, collective memory and national identity, two ideational elements in the enterprise of Chinese nationalism, are the intervening variables between the CCP's rationality in shoring up the internal and external legitimacy of the authoritarian state and the desired outcome of the regime's domestic and foreign policies.

To explain how the CCP plays the nationalist gallery in seeking the loyalty and support of the Chinese populace and enacting the moral foundation of the PRC's social mobility in the international society, the construction of collective memory and national identity is investigated from the analytical angle of the social pragmatics of strategic narratives, a communicative device exploited in the CCP's historical mythmaking. Because history is filtered through the interpretation and reinterpretation, in projecting the strategic narrative revolving around historical representation, it is essential that the social meanings and values of the nation's past be distilled from collective identity and be reaffirmed in the public recollection. Standing in the shoes of rational choice approach, the scrutiny of the CCP's internal and external regime legitimation is focused on the formation, projection, and reception of the master commemorative account. Looking at the symbolic representation of the traumatic symbol in these historical narratives, where the blow dealt to the Chinese nation is defined, the victimizers are identified, responsibility is attributed, and preventive actions are prescribed, one can see clearly how

⁸⁶ For an example of how political actors adopt and construct identities to serve their individual purposes, see David D. Latin, *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the near Abroad* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

the source of national humiliation and the goals of a traumatized community are oriented toward the role identity of the CCP regime as the crucial agent of advancing national interests. The in-depth analysis of the narrative framing, which positions the CCP at the center of the nation-state dyad, reveals the way that collective memory and national identity are marshaled as a reliable resource, which promises a narrative edge in connecting the authoritarian state and its domestic populace and presenting the moral credential for the PRC's long-awaited international status.

Meanwhile, it should be noted, the communicative techniques of the state's historical mythmaking do not fully account for the rhetoric potency of the CCP regime's morale role and the narrated moral identity of the PRC state, which have proved to be well resonated within the domestic audience of the CCP's strategic narratives. If collective memory and national identity are simply the functional devices for the rational actor to legitimize certain political agendas, it would be difficult to explain why the CCP's diplomatic decision-making is amenable to the popular assessment. In fact, these endogenous variables of China's diplomacy, as advocates of the cultural perspective in memory study will agree, must have their own inherent power that is not at the full discretion of the CCP's instrumentalist manipulation. As the preexisting parts of the Chinese political landscape, collective memory and national identity have taken on a life of their own and exerted a continuing influence in the domestic-foreign-policy interaction.

To fill the lacunae of rational choice approach, historical institutionalist analysis is an alternative analytic pathway taken in this dissertation. In order to figure out what kind of political imperatives compel the CCP leadership to alter the rational course of

action and adopt suboptimal foreign policy options in meeting nationalist demand, scholars need to rummage in the belief system of Chinese foreign policy ideas, which is made up of the historically-constructed institutions that serve as the independent variables in the policymaking process. According to some historical institutionalists, political behavior is not a consequential, but obligatory, action, because it is governed by the “logic of appropriateness” rather than rational self-interests.⁸⁷ Along this line of reasoning, embedded in the collective memory and national identity are the institutional structure of social norms and collective expectations, which define the standard of appropriateness regarding the behavior of political actors and shape the popular perceptions of foreign affairs. To the extent that these historical forces shape the conception of state interests and the preferences of elites and masses, collective memory and national identity are, in essence, the internal sociological determinants of China’s foreign policy behavior.

To interpret how the ideational factors that are constructed to boost CCP’s regime legitimacy can in turn constrain its policy choice, a crucial component of the research program of historical institutionalist analysis is the study of the “moral or cognitive templates” inherent in collective memory and national identity.⁸⁸ These ideational parameters of Chinese nationalism are the key to understanding how the master historical account is enmeshed in the social values and aspirations shared by the Chinese populace. It is also these independent entities, working as active agents in the mnemonic context of the CCP’s foreign policy decision-making, that have “bounded” the rationality of the

⁸⁷ James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1989), 160-66.

⁸⁸ Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, “Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms,” *Political Studies* 44, no. 5 (1996): 939.

actor in its performance on China's diplomatic stage while empowering its audience in contesting with the authoritarian regime.⁸⁹

The research agenda of my historical institutionalist analysis includes three steps.⁹⁰ The first step is concerned with the question of how collective memory and national identity become significant in Chinese political culture. As these ideational factors are the essential elements of Chinese nationalism, tracing the origin and evolution of nationalism in the Chinese context is intermingled with our survey of the pedigree of Chinese collective memory and national identity. In retrospect, the pre-modern Chinese cultural supremacy was constructed in the interaction between the Middle Kingdom and those vassal states to which it claimed suzerainty in the Sino-centric tribute system. Such an institutional arrangement was disrupted in its contestation with the Westphalian system in the Opium War. It was at this critical juncture of the Chinese history that nationalism and the collective memory of national trauma came to the forefront of the Chinese political landscape.⁹¹ Examining the consequences of such an exogenous shock on the survival-based security of the Chinese nation sheds light on the understanding of how Westphalian concepts, such as sovereign whole and territorial integrity, that were abhorred by China emperors, came into the mindsets of Chinese political entrepreneurs.

⁸⁹ Historical institutionalists use the concept of "bounded rationality" to criticize the strict rationality assumption of rational choice scholars. For the elaboration presented by Herbert Simon, see Herbert A. Simon, ed. *Models of Bounded Rationality: Empirically Grounded Economic Reason*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 291.

⁹⁰ The design of this research agenda corresponds to the three distinct theoretical questions proposed by Sheri Berman for the ideational scholarship. See Sheri Berman, "Ideas, Norms, and Culture in Political Analysis," *Comparative Politics* 33, no. 2 (2001): 230-44.

⁹¹ According to Stephen Krasner's model of "punctuated equilibrium," historical institutions tend to remain essentially stable until they are confronted with such an exogenous shock and enter a new stage of equilibrium. Chinese foreign policy ideas were formed in the "punctuated equilibrium" wherein the national identity was constructed in a new institutional environment—the Westphalian international system. See Stephen A. Krasner, "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics," *ibid.* 16 (1984): 223-46.

Charting the origin of Chinese nationalism is a prerequisite step in the process tracing of the formation of Chinese foreign policy ideas. But at this stage one still cannot guarantee that the ideational elements of Chinese nationalism have taken on the status of internal determinants of China's foreign policy behavior. For a holistic understanding of the path-dependent mode for Beijing's foreign policy making that is causally related to collective memory and national identity, the second step of the research agenda is engaged in the institutional process of foreign policy ideas; that is, how the social values and meanings inherent in the national identity and collective memory are organized as an embedded pattern of Chinese political discourse, which constitutes the moral foundation of the state's diplomatic behavior. With this research orientation, the institutionalization of Chinese foreign policy ideas is dissected in the following two manners.

The first deals with the cognitive effect of collective memory and national identity on the Chinese inter-subjective understandings of foreign relations. A caveat needs to be noted here. As memory is both retrospective and prospective, members of a post-colonial society do not simply live in the recollection of national trauma; rather, as some sociologists contend, they are active agents in "transmitting reflexive knowledge about the past from the perspective of a future present."⁹² Along with this logic, the institutionalist analysis in my research program will elucidate how Chinese national trauma casts its memory forward in such a way that the meanings and values of the bitter experience of the self in interacting with the other have been conventionalized as "logic of appropriateness," regarding how the Chinese state should properly behave and what kind of goals it should actively pursue on the foreign relations front. Collective expectations concerning the conduct of China's diplomacy and the conception of the state

⁹² Elzbieta Halas, "Time and Memory: A Cultural Perspective," *Trames* 14, no. 4 (2010): 313.

interest have constituted the “moral or cognitive templates” in the ethical agenda of Beijing’s foreign policy decision-making. These social norms, which have been encoded in the traumatic memory, cannot be reduced to the external constraints on the behavior of Chinese political actors, as they serve as the signpost of the normative practices that are constitutive of the actors themselves.

With reference to the affective dimension of national identity, the second mode of dissecting the institutional process of Chinese foreign policy ideas is to test if these ideational factors can steer the emotion of Chinese populace, and if they can, how the perception, and action of Chinese in-group members are motivated by the emotional appeal of collective memory and national identity. In this regard, the thrust of this study is Chinese identity predicament, wherein Chinese rising pride in recovering its historical glory uneasily coexists with a lingering insecurity in the national community. By observing how the Chinese in-group members perceive and react to the behavior by foreign out-group in these situations where the identity-constitutive norms are disrupted in the antagonistic intergroup relations, one can figure out the causal pathway in which the “moral or cognitive templates” of Chinese foreign policy ideas shape the affect-filled representation of collective memory and national identity. The emotional effectiveness of foreign policy ideas is particularly salient, as will be shown in the case study of this research, if they convince the China populace of the similarity of past trauma to the current diplomatic conflicts. As collective identity is accentuated in these cases, historical analogy becomes a mental shortcut, not only for those who have personally experienced the traumatogenic events, but for those non-involved members of the Chinese in-group as well, in processing the foreign-policy information. This “post-

memory” feature of national trauma is important evidence to verify that the collectively-held norms have bred a “habitual, natural, or instinctive” mode of behavior in the Chinese community.⁹³

The purpose of the first two steps of the historical institutionalist analysis is to portray a comprehensive picture of the formation and institutionalization of the ideational factors of Chinese foreign policy making. Now that we understand *why* collective memory and national identity have causal effects on Beijing’s diplomatic decision-making and the PRC’s foreign policy behavior, another crucial component that should be included in our research program is to analyze *how* these two historical institutions in Chinese nationalism, once evoked in the flashpoint diplomatic issues, are causally linked to particular outcomes. The third step of this research agenda will pinpoint three mechanisms, or causal linkages, whereby the historical institutions influencing China’s diplomacy have their impact on the political behavior and claim-making of both the Chinese state and societal forces in domestic-foreign-policy interaction.

The first mechanism is elaborated through the dramaturgical analysis of Beijing’s foreign policy making.⁹⁴ In order to apply the inter-subjective understandings of the identity-constitutive norms into specific actions to guarantee the CCP’s ongoing legitimacy and its hold on power, the authoritarian regime has to stage its performance before the fellow members of Chinese society. To be identified by the audience as convincing and thereby legitimate, its actions are obliged to fit into the conceptual

⁹³ Berman, “Ideas, Norms, and Culture in Political Analysis,” 239. “Post-memory” is a notion borrowed from Marianne Hirsch’s research on the memory of war, which means that individual who did not participate in war become the most powerful advocates of “remembering” the war. See Marianne Hirsch, “Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile,” *Poetics Today* 17, no. 4 (1996): 649.

⁹⁴ An example of such dramaturgical analysis is the psycho-cultural cybernetic model established by Chih-yu Shih. See Shih-Yu Shih, *China’s Just World: The Morality of Chinese Foreign Policy* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993).

scheme in the belief system of policy ideas. Viewed in this sense, China's diplomacy can be construed as a drama, in which the state actor does not automatically respond to external reality, but to the "logical of appropriateness" as signified in its unswerving commitment to the normative scripts of the drama. The analysis of the dynamic process of the CCP's role performance, which connects historical institutions with the ethical foreign policy behavior of the state, provides an enlightening lens to answer a key question in the empirical examination of Chinese nationalism: Is domestic nationalist opinion a post hoc justification of the PRC's foreign policy behavior, or does it actually influence Beijing's decision-making?

The second mechanism that will be explored is the interaction between the actor and the audience of the PRC's diplomacy and the policy feedback loop connecting the narrative projectors and receivers in a commercialized communicative environment. The linkage analysis in this regard treats the interchange of Chinese foreign policy information in a marketplace, where media serve as the tradesman between the CCP as the information provider and Chinese populace as text receivers.⁹⁵ For the propaganda-focused official media, given its mission of advertising the CCP's policy commitment, what they actually supply is the foreign policy information crafted in the elite-preferred frames, in the hope of gleaning popular support for the regime. On the part of market-sensitive media driven by the pursuit of profit, an effective strategy for increasing the demand for their information commodities is to provide sensationalist coverage of those diplomatic flashpoint events, which are highly related to Chinese collective memory.

⁹⁵ In their political-economic analysis of the communication of nationalist ideas in the marketplace, Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine propose an argument different from what is presented in this research. They believe the nationalist mythmaking of the newly democratizing states is conducted in an imperfect market, which can create an opening for the mythologizers to "hijack public discourse." See Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, "Nationalism and the Marketplace Ideas," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996): 5-40.

The processing of such foreign policy information is anchored in the reservoir of pre-existing ideas that are encoded in historical institutions, which tends to dramatize the political identity in a “community of feeling.” The autonomy of the domestic text receivers in selecting a narrative frame, which is to be consistent with the normative scripts of China’s diplomacy, has become a discursive force mitigating against the CCP’s efforts in shaping the content of foreign policy information as required in its rational calculation. Further, the emerging information and communication technologies (ICTs), while broadening the avenues for the popular engagement with foreign affairs, provides a feedback conduit, transferring the timely, reliable information about the nationalist sentiments on sensitive diplomatic issues back to the circle of foreign policy establishment. The empirical examination of how the state decision-makers accommodate, or negotiate with, nationalist opinion through this feedback process is a crucial means to weigh the influence of the state and society in the foreign policy making process.

From the analysis of the above two mechanisms, one can see that historical institutions both constrain and enable political behavior. In today’s media ecology, the Chinese populace is no longer constrained by a scarcity of foreign policy information. The proliferation of ICTs has opened a social space for disseminating the information pertinent to those emotionally-charged diplomatic issues, which readily activates the affective elements encased in Chinese collective memory and national identity. The derived emotional locus, which is galvanized in the public awareness of these focused events in an increasingly transparent media environment, points to another transmission mechanism to be analyzed in the study. In the popular contestation with the regime,

historical institutions offer a legitimate narrative frame, which deftly links the critique of the CCP's failure to adhere to the scripts of the diplomatic drama to the domestic disgruntlement with the regime's governance. This third mechanism corroborates an important argument that is complementary to the rational choice analysis of collective memory and national identity. While the CCP's claim of its regime legitimacy is based on their instrumental function, these institutional variables provide the epistemic resources for linking issues in the domestic and foreign-policy realms in an unofficial frame that is capable of competing with official one.

As such, the "logic of appropriateness" stipulated in the historical institutions can thus be transformed into two lines of logic. In projecting the strategic narratives that are aimed to shore up its regime legitimacy, the CCP is following the "logic of legitimation."⁹⁶ Meanwhile, as nationalism is perhaps the only state-sanctioned issue frame that is technically allowed by the authoritarian regime to exist alongside the official ones, historical institutions also provides the "logic of contestation," which gives ground for the counter-narratives that lead to foreign policy change. As evidenced in the large outcry of nationalist demand in diplomatic crises, the narrative frame of popular contention enabled by this line of logic has become a release valve, which directs popular indignation against foreign entities back to the regime itself. The reason why this kind of issue framing is effective in coalition building for popular engagement with the foreign policy making process is that the "norm entrepreneurs" among Chinese societal forces, by deploying the "principled beliefs" in historical institutions, are successful in shaping

⁹⁶ See, e.g., Vivienne Shue, "Legitimacy Crisis in China?," in *Chinese Politics: State, Society and the Market*, ed. Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 44-46.

the political conditions of Beijing's decision-making, thereby increasing the CCP's receptivity to the counter-narratives projected along the "logic of contestation."⁹⁷

With regard to methodology, this study employs a historical, inductive, and qualitative approach to discern and explain the origin and transformation of Chinese foreign policy ideas. Rather than a law-like generalization of abstract, atemporal, and cross-country regularities in political behavior, this research is an attempt to uncover the conditions and circumstances under which the present preferences of Chinese political actors, the state's diplomatic interests, and the goals of national foreign policy are formed and developed over time. Since the examination of these thematic issues needs to be equipped with what Cohen calls the "insider cultural knowledge" in a concrete historical setting, an adequate appreciation of the motivational elements and the normative environment of Beijing's foreign policy making will not emerge from deductive reasoning, featuring highly restrictive assumptions but at the expense of a thorough investigation of indigenous political culture. Thus, empirical research on the historical and cultural foundation of the PRC's diplomacy has to grapple with the social values and meanings of institutions, which "are historically specific and temporally embedded, and crucial in the translation of macro- and micro-level processes into outcomes."⁹⁸

Historical institutional approach, a qualitative research method appropriate for the inquiry of the variables that are historically informed and socially complex, has the promise of

⁹⁷ For a similar example in the "transnational advocacy networks of activists, as described by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, see Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 2.

⁹⁸ Daniel Nexon, "Historical Institutionalism and International Relations," *E-International Relations*, <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/04/16/historical-institutionalism-and-international-relations/>. (accessed on March 1, 2014).

producing a cause-of-effect view of the ideational and cultural determinants of China's foreign policy behavior.

Along with the historically-structured study of the special character of the Chinese nation and its contemporary international behavior, another focus of this dissertation is the dynamic interaction between the Chinese authoritarian state and societal forces on the domestic and foreign relations front. In this vein, an inductive approach also fits more comfortably with the single case study of state-society relationship, where collective memory and national identity are the keys to understanding how the domestic audience assesses the CCP's diplomatic performance. Regarding the trade-offs between descriptive richness and parsimonious rigor,⁹⁹ precisely because of the particularistic, unique features of these social-cultural dynamics that are central to the accommodation and negotiation between the regime and societal forces, the analytic nature of a culturally and temporally bounded interpretation of Beijing's diplomatic decision-making has pointed to the methodological predilection for a less parsimonious analysis. However, the explanatory richness in the formation of collective memory and national identity and the causal mechanism, wherein these historical institutions affect the state's foreign policy making, does not mean that the current research is preoccupied with the purely thick descriptive and subjective accounts without rigorous theorizing. Apart from the historical analysis of the cultural-institutional environments in which the ideational parameters of Chinese foreign making were constructed, testing the theoretical propositions regarding the causal effects of these independent entities on the policy

⁹⁹ Such trade-off reflects different methodological foci in the research of historians and political scientists. See, e.g., Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George, "Case Studies and Process Tracing in History and Political Science: Similar Strokes for Different Foci," in *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*, ed. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2001), 137.

behavior and political claim-making of the state and societal factors is also an essential component in the research program of this study.

In identifying the causal chain that links the ideational elements of Beijing's foreign policy making and the behavior of an authoritarian state and societal forces, an operational procedure used in this study is process tracing. As collective memory and national identity are socially constructed, the systemic exploration of these ideational variables needs to attend to the historical and contextual processes through which they are formed and translated to the PRC's diplomatic behavior. Process tracing is used here to delineate the origin of Chinese national identity and the collective memory of national trauma in the social interaction on the international scene, and the institutionalization of their normative, purposive, and emotional dimensions that are embedded in the belief system of Chinese foreign policy. Such a research strategy, as Alexander George notes, "employs a qualitative procedure that makes use of the historian's methodology of explanation."¹⁰⁰ As an intellectual vehicle, it converts the historical inquiry of collective memory and national identity into an analytic approach that is couched in the theoretical form of historical institutionalism. The process tracing of the evolution of some focused events in China's diplomacy provides empirical evidence on whether the CCP's diplomatic rhetoric, the overall posture of decision-makers, and policy action shift in accordance to the level of public awareness of and emotional response to these focal point issues. Such examinations is indispensable in ascertaining a causal pathway in which the historical institutions of Chinese foreign policy making shape the definition

¹⁰⁰ Alexander L. George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy*, ed. Paul Gordon Lauren (New York, NY: Free Press, 1979), 46. Also, see, among others, Bennett and George, "Case Studies and Process Tracing in History and Political Science: Similar Strokes for Different Foci," 144-52.

and assessment of diplomatic situations, the evaluation of policy options, and finally, the choice of courses of action.

As noted above, the intellectual orientation of this dissertation is not to generalize the timeless, universal constants of political behavior, but to apply theories to the interpretation of the *sui generis* foreign policy behavior that is temporally and spatially bounded. Rather than a hypothesis-generating research, the analytic inquiry of this research belongs to what Arend Lijphart terms “interpretive case studies.”¹⁰¹ As the primary source of the ideational elements of Chinese foreign policy ideas, collective memory and national identity cannot be observed directly by running perfect experiments. Some historians have made the remark that collective memory is the “most elusive ... phenomena [of] ‘popular consciousness’.”¹⁰² Likewise, the historical consciousness inherent in national identity, with its “cultural density and fluid textures,” can only be measured crudely through survey analysis.¹⁰³ To excavate the inter-subjective meanings embedded in these independent entities, this study employs discourse analysis to grasp the social values and meanings that collective memory and national identity give to the Chinese populace. With the data collected from public speeches made by the CCP leaders on occasions such as the anniversary of the Party and other official documents—a major source for observing how the regime’s ideological guidelines are promulgated, the discourse analysis explores the affinity of the role identity of the CCP, as narrated in official nationalist discourse, to the autobiographical accounts of the Chinese nation. The gist of the interpretation of the counter narratives is

¹⁰¹ Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 692.

¹⁰² John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War Two*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & The New Press, 1999), 25.

¹⁰³ Bell, “Introduction: Violence and Memory,” 349.

the way that the hegemonic frame is appropriated in the popular discourse and is connected to the judgment of the CCP's diplomatic performance and to the articulation of popular grievance. This examination shows how the official nationalist discourse is applied sensibly in the counter-framing endeavor of societal forces, whose contention prevails in a discursive environment enabled by historical institutions.

In terms of case study, two categories of flashpoint diplomatic issues, in which the perceived foreign provocations are most likely to stir up the emotionally charged nationalist sentiments in Chinese community, are highlighted in this research. One is China's conflicts with Japan over historically related diplomatic issues, particularly the ongoing territorial disputes over the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands. To be sure, historically derived animosity against Japan is a most likely case to test the causal impacts of historical institutions on Beijing's diplomatic decision-making. Compared with those Southeast Asian countries with which the PRC is engaged in the territorial disputes, Japan occupies a central place in the rise of Chinese nationalism. The Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), a defining point when power in East Asia shifted from China to Japan, was a devastating blow to China's Qing dynasty, as the Middle Kingdom was defeated by a tiny country that was dismissed as dwarfs. "The assaults from Japan, a speck of dust in [China's] backyard," as indicated by one scholar, "shattered the self-assurance and was experienced as a shocking and intolerable humiliation."¹⁰⁴ Given the tragic historical experience, Chinese public's entrenched wariness of Japan's attempt of remilitarization is

¹⁰⁴ Liah Greenfeld, "Roots of Japan-China Rivalry," *Japan Times* (September 27, 2012), <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2012/09/27/commentary/world-commentary/roots-of-japan-china-rivalry/#.U410EfldVo4>. (accessed on March 1, 2014).

not surprising.¹⁰⁵ Regarding the state-society relationship, under the situations where historically related controversies come to the forefront of Sino-Japanese relations, nationalist mobilization is most likely to break out and to constrain the CCP's diplomatic autonomy. Such focused events provide an important case where Chinese public opinion runs in concert with the regimes' claims to its memory-based legitimacy while challenging the government's rational foreign policies.

The probe of the affective dimension of Chinese national identity uses the cases of popular nationalist protests prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, a long-awaited and hard-earned opportunity for the PRC state to showcase its cutting-edge progress, economically and athletically. The hyper-nationalist reaction to the disruption during the run-up to the symbolic event of China's international status and the perceived bias in Western reporting on the riot in Tibet exemplifies the Chinese identity predicament, wherein its everlasting quest to affirm its power status is ruptured in the social interactions with the foreign "other." These cases serve as important fodder for testing how the emotional elements of Chinese historical institutions shape the in-group members' perception and behavior toward the foreign out-groups.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Following this introductory chapter, Chapters 2 and 3 revolve around the CCP's regime legitimacy. Focusing on the entry point of the current research program, Chapter 2 starts from the domestic sphere in the internal-external linkage of Chinese foreign

¹⁰⁵ A survey conducted by the Asia Security Initiative Research Center of the East Asia Institute in ten major Chinese cities in 2011 on Chinese perceptions of external threats provides important evidence in this regard. See Joo-Youn Jung, "Rising China and the Chinese Public's Security Perceptions," (Seoul, South Korea: EAI Asia Security Initiative, Working Paper 23, 2012).

affairs. To examine the PRC's diplomacy beneath its bewildering surface, it is imperative to canvass China's illiberal domestic politics, particularly the primary internal concern of the CCP as the final decision-maker of Chinese foreign policy. For an authoritarian state, the first and foremost consideration of its diplomatic formulation is to ensure the perpetuation of its political power by augmenting the regime legitimacy. After the legitimacy crisis of the Tiananmen Incident, one of the strategies for the CCP to rehabilitate its political authority is to conceptualize the rightful source of authoritarian state and the moral justification of the regime. In this regard, this chapter provides the background knowledge of why and how nationalism was selected from the repertoire of Chinese political culture in the regime legitimation enhancement. By historicizing this revamped official ideology, Chapter 2 teases out the correlation of collective memory and national identity in the ideational enterprise of Chinese nationalism to the domestic popular support of the incumbent regime. On the basis of the moral relationship between the state and the nation, this chapter also portrays how these historical institutions become the cultural parameters of Chinese foreign policy making.

In the official nationalist discourse, collective memory and national identity are represented in the master commemorative narrative of modern Chinese history, which has been pumped up in the nationwide patriotic education campaign. The social pragmatics of this sort of strategic narratives, employed for the instrumental purpose of regime legitimation, is the focus of the interpretive analysis in Chapter 3. Following the inquiry line of rational choice approach, this chapter examines how the symbolic elements of collective memory are utilized to project the CCP's role identity in the state's historical mythmaking. With the analytic lens of semiology, this chapter also peruses the semantic

and syntactic elements in the narrative paradigms of two distinctive master historical accounts. These two dimensions of political symbolism, as manifested in the Maoist era and the patriotic education in the wake of the Tiananmen crackdown, demonstrate the instrumental function of collective memory and national identity, the two historical institution of Chinese nationalism, in the domestic and foreign policy agendas. The different reactions of the domestic and international audiences to the victimization discourse provide evidence for the limitation of rational choice approach, which cannot convincingly explain the internal-external conflict in the state legitimation project. As illustrated in the backfire of the CCP's effort in reconfiguring China's diplomatic rhetoric, the domestic audience of the regime's strategic narratives has its autonomy in choosing a narrative frame that is congruent with the normative scheme of China's foreign policy making.

To spell out the underlying factors that condition Beijing's adjustment of diplomatic narrative frame, the inquiry of this research shifts to the historical institutionalist analysis, where collective memory and national identity are treated as independent variables of Chinese foreign policy making. Following the research agenda proposed above, Chapter 4 traces the origin and evolution of these historical institutions. As elaborated in this chapter, the dialectical relationship between the Chinese "self" and the foreign "other" has provided the cultural-institutional context for the construction of its national identity. The dramatic positional change of the Chinese actor in the self-other interaction, resulting from the transformation from the tribute system to the Westphalian system, and the consequent national humiliation gave rise to the decisive shift of Chinese national identity. It is in this transformation that the normative meanings of the collective

memory of national trauma were institutionalized as consensual social norms that were embedded in the national identity. As a social practice of the state actor, China's tenacious struggle for national rejuvenation has been guided by the purposive elements of the national identity. Due to the protracted and ambivalent nature of the state's action in attaining the great-power status on the international stage, the confidence of the resurgent state is compromised by an acute sense of frustration. This identity predicament has engendered a peculiar public emotion in the Chinese community, which has profoundly influenced the in-group members' evaluation and perception of out-group entities and their behavior in the antagonistic intergroup relations.

Chapter 5 provides case studies to illuminate the way the historical institutions of Chinese foreign policy ideas influence the behavior of the CCP leadership and societal forces. In the case study of the ongoing stand-off of Beijing and Tokyo in the territorial disputes over the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands, this chapter manifests how the normative scripts of China's diplomacy has "bounded" Beijing's foreign policy choice. Due to the conflict between rational thinking in the conduct of a pragmatic diplomacy and the mandate of memory-encoded social norms that are central in the ethical agenda of China's diplomacy, the CCP leadership is backed into a quandary imposed by the historical institutions of Chinese foreign policy ideas. Beijing's dilemma can further be captured in China's communicative environment. By mapping the accommodation of the propaganda state for commercialized media in the foreign policy marketplace, this chapter elucidates how the state-preferred narrative frames in foreign affairs coverage are disrupted by societal forces, whose behavior are guided by the "logic of contention" offered by historical institutions. From the rhetorical transaction between the state and

society, one can see the agencies of elites and masses in the domestic-foreign-policy interaction are mutually constitutive. The historical institutional elements of Chinese nationalism, while conducive to the enhancement of regime legitimacy, have enabled the projection of counter-narratives, which are appropriated from the state-imposed category of political communication and transmitted through market-oriented media. This kind of societal forces is capable of undermining Beijing's efforts in mediating emotionally-charged interstate conflicts.

The overall findings and implications of this dissertation are summarized in the concluding chapter. In terms of methodology, the theory-based process tracing and "interpretive case" study in this research hold out some promise of contributing to the scholarship of international politics and comparative politics. In the realm of comparative foreign policy study, the historical institutionalist analysis of Chinese foreign policy ideas presents a "deviant case" that has not yet been sufficiently explained by existing theories.¹⁰⁶ Such an abnormal case can dissuade sweeping generalization in theorizing the domestic politics of a state's foreign policy behavior, while assisting in the formulation of a typology theory that can more convincingly explain the diplomatic decision-making of non-democratic states. On the other hand, the comparison of the rational choice and historical institutionalist approaches in this study offers another case that may help comparativists to strike a balance between the agency-based and structural accounts of political life. As evidenced in the strategic narratives highlighting the traumatic memory of the nation, historical institutions can be instrumentalized in the strategic calculations of rational actors to achieve their goals and preferences.

¹⁰⁶ For the notion of "deviant case studies," see Liphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," 692.

Meanwhile, given their role in forming collective beliefs and social institutions, these variables can also be transformed into endogenous “rules of the game,” which can make political actors adapt their strategies not only reflecting, but also reinforcing the “logic of appropriateness.”

CHAPTER II

CHINESE NATIONALISM AND THE LEGITIMACY ENHANCEMENT OF AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME¹

*Legitimation is a preoccupation of all ruling elites
because at all times, even in totalitarian systems,
governance requires some level of voluntary
submission to authority.*

—Neta C. Crawford²

*To a greater or lesser degree leaders have to
legitimate their policies ... They do this by the use
of language and concepts. Consequently they must
draw, proactively or retroactively, on the discourses
(beliefs, practices and associated linguistic
realizations) of the society of which they are a part.*

—Paul Anthony Chilton³

For a study of the PRC's diplomacy that is aimed at developing an internal view of a China looking out, a crucial component of the research program is to lay out the domestic pressures that the state leaders face when they hammer out foreign policy. To achieve this purpose, as David Skidmore and Valerie Hudson correctly point out, the researchers need to "know something not only about the society and political process generally, but also about the goals, motives and priorities of state leader themselves."⁴ In the "exhaustive list" of domestic variables that drive the state leaders' formulation of

¹ This chapter is based on a major revision of the article Ning Liao, "Bringing Ideology Back In: Chinese Nationalism Contextualized in the Legitimacy Enhancement of an Authoritarian Regime," *Asian Profile: An International Journal* 40, no. 4 (2012): 351-63.

² Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention*, 33.

³ Paul Anthony Chilton, *Security Metaphors: Could War Discourse from Containment to Common House* (1996), 31.

⁴ Skidmore and Hudson, "Establishing the Limits of State Autonomy: Contending Approaches to the Study of State-Society Relations and Foreign Policy-Making," 6.

foreign policy, a primary one is the legitimacy of the regime that they stand for.

Decisively related to the survival of the state leadership and its ability to maintain power,

legitimacy is a catch-all term that encapsulates the justification of the power and popular perception of a political authority. Once a government comes into being, its viability is contingent upon the degree to which it can institute its legitimacy among the populace.⁵

Since it is “the highest normative defense against the breakdown of a system of social order,” legitimacy can be construed as a prerequisite of regime stability.⁶ In the practical political world, it is hardly controversial that any type of regime, be it a democracy, an autocracy, or a transitional state positioned somewhere within the democratic-authoritarian continuum, has to grapple with its legitimacy. Being a top priority of state leaders, regime legitimacy is a critical factor that shapes the contour of Beijing’s diplomatic decision-making, and thus a sensible entry point of the current research of the linkage politics its foreign affairs.

The CCP’s tenure of more than six decades and the enduring deference of the Chinese populace to the state led by the longest-ruling Party in the world is a fascinating conundrum that has perplexed students of comparative politics.⁷ In the aftermath of the CCP’s crackdown of the pro-democracy movement in 1989, the anticipation of the imminent demise of the Chinese communist regime was prevalent in the West. In the new millennium, some Western observers of Chinese politics still “expect the regime to

⁵ See, e.g., James L. Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation?* (New York, NY: Russell Sage, 2004), 289-327.

⁶ Talcott Parsons, “Some Reflections on the Place of Force in Social Process,” in *Internal War: Problems and Approaches*, ed. Harry Eckstein (New York, NY: Free Press, 1964), 57.

⁷ Heike Holbig, “Ideological Reform and Political Legitimacy in China: Challenges in the Post-Jiang Era,” in *Regime Legitimacy in Contemporary China: Institutional Change and Stability*, ed. Gunter Schubert and Thomas Heberer (London: Routledge, 2009), 13.

fall to democratization's 'third wave'."⁸ In light of the lopsided progress of China's democratization, compared with phenomenal economic achievement, these propositions are not completely implausible. However, these predictions underestimate the CCP's capability to rehabilitate and reconsolidate its legitimacy. As a "resilient" authoritarian regime, the CCP is not a passive actor incapable of responding to the dizzying array of internal and external challenges, but rather a proactive adaptor to the changing governance environment, engaged in strategic actions to sustain its political authority.⁹

What, then, are the sources of the legitimacy of the Chinese authoritarian state?

In the wake of the Tiananmen Incident, how did the CCP survive the most severe legitimacy crisis it had experienced since the PRC was founded? How do the ideational elements of the CCP regime legitimacy relate to the belief system in which Beijing's foreign policy making and the PRC's diplomatic behavior are reasoned? Answering these questions will facilitate our understanding of the central position of the CCP's regime legitimacy in the linkage politics of Chinese foreign affairs. Starting from the source of the CCP's regime legitimacy, the first part of this chapter elaborates why China's economic performance is not a panacea for tackling the perceived challenges to the CCP's political authority. To engineer consensus building during the transitional period of institutional change, the Party-state is aware that performance-based legitimacy should be synergized with the ideological instrument that can generate the subjective values that validate the rightful source of the monopolistic rule. The second part elucidates why nationalism was revamped as a hegemonic official discourse at a critical

⁸ See, e.g., Gordon Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China* (New York, NY: Random House, 2001); Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience," 16.

⁹ See, e.g., "Authoritarian Resilience," 6-17; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W. Downs, "Development and Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (2005): 77-86; David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008).

moment when the CCP's regime legitimacy was disassociated with traditional ideological dogma. This can be revealed from the adaptive effort of the CCP regime to refurbish its official ideology by leveraging the normative elements of Chinese political culture. This part also examines how official nationalist discourse shapes the subjective values in the Chinese popular conception toward the regime's performance. By fulfilling the identity needs derived from the collective memory of national humiliation, nationalism has become an effective means to mobilize popular affection and thus helps to institute the legality and moral justifiability of the authoritarian regime in its legitimation endeavor.

PERFORMANCE-BASED OR IDEOLOGY-BASED: THE SOURCES OF THE CCP'S REGIME LEGITIMACY

The source of legitimacy, notwithstanding its universal significance, varies in diverse political cultures. As Max Weber succinctly summarizes this basic insight, "according to the legitimacy which is claimed, the type of obedience, the kind of administrative staff developed to guarantee it, and the mode of exercising authority, will all differ fundamentally."¹⁰ Western civil societies, conventionally portrayed as the beacon of democracy, feature the well-established procedural legitimacy accorded to a democratically elected government. The regime legitimacy in the democratic setting is premised upon the endorsement of the state by the electorate. In contrast, in non-democratic states, procedural-based legitimacy that is characterized by civil liberty, legal order, and political accountability is virtually non-existent. Authoritarian regimes are

¹⁰ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 213.

thus stereotypically considered to be illegitimate and fragile at their core.¹¹ An extremist view even holds that the survival of these regimes can be attributed only to the submission of their citizens to pervasive coercion and draconian repression by these states.

This assumption, however, is not consistent with the reality in China. The constituencies of today's Chinese society are no longer what William Kornhauser dubs the "atomized masses," entirely subject to the regime's surveillance and unconditionally obedient to its dictatorship.¹² In the transition from a rigid planned economy to a quasi-capitalist economy, the shifting of the balance of power from the authoritarian state to an increasingly pluralistic society has rendered the sociopolitical cost of the CCP's governance forbiddingly high. Under such circumstances, the infeasibility of resorting to violence to assert the regime's political authority becomes ever less feasible. Coercion and repression cannot be the effective means to maintain the rule of an authoritarian regime. As Yanqi Tong contends, "Any regime that can sustain its rule for a long time has legitimacy. ... So long as the general population accepts the right of their rulers to rule, for whatever reason, the regime enjoys legitimacy."¹³ Even without the procedure of democratic election, authoritarian states can ground their claim to legitimacy on the basis of popular support. The Chinese Party-state, for example, is at pains to emphasize that "only the CCP is able to ensure economic growth, provide social stability, and defend national sovereignty."¹⁴ The regime's purported performance in the domestic and

¹¹ Bruce Gilley, "The Limits of Authoritarian Resilience," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 1 (2003): 18.

¹² William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1959), 62.

¹³ Yanqi Tong, "Morality, Benevolence, and Responsibility: Regime Legitimacy in China from Past to the Present," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 16, no. 2 (2011): 145.

¹⁴ Andre Laliberte and Marc Lanteigne, "The Issues of Challenges to the Legitimacy of Ccp Rule," in *The Chinese Party-State in the 21st Century: Adaptation and Reinvention of Legitimacy*, ed. Andre Laliberte and Marc Lanteigne (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 8.

foreign policy agendas actually shows its effort in defining the instrumental and normative dimensions of the regime legitimacy. Either way, the CCP leadership, just as the state leaders in any polity, wants to convince the Chinese populace of the capacity of the political system, in order to “engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society.”¹⁵

The two normative and instrumental sources for the CCP’s regime legitimacy are corroborated by some scholars in their research of Chinese political legitimacy. Drawing on the concepts of Western political philosophy, Baogang Guo describes the normative and consensual aspect of the legitimacy as the “original justification,” or the “moral capital,” of the CCP regime.¹⁶ On the front of foreign relations, the state’s defending of national sovereignty, as mentioned above, reveals the normative appropriateness of the regime, since the integrity of sovereignty is one of the normative linchpins of Chinese national identity. In the realm of domestic governance, the state’s effort in maintaining social stability, which meets the collective expectation of a society that has weathered the scourge of wars and chronic division, also affirms the moral justification of the ruling authority. Regarding the instrumental aspect of legitimacy, the Party-state’s governance in promoting China’s economic “growth” and “development” reflects the “utilitarian justification” of the regime.¹⁷ This notion, founded on the utility principle that is emphasized in the rationalist school of political philosophy, assumes that regime legitimacy is a function of the extent to which the individual’s needs are satisfied by the

¹⁵ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man*, expanded ed. (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 84.

¹⁶ Baogang Guo, “Political Legitimacy and China’s Transition,” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 8, no. 1 & 2 (2003): 3.

¹⁷ “Political Legitimacy and China’s Transition,” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 8, no. 1 & 2 (2003): 6; *China’s Quest for Political Legitimacy: The New Equity-Enhancing Politics* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 9.

government.¹⁸ It denotes the regime's method for achieving consensus building for the political system through "eudemonic appeals," or to put it more simply, by "[maximizing] an individual's happiness and [minimizing] his/her pains."¹⁹

"Original justification" and "utilitarian justification" are integral components of regime legitimacy. To sustain their regime, authoritarian regimes seek to strike a balance between these two modes of ruling justification. However, even in the case of an authoritarian regime with remarkable sustainability, legitimacy is not settled once and for all. A regime may put more emphasis on a certain aspect of legitimacy, and its legitimacy can be realized and retained in divergent ways in different historical periods. Likewise, the same dimension of legitimacy may be strengthened or weakened in different periods, depending upon the political situations that a regime encounters.

Moving away from the totalitarian rule of the Maoist era, the appealing pragmatism, enshrined in the mandated discourse of reform and opening-up (*gaigekaiifang*), was brought by Deng Xiaoping to the center stage of Chinese politics when he took office in the late 1970s.²⁰ As Deng so memorably put it, without reform, China would lose its "membership of the Earth" (*kaichu qiujì*).²¹ His admonition suggested the CCP leadership's high concern with its regime legitimacy, after a series of social turbulence, particularly the catastrophic Great Leap Forward and the self-inflicted

¹⁸ See, e.g., Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (New York, NY: Hafner Publishing Co., 1948).

¹⁹ Baogang Guo, "China's Peaceful Development, Regime Stability and Political Legitimacy," in *China's "Peaceful Rise" in the 21st Century: Domestic and International Conditions*, ed. Sujian Guo (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 47.

²⁰ Deng's pragmatism was vividly expressed in what was called his "cat theory;" namely, "whether black cat or white cat, cat which can catch mouse is good cat." In this approach, ideology was relatively downplayed, material incentives were accepted, and some room was given to market considerations. By advocating the so-called "cat-theory," Deng insisted on pragmatism as the only rule of decision-making and policy assessment.

²¹ Yuchao Zhu, "'Performance Legitimacy' and China's Political Adaptation Strategy," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 16, no. 2 (2011): 126.

havoc of Cultural Revolution. With the inception of market-oriented economic reform, which provided an unprecedented level of social welfare that could not be achieved in the Maoist era, “utilitarian justification” became the chief basis of the CCP’s regime legitimacy. Guided by Deng’s dictum that “only development is a hard fact” (*fazhan caishi yingdaoli*), the pragmatic formula of performance legitimacy, rather than revolutionary legitimacy representing the CCP’s “original justification,” established a new “social contract” between state and society, whereby the party-state enacted regime legitimacy by offering Chinese citizenry substantial improvement of their living standard in exchange for the perpetuation of the political status quo.²²

More than two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the CCP still remains at the helm of power. China has maintained its economic development at a gravity-defying double-digit growth rate. It is not far-fetched to claim that the CCP’s monopolistic rule would not have been possible without its sterling economic performance. Looking at the present regime, one would be tempted to offer the opinion that the CCP’s main claims to legitimacy rests on its “utilitarian justification.”

A logical question one can probably raise within the context of the argument above is whether the utility and feasibility of performance-based legitimacy spells the end of the normative dimension of the CCP’s regime legitimacy, or in other words, the “original justification” of its political authority. There is no doubt that the economic governance of the regime provides “eudemonic appeals” of the CCP’s governance, which has earned it a significant measure of legitimacy in its orchestration of the “growth” and

²² For the notion of “social contract, see Stephen White, “Economic Performance and Communist Legitimacy,” *World Politics* 38, no. 3 (1986): 463.

“development” of the Chinese economy. However, the popular perception of the incumbent government as a meritorious regime does not suffice to ensure its legitimacy. In today’s China, it is important to note, the authoritarian regime is, as Vivienne Shue observes, “ill-positioned to claim direct credit for whatever economic advances are in fact taking place.”²³ While China’s reform and opening-up policies are taking hold, a cauldron of sociopolitical ills is imperiling the party-state’s capacity to garner popular support. The CCP regime is confronted with a multitude of domestic challenges—endemic corruption, epidemic pollution, emaciated health care, shredded social services, entrenched industrial overcapacity, surging ethnic conflicts, to name several. The very policies implemented to sustain China’s economic growth have unwittingly triggered a slew of socioeconomic problems, which has led to a significant increase in the frequency and size of grassroots unrest and protests. Apparently, the pent-up disgruntlement in a transitional society cannot be resolved or remedied through economic development alone. As a testimony to Seymour Lipset’s cogent argument that “a crisis of legitimacy is a crisis of change,”²⁴ the intense domestic tensions behind the façade of China’s economic prowess is threatening to erode the “utilitarian justification.”

No less important, the CCP needs to be on guard against another major challenge induced by its economic growth, which can discredit the argument that economic performance alone will necessarily translate into regime legitimacy. As Samuel Huntington posits, modernization will generate social demands for increased political participation and mobilization. In his words, “Modernization means mobilization,” and

²³ Shue, “Legitimacy Crisis in China?,” 45.

²⁴ Seymour Martin Lipset, “Social Conflict, Legitimacy, and Democracy,” in *Legitimacy and the State*, ed. William Connolly (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1984), 89.

“mass mobilization means political participation.”²⁵ In such a scenario as what Huntington dubs “performance dilemma, the efforts made by autocratic regimes to enhance their economic performance may breed the unwanted or unexpected request for the entitlement to expanding political participation and democratic freedom, which will in turn undermine the basis of authoritarian power.”²⁶ Some scholars have applied this notion of “performance dilemma” to their critical analysis of Chinese economic reform, arguing that sustained and spectacular economic growth is likely to be accompanied by demands for “political participation and pluralization.”²⁷ This argument is echoed in Ronald Inglehart’s modernization theory, which stresses the relationship between economic development and value changes. In Inglehart’s account, “economic development, cultural change, and political change are linked in coherent and even, to some extent, predictable patterns.”²⁸ Along this line of logic, the ongoing economic growth in China will arguably lead to the expansion of the modernized sector of its population, the constituencies of which are better educated and more inclined to support fundamental political change. As Chinese society is becoming “more complex, pluralistic, self-confident, [and] resourceful,” Larry Diamond also predicts, economic development “will generate growing pressures (and possibilities) for China to make a definitive regime change to democracy.”²⁹

²⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay,” *World Politics* 17, no. 3 (1965): 388.

²⁶ *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 177; *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 46-58.

²⁷ Heike Holbig and Bruce Gilley, “Reclaiming Legitimacy in China,” *Politics and Policy* 38, no. 3 (2010): 400. Also see, e.g., Holbig, “Ideological Reform and Political Legitimacy in China: Challenges in the Post-Jiang Era,” 13-34.

²⁸ Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in Forty-Three Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 15.

²⁹ Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University, 1999), 265.

Diamond's proposition is not without merit. Thanks to the CCP's emphasis on economic "growth" and "development," Chinese people may be apolitical for the time being, as they are more concerned with the extent to which their living standard is improved. If China's economy cannot keep on growing at the unprecedented rates, the government will fall short of the social expectation engendered by its economic governance. The abrasion of the instrumental dimension of the regime legitimacy, resulting from the erosion of the CCP's "eudemonic appeals," will ultimately turn out to be a critical catalyst of more sociopolitical reforms. Should the economy experience a severe decline, the populace could readily blame the government for the economic woes. Since contemporary Chinese society has become more assertive and defiant, the operational cost of maintaining satisfactory economic governance is mounting. It is increasingly difficult for the Party-state to meet all the social expectations arising from economic reform. If the "social contract" between the regime and the Chinese people is breached, the legitimacy that the regime has accumulated thus far will eventually dissipate. Viewed in this sense, Yuchao Zhu is correct in contending that performance-based legitimacy "is always 'unfinished business,' which continues to face constant challenges, and reflects the dynamic interaction between an authoritarian state and an increasingly pluralistic society."³⁰

As mentioned above, "original justification" emphasizes consensus building by constructing the subjective belief that the directives of authorities are legitimate and generating a sense of obligation to obey the political authorities. In other words, only by demonstrating the normative appropriateness of their ruling authority are the incumbent

³⁰ Zhu, "'Performance Legitimacy' and China's Political Adaptation Strategy," 134.

power holders able to elicit the voluntary deference of the populace. Such “moral capital” of an authoritarian regime, in the view of some comparativists like Margaret Levi and her colleagues, is essentially a mode of “value-based legitimacy,” which is manifested in the “trustworthiness of government” and “procedural justice.”³¹

For an authoritarian state lacking established procedural legitimacy that is conferred by submitting to competitive elections, an effective means to enact “value-based legitimacy” is to nurture the popular trust in its political authority and to justify the rightful source of the regime. To win the general consent of those over whom the authoritarian state rules, according to Antonio Gramsci, political elites need to develop an ideology to weave together their interests and those of their subordinates.³² The process of instituting such an ideology is one of setting up a coherent set of values or common social experiences in “a unified system of meanings for which political actors claim exclusive authority.”³³ By communicating the normative appropriateness of its political authority in the state-society interaction, the legitimating ideology is tantamount to a cognitive linkage, which transcends the boundaries lines of the authoritarian state and an increasingly pluralistic society.

The urgency of constructing and propagating such a legitimating ideology in the form of official discourse became ever more pronounced in China when the CCP started to initiate the market-oriented reform. Due to the decisive shift of its policy focus from

³¹ Margaret Levi, Audrey Sacks, and Tom Tyler, “Conceptualizing Legitimacy, Measuring Legitimacy Beliefs,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 53, no. 3 (2009): 357. Also see Richard Flacks, “Protest or Conform: Some Social Psychological Perspectives on Legitimacy,” *The Journal of Applied Behavior Science* 5, no. 2 (1969): 127-50.

³² Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Howell-Smith (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1971), 114.

³³ Carsten Herrmann-Pillath, “Culture, Economic Style and the Nature of the Chinese Economic System,” *China aktuell (Journal of Current Chinese Affairs)* 34, no. 2 (2005): 38. Also see Michael Freedon, “Ideology and Political Theory,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11, no. 1 (2006): 3-22.

class struggle to economic-oriented reform, the CCP leadership was left without an integrative ideological force to inspire the Chinese people when they were entangled with painful hardships as a side effect of the economic reform. The resultant crisis of faith was so severe that the CCP had to scurry to find alternative doctrines to fill the void. On the heels of the Tiananmen crackdown, Deng himself acknowledged that “the most serious mistake” made by the Party in the first decade of the Post-Mao reform era was the omission of ideological education.³⁴ Aware of the limitations of performance-based legitimacy, the CCP started to rely heavily on an official ideology to attest to the common interest of the state and society in the performance of the government, so as to buttress the “valued-based legitimacy” of its political authority.

More than two decades after the 1989 debacle, ideology remains crucial to the CCP’s regime legitimacy. In today’s China, one of the socioeconomic concomitant effects of the institutional changes, which are unfolded in a host of issue areas, is the emergence of “winners” and “losers” in the process of reform. In stark contrast to the situation in the Maoist era, when China was one of the most equitable polities, contemporary China has become one of the least equitable countries in the world. Some scholars have also observed that this disparity shows the alarming tendency of perpetuation, to the extent that the most and least privileged social groups have remained largely the same.³⁵ As indicated by these disturbing signs, socioeconomic transition has posed a daunting challenge to the capacity of the Chinese government to maintain social

³⁴ Xiaoping Deng, “Speech to Cadres and Soldiers of the Beijing Martial Law Corps on June 9, 1989,” <http://tsquare.tv/chronology/Deng.html>. (accessed on June 1, 2012).

³⁵ See, e.g., Zhou Jiang, “2002 *Nian Zhongguo Chengshi Redian Wenti Diaocha* [Investigation of the Hot Issues in Chinese Cities in 2002],” in 2003 *Nian Shehui Lanpishu: Zhongguo Shehui Xingshi Fenxi Yu Yuce* [*Blue Book of the Chinese Society in 2003: An Analysis and Forecast of Chinese Social Situation*] ed. Ru Xin, Lu Xueyi, and Lin Peilin (Beijing: *Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe*, 2003).

equality. If the regime fails to achieve a more equitable distribution of wealth between various social groups, this chronic disparity, as the most significant transition costs plaguing China's reform, will threaten the continued viability of the reform and opening-up policy.³⁶ In light of the volatile environment of the institutional changes, there will inevitably be discord between the social groups who traditionally claim the lion's share of the national wealth and those who consistently reap the least from the reform.

In the socioeconomic transition, ideology is of utmost importance for the CCP to prevent the exhaustion of its performance-based legitimacy. One of its instrumental functions in this regard, as Douglass North has pinpointed, is to "shape the subjective mental constructs that individuals use to interpret the world around them and make choices."³⁷ In a transitional society like China, the kaleidoscopic social expectations, especially the antagonistic interests of those social groups that are the "winners" and the "losers" in the institutional change, may well induce mass alienation, thereby jeopardizing the instrumental dimension of regime legitimacy. To minimize the possibility of such an adverse situation, one of the missions of the official ideology is to shape the "subjective mental constructs" of the Chinese populace in such a way that the individuals' appraisal of the performance of the incumbent government is framed in an ideal state-society relationship, which demonstrates the competency of the regime and its commitment to the common interests it shares with the society.³⁸ Official ideology, while reviving the "original justification" of the regime's political authority, has its utility

³⁶ Yongnian Zheng, "State Building, Popular Protest and Collective Action in China," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 3, no. 1 (2002).

³⁷ Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 76.

³⁸ Heike Holbig, "International Dimensions of Legitimacy: Reflections on Western Theories and the Chinese Experience," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 16, no. 2 (2011): 169; "Remaking the CCP's Ideology: Determinants, Progress, and Limits under Hu Jintao," *China aktuell (Journal of Current Chinese Affairs)* 38, no. 3 (2009): 39.

in buffering against various social anxieties and resistance. In the cases where the Party-state falls short of the social expectations, this normative mediator is an effectual way to evade the “performance dilemma” of its governance.

NATIONALISM: AN OFFICIAL IDEOLOGY REVAMPED FOR REGIME LEGITIMACY

To be sure, the post-Tiananmen Chinese leadership has realized that the “utilitarian justification” of its political authority should not deluge the normative dimension of its legitimacy. Instead of downplaying the “original justification” of the regime, the CCP has brought ideology back to bolster the “moral capital” of its governance. Compared to the “utilitarian justification,” which reflects the empirical and instrumental dimension of its legitimacy, the “original justification” of the regime is more related to the subjective values and normative beliefs held in popular perception. Enhancing such “value-based” legitimacy is an ongoing project of ideological legitimization undertaken by the CCP leadership.

It should be noted, however, that one of the sources of “value-based” legitimacy can be rarely found in the Chinese political landscape. In retrospect, since the Zhou Dynasty, Chinese history has featured feudal authority and despotic tradition. Even the CCP, a modern Party that evolved from a revolutionary regime, does not believe that procedural democracy endows it with legitimacy. It is the CCP’s historical mission of carrying out the socialist revolution that initially validated the legitimacy of the regime. Viewed in this light, “procedural justice”—a widely recognized element that constitutes the legitimacy basis of legal authority in Western democratic states—is virtually absent in

the 4000-year history of Chinese governance. Thus, in enhancing the “value-based legitimacy” of the CCP regime, official ideology should largely focus on the “trustworthiness of government” to demonstrate the rightful source of the regime and garner popular support for the authoritarian state.

How, then, does the CCP’s official ideology present itself as a trustworthy regime lacking the procedural-based legitimacy? David Beetham’s model of political legitimation offers an enlightening hint to our inquiry here. In Beetham’s multilayered framework, legitimate power, existing in whatever kind of political system, is predicated on its “conformity to established rules,” the “justifiability of the rule by reference to shared beliefs,” and the “expressed consent of the subordinate.”³⁹ Only when the first two levels of legitimacy, legality and normative justifiability, are present can a regime obtain the third level of legitimacy, as is demonstrated in the form of the popular trust of the regime and the behavior of complying with the trustworthy government. These two elements of legitimacy are more tacit in Chinese political culture than those entrenched in the Western context. Ironically, while legitimacy literally means the quality of being lawful (*hefaxing*), the legality of political authority in China attaches less importance to rule by law (*fazhi*) than to rule by virtue (*dezhi*). The ideological foundation of regime legitimacy enacted in the Chinese political landscape, therefore, can only take distinct form from that of its Western counterparts.

With its lasting impact on the contemporary Chinese political system, political culture is a primary ideational resource that the CCP has actively resorted to in

³⁹ David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press international, Inc., 1991), 16-19. “Political Legitimacy,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, ed. Kate Nash and Alan Scott (Malden: Blackwell, 2001), 110.

revamping its legitimating ideology. From the cultural repertoire, nationalism—a distinctive discourse that draws deeply from the normative elements in national history—is selected as an alternative fodder for the state legitimation. In erecting an evaluative belief system that is a normative fit into the cognitive scheme of popular perception, official nationalist discourse is integrated with the normative framework of Chinese political culture, in which the regime's ethical rule and the rightful source of its one-Party rule is justified by the moral requirements of a legitimate ruler that have been well established in the normative tradition of political authority.

In the Chinese political culture, as just noted, it is imperative that the exercise of power conform to informal conventions rather than formalized law. According to Confucianism—an archetypal representation of the Chinese political culture and normative schema from which the stability of traditional Chinese political order originated, the legality of a legitimate regime is first and foremost derived from the so-called “mandate of heaven,” the preeminent source of rightful rule. Chinese emperors, recognized as “the son of heaven,” are the supreme rulers processing the highest level of morality.⁴⁰ In this sense, the Western notion of legality is reflected in the setting of Chinese political culture as the inherent connection between the right to rule and the ethic of morality. According to such “established rules,” the touchstone of successful political authority in Chinese political culture, as noted by John King Fairbank and Edwin

⁴⁰ Donald E. Polkinghorne, “Narrative and Self-Concept,” *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 1, no. 2&3 (1991): 40-53.

Reischauer, is the virtue of the ruler.⁴¹ In order to be legitimate, the regime has to "become the undisputed moral authority."⁴²

In this sense, the post-Mao legitimating ideology of the CCP has avoided Mao-era motifs and Marxist homilies. The morality of the CCP regime is a major theme presented in the nationalist discourse as a revamped official ideology. For an authoritarian regime, the salience of its ideology does not necessarily require that political life be wrapped in an overlay of platitude and political dogma, as was the case in the Maoist era. To effectively fulfill its legitimating functions, ideology can be "a symbolic resource for the formation of public opinion" that can frame the popular perception of "the social construction of reality."⁴³ Nationalism, in this regard, is an ideal vehicle to mobilize popular support, because it is based on a set of common symbols shared in what Benedict Anderson phrases "imagined community."⁴⁴ In the CCP's regime legitimation, two symbolic elements within the enterprise of Chinese nationalism are highly relevant to the morality of the Communist regime, which, in accord with the normative scheme of Chinese political culture, is intertwined with the regime legitimacy. One is the collective memory of the "century of national humiliation" (*bainan guochi*), a historical period when China was oppressed, bullied, and torn asunder by imperialist invasion and territorial division from the first Opium War to the founding of the PRC state. This traumatic symbol has bred the strong nationalist aspiration of attaining a rightful place on the international stage, the other symbolic element of Chinese nationalism that has

⁴¹ John King Fairbank and Edwin O. Reischauer, eds., *China: Tradition and Transformation* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 44.

⁴² Tong, "Morality, Benevolence, and Responsibility: Regime Legitimacy in China from Past to the Present," 146.

⁴³ Holbig, "Remaking the CCP's Ideology: Determinants, Progress, and Limits under Hu Jintao," 39. Also see Michael Wohlgemuth, "Evolutionary Approaches to Politics," *Kyklos* 55, no. 2 (2002).

⁴⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York, NY: Verso, 1983).

signified the purposive meaning of the national identity. To undo China's erstwhile subjugation by foreign powers and to restore its prominent position in the international status hierarchy have become the contemporary "mandate of heaven" for the CCP regime as the political agent of the Chinese nation. Meeting these symbolic needs thus endows the authoritarian state with an informative sense of political loyalty from the national members.

Insofar as the regime's performance in the foreign relations front reflects the "justifiability of rule" of the authoritarian regime, the CCP's morality, which subscribes the emotional narratives of the nation's past victimization, makes diverse groups and classes of Chinese society cohered around the state, whose rule is perceived to conform to the "established rules" embedded in the political culture. In an effort to exalt the rightful rule of a trustworthy government that is suffused with ethical goodness, the CCP's legitimating ideology revolves around a key theme; that is, the relationship between the authoritarian state and the principal of the nation, the Chinese people. This explains why nationalism is expressed as patriotism in Chinese official discourse, which means that the love of the nation is indistinguishable from the support of the Communist state and the authoritarian regime. By presenting the state and nation as "the whole moral and intellectual condition of a people,"⁴⁵ official nationalist discourse provides a systemic version to convince the Chinese populace that the one-Party rule of the authoritarian regime is justifiable, feasible, and sustainable.

Achieving this purpose is particularly important in the wake of the Tiananmen crackdown, when the ideological vacuum in the Chinese political life led to a series of

⁴⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 299.

“belief crises.”⁴⁶ Indoctrinating the notion that the regime was the incarnation of the highest moral standards was a required undertaking for the regime to get out of its legitimacy crisis. In the ideological education, the CCP regime was incessantly narrated in the nationalist discourse as the only regime capable of protecting the nation from a coalition of foreign enemies, and of leading the nation to modernization. Deng’s successors, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping who is currently leading the Party-state, have all devoted a large amount of political resources to the propagation of nationalist discourse in the state-led patriotic education. In light of the legitimating function of nationalism, which is viewed by Ernest Gellner as “primarily a political principle that the political and the national unit should be congruent,”⁴⁷ what is continuously inculcated in the state-led patriotic education is a popular belief in the integrated and inseparable relationship between the ruling and the ruled. As the current Chinese political system is conceived of as right and just in the evaluative system of popular perception, the “original justification” of the CCP regime, as a “divine being” or “a leader of moral characters” with this unique quality,⁴⁸ is vigorously revived in the representation of moral linkage between of the state and the Chinese nation. Viewed from this perspective, the nationalist propaganda in the CCP’s ideological education has, in Suisheng Zhao’s words, become “a new basis of legitimacy to bolster faith in a system in trouble and hold the country together during the period of rapid and turbulent

⁴⁶ As enumerated by Jie Chen, the “three belief crises” plaguing the CCP in the post-Mao reform were the crisis of faith in socialism, the crisis of belief in Marxism and the crisis of trust in the Party. See Jie Chen, “The Impact of Reform on the Party and Ideology in China,” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 4, no. 9 (1995): 131.

⁴⁷ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 11.

⁴⁸ Guo, “Political Legitimacy and China’s Transition,” 3.

transformation."⁴⁹ By renewing the ideological orthodoxy of loyalty to the nation-state, nationalism, a political ideology that identifies the nation with the state, has been exploited as a coalescing force in the state legitimization project of the post-Tiananmen CCP leadership.

In Beetham's model of political legitimacy, as noted above, a regime's exercise of its political power based on the social convention in political culture and the justification of the rightful source of that power can lead to the popular consent of the regime power. Has the CCP's regime legitimization achieved such an outcome? To a large extent, the expressed popular consent has been confirmed by some scholars in their empirical research, which gauge the popular trust of the authoritarian regime. For instance, Jie Chen's study of the popular support in urban China has found that the CCP regime enjoys at least a moderately high level of legitimacy.⁵⁰ Chen's research is conducted within David Easton's theoretical framework, in which popular political support is divided into diffuse support and specific support.⁵¹ Diffuse support, defined as a learned loyalty representing the individual conviction that the incumbent regime conforms to the moral or ethical principles in political life, can be seen as an indicator of the "expressed consent" regarding the "valued-based legitimacy" of the regime, or the "original justification" of its political authority. Measuring the positive evaluation of particular policies of the government, specific support, in the case of China, reflects the CCP's performance-based legitimacy. In Chen's three surveys conducted in Beijing,

⁴⁹ Suisheng Zhao, "A State-Led Nationalism: The Patriotic Education Campaign in Post-Tianmen China," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31, no. 3 (1998): 289.

⁵⁰ Chen, *Popular Political Support in Urban China*.

⁵¹ David Easton, *A System Analysis of Political Life* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1965).

respondents registered a much higher level of diffuse support than specific support.⁵² An important argument that can be inferred from this empirical study is that the moderately high level of popular support that the CCP enlists is less a reflection of its policy performance in socioeconomic areas than it is of the regime's success in shaping the subjective cognitive of the Chinese populace within the normative framework of ideology.

According to Chen's research findings, expressive nationalist attitude is one of the ideational sources of the CCP regime legitimacy.⁵³ Such empirical evidence supports the epistemic function of national identity and collective memory in achieving social solidarity and popular mobilization. In the CCP's legitimating ideology, these two essential elements in the enterprise of nationalism are utilized in the state legitimation to forge an emotional bond within the Chinese community, thereby supplying diffusing support to the political authority of the authoritarian state. This point of view can be better understood if we historicize the concept of nationalism. As John Unger summarizes in the introduction of a volume collecting a series of scholarly works on this emerging topic in Chinese politics, to unearth the ramifications of Chinese nationalism, "one must first come to grips with the historically derived *content* of Chinese nationalism."⁵⁴ To be more specific, as Yan Sun observes, "the Chinese concern for ideological and conceptual adaptation is related to the national search for identity and resurrection that has faced the nation since its confrontation with the West in the last

⁵² Chen, *Popular Political Support in Urban China*, 54-153.

⁵³ *Popular Political Support in Urban China*, 106-08.

⁵⁴ Jonathan Unger, "Introduction," in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), xiii., emphasis in original.

century.”⁵⁵ Tracing the vicissitudes of the Chinese nation and the formation of national identity in its social interaction with the foreign “other,” it is not difficult to find one leitmotif of Chinese nationalism, whose moral significance has been evinced in Chinese foreign relations. Along its historical trajectory, Chinese nationalism is prominently defined in the context of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, the notions that were introduced to the Chinese political discourse in the “century of national humiliation.” To the extent that national salvation throughout Chinese modern history centered on the leitmotif of preserving national unity at all cost against Western powers’ encroachments, there is an entrenched tie between the collective memory of national trauma and the national sovereignty and territoriality. In Sow Keat Tok’s account, “the persistent efforts to leverage humiliations and crises of the Chinese nation contributes to one of the most noteworthy phenomena of modern Chinese history—the strange, continued passion of the Chinese mentality toward the fascination of the ‘sovereign whole’ and the messianic devotion to preserving it.”⁵⁶ Consistent with this tendency, the perpetual dynamic of Chinese identity politics is the tenacious struggle for national rejuvenation, an identity need inspired by the national humiliation of the loss of sovereignty and the dismemberment of territory.⁵⁷

In the official nationalist discourse, the CCP’s alleged credential as the sole guardian of the Chinese nation animates the ever-lasting nationalist sentiment and aspiration in the national community. The purported capability of the Chinese state in

⁵⁵ Yan Sun, *The Chinese Reassessment of Socialism, 1976-1992* (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1995), 18.

⁵⁶ Sow Keat Tok, “Nationalism-on-Demand? When Chinese Sovereignty Goes Online,” in *Online Chinese Nationalism and China’s Bilateral Relations*, ed. Simon Shen and Shaun Breslin (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 20. Also see John W. Garver, *Foreign Policy of the People’s Republic of China* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993).

⁵⁷ Yaqing Qin, “Struggle for Identity: A Political Psychology of China’s Rise,” in *China’s Rise in Historical Perspective*, ed. Brantly Womack (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010).

fulfilling the historical mission of the Chinese nation affirms its moral commitment to the national polity. In this way, the legitimating ideology of nationalism demonstrates that the CCP's interest in clinging to political power is congruent with the nationalist interest in restoring a strong and unified China on the international stage. Such a centripetal force in the project of nation-state building, to use Suisheng Zhao's words, "gives the Communist state the responsibility to speak in the name of the nation and demands the citizens subordinate their individual interests to China's national ones."⁵⁸ As a fundamental source of the diffuse support, collective memory and national identity have injected a strong dose of emotionality and morality into the relationship between the Chinese state and nation, thereby ensuring that Chinese national members succumb their private selves to a "hierarchy of felt identity" existing in the political community of nation-state.⁵⁹

With the animation of such "identity hierarchy," in the portrayal of the moral competency of the regime as the sole actor in Chinese political life that is able to prevent violation of the national sovereignty, emotional analogies are constantly made in official nationalist discourse between China as a nation and a loving mother who deserves the "filial devotion" of all her children.⁶⁰ Insofar as the image of nation-state has been constructed as a collectivity in the official nationalist discourse, the loyalty of the Chinese populace to the nation is transferred to the dependence of the society on the state in pursuing its nationalist passion, and thus arouses the affectionate feeling of the populace

⁵⁸ Suisheng Zhao, "China's Pragmatic Nationalism: Is It Manageable?" *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2005): 134.

⁵⁹ Mabel Berezin, "Emotions and Political Identity: Mobilizing Affection for the Polity," in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, ed. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 85.

⁶⁰ Vanessa Fong, "Filial Nationalism among Chinese Teenagers with Global Identities," *American Ethnologist* 31, no. 4 (2004): 634.

toward the regime. This morality-based legitimacy conceptualized in the nationalist discourse, as a peculiar example of “value-based legitimacy,” helps to frame the government’s performance in a positive light and avoid the legitimacy deficit in the process of socioeconomic transition.

CHAPTER III

MASTER HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS: STRATEGIC NARRATIVES IN THE STATE LEGITIMATION

Communities... have a history—in an important sense they are constituted by their past—and for this reason we can speak of a real community as a “community of memory,” one that does not forget its past. In order not to forget that past, a community is involved in retelling its story, its constitutive narrative.

—Robert N. Bellah et al.¹

Narratives help to construct personal and social identity, provide sense and order to experience, and frame and structure action. In other words, the ontology of the human world is defined by the existence and ubiquity of private and public narrative (including ... the stories of historians).

—Geoffrey Roberts²

Collective memory, as analyzed in the literature review section of Chapter I, is not only possessed by individuals, but also consumed by a social group. Owing to the frequent lack of immediacy in first-hand recollection, the construction of socially-embedded memory always relies on the symbolic techniques of cultural representation, which encode and preserve memories into narrative stories that are distributed among group members. By capitalizing on the symbolic resources in the repertoire of collective memory, political actors can narrate the past to reflect the present and even to formulate

¹ Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 153.

² Geoffrey Roberts, "History, Theory and the Narrative Turn in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 4 (2006): 710.

the future. Viewed in this light, the symbolic representation of collective memory is interwoven with the strategic deployment of historical narratives. An archetypical example in this regard is the creation and dissemination of master commemorative narratives, which serve to activate the nationalist aspiration in a mnemonic community based on the shared destiny of its members.³ Political regimes seeking to mobilize social resources typically resort to this sort of strategic narrative to invoke public memory and enact collective identity in their endeavor of policy legitimization.

This is especially true in an authoritarian state like China. Historical education launched by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), as a crux element of the moral-ideology pedagogy of the so-called “patriotic education” (*aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu*), has been an integral intermediary for the symbolic representation of the collective memory. By bestowing determined meanings upon the past, which is causally related to the present and future of the Chinese nation, the state-sanctioned commemorative narrative, as a product of the state’s historical mythmaking, defines the identity role of the Communist regime in Chinese nation’s sociopolitical development and projects varied self-images of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in distinctive contexts. In the structuring of the expectation and behavior of the Chinese populace, the master historical account, implicated in the construction and consumption of collective memory, has become an effective sense-making tool maneuvered by the CCP in the internal and external legitimization of the authoritarian state.

This chapter seeks to systematically investigate the formation and projection of the historical accounts propagated in the CCP’s patriotic education campaign, and the reception of this sort of strategic narratives that has influenced the CCP’s pursuit of its

³ See, e.g., Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*.

domestic and diplomatic strategic aims. Starting with the social pragmatics of political communication, the first section delves into the instrumentalization of master historical account in the regime legitimacy enhancement, with a focus on the primary plot line underpinning the story-telling of the official historiography of modern Chinese history. The second section compares and contrasts two lines of master historical accounts spotlighted in the nationalist discourse of Mao's China and the post-Tiananmen era, illuminating how the symbolic representation of collective memory is structured in the narrative frames in the state's historical mythmaking. In order to shed light on the discursive texture of the linkage politics of Chinese foreign relations, the third section maps the domestic and international reception of the victimhood discourse—a thematic focal point of the patriotic education staged by the CCP from the 1980s onward—and the reconfiguration of Beijing's diplomatic discourse in reworking the PRC's public image on the international scene.

PATRIOTIC EDUCATION: THE SOCIAL PRAGMATICS OF STRATEGIC NARRATIVES⁴

The formation of strategic narratives is a power-laden undertaking, functioning as a dynamic link between two categories of actors: elites and masses. Those wielding the regime power have vested interest in shaping the public discourse and deliberation by crafting particular narratives in their political claim-making, in order to gain political leverage or mobilize popular support. The social pragmatics of strategic narratives was catapulted to the forefront of legitimacy enhancement of the Chinese authoritarian state

⁴ This section uses the data in my article Ning Liao, "The Enbaling and Constraining Effects of Strategic Narratives: Nationalist Discourse and China's Foreign Relations," *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 6, no. 2 (2013): 26-32.

when the Party-state inaugurated an extensive propaganda campaign of patriotic education in the early 1990s, on the heels of the Tiananmen pro-democracy movement, to mitigate the most severe crisis of the regime.

The main theme of the patriotic bandwagon was the indoctrination of the state-sanctioned nationalist discourse detailing the wartime suffering foisted upon the Chinese nation by foreign colonial powers and Japanese imperialists during its modern history. In the process of historical representation, nationalism became a centripetal force of turning national affiliation into political solidarity, to the extent that the commemorative accounts helped to create an “imagined community” on the basis of the common past shared by the members of the Chinese nation.⁵ As Stephen Crites argues, “A self without story contracts into the thinness of its personal pronoun.”⁶ According to the instrumental logic of nationalism, collective memory, a primary source to construct the “selfness” of the Chinese nation, is an ideal and convenient resource for political actors to promulgate master historical accounts. At a critical moment when the moral standing of the CCP regime fell to an all-time low, the communicative symbols intrinsic to the collective memory were intensely exploited in the Chinese Party-state’s historical mythmaking, with an effort to persuade the masses to follow the elites’ political leadership.

How is Chinese collective memory constructed in the state-projected strategic narratives? In essence, the dissemination and consolidation of the meanings that are distilled into collective memory results from a process of creating of master commemorative accounts, which are treated as a “true” discourse through the narrative

⁵ For the notion of “imagine community,” see Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*.

⁶ Stephen Crites, “Storytime: Recollecting the Past and Projecting the Future,” in *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*, ed. Theodore R. Sarbin (New York, NY: Praeger, 1986), 571.

arrangements of historical episodes. For the purpose of policy advocacy and legitimation, communicators need to organize the “storyline” of national history within selected frames and “emplot” those seemingly disconnected events and actions by unifying them into a coherent whole under the proposed thesis.⁷ On the foundation of such a “schemata” dictating the storyline of national history,⁸ the persuasiveness of master historical accounts increases the probability that the audience’s interpretation of, and response to, domestic and international affairs are primed in those frames preferred by the narrative projector.

In the patriotic education staged by the CCP, the centerpiece of the state-projected strategic narratives is the relationship between the Party-state and the Chinese nation. A stable and constant theme of the patriotic bandwagon is thus the incessant articulation of the CCP’s role identity as the sole savior and guardian of the Chinese nation and its credentials for a monopolistic grip on political power. All the “specific narratives” in the historical vicissitudes are patterned into this “schematic narrative template” that reigns in the construction of the master historical account.⁹ As the CCP regime has set its propaganda machine in motion for the campaign, the narration of the authoritarian state as a “regime of truth” and its relationship with the nation has become a political ritual repeatedly performed in the Chinese public space,¹⁰ which helps to create a “community

⁷ Polkinghorne, “Narrative and Self-Concept,” 141. Gearóid ÓTuathail, “Theorizing Practical Geopolitical Reasoning: The Case of the United States’ Response to the War in Bosnia,” *Political Geography* 21, no. 5 (2002): 627. Also see Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative (Volume 1)*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago, MI: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

⁸ Frederic Charles Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 208.

⁹ James V. Wertsch, “Collective Memory,” in *Memory in Mind and Culture*, ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 128-32. For the differentiation between “schematic narrative template” and specific narratives,” also see *Voices of Collective Remembering*.

¹⁰ The phrase “regime of truth” is borrowed from Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power,” in *Michel Foucault Essential Works: Power*, ed. James D. Faubion (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001), 131.

of feeling” that obscures the divide between the state and the nation.¹¹ It is this “schemata” that has guided the construction of collective memory, in an attempt to enact the role played by the Communist Party in the Chinese revolution and social development in Chinese political imaginary. As asserted by Hu Jintao, former General Secretary of the Party at the congregation commemorating the 90th anniversary of the founding of the CCP,

In the 170 plus years since the Opium War of 1840, our great country has weathered untold hardships, our great nation has waged earthshaking struggles, and our great people have scored splendid achievement in the annals of history. Following the Opium War, China gradually became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and foreign powers stepped up their aggression against China. The feudal rule became increasingly corrupt, the country was devastated by incessant wars and turbulence, and the Chinese people suffered from hunger, cold, and oppression. To salvage China from subjugation was an urgent mission for the Chinese nation. And the Chinese people faced the historic tasks of winning independence and liberation. ... The birth of the [CCP] was a natural product of the development of modern and contemporary Chinese history as well as the indomitable exploration of the Chinese people for survival of the nation. [It] put the Chinese revolution on the right course, gave the Chinese people a powerful motivation, and created bright prospects for China’s future development.¹²

After recounting the historical role the CCP has played in the new-democratic revolution, the socialist revolution and the establishment of the socialist system, and the reform and opening up over the past 90 years, which was described as “a grand epic in the history of human development on [the] ancient land of China,” Hu continued to state:

These three major events reshaped the future and destiny of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation. They irreversibly ended the misery endured by China in modern times when it suffered from both domestic turmoil and foreign invasion and was poor and weak. They also irreversibly started the Chinese nation’s historic march for development, growth, and great

¹¹ For the notion of “communities of feelings,” see Berezin, “Emotions and Political Identity: Mobilizing Affection for the Polity,” 92-94.

¹² Hu Jintao, “Speech at the Meeting Commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Communist Party of China,” Xinhua Agency, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-07/01/c_13960505.htm. (September 3, 2012)

rejuvenation. They gave China, a civilization of over 5,000 years, a completely new look and created unimagined prospects for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. What has happened shows that in the great cause of China's social development and progress since modern times, history and the people have chosen the [CCP] ... History has also fully shown that the [CCP] truly deserves to be called a great, glorious and correct Marxist political party, and the core force leading the Chinese people in breaking new ground in development.¹³

The regime legitimacy of the CCP, as demonstrated in Hu's official statement, is symbolized in its role identity as the genuine representative of the Chinese nation. Too often, the strategic narration of national history needs "an evaluative framework in which good or bad character helps to produce unfortunate or happy outcome."¹⁴ Structured by such a normative logic, which aptly integrates the experiential elements of Chinese historical development and the popular evaluation of the Communist state, causal linkage is established between the source of the traumatic humiliation inflicted on the Chinese nation—the corrupt feudal rule and foreign subjugation—and the foundation of the CCP, depicted as an inevitable outcome of Chinese modern history. Within this framing structure, the determined role that the Communist regime has played throughout the path taken by the Chinese nation along its independence, liberation, and modern development validates the capability and morality of the CCP leadership

With regard to the rhetorical transaction between the elites and masses in the political communication system, how well the state-driven strategic narratives are received by the general populace is, according to Michael Schudson's analysis on the power of cultural symbols, less dependent on the audience's personal interests in the content or nature of the narratives themselves than on the position of the narrated

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Alasdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," *The Monist* 60, no. 4 (1977): 456.

memory “in the cultural tradition of the society the audience is a part of.”¹⁵ Only when historical representation is contextualized within such social milieu can it become intelligible. Given that reconstructing a modern state is an unfailing dynamic driving the tenacious struggle of generations of Chinese political elites, the representativeness of the CCP nicely fits the ongoing purposive action of the Chinese nation in recovering its powerful status in the international community, and is thus resonant with the targeted audience of the strategic narratives formulated for the sake of political mobilization.

As such, the historical identification of the CCP resembles what Kenneth Gergen terms a “stability narrative” in the official nationalist discourse, through which the highlighted elements in the Chinese collective memory are indexed “in a way that the trajectory remains essentially unchanged.”¹⁶ To achieve the rhetorical efficacy of such hegemonic discourse in the patriotic education campaign, an innovative means for the ruling elites in the “symbolic enhancement” of the incumbent regime is, as Lowell Dittmer proposes in his elaboration of political symbolism, “to enhance the status of the collectivity [it] represents, and emphasize the indissoluble linkage between the office [it] holds and the high status and great power of that collectivity, alluding frequently to [its] own competence as an incumbent and deriding [its] opponent’s inexperience.”¹⁷ This narrative technique of social representation is widely used in the formulation of strategic narratives in the CCP’s patriotic education. For instance, Jiang Zemin, Hu’s predecessor,

¹⁵ Michael Schudson, “How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols,” *Theory and Society* 18, no. 2 (1989): 169.

¹⁶ Kenneth J. Gergen, “Narrative, Moral Identity, and Historical Consciousness,” in *Narrative, Identity and Historical Consciousness: A Social Constructionist Account*, ed. Jürgen Straub (New York, NY: Berghahn, 2005), 104.

¹⁷ Lowell Dittmer, “Political Culture and Political Symbolism: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis,” *World Politics* 29, no. 4 (1977): 542, 74.

once articulated the “indissoluble linkage” of the Party-state and the Chinese nation in an assertive manner.

Our party has inherited and carried forward the Chinese nation’s outstanding tradition, and has made the biggest sacrifice and the biggest contribution in the struggle of national independence and safeguarding the national sovereignty. We have therefore won the heartfelt love and support from people of all nationalities in China. The Chinese Communist is the firmest, the most thoroughgoing patriot. Chinese Communist Party’s patriotism is the highest model of conduct for the Chinese nation and the Chinese people.¹⁸

Given the woeful memory of extraterritoriality and concession imposed by foreign aggression and subjugation, the absolutist notions of “national independence” and “national sovereignty” inferred from the traumatic experience of national humiliation have been ingrained in Chinese political culture as the “ideational codes,” or the “distinctive patterns of assumptions,” of the basic property of the Chinese nation.¹⁹ The historic agency of the CCP in unifying the Chinese nation and restoring its dignity has, as claimed in Jiang’s speech and other authoritative political documents, emblemizes the “indissoluble linkage” between the state—the alleged indefatigable defender of China’s territoriality and sovereignty—and the nation, whose felt need of cleansing national humiliation is fulfilled by the incumbent regime. Since the character of the Communist regime is evaluated in the narrative framing in accordance with the normative values sustained in the Chinese political culture, the CCP’s identity role, which is symbolized as the paramount patriotic force that is capable of protecting the nation from foreign intrusion and leading it to modernization, appeals to the consensual assumptions inherent in Chinese political imaginary.

¹⁸ Jiang Zemin, “Speech at the Sixth Plenary Session of the 14th Ccp National Congress,” *People’s Daily*, October 10, 1996.

¹⁹ David J. Elkins and Richard E.B. Simeon, “A Cause in Search of Its Effect, or What Does Political Culture Explain?,” *Comparative Politics* 11, no. 2 (1979): 128-29.

How, then, does such “mnemonic legitimation,” as Jan-Werner Müller terms it,²⁰ make its way into public awareness? To enhance their communicative efficacy, the reception of elite-driven strategic narratives projected in the patriotic education is guaranteed by the social and institutional reinforcement of the patriotic education. Just as memory is a social undertaking manifested in cultural practices, so do commemorative narratives function in institutionalized social relations, where the shared meanings lodged in the collective memory are enacted.²¹ To shore up the legitimacy of the authoritarian regime, patriotic education has constituted a primary instrument of the propaganda state in socializing the Chinese populace to the ideological system instituted in the state’s consensus building project. Today, more than two decades after the prodemocracy protests, this central means of constructing and reproducing canonical national historical narratives is still crucial to mustering allegiance to the unity of the Chinese nation-state and is hence underscored in the CCP’s emphasis on patriotism. In an official document rectified in the sixth plenary session of the 17th CCP’s Committee, patriotism is explicitly affirmed as one of the “core socialist values”:

Patriotism is the deepest intellectual tradition of the Chinese nation, and it is the thing most able to arouse Chinese sons and daughters to unite in struggle. ... We need to carry out education in a national spirit on a broad scale, put great effort into fostering ideologies of patriotism, collectivities and socialism; strengthen people’s sense of national pride, self-confidence and self-esteem; encourage people to turn their patriotic fervor into practical action to revitalize the country; and view it as the greatest honor to love the motherland and contribute all their strength to developing the motherland and as the greatest disgrace to harm the motherland’s interests and dignity.²²

²⁰ Müller, “Introduction: The Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory,” 26.

²¹ Schudson, “How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols,” 170.

²² The CCP Central Committee, “The Decision of the CCP Central Committee on Major Issues Pertaining to Deepening Reform of the Cultural System and Promoting the Great Development and Flourishing of Socialist Culture,” <http://www.cctb.net/bygz/wxfy/201111/W020111121519527826615.pdf>. (accessed on September 12, 2012)

To sustain social recognition, public acceptance, and ethical practice of the “national spirit” with patriotism, the Chinese Party-state has made unremitting efforts to ensure that the master historical narratives be “physically present” and “cognitively memorable” in social relations.²³ The state education system is, as Podeh has found in his research on the construction of collective memory in Israeli history education, “another arm of the state” to transmit the “approved knowledge” to the young generation.²⁴ Under the rubric of patriotic education, Chinese state-centric history education remains an important avenue of “mnemonic socialization” in China,²⁵ wherein state-sanctioned commemorative narratives can be readily retrieved by the general populace.

As modern Chinese history has been integrated into the national educational curriculum up to the postgraduate levels, all college students are required to study what they should believe. The testing of the uniform and approved historical knowledge is an effective means for the retention of master commemorative narratives. Apart from the college entrance examinations, modern Chinese history is an essential part in the nationwide matriculation exam of graduate schools. In the subject of politics, all examinees, regardless their majors, have to retrieve the “true” historical knowledge and relate the information to their comments on contemporary Chinese politics. Their answers must dovetail with the official discourse printed in state-sanctioned textbooks, another pedagogical element of history education manifesting the quintessence of institutionalized patriotic education. To be erected as orthodox knowledge, master

²³ Schudson, “How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols,” 163.

²⁴ Elie Podeh, “History and Memory in the Israeli Educational System: The Portrayal of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in History Textbooks (1948-2000),” *History and Memory* 12, no. 1 (2000): 66.

²⁵ Zerubavel, “Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past,” 286-89.

historical accounts projected in the CCP's patriotic education are always disseminated through historical textbooks. In Chinese historical education, textbook writing is an uncontested "memory regime," whereby master commemorative narratives promulgated by the "privileged interpreters" of national history, along with the codified judgment of historical events, are transmitted into the minds of the national audience.²⁶ In order to maximize the discursive power of patriotic education, the compilation and revision of these textbooks are unconditionally subject to rigid censorship by the government. Such a memory agent, as Zheng Wang describes, "[functions] as a kind of 'supreme court' whose task is to decipher, from all the accumulated 'pieces of the past,' the 'true' collective memory."²⁷

Therefore, in the process of the selection and organization of historical knowledge, the CCP has managed to insulate the master discourse of national history from any form of alteration. Through the discursive colonization, the molding of collective memory in the symbolic system of patriotic education provides a pretext to purge various forms of "unofficial history," which is perceived by the regime to deflect the dogmatic conclusion of past events drawn by state authorities.²⁸ Any attempts to challenge the symbolic relationship between the Party-state and the nation are tantamount to treason, thereby being banished from the Party-state's educational socialization of the Chinese populace. In this way, heterodox social voices in discord with the consensual

²⁶ Eric Langenbacher, "Collective Memory as a Factor in Political Culture and International Relations," in *Power and the Past: Collective Memory and International Relations*, ed. Eric Langenbacher and Yossi Chain (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 33-36.

²⁷ Zheng Wang, "National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China," *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (2008): 786.

²⁸ Qiu Jin, "The Politics of History and Historical Memory in China-Japan Relations," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 11, no. 1 (2006): 36. For a discussion of Chinese "official history" and "unofficial history," see "The Politics of History and Historical Memory in China-Japan Relations," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 11, no. 1 (2006): 25-63.

narrative of national history are relentlessly coerced, which facilitates the “symbolic enhancement” of regime legitimacy.

REMEMBERING OR FORGETTING. THE SELECTIVE PARADIGMS OF NARRATED MEMORY²⁹

As a pragmatic usage of narratives, the structuring of historical storylines, which is formulated in consistence with the communicator’s political agenda, invariably involves the selective remembering and forgetting of certain parts of the past, so that the historical narrative fits the ontological reflection of the contemporary world. Given its malleability, the construction of collective memory tends to be the enactment of “myth” in forming master historical accounts, which are less about the chronology of the past than the assertion of the past that is motivated by the logic of legitimation. It is this genre of narrative, described by Heuser and Buffet as “a shorthand for a particular interpretation of a historical experience ... invoked in the present to justify certain policies,”³⁰ that is often institutionalized as official discourse when the state is engaged in mythologizing national history.

As a defining feature of historical mythmaking, symbolic elements extracted from communication events are “emplotted” within particular framing paradigms, which provide the epistemic resource for the moral judgment rectifying in the inter-subjective meanings of the collective identity. Such narrative framing includes two semiological dimensions involving the communicative constituents of political symbolism. The first is

²⁹ This section is based on a major revision of Liao, “The Enbaling and Constraining Effects of Strategic Narratives: Nationalist Discourse and China’s Foreign Relations,” 32-40.

³⁰ Beatrice Heuser and Cyril Buffet, “Introduction: Of Myths and Men,” in *Haunted by Memory: Myths in International Relations*, ed. Cyril Buffet and Beatrice Heuser (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998), ix.

the semantic relationship between “the symbol and the political reality ... it refers to.”³¹

Since the selection of symbols is contingent upon the semantic context that conditions the state’s mythmaking, the framing of historical events is subject to the elites’ structural imperatives under shifting domestic and international circumstances. Second, the chosen symbols bear socially binding connotations, and hence register specific signs in public memory, whose relationship reflects the syntactic dimension of historical accounts.³²

With the mediation of the meanings connoted from the selected symbols, which are capable of animating the emotions that are deep-seated in the political culture, the syntax of master historical narratives structures the feeling of the audience regarding how the domestic politics and international affairs work and their comprehension of the distinct signs associated with the mythic symbols.³³

These semiological elements of political symbolism are applied to the distinctive narrative paradigms prevalent in the Chinese state-led history education under the Maoist totalitarian regime and the patriotic bandwagon initiated in the wake of the Tiananmen crackdown. Within the dominant narrative structures, two paradoxical symbols have been formed in projecting modern Chinese history: the triumph of the Chinese people in the Communist revolution led by the CCP and the national humiliation wrought by the imperialist intrusion and aggression.³⁴ The projection of these symbolic polarities are shaped by the agenda-setting of historical narrative framing, which highlights “particular causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” concerning

³¹ Dittmer, “Political Culture and Political Symbolism: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis,” 571.

³² Ibid.

³³ “Political Culture and Political Symbolism: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis,” 568.

³⁴ E.g., Gries, *China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, 69-85. Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*, 95-117.

the structural constraints of the Party-state in diverging situations.³⁵ The glorious and traumatic symbols selected for narrative framing have signified antithetical national identities. In this communicative process, the syntax of master historical accounts has provided the CCP with a discursive means to “filter identity discourse” that is instrumental in justifying the behavior and policy of the state.³⁶ The political advocacy and legitimation of the authoritarian regime have therefore been aligned “with public justifications which enact the identity and moral purpose of the state.”³⁷

In Maoist era, China was headed by a charismatic leader who was obsessed with the purported “grand enterprise of continuous revolution.”³⁸ The definition of the major challenges confronting the Party-state was structured within the frame of “class-struggle,” an overriding theme of the sociopolitical development instituted by a totalitarian regime. Predicated by such agenda setting, those actors in an ideological camp that was heresy to a revolutionary state were identified as the primary culprits that were conspiring to overthrow the regime. In the face of the imminent threats from these arch enemies, the state was in bad need of a heroic image, communicated through the mobilizing “identity discourse,” to substantiate its capability of enduring the adverse diplomatic environment and muster the broad-based popular support for the “continuous revolution” of the revolutionary state. Within such a semantic context, the Communist victory in the warfare of national liberation—including the Chinese resistance against the Japanese invasion and the civil war between the CCP and the nationalist Kuomintang

³⁵ Robert M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 52.

³⁶ Jeffrey T. Checkle, “Social Constructivism in Global and European Politics: A Review Essay,” *Review of International Studies* 30, no. 2 (2004): 234.

³⁷ Mark Lynch, *State Interests and Public Spheres: The International Politics of Jordan's Identity* (New York NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), 18.

³⁸ Jian Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

(KMT)—was privileged as the most appropriate symbol fitting the structuring logic of the state's historical mythmaking.

To enhance its rhetorical potency in fostering popular identification with the Communist regime, the social categorization function of nationalist discourse was fulfilled in the Party-state's historical mythmaking. This was achieved in the framing process through the projection of a referent sign that serves as a foil, that is, by "alluding frequently to [the CCP's] competence as an incumbent and deriding [its] opponent's inexperience."³⁹ To be more specific, the determined meaning connoted from the mythic symbol of Communist triumph was accentuated in the juxtaposition of two protagonists of the same historical period. Thus, it should come as no surprise that the positive contribution of the KMT led by Chiang Kai-shek, Mao's nemesis, in the Sino-Japanese War was largely ignored in official discourse. On the 20th anniversary of the Communist victory over Japan, Lin Biao, then Vice-chairman of the CCP's Central Committee, wrote, "The basic reason [for the victory] [was] that the War of Resistance against Japan was a genuine people's war led by the [CCP] and Comrade Mao Tse-teung."⁴⁰ As quoted in an authoritative document of the CCP, Chiang's resistance to Japan was pinned down by Mao as the "consequences of the serious blow Japanese invasion dealt to the interests of Anglo-U.S. imperialism in China as well as to those of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie whom Chiang Kai-shek directly represented." With regard to the impact of the KMT on the Communist victory, Mao specifically noted that "Chiang opposed the

³⁹ Dittmer, "Political Culture and Political Symbolism: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis," 574.

⁴⁰ Piao [Biao] Lin, *Long Live the Victory of the People's War! In Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of Victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japan* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 1-2.

general mobilization of the people for total war, and adopted the reactionary policy of passivity and resisting Japan but actually opposing the Communist and the people.”⁴¹

Apparently, the competence of the CCP-led army and underground forces, which was given full credit for the national independence and affirmed the “victor” identity of the nation-state, was in sharp contrast with the KMT troops, whose corruption and impotence along with its yielding to the Japanese aggressors were diagnosed as a primary cause for the agony of the Chinese nation under the nationalist rule. In a syntactic sense, the social categorization textually implied in these “self-glorifying” and “other-maligning” myths conveyed the normative evaluation of the historical narrative frame.⁴² The demarcation of the two dichotomized signs promoted the moralism of the Communist state, which was extolled in the official discourse as “the sole leader of the ‘Great Chinese War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression’.”⁴³

In the political symbolism of historical mythmaking, the in-group and out-group identities attributed to the patriotic CCP and the traitorous KMT were signified in the syntactic “structures of attention,” which logically means that some other aspects of the same historical event that were incompatible with the dominant frame must be simultaneously consigned into “structures of inattention.”⁴⁴ During much of the Cold-war period, the nationalist force became “almost a codeword for any political dissident

⁴¹ Tse-tung [Zedong] Mao, *The Policies, Measures, and Perspectives of Combating Japanese Invasion* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1954), i-ii.

⁴² Yinan He, “National Mythmaking and the Problems of History in Sino-Japanese Relations,” in *Japan's Relations with China: Facing a Rising Power*, ed. Peng Er Lam (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 70.

⁴³ “National Mythmaking and the Problems of History in Sino-Japanese Relations,” in *Japan's Relations with China: Facing a Rising Power*, ed. Peng Er Lam (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 73.

⁴⁴ Mieke Bal, *Death & Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

tendency" in the Chinese political discourse.⁴⁵ The internal conflict between the two actors representing diametrically opposed classes overshadowed the international fissure between China and Japan in the political legitimization of the Communist regime. The trauma inflicted upon the Chinese people in the Sino-Japanese war, in the view of the CCP's historical mythologizers, was not an appropriate symbol by which the narrative audience would remember and interpret a historical issue in the way that a revolutionary state wished. Hence, this symbolic element was stylized as a peripheral issue in the narrated memory of modern Chinese history in Maoist era.⁴⁶ Such intended amnesia, as a manipulative technique of the state's historical mythmaking and a communicative component of the "symbolic enhancement" of the Communist state, directed the nationalist hatred toward the reactionary actors and Beijing's ideological opponents rather than an external entity whose conflict with China was in discord with the "class-struggle," a dominant narrative frame and preordained mission of the revolutionary regime.

On the front of Chinese foreign relations, Japan's strategic position in the balance of power of the Asia Pacific region pushed Beijing to engage Tokyo in an attempt to hedge against Western containment of the fledgling regime. In step with this calculation, distinction was made between the Japanese people at large and the coterie of Japanese militarists whose brutality was the real cause of the Chinese war misery.⁴⁷ In accordance with this "separation" thesis, historical feuds, considered as secondary to the normalization of the bilateral relations that was more profitable in geo-political terms,

⁴⁵ Rana Mitter, "Behind the Scenes at the Museum: Nationalism, History and Memory in the Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987-1997," *The China Quarterly* 161(2000): 283.

⁴⁶ E.g., James Reilly, "China's History Activism and Sino-Japanese Relations," *China: An International Journal* 4, no. 2 (2006): 192.

⁴⁷ He, "National Mythmaking and the Problems of History in Sino-Japanese Relations," 73-74.

were largely slighted. For instance, the Nanjing Massacre, one of the most appalling holocausts in the Sino-Japanese war, was dealt with cursorily in the state's mythmaking. Until the renewed focus of narrative framing emerged in the 1980s, not only did official historiography soft-pedal this wartime suffering of the Chinese people, scholarly investigation, as noted by Daqing Yang, was also criticized for "stirring up national hatred and revenge" against Japan, and was thus suppressed into silence.⁴⁸ Instead of being singled out for special commemoration, Japanese intrusion was pinned down as one of the objects of the Communist victory in countering foreign imperialism and domestic reactionary forces.

In the post-Mao reforming era, the profound transformation of China's domestic social structure and the external contextual constraints has led the state to revamp nationalist discourse and hence the framing package of historical accounts. The narratives celebrating revolutionary heroism, which were at odds with the social reality of the market economy, could not ameliorate the rampant complaints made by a large part of the populace that was adversely affected by the socioeconomic reform. The centrifugal forces of disintegrating social cohesion culminated in the pro-democracy movement in 1989, the repression of which further took the limelight from the CCP's impressive accomplishment in the economic realm. The Western-imposed sanction in the immediate aftermath of the astounding suppression and the collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe exacerbated the regime's vulnerability and insecurity. In the volatile domestic and international environment, the pressing task of the official nationalist discourse was to mitigate the glaring fissure between the authoritarian state

⁴⁸ Dali Yang, "Convergence or Divergence? Recent Historical Writings on the Rape of Nanjing," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (1999): 858.

and the disgruntled society. For an authoritarian state whose power relations with the society was severely challenged in the social disruption, a transformative production of official discourse was vital in sustaining China's socioeconomic development in a direction where the one-Party rule could be maintained.⁴⁹ As the endpoint of the narrative framing has shifted from justifying the radical initiatives of class struggle to energizing the populace disillusioned by the waning appeal of the orthodox ideology on which the CCP could claim its legitimacy, a new mythic symbol that can distract the general populace from the cauldron of the socioeconomic problems at issue must be conjured in the transformative reproduction of the impoverished official discourse.

Shaped by the overhaul of the agenda setting, the endemic memory of China's victimization in the "century of national humiliation" (*bainian guochi*), from the Opium War through the founding of the PRC, stood out from the "symbolic reserve" of the Chinese political culture, as a narrative resource for the political elites to highlight certain aspects of collective memory in order to mobilize support in the historical mythmaking.⁵⁰ In the so-called "education on national conditions" (*guoqing jiaoyu*), the categorization of the *self* and *other* in Chinese diplomatic history, which connotes how the woeful memory is related to the chief perils of contemporary China, is less premised upon the Communist-Nationalist conflict than on the ethnic ones between the Chinese nation and

⁴⁹ According to Norman Fairclough's conceptualization of the mutual constitutive relationship between discourse and social structure, conservative and/or transformative reproduction of discourse is often needed at the time of social changes. See Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), 37-40.

⁵⁰ See James H. Liu and Tomohide Atsumi, "Historical Conflict and Resolution between Japan and China: Developing and Applying a Narrative Theory of History and Identity," in *Meaning in Action: Constructions, Narratives, and Representations*, ed. Toshio Sugiman, et al. (Tokyo: Springer, 2008), 330. Also see Stephen D. Reicher and Nick Hopkins, *Self and Nation* (London, UK: Sage, 2001).

foreign invaders.⁵¹ In an attempt to augment the CCP's outreach to the KMT on the Taiwan issue, the official narrative framing has departed from emphasizing Chiang's non-resistance policy to eulogizing the KMT's contribution in the anti-Japanese war, which gives ground to the common interest and joint efforts of the antagonist actors in opposing foreign intrusion.⁵² Such a kind of "emplotment"—something unthinkable in Maoist era when the projection of the revolutionary state's heroic image dominated the structuring of historical storyline—dissociates the demonization of a former negative sign from the syntactic context of historical account and ushers in those external entities that are identified as the "causal agent" in the formation of the Chinese "victim" identity signified from the renewed symbol.⁵³

In the obsessive attention to national humiliation, with regard to the "connotative property" of the traumatic symbol,⁵⁴ no other foreign encroachment can better stoke Chinese nationalist resentment than Japanese incursion. In the reformulated narrative paradigm, Japanese war crimes, which were deemphasized in the Maoist historical narrative, are brought into the center of the "structures of attention." The tragic tale of the ferocious ravaging of the Chinese victims by Japanese militarists has been revived as one of the showpieces in the "new remembering of the World War II."⁵⁵ The collection of archival data in academic volumes and the active representation of this cataclysmic war by the memory agents of museums and memorials features what Parks Coble

⁵¹ Wang, "National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China," 791.

⁵² He, "National Mythmaking and the Problems of History in Sino-Japanese Relations," 80.

⁵³ Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," 52.

⁵⁴ See Dittmer, "Political Culture and Political Symbolism: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis," 568.

⁵⁵ Arthur Waldron, "China's New Remembering of World War II: The Case of Zhang Zizhong," *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 4 (1996).

describes as the “number game” in sensationalizing the horror of Japanese imperialism.⁵⁶ Given that the categorization of Japan as an invader and China as a resistor runs so deeply in the Chinese collective memory, it is hardly surprising that the reinvigorated war commemoration impresses itself on public consciousness with intense resonance. With the introduction of the external sign, the causal interpretation and normative evaluation carried with the mythic symbol—that the former intruders and aggressors, the most egregious one being Japan, are the worst villains in modern Chinese history—tends to activate a particular collective emotion when the in-group is infuriated by the out-group’s provocations. In such cases where the threats imposed by the contemporary “victimizers” harken back to their past savage act, the Chinese populace, whose inter-subjective understanding of foreign affairs is framed in the historical narrative paradigm, coheres as a “victim” group. The normative orientation created by the master historical account distracts the general populace from mounting internal tensions in the painful domestic transition, thereby serving as a legitimating glue of national cohesion.

Despite the dominant position of the victimization discourse in the discursive package of patriotic education, it should be noted, the symbolic representation of the traumatic symbol uneasily coexists with, if not overwhelms, the eulogy of Chinese heroism in the official historiography. The state’s mythmaking strikes a balance between the marked focus on the magnitude of foreign subjugation and the concurrent portraying of the Chinese fortitude displayed in their indomitable resistance.⁵⁷ Such a nuanced

⁵⁶ Parks M. Coble, “China’s ‘New Remembering’ of the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, 1937-1945,” *The China Quarterly* 190(2007): 404-05.

⁵⁷ E.g., Gries, *China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, 43-53; Kirk A. Denton, “Horror and Atrocity: Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums,” in *Re-Envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memories in Reform China*, ed. Ching Kwan Lee and Guobin Yang (Washington, D.C. & Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press & Stanford University Press, 2007), 248.

narrative arrangement suggests the social action of national rejuvenation as a remedy of China's past victimization, a storyline that orients the audience to the future of a traumatized community.

As a strategic narrative of a political regime, master historical accounts are not only projected in historical representation. In the state's mythmaking, it is vital that this communicative device portray a vision of the future for the nation, which, by connecting with the historical agency of the regime power, provides a sense of sameness in the national community and moral motivations to inspire the general populace to participate in the cause of the "causal agent." In the nationwide discussion helmed by the current CCP's General Secretary Xi Jinping over the "Chinese dream" (*zhongguo meng*), the unambiguous subtext of this catchphrase was borne out in the nationalist call made by People's Daily (*renmin ribao*) in an editorial commemorating the 80th anniversary of Japanese invasion "China's goal for the great national rejuvenation relies on the solidarity of the people and the strong leadership of the [CCP]."⁵⁸

This slogan propagated by the mouthpiece of the Chinese propaganda state offers a compelling example of the symbolic technique of the CCP's strategic narratives. In the historical path taken by the Chinese nation in eradicating the source of its humiliation and achieving the goal of its rejuvenation, the decisive role played by the Communist state in the course of "causal transformation"⁵⁹—from a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society to an independent and strengthening state—comports with the interests of the widest

⁵⁸ English.news.cn, "People's Daily Urges Chinese 'Never Forget National Humiliation' on Sept. 18," Xinhua Agency, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2011-09/18/c_131145289.htm. (accessed on October 1, 2012).

⁵⁹ For the notion of "causal transformation" in the projection of strategic narratives, see Andreas Antoniadis, Ben O'Loughlin, and Alistair Miskimmon, "Great Power Politics and Strategic Narratives," (Center for Global Political Economy, University of Sussex, 2010), 4. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977).

possible swath of the Chinese population. Avoiding the Mao-era motif of “class struggle” and Marxist homilies, the all-encompassing Chinese dream serves as a broad summon for nationalist sentiments. The ménage of shared nostalgia in the national community and the Party vision infuses the purposive dimension of the national identity, thereby instilling the feeling of the Chinese “self” and fostering popular loyalty to the state above individual agendas. As the narrative frame highlighting the unique representativeness of the CCP is aligned with the “source-path-goal schematic pattern” of the master historical account,⁶⁰ the patriotic motto that love of the nation is indistinguishable from support for the state has been made socially intelligible.

AN AGGRIEVED OR ACCOMMODATIONIST STATE: RECEPTION OF THE VICTIMIZATION DISCOURSE

In conjunction with the domestic consideration of enhancing regime legitimacy, the projection of historical narratives is a discursive venue for the PRC state to justify its persistent quest for power status on the world stage. Notwithstanding its current power base and growing influence in international affairs, China’s social rank in the status hierarchy of international society is perceived by the Chinese “self” as incommensurate with its grandiose national history. To achieve the social purpose intrinsic to the national identity, the “othering” protagonist is incorporated into the PRC’s identity narrative. Just as the “symbolic enhancement” of its domestic legitimacy needs an opposite sign, so is the enactment of Beijing’s external legitimacy premised upon the “relational comparison”

⁶⁰ Polkinghorne, “Narrative and Self-Concept,” 142. For the narrative technique of “frame alignment,” see David A. Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 4 (1986): 464-81.

of China's moral identity to those of out-group entities.⁶¹ The sign of the "victimizing" other is employed here as a sort of "symbolic markers,"⁶² exhibiting China's undeserved treatment in a Western-founded institutional context. Along with the poignant reminder entreating the domestic audience "not to forget national humiliation" (*wu wang guochi*), Beijing often claims that the Chinese nation, given "the moral authority of [its] past suffering,"⁶³ has a thorough understanding of the value of peace and the price of inequality in the Westphalian international system. Viewed in this light, what the victimization discourse presents is an "ethical argument" that the PRC possesses the normative credentials for asserting membership in the social category of legitimate great powers.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, this "ethical argument" is more persuasive to the Chinese audience than to its Western counterpart. According to Vamik Volkan's conceptualization of "chosen trauma," what the narrators of national humiliation really "choose" is "to mythologize and psychologize the mental representation" of the traumatic symbol.⁶⁵ Since the narrative paradigm of the victimization discourse is congruent with the Chinese national feeling, the selected symbol of national trauma "[conveys] an unambiguous and emotionally compelling frame" to the domestic audience.⁶⁶ Once the "connotative property" of the "chosen trauma" is activated in response to foreign discrimination or

⁶¹ Rawi Abdelal et al., "Identity as a Variable," *Perspectives on Politics* 4, no. 4 (2006): 699.

⁶² Gerard Delanty and Chris Rumbord, *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization* (London: Routledge, 2005), 51.

⁶³ Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, 50.

⁶⁴ For the notion of "ethical argument," see Amrita Narlikar, "All That Glitters Is Not Gold: India's Rise to Power," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 5 (2007): 986.

⁶⁵ Vamik D. Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), 36-39. "Chosen Trauma, the Political Ideology of Entitlement and Violence," <http://www.vamikvolkan.com/Chosen-Trauma-the-Political-Ideology-of-Entitlement-and-Violence.php>.

⁶⁶ Robert M. Entman, "Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House's Frame after 9/11," *Political Communication* 20, no. 4 (2003): 416. For the elaboration of culturally congruent narrative frame, see *Projection of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

mistreatment, the tragic story readily invokes the normative elements in the Chinese collective memory. As a result, the perceived provocations of the out-group tend to fortify the cognitive consistency of the populace in processing the information of foreign affairs that are germane to historical grievance.

Take the Sino-Japanese controversy over the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands as an example. In the Chinese in-group members' evaluation, Japan's audacious move of nationalizing the islands is associated with its annexation of the Chinese territory in the maritime sphere—a symbol signifying the onset of Japanese imperialist invasion—and its current reluctance to hold real remorse for its wartime transgression. As seen by a resentful actor that is instinctively hardwired to detect the illegitimate motives of its past invader, the latter's action affirms the pre-existing beliefs concerning its war-prone character and the ambition of military expansion. The propensity of threat perception not only determines how the members of the victim state draw inference of the resented actor's intention, but also shapes how they act upon the “preconceived stereotype” communicated in the selective paradigm of historical narratives.⁶⁷ The external stimulant of perceived injustice thus evokes Chinese nationalist sentiments that are fermented in the collective memory. Such responsive emotion—an outgrowth of the “mental representation” in consuming the commemorative narratives—magnifies the negative image of the former wrongdoer and exaggerates a “sense of entitlement,” whereby the Chinese in-group seeks “to regain what was lost, or seek to revenge” for the misconduct of the victimizer.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Allen S. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan*, (Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 1989), 18.

⁶⁸ Varlık D. Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity,” *Group Analysis* 34, no. 1 (2001): 89.

As a dramatic manifestation of the entitlement syndrome, the geyser of Chinese nationalist sentiments is reactive vis-à-vis the out-group references, which are perceived as jeopardizing the in-group's crusade for national renaissance and its purposive action in foreign affairs. Due to the conventional role prescribed to an illiberal political regime, however, the reigning Western powers often take the CCP to task for stoking domestic nationalist fervor in an attempt to keep its grip on power. For those who are taken aback by Beijing's muscular position when it is embroiled in the emotionally-charged diplomatic skirmishes, China's foreign policy behavior seems to be grounded on such a self-proclaimed logic: "To have been a victim gives you the right to complain, to protest, and to make demands."⁶⁹ Actually, the reiteration of China's moral superiority that rest on this justification does not grant it the accreditation of a full-fledged power, but rather paints it as an insecure and defensive actor, which, on the account of some Western observers, "has not been psychologically prepared to play a full 'great power' leadership."⁷⁰ The cathartic venting of nationalist sentiments in the antagonistic intergroup interactions precisely attests to their inference that the aggrieved strain of Chinese nationalism has developed into the aggressive display of a dissatisfied and bellicose power, whose self-proclaimed status as a "responsible great power" evinces its ambition "for dominance or relative gains over its adversaries."⁷¹ Ironically, the PRC's "ethical argument" has brought upon itself an assertive and expansionist reputation that it regularly denounces. The threat perception constitutive in the Chinese "mental representation" of national trauma has been reciprocated with a negative image assigned

⁶⁹ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Abuse of Memory* (Paris: Arléa, 1995), 56. Quoted in Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2004), 86.

⁷⁰ Orville Schell, "China Reluctant to Lead," *YaleGlobal*, March 11, 2009.

⁷¹ Lei Guang, "Realpolitik Nationalism: International Sources of Chinese Nationalism," *Modern China* 31, no. 4 (2005): 498.

by the foreign “other.” It is on the basis of the stereotypical out-group intention that the progenitors of the “China threat” thesis appraise China’s international character and gauge the motivation of its behavior.

The rising tide of acrimonious exchange between China and Japan provides a compelling annotation on the international reception of the PRC’s victimization discourse. With regard to status politics, threat imputation implicated in the intergroup differentiation is “symbiotically interactive.”⁷² Given the unwieldy character of historical grudge and the adversarial nationalisms in both countries, the two actors have identified each other as an “unforgivable other.”⁷³ While frequently chastising Japan for being insufficiently repentant over the grave harms it brought to the Chinese nation, Beijing is perceived by Tokyo as a strategic rivalry competing for the stewardship of regional affairs. Insofar as anti-Japanese animus can be easily tapped by the projector of the victimization discourse as a leverage for its political ends, such as discrediting Japan’s moral qualification as an international actor, the excessive and disturbing hostility of the Chinese populace toward the erstwhile colonial overlord has begot the repugnance of the Japanese people, with many concluding that the nationalist hysteria in today’s China is orchestrated by the CCP that is committed to exploiting the “guilt card” to extract Japan’s concession.⁷⁴ The everlasting xenophobic sentiments against Japan have reinforced China’s outlier status assigned by Tokyo, which has hardened the latter’s diplomatic and defense posture in response to Beijing’s burgeoning influence across Asia. In the vicious

⁷² Yong Deng, “Reputation and the Security Dilemma: China Reacts to the China Threat Theory,” in *New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy*, ed. Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 191.

⁷³ Yu Li and Yunxiang Liang, eds., *Wenming Shijiao Xia De Zhongri Guanxi [the Sino-Japanese Relations in a Civilizational Perspective]* (Hongkong: Xianggang shehui kexue chubanshe youxian zongsi [Hongkong Social Science Publishing Co.], 2006), 259.

⁷⁴ Denny Roy, “The Sources and Limits of Sino-Japanese Tensions,” *Survival* 47, no. 2 (2005): 195, 204.

spiral of pernicious social categorization, the threat imputation to the “other” is concomitant with the magnification of the distinctiveness of the superior “self.” Viewed in this vein, what Christopher Hughes calls “Japan’s remilitarization” is partly emboldened by domestic revisionist nationalist discourse.⁷⁵ Some Japanese far-right wingers, while decrying the apologetic view of their country’s military past, openly glorify Japan’s war aggression and challenge the historical narratives prevalent in East Asia by counter-framing the Pacific War as a “sacred struggle for Asian liberation.”⁷⁶ As evidenced in outburst of Chinese public outcry and nationalist upsurge in 2005, the approval of Japanese history textbook, which were claimed to distort the history of Japan’s colonial imperialism, has added fuel to the flare-up of Sino-Japanese tensions.

The undercurrents of mutual antipathy have rendered the CCP reflective upon the weighty costs of the victimization discourse in its external legitimation. In actuality, the overreliance on the “othering” sign to represent China’s moral identity has engendered its political estrangement from major powers and neighboring states. Considering the CCP’s aversion to the dire security landscape of external coalitional containment that would abort its modernization drive, the denigration of China’s international reputation has necessitated substantial adjustment in the rhetoric package of Beijing’s diplomacy. In combating the discriminatory response from the concoctor of the “China threat” thesis and legitimizing the PRC’s upward mobility, some strategic thinkers in Beijing’s foreign policy establishment proposed the notion of “peaceful rise” (*heping jueqi*)—a key watchword of the PRC’s diplomacy that was revised later by the top leaders as “peaceful

⁷⁵ Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Remilitarisation* (Oxford & New York: Routledge for International Institute 2008).

⁷⁶ Shunji Cui, “Problems of Nationalism and Historical Memory in China’s Relations with Japan,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 25, no. 2 (2012): 215–16. Also see Kenichi Goto, *Tensions of Empire: Japan and Southeast Asia in the Colonial and Postcolonial World* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003), 290.

development" (*heping fazhan*), out of the profound concern that the term "rise" would convey a disturbing connotation of China's global activism to an alarmed external audience.⁷⁷

The ascension and swift modification of the "peaceful" thesis is by no means the CCP's political expediency. In addition to its utility in the internal legitimization of the state, strategic narratives do not just play an auxiliary role in the diplomatic project of shaping China's role conception and rebuilding its public image in the international arena. To effectively dilute its intransigence displayed in the raucous frays with the foreign "other"—the target audience of the "peaceful" narrative, a gentler moral identity other than a victim state seeking historical redress is sorely needed to signal the pacific nature of China's emergence in the international arena. The "symbolic reserve" that the CCP appropriates for this end is Chinese civilizational root—Confucianism. In the selective interpretation of the indigenous discourse, some of the core values of Confucianism with contemporary relevance to Chinese foreign relations are framed into a rehabilitated narrative paradigm, which orients the reconfiguration of identity narrative so as to reshape China's external image. As Lene Hansen cogently argues, "foreign policies rely on representations of identity, but it is also through the formulation of foreign policy that identities are produced and reproduced."⁷⁸ To provide a cultural underpinning of Beijing's peaceful diplomacy, Confucian China's benign history is articulated as a metonym, bestowing credible meanings upon a fresh international identity of the PRC.

⁷⁷ See, e.g., Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of 'Peaceful Rise'," *The China Quarterly* 190, no. 291-310 (2007).

⁷⁸ Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London, UK: Routledge, 2006), 1.

state that is in tandem with the pragmatic approach to defusing longstanding tensions and thorny conflicts.

In the social philosophy of Confucianism, two interrelated notions centering on the concept of harmony (*he*), among others, are held up as an exemplar of China's culturalist role-playing on the foreign relations front. One is "harmony is most precious" (*he wei gui*), a dictum historicizing Beijing's conduct of foreign affairs in the time-honored tradition of "Confucian pacifism."⁷⁹ Unlike the victimization discourse, which is framed in the symbolic representation of the "chosen trauma" and naturally acquires the negative and reactive "sense of entitlement" on the part of a recalcitrant state standing ready for revenge, the harmony-centered Confucian discourse has visualized an amiable China with a peace-loving heritage on the foreign relations front. The international system that it envisages is encapsulated in another Confucian adage, that is, "harmony but without uniformity" (*he er bu tong*). In contrast to Huntington's "clash of civilization" thesis, the Confucian preoccupation with harmony places a premium on the feasibility of peace that can be achieved in a diverse and pluralistic global community through the "adaptation, reconciliation and mutual tolerance" of its constituencies.⁸⁰ As Beijing is ultra-sensitive to the specter of the negative identification of China's dispositional traits, which it fears would agitate unfriendly image attribution and thus escalate into mutual hostilities, the ideal vision of a world order based on the Confucian virtuous relationship casts its formulator as a humanitarian actor, featuring the moderate

⁷⁹ Qing Cao, "Confucian Vision of a New World Order? Culturalist Discourse, Foreign Policy and the Press in Contemporary China," *The International Communication Gazette* 69, no. 5 (2007): 437.

⁸⁰ "Confucian Vision of a New World Order? Culturalist Discourse, Foreign Policy and the Press in Contemporary China," *The International Communication Gazette* 69, no. 5 (2007): 438. For Huntington's conflicting antithesis, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

and conciliatory approach to foreign affairs in an attempt to assuage the apprehension and distrust of China's rise.

In terms of normative evaluation, an inter-textual allusion suggested in the harmony-based diplomatic rhetoric is the comparison of China's moral high ground with the hegemonic and democracy-exporting Westphalian international system. Just as Gilbert Rozman states in his testimony on Beijing's security discourse, the Confucian icon is elevated "as the centerpiece in an ideologically tinged narrative about what has made China superior to other civilizations over thousands of years and will enable it to prevail again in the future."⁸¹ China's civilizational attraction signified in the diplomatic syntax panders to the nationalist impulse of its domestic audience

However, the realignment of strategic narratives with the recaptured Confucian value is not a panacea to abate the external clamor of "China threat" argument. In the cases where historical disgruntlement come to the stage, the CCP often finds itself in a bind: On the one hand, it needs to pursue a pragmatic diplomacy directed at an external audience suspicious of its power aspiration, while on the other hand, it has to appease the strident domestic public opinion. Such a scenario unveils the autonomy of text receivers in selecting a narrative frame that fits into their "existing belief [system],"⁸² which in turn structures the diplomatic behavior of the narrator.

Here, one needs to note the irreconcilable contradiction between the Confucian notion of a harmonious world and the victimization discourse narrated to enact the moral justification of the PRC's aspiration for a deserved international status. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, Chinese collective memory of imperialist invasion and

⁸¹ Gilbert Rozman, "Written Testimony for the Hearing on China's Narratives Regarding National Security Policy" (Washington, D.C.: U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2011).

⁸² Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," 53.

the derived territorial concession has made Beijing's foreign policy making hypersensitive to the integrity of sovereignty and territoriality. According to Daniel Bar-Tal, the collective beliefs of victimization, with a focus on the atrocities perpetrated by the out-group, and hence the dedication to the in-group are important sources of "ethos."⁸³ In the animosity-building situations where the public memory of dismemberment and subjugation is readily retrieved from the victimization discourse, such "ethos" entails preserving a cohesive nation, safeguarding the state sovereignty, and upholding national honor at all cost. These social actions taken by the members of the Chinese nation to dislodge external provocation involves the underlying assumption of irreconcilable conflict with the foreign "other" infringing China's territorial integrity, which is ever present in the PRC's diplomatic disputes. However, the role conception of the states in the harmonious world that is informed by the Confucian cultural value constrains the antagonistic actions among the member states, "to the extent that the [they] denounce [their self-interests] so that the group and its internal harmony can be cherished."⁸⁴ Apparently, in the normative environment of Beijing's foreign policy making, the appropriate behavior determined by the Chinese "ethos" is anathema to the Confucian notion of harmony. The "peaceful" thesis of Chinese diplomacy may thus be abhorred its domestic receivers. Inasmuch as their interpretation of flashpoint diplomatic issues is heavily supported by the "chosen trauma" frame, the domestic response to Confucian diplomatic rhetoric may well transcend the framing intention of the Chinese leadership

⁸³ Daniel Bar-Tal, *Shared Beliefs in a Society: Social Psychological Analysis* (London: Sage, 2000).

⁸⁴ Chih-yu Shih and Jiwu Yin, "Between Core National Interest and a Harmonious World: Reconstructing Self-Role Conceptions in Chinese Foreign Policy." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 6, no. 1 (2013): 65.

This line of reasoning can account for the failed attempt of some liberal intellectualists to bring “new thinking” to China’s diplomacy toward Japan. In late 2002, having witnessed the swelling of virulent popular nationalism, *People’s Daily* journalist Ma Licheng lamented in an influential journal the misleading effect of Chinese media on the parochial public opinion toward Japan, which he viewed as an obstacle to an improved relation between China and its neighboring states.⁸⁵ Echoing Ma’s advocacy of downplaying the apology diplomacy in the bilateral relations, Shi Yinhong, a realpolitik scholar at Renmin University of China, suggested Beijing’s rapprochement with Tokyo through shelving history issues and seeking a comprehensive partnership with Japan to counter U.S. hegemony in East Asia.⁸⁶ Almost predictably, the “new thinking” ignited a remarkable flurry of nationalist backlash. With the heightened “emotional schema” pervading in the in-group community and the oversimplified group categorization, the two iconic figures, Ma Licheng and Shi Yinhong, found themselves under vitriolic attacks. Ma, branded as a “traitor” to China, even received death threats that prompted him to move to Hong Kong.⁸⁷ Since Japan-bashers got the upper hand in the ensuing heated debate, those sharing a similar view on the “cool diplomacy” toward Japan with Ma and Shi had to keep a low profile. Just as one Chinese scholar flatly explained their reticence, “We’ll be regarded as traitors if we say anything positive about Japan. We may even be blacklisted.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Licheng Ma, “Duiqi Guanxi Xin Siwei: Zhongri Minjian Zhiyu [New Thinking on Sino-Japanese Relations: Worries of Peoples],” *Strategy and Management [Zhanlue yu guanli]* 6(2002).

⁸⁶ Yinhong Shi, “Zhongri Jiejin Yu ‘Waijiao Geming’ [Sino-Japanese Rapprochement and ‘Diplomatic Revolution’],” *ibid.* 2(2003).

⁸⁷ Gries, “China’s ‘New Thinking’ on Japan,” 838-39.

⁸⁸ Strait Times, “China: Beijing Tightens Control on Domestic Reporting on Japan,” October 4, 2004.

The social resistance encountered by the short-lived “new thinking” exemplifies how an alternative narrative recommending a cure to the deteriorating Sino-Japanese relations is considered heresy to the “ethos” of memory-encoded norms. Whether or not Ma and Shi were nudged to express their viewpoints by the decision-making circle, the fact that their provocative articles were published shortly after the fourth generation of the CCP leadership came into office suggested Beijing’s intention of dousing anti-Japanese sentiments that would derail the bilateral relations.⁸⁹ Such a credible signal indicated that Beijing’s desire for a prudent and carefully calibrated set of reaction to navigate away from confrontation with Japan. Nevertheless, once the Japanese out-group’s affronts that are perceived as a blatant offense to Chinese sensibilities—for instance, its motion of purchasing the contested *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands and the Prime Ministers’ pilgrimages to the Yasukuni Shrine, a symbolic center of the state institutionalization of war dead—come under the spotlight, the Chinese “ethos” reified as sovereignty, territoriality, and national dignity are socially recognized as the “dominant national ideas” about “what the nation *should* do.”⁹⁰

Insofar as the Chinese public bases its assessment of the state’s diplomatic performance on these ethical criteria, Beijing’s desire to tone down contentious history issues is rendered unwarranted. As the attention of domestic audience is decidedly bounded by memory-based “ethos,” rather than the judicious calculation of presenting China’s benevolent image informed by the Confucian harmonious account, the state’s accommodationist stance does not squarely fit the normative paradigm that has figured

⁸⁹ Jian Zhang, “The Influence of Chinese Nationalism on Sino-Japanese Relations,” in *China-Japan Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Creating a Future Past?*, ed. Michael Heazle and Nick Knight (Cheltenham, UK & Northampton, MA: Edgar Publishing, 2007), 29.

⁹⁰ Jeffrey W. Legro, “What China Will Want: The Future Intentions of a Rising Power,” *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 3 (2007): 522, 23.

prominently in the popular imagery. Given the narrated role of an indefatigable defender of the Chinese nation, which distinguishes the CCP from those incompetent regimes permitting the transgression of China's sovereign whole, the diplomatic treatment recommended by the pacific discourse carries a strong risk of abrading the regime's mnemonic legitimacy. Viewed in this sense, not only does the victimization discourse shape the public expectation of the state's diplomatic behavior, it also creates an ideational structure that is capable of arresting the dexterity of Beijing in handling crisis situations. Beijing's intention to reaffirm the civilizational line of its diplomatic tradition is incompatible with its adherence to the domestic "ideational codes."

CHAPTER IV

MEMORY-ENCODED AND IDENTITY-CONSTITUTIVE NORMS.

EMOTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN CHINESE FOREIGN
RELATIONS¹

Not Ideas, but material interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the "world images" that have been created by "ideas" have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest.
—Max Weber²

[The] primary role of emotion in humans is to alert the individual experiencing the emotion that action in some situation is necessary and to motivate or energize that action.
—Jefferson A. Singer and Peter Salovey³

In the normative environment of the PRC's diplomacy, collective memory and national identity, which are mutually constitutive in the enterprise of Chinese nationalism, are two ideational factors shaping Beijing's foreign policy making and the external behavior of the Chinese state. In Chapter 3, the examination of state-centric strategic narratives, contextualized in the mythmaking of the CCP regime's patriotic education, employs the rational choice approach. Along this inquiry line, the ideational variables of memory and identity, as the raw materials of the CCP's strategic narratives, are in

¹ This chapter contains materials of Ning Liao, "Dualistic Identity, Memory-Encoded Norms, and State Emotion: A Social Constructivist Account of China's Foreign Relations," *East Asia: An International Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2013): 139-60.

² Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 289.

³ Jefferson A. Singer and Peter Salovey, *The Remembered Self: Emotion and Memory in Personality* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1993), 122.

essence constructed by the rational political actor to foster popular support for the authoritarian state and thus to achieve its desired domestic and foreign policy outcome. In an effort to test the social-cultural interpretation of Chinese foreign policy behavior against rational and material explanation, the following two chapters (Chapters 4 and 5) represent an conceptual move from the rational-choice analytic paradigm, in which the two ideational constructs mentioned above are treated as the intervening variables between the rationality of authoritarian state in its regime legitimacy enhancement and the outcome of its domestic and foreign policy agendas, to the historical-institutional approach.

As the independent variables in the alternative analytic framework, historically-constructed institutions are capable of structuring the rationality of political actors and their behavior in the policymaking process. In the attempt of this dissertation to chart out the causal mechanism in which collective memory and national identity shape the conception of China's diplomatic interests and behavior, two empirical questions are central to the historical-institutional analysis of Chinese foreign policy making: First, how did collective memory and national identity gain their prominence in Chinese political imaginary? Second, how do the social norms inherent in these historical institutions take on a life of their own? Put another way, how are the ideational motivations of Chinese foreign policy behavior institutionalized in the indigenous political culture? Centering on these focal points of memory and identity, this chapter delves into the formation of these two important components of Chinese nationalism and their normative and affective dimensions on the foreign relations front.

With the analytic lens of political sociology that views the state as a social actor interacting with its counterparts in the international society, this chapter starts with the delineation of the construction of the Chinese national identity in two distinctive cultural-institutional contexts. The process tracing of the origin of Chinese nationalism contours the way that the adversarial aspects of the Chinese nationhood, or national identity, were forged in its dramatic positional change in the transformation from the *tianxia* (all-under-heaven) order to the Westphalian system. In such an external setting where ideational factors came to the fore of Chinese political life, the second section canvasses the constitutive and regulative meanings of the collective identity, which compose a normative paradigm of Chinese foreign policy choice. In order to spells out the causal pathway by which the purposive element of the Chinese national identity have constituted the social norm underpinning the state's purposive actions in the international arena, this section also examines China's tenacious struggle for national rejuvenation, a social action that is seen as the constant theme in the vicissitudes of the nation-state, from the performative perspective of the national identity. By looking at how the identity-constitutive norms, or the "ideational codes"⁴ embedded in the Chinese collective memory, have informed the instrumental awareness of the state, and are thus linked to the state's preference in the foreign policy choice, the second part of the chapter carves out the institutionalization process of the ideational factors motivating the PRC's diplomacy. Turning to the affective dimension of the national identity, the third part of the chapter pinpoints the formation and representation of Chinese identity predicament and the derived emotion of the Chinese state in its social practice of aspiring for the great-power

⁴ Elkins and Simeon, "A Cause in Search of Its Effect, or What Does Political Culture Explain?" 128. Also see Roger M. Keesing, "Theories of Culture," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 3(1974): 77.

status. Drawing on the intergroup emotions theory, this part attempts to tease out the mechanism wherein the group-based emotion serves as a cognitive scaffold for the perception and behavior of the Chinese state members in their interaction with the foreign "other."

SELF-OTHER INTERACTION: CULTURAL-INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF THE NATIONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

While it is a political phenomenon existing in all types of political systems, nationalism is exhibited in various fashions in different political cultures. With regard to China, as Lucian Pye, an eminent China scholar, noted as early as the 1960s, patriotic Chinese in the twentieth century, be they Communist or nationalist, were more ardent in detailing "the real and imagined ways in which China [had] been humiliated by others" than other former colonial or semi-colonial countries.⁵ Whereas in the era of Mao, charismatic appeals and heroic glory were one of the overriding themes of the state-crafted nationalist discourse, in contemporary China, both the political elites and the masses, as Pye observes, "continue to dwell on the idea that they were years ago grossly and cruelly mistreated by others, and consequently they have a huge burden of humiliation."⁶ The constant reference to national humiliation, so much at odds with the celebration of China's historical greatness showcased in the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, can be attributed to a peculiar statehood and nationhood, constructed in the institutional and cultural context of the interaction between the Chinese "self" and the foreign "other."

⁵ Lucian W. Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics: A Psychocultural Study of the Authority Crisis in Political Development* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1968), 71-72.

⁶ "China: Not Your Typical Superpower," *Problems of Post-Communism* 43, no. 4 (1996): 12.

According to modernization theorists, a nation can be analyzed in terms of a host of stable indicators shared by the members of a group or community—for instance, history, culture, language, customs, and territory—on the basis of which the group or community asserts its identity. The Chinese national identity, conventionally determined by the genealogy one is born into, is first and foremost comprehended in the analytic paradigm of ethnic nationalism (*minzu zhuyi*), rather than that of state nationalism (*guojia zhuyi*).⁷ The focus on ethnicity echoes what David George calls the “involuntarist” approach to nationality,⁸ on the premise that nationality is an objective entity characterized by an array of racial attributes. With regard to Chinese nationalism, these given characteristics include, as asserted by Sun Yat-sen, one of the iconic figures of the Chinese nationalist pantheon, all the traits of Chinese ethnicity—“common blood, common language, common religion, and common customs”—that have rendered the Han people “a single, pure race.”⁹ Behind the ascriptive vision of the Chinese national identity, it should be noted, is the discernible sense of cultural superiority constructed within a specific social structure. The distinctive “selfhood” held and projected by the Chinese is, in accordance with the analytic apparatus of identity proposed by Rawi Abdelal and his colleague, forged in the “relational comparisons” between the in-group Chinese and the out-group foreigners, the interactions of which have composed the social reality of the Chinese foreign relations.¹⁰ While the primordial dimension of national identity is a given in social life, the nobility of the “single, pure race” of the Chinese is

⁷ James Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 27(1992).

⁸ David George, “National Identity and National Self-Determination,” in *National Rights, International Obligations*, ed. Simon Caney, David George, and Peter Jones (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996).

⁹ Yat-sen Sun, *The Three Principles of the People: San Min Chu I*, trans. Frank W. Price (Taipei: China Publishing Company, 1924), 5.

¹⁰ Abdelal et al., “Identity as a Variable,” 698.

enacted and reinforced in its interactive relationship with other collective identities. Chinese civilization, an ideational source of its national identity, is conceptualized in the self-other dialectic throughout Chinese history.

This dynamic is captured in R. B. J. Walker's proposition that politics is predicated upon a "sharp delineation of here from there."¹¹ In actuality, the demarcation of boundaries may not be in the geographical sense, but is exhibited in a myriad of divisions inscribing the inside and the outside.¹² In retrospect, while the pre-modern Chinese attained cultural superiority from its envisioned central position in the world, the Sino-centric worldview was largely based on the interrelated dichotomy of self and other. Since all the entities at the fringe of the Middle Kingdom were regarded as less-favored groups, the primordial notion of China was epitomized in the *tianxia* order, a hierarchical model of concentric zonation.¹³ In his incisive discussion of Sino-centrism, Samuel Kim elaborates the key characteristics of the institutional system of *tianxia*:

[The Sino-centric] world order was a concentric extension of the hierarchical principle which prevailed in the domestic social structure of the Middle Kingdom. It was a system of 'interstate' relations unto itself with its own rules of the game. It was not a system of international relations in the modern European sense, whose stability was maintained by the balance of power among more or less equal member states. It was instead a system of hierarchical harmony enforced by the preponderance of power and virtue anchored in China.¹⁴

¹¹ R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), ix.

¹² Gaston Bachelard, *The Politics of Space* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1994), 211, 17-18.

¹³ According to the historiography on the glorification of Chinese civilization, other contemporary states at that time, such as Korea, Vietnam, and Japan, were all cast under the power shadow of Chinese culture. Thus, the lack of any rival civilization was a primary factor in the development of the Sino-centric worldview. See Norton Ginsberg, "On the Chinese Perception of a World Order," in *China in Crisis, Volume 2: China's Policies in Asia and America's Alternatives*, ed. Tang Tsou (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

¹⁴ Samuel S. Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 23.

The *tianxia* order is in stark contrast to the Westphalian interstate system, a decentralized political order defined by the legal equality among its constituencies. In all its ramifications, the Sino-centric system was uniquely marked by its moral hierarchy and a centripetal tendency of movement toward the symbolic center of a ritualistic society. An archetypal example of such Sino-centric cosmology is the harmonious and hierarchical relationship between the Middle Kingdom and those countries it deemed as culturally inferior on the circumference, one that was instituted through the tribute system—a quasi-international order centering around and governed by China.¹⁵ Within this institutional mechanism, China—the most powerful state in East Asia in the moral, material, and cultural sense—was held accountable for the actions of those states over which it claimed suzerainty. In return, Chinese emperors received confirmation of their leadership from their vassal states, whose rulers or envoys would perform rituals and present gifts to show deference and submissiveness in their periodic missions to the Celestial Empire.

With respect to identity politics, Chinese narcissistic cultural superiority, the positive dimension of the national identity is demonstrated in its interactions with the peripheral countries. Ruled by the “Son of Heaven”—a “cardinal point in the universal continuum” and the “apex of [Chinese] civilization”—who exercised *de jure*, if not always *de facto*, reign and rule over all human affairs,¹⁶ China was envisioned as the sole prominent actor at the center of the Confucian international society. Unlike the Westphalian system, which took for granted the equality of the constituent sovereign

¹⁵ John King Fairbank, *China: A New History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

¹⁶ Mark Mancall, “The Ch’ing Tribute System: An Interpretive Essay,” in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations*, ed. John King Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 63.

nation-states, the tribute system was modeled on the “asymmetry and interdependence of the superior/inferior relationship,”¹⁷ with emphasis put upon the prestige of the primary state in the hierarchic social order and the legitimacy of this ranking order collectively accepted by the secondary states.

To a large extent, the moral justification of China’s preponderant position—or the “noncoercive command,” to borrow David Lake’s words,¹⁸—that the Chinese empire attained, was founded on the credible commitment it made as not to exploit the secondary states in the tribute system.¹⁹ In this sense, the ritualized and institutionalized form in which the self-other dynamic manifested itself in the tribute system was essentially an incarnation of Confucian patriarchy. To be more specific, the social nature of the stable hierarchy formed in the *tianxia* order reflected the Confucian principles of *li* (ritual) and *renai* (benevolence) that the tributary homage was morally subject to.²⁰ The consensus on these central paradigmatic norms, which originated from the ethical tenets guiding the hierarchical relationship in Chinese society and later underpinned the interstate order, contributed to the legitimation of China’s social status in the tribute system and the stability of the *tianxia* order. In that it incorporated the normative architecture of Confucianism formalized in the relations between the Chinese empire and those peripheral states, the ideational structure of the *tianxia* order was constitutive of the differentiated positions in the society of pre-modern states. Although the idea of nationalism resting on the Western concept of nation-state had not yet been introduced to

¹⁷ James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Quest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 124.

¹⁸ David A. Lake, “The New Sovereignty in International Relations,” *International Studies Review* 5, no. 3 (2003): 304.

¹⁹ David C. Kang, “Hierarchy and Legitimacy in International Systems: The Tribute System in Early Modern East Asia,” *Security Studies* 19, no. 4 (2010): 592.

²⁰ Yaqing Qin, “Why Is There No Chinese International Relations Theory?,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 7, no. 3 (2007): 323. “Struggle for Identity: A Political Psychology of China’s Rise,” 251-52.

China during the era of tribute system, such an institutional and cultural construct represented the ideal identity of China as a prominent power in the international society. The derived affective sense of cultural superiority, enacted on the basis of the self-other interaction in the Sino-centric *tianxia* system, lends support to Dittmer and Kim's proposition that the Chinese national identity is not "constructed, let alone enacted, in isolation."²¹

The boundaries denoting the political space of the Chinese *tianxia* order were strictly cultural. The self-other division connate in the traditional Chinese national identity constitutes a fault line between "the [barbarian] steppe and China proper," denoting the supremacy of Chinese civilization as well as "the nature and authority" of the Chinese rulership under the heaven²² This inter-cultural comparison, through which the superior dimension of the Chinese national identity was molded, provided the frame of reference for the conceptualization of Chinese foreign relations in the institutional context of the *tianxia* order. Given that the idea of nation-state sovereignty—the cornerstone of the Westphalian international system—was repugnant to Chinese empires, one of the distinguishing features of foreign affairs in the imperial China was the absence of a foreign ministry, which was replaced with such institutions as the Board of Rites (*libu*) or the Court of Colonial Affairs (*lifanyuan*) handling relations with non-Chinese groups.²³ As indicated in the scant attention the tribute system paid to the territoriality of the state, Chinese emperors, endowed with a divine moral "mandate" over the barbarian

²¹ Lowell Dittmer and Samuel Kim, "Whiter China's Quest for National Identity?," in *China's Quest for National Identity*, ed. Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 240.

²² Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 90.

²³ June Teufel Dreyer, *China's Political System: Modernization and Tradition*, 8th ed. (Boston, MA: Pearson Longman, 2012), 327.

neighbors, were inclined to view diplomacy as “giving expression externally to the same principles of social and political order that were manifested internally within the Chinese state and society”; and therefore, the foreign relations of pre-modern China were, as noted by John King Fairbank, “accordingly hierarchic and non-egalitarian, like Chinese society itself.”²⁴ Guided by such a perception of the outside world, Chinese imperialist rulers did not differentiate between foreign relations and domestic politics. For them, the demarcation of these two arenas of activities, if any, was demonstrated in the dichotomy between the positive “civilized self” and the negative “barbaric other.”

However, a state’s external and domestic environment and the national identity that it shapes are not monolithic. Variation in the cultural-institutional context can reconstruct the national identity. Correspondingly, in accordance with Claude Lefort’s proposition on the “fundamental indeterminacy ... of relations between *self* and *other*,”²⁵ the position of the Chinese actor in the self-other dialectic is in flux. With the breaking out of the Opium Wars, China’s prominent position and cultural supremacy in the *tianxia* order came to an abrupt end. A watershed in Chinese history, the wars ushered in the toe-to-toe contest between the Westphalian international system and the Sino-centric tribute system, and raised the curtain on China’s “century of national humiliation.” As a result of a series of military debacles of the Qing court at the hands of foreign aggressors and the surrender of its sovereignty, swaths of Chinese territory were “carved up like a melon” (*guafen*) by foreign predators. Correspondingly, the tribute system was severely

²⁴ John King Fairbank, “A Preliminary Framework,” in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations*, ed. John King Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 2.

²⁵ Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, trans. David Macey (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 19, emphasis in original.

attacked and gave way to the treaty system, which destroyed the institutional mechanism of the *tianxia* order.²⁶

In its harsh clash with the Western powers, the innate confidence of the Qing Empire in the validity and viability of Sino-centrism was shattered. In 1860, the Garden of Perfect Splendor (*yuanmingyuan*), the imperial palace compound in a northwestern suburb of Beijing, was razed to the ground by Anglo-French forces. British officer Garnet Wolseley described this defeat as “the strongest proof of [the United Kingdom’s] superior strength . . . [It] served to undeceive all Chinamen in their absurd conviction of their monarch’s universal sovereignty.”²⁷ Due to the demise of the tribute system, the Middle Kingdom that had formerly basked in the warm glow of a self-indulgent perception of invulnerability was degraded to a humiliated subordinate disdained by the invading “barbarians” as the “sick man of East Asia” (*dongya lingfu*). Unlike their forefathers in the heyday of the *tianxia* order, who would self-abase China as “‘our inferior nation’ (*biguo*)” while referring to the tributaries as “‘your superior nation’ (*guiguo*),” the late Qing emperors, confronted with the Western governments vying with one another in their imposition of concessions and extraterritoriality upon the Manchu court, could not afford such “self-deprecation” in addressing foreigners.²⁸ Apparently, China’s “sacred” self-image was desecrated in the intergroup rivalry. Its fatal defeat in the inter-systemic contest introduced by the Opium Wars signaled the decisive shift in the Chinese national identity from the superiority dimension to the inferiority aspect. Such

²⁶Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order*, 30-37. Mancall, “The Ch’ing Tribute System: An Interpretive Essay.”

²⁷Garnet Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China in 1860. To Which Is Added the Account of a Short Residence with the Tai-Ping Rebels at Nankin and a Voyage from Thence to Hankow*, vol. Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts (London, 1862), 281.

²⁸Gries, *China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, 9.

identity conversion provided the Chinese political actor with an impetus of forceful retribution in the intergroup relationship and an ideational pointer to address the sociopolitical challenges encountered in the transformed cultural-institutional environment.

“IDEATIONAL CAUSALITY”²⁹: STATE’S PURPOSIVE ACTION GUIDED BY SOCIAL NORMS

The agency of the state actor and the social environment in which national identity is constructed are mutually constitutive. Variation in the external and domestic contexts, as some constructivists point out, will affect “contingent properties (identities, interests, and capabilities)” of political actors.³⁰ Since the relationship between the Chinese “self” and the foreign “other” was significantly altered by the defeat of the *nanxia* order by the Westphalian system, China began a steady decline in the late 19th century and plunged into chaos, the presuppositions of Chinese political elites about the international setting was restructured, which, in turn, shaped the objectives of the Chinese state actor and opened up alternative paths for the enhancement of its capabilities to withstand the competition among modern nation-states. The qualitative shift of the national identity from superiority to inferiority aroused self-reflection by Chinese political elites regarding questions as to “why China [was] weak and how it [could] be

²⁹ The notion of “ideational causality” is quoted in Annika Björkdahl, “Norms in International Relations: Some Conceptual and Methodological Reflections,” *Cambridge Review of International Relations* 15, no. 1 (2002), a review essay on the study of norms in international relations.

³⁰ Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter J. Katzenstein, “Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security,” in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), 41.

strong, about lost territory, and about reclaiming a leading position in the world.”³¹

China's intelligentsia commenced a restless search for a less-aggrieved persona in their encounter with the Western actors.

At the early stage of identity reconstruction, the humiliations incurred as a result of foreign encroachments were, due to the entrenched ethnic fissures between the Manchu rulers and their Han subjects, attributed to the incompetency of the Qing court as opposed to the waning of the Chinese nation.³² China's humiliating defeat by Japan in the first Sino-Japanese War, which heralded “a conclusion to the brightest hopes of the era of self-strengthening,”³³ not only accelerated the collapse of the Qing dynasty, but also triggered the contemplation in the national community of a practical means to rejuvenate China. Disillusioned with the rosy dream of national rejuvenation through self-strengthening,³⁴ some intellectuals of the late Qing realized that China had fallen prey to the immutable pattern of evolution that applied to all civilizations. But they still held out the possibility of the state's survival in the complex international environment, with an appeal to the Western concept of nation-state. In leading the nationalist cause, political elites attempted to syncretize the exotic theories imported from China's subjugators with the indigenous conditions. Thus, the notion of sovereignty seeped into Chinese political thinking. Making China a unified nation and forging a cohesive political system out of what Sun Yat-sen called the “sheet of loose sand” (*yipan sansha*)

³¹ Andrew Nathan and Robert Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 34.

³² Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 20-30. Among others, also see John King Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution: 1890-1985* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 1987).

³³ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1991), 224.

³⁴ In their struggle for an ideal national identity and international status, some officials in the Qing court, with the belief that Chinese values were superior while the Western technologies could be utilized for China to regain its identity as a strong power, initiated the self-strengthening movement (*yangwu yundong*).

was recognized by the Chinese political elites as the only viable means for it to survive in a Social Darwinist world. Motivated by the goal of saving the nation, Sun advocated the adoption of nationalism and cried out to his compatriots:

We [the Chinese people] are the poorest and weakest state in the world, occupying the lowest position in international affairs; the rest of mankind is the carving knife and the serving dish, while we are the fish and the meat. Our position now is extremely perilous; if we do not earnestly promote nationalism and weld together our four hundred millions into a strong nation, we face a tragedy—the loss of our country and the destruction of our race. To ward off this danger, we must espouse nationalism and employ the national spirit to save the country.³⁵

The 1911 Revolution led by Sun and his cohorts eventually demolished the millennia-old imperial system. While the ensuing warlordism and the chronic division of the state were inimical to Sun's goal, they brewed another epoch-making event, the May Fourth Movement. In accordance with the Versailles Treaty signed at the Paris Peace Conference, Germany's China concessions were transferred to Japan. The continued experience of being "carved like a melon" inspired humiliation that was similarly felt by a large number of Chinese citizens. The student protest in May 1919 and the New Culture Movement gained ground among intellectuals who were dismayed at the failure of the new Republic to revitalize China and return it to a dignified state.³⁶

In this sort of social movements, which was aimed at overthrowing a regime that was accused of kowtowing to foreign demands and was perceived as incompetent for safeguarding national territoriality and state sovereignty, national identity was "actualized" in the actions of the members of the Chinese state. Inferring from Judy

³⁵ Sun, *The Three Principles of the People: San Min Chu I*, 12.

³⁶ For how the Chinese nationalism appeared to reach its zenith form in the May Fourth Movement, see Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 119-23.

Butler's conception of "performativity to identity,"³⁷ one can argue that the identity of the Chinese nation-state was enacted, as Sun Yat-sen appealed, through the collective action of preserving the Chinese race and preventing the destruction of the state in the "extremely perilous" moment. One of the "ontological effects" of this social practice³⁸ is that the structural relationship between state sovereignty and the nation was incorporated into the reconstitution of a powerful and unified China. Recognized as the normative value that was of central importance in defining what "China" should be in the transformed cultural-institutional setting, the Westphalian concepts of autonomous sovereign and indivisible territory were thus "structured," to use Anthony Giddens's words,³⁹ as a social norm that has ever since been engrained in a non-Western society haunted by the bitter memory of foreign aggression and territorial secession.

In the constructivist school of IR, norms have both defining and regulative effects in their guidance of political actors' behavior.⁴⁰ In terms of the defining sense, social norms, which specify the practice that will "bring respect and approval (or disrespect and disapproval) from oneself and others," can be understood as the "prescriptive accounts" constituting the identity of political actors.⁴¹ Over the past century and a half, various reform and revolutionary movements mobilizing for the cause of Chinese national salvation—from Sun Yat-sen's search for an independent Chinese nation-state, to

³⁷ Judy Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999).

³⁸ Cynthia Weber, "Performative States," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 27, no. 1 (1998): 78.

³⁹ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Katzenstein, "Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security," 5. Björkdahl, "Norms in International Relations: Some Conceptual and Methodological Reflections," 15-16. Nicholas Onuf, *The World of Our Making* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

⁴¹ Paul Kowert and Jeffrey Legro, "Norms, Identity, and Their Limits: A Theoretical Reprise," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), 453. Francesca Cancian, *What Are Norms? A Study of Beliefs and Action in a Maya Community* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 6.

Chiang Kai-shek's attempt to unify China, to Mao Zedong's mass-based movement to overthrow the "three mountains" of imperialism, feudalism-colonialism, and bureaucratic capitalism—have all cohered around the persistent quest for sovereign independency and territorial integrity. In the interactions of Chinese "self" and foreign "other," the preservation of a cohesive nation and its inseparable territories and the safeguarding of state sovereignty at all costs have been valorized as "a quintessentially Chinese idea," or the "constitutive norms" of the Chinese national identity.⁴² As a leitmotif in the promotion of the nationalist mission to cure what has been perceived as the weak, diseased national character, such practice provides the Chinese community with a validation of its identity and thus earns the allegiance of the group members of the nation-state.

The discourse of nationalism, which resembles a normative paradigm for the assessment of the state's policy, is simultaneously brought to bear on the state actor in a regulative fashion. In the enactment of the identity of the nation-state, social norms, although not necessarily defining specific policy option, provide the ethical foundation and a diffuse normative structure that delimits the boundaries and establishes the moral criteria for policy choices.⁴³ Guided by these normative underpinnings, statesmen, as Puchala and Hopkins assert, "nearly always perceive themselves as constrained by

⁴² Samuel S. Kim, "Sovereignty in the Chinese Image of World Order," in *Essays in Honor of Wang Tieya*, ed. Ronald St. J. Macdonald (London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1994), 428; Abdelal et al., "Identity as a Variable," 697.

⁴³ Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security," 54. Steven Bernstein, "Ideas, Social Structure and the Compromise of Liberal Environmentalism," *European Journal of International Relations* 6, no. 4 (2000): 467.

principles, norms, and rules that prescribe and proscribe varieties of behavior," with limited leeway for improvisation⁴⁴

In the Chinese context, the absolutist notions of sovereignty and territoriality have served as the signposts shaping the policy agenda of the contemporary authoritarian regime on the foreign relations front. Only those foreign policies embracing the consensual social norms can be judged as ethical. In this sense, Beijing's foreign policy cannot be intelligible without taking into consideration the circumscription of social norms that have been settled as domestic convention that regulate the state's behavior. The arena in which the CCP's diplomacy is conducted is, according to Bruce Andrews' social constructivist approach, comparable to a stage of performance where the "second-order purposive relationship ... of reciprocity" between the state and society is unfolded.⁴⁵ On this symbolic stage, the normative justification of the incumbent regime is largely dependent upon the regime's commitment to following the diffuse social norms and its fulfillment of the role prescribed by these norms.

Viewed in this light, Chinese nationhood cannot be discounted as simply a desideratum of the state-building project. Take the Taiwan issue, one of the thorns in Beijing's side; for example. The unification of the island, a conviction that has taken the form of a shared social norm, emblemizes a cohesive national polity. Meeting the expectation of the Chinese community has constituted a means for the Communist regime to preserve its "nationalist legitimacy."⁴⁶ Not a single CCP leader could afford to stand

⁴⁴ Donald J. Puchala and Raymond F. Hopkins, "International Regimes: Lessons from Inductive Analysis," *International Organizations* 36, no. 2 (1982): 270.

⁴⁵ Bruce Andrews, "Social Rules and the State as a Social Actor," *World Politics* 27, no. 4 (1975): 323.

⁴⁶ Elena Atanassova-Cornelis, "Chinese Nation Building and Foreign Policy: Japan and the U.S. As the Significant 'Others' in National Identity Construction," *East Asia: An International Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2012): 97.

condemned in national history for shrinking from a fight to prevent Taiwan's independence. It would be counterintuitive then for a "nationless state"⁴⁷ to remain so steadfast in the mission of uniting the state and the nation under a single banner. In view of the "agency (state/regime)-principal (nation) relationship" between the state and nation,⁴⁸ if the state disregards the consensual norms and its diplomatic performance deviates from the rule of conduct widely shared in the domestic society, it has to face the loss of public support and thus the erosion of regime legitimacy. Hence, in the deliberations on and execution of Chinese foreign policy, when it comes to issues concerning national unity and territorial integrity, particularly those pertinent to the emotionally-charged memory of national dismemberment and subjugation, the CCP leadership has ample grounds for heeding the prevailing domestic social norms.

According to the analytic framework of Abdelal et al., the configuration of collective identity encompasses interrelated normative and purposive elements. In other words, the normative principle imposing obligatory actions that validate the collective identity is intimately linked to certain "social purposes" shaping the "interests, goals, or preferences" of a given group.⁴⁹ As such, national identity functions as an ideational mediator, connecting the normative structures of domestic conventions and the state's interests. Apart from regulating Beijing's foreign policy choice, the ideational norms encoded in the Chinese collective memory—as the inter-subjective understandings constituting the national identity—offer a general vision for the state's course of action.

⁴⁷ John Fitzgerald, "The Nationless State: The Search for a Nation in Modern Chinese Nationalism," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 33(1995).

⁴⁸ Jungmin Seo, "Nationalism and the Problem of Political Legitimacy in China," in *Legitimacy: Ambiguities of Political Success or Failure in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Lynn White (Hackensack, NJ & London: World Scientific, 2005), 142.

⁴⁹ Abdelal et al., "Identity as a Variable," 698.

By meeting the social need of the past-victim 'self,' reconstructing a powerful modern state, which is expected to sustain and develop the identity of the ideal "China" that was destroyed in the cultural-institutional transformation, constitutes the foundation of the state's status concept and the purposive norm guiding its performance on the diplomatic stage. It is this desire of achieving effective rehabilitation in the intergroup relations that has been driving the unremitting efforts of generations of Chinese political elites and activists in their struggle toward national rejuvenation, from the demolition of the imperialist system to various political reforms in the republican era, and from the establishment of the nationalist republic to the founding of the Communist regime.

As such, collective memory takes on its importance in a setting of "ideational causality" in the Chinese identity politics, wherein the identity-constitutive norms motivate the state's purposive actions in foreign affairs while revealing the social instrument for the state to achieve its aims. By virtue of the above-mentioned concept of "relational comparison" required for the formation of collective identity, the pursuance of great-power status in the international community is explicitly related to the socially constructed categories of inter-groups. Inasmuch as the state's social position is highly relevant to the recognition it acquires from other members of the international society, the symbolic significance of the prestige motive of the state is conceivable only when its honor-driven behavior is situated in the milieu of the interaction between the Chinese "self" and the foreign "other." The imperative to regain "face" (*mianzi*) before the audience of the international theatre can be construed as a "rational [pursuit] to fulfill the drive for [the] ontological security" of the Chinese state.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, 13-30. Brent Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the In State* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 2.

In performing the national identity, China's persistent quest for power-status on the world stage reflects the instrumental character of the state's aim in wiping away national humiliation and thus affirms the social needs inherent in the state's self-identity. In the process of seeking "ontological security," the normative expectations intrinsic to the collective identity entail that the nation-state secure all possible affirmation of its recovered eminence from the originators of the modern international system—the West. The Beijing Olympics is particularly illustrative of such a social practice. Underlying the triumphant spirit was not only China's objective to solidify its stance as a sports powerhouse, but the identity need that has been reciprocally shared by both the state and nation as a social norm, impelling the elevation of the country's international standing to a position commensurate with the progress it has made since its opening-up.

On the part of the authoritarian regime, considering the domestic end to which its international considerations are geared, the external legitimacy that the Chinese state attains can be transposed to the CCP's internal legitimation. As regime legitimacy is always the sanctioned top priority of Beijing's foreign policy choice, acquiring the desirable "international status" has been routinized as an "overriding policy objective" of Beijing's diplomacy.⁵¹ Along this line of logic, not only is the CCP keen on attaining international legitimation, it also earnestly wishes to give the domestic public the impression that their government has made strenuous efforts to conform to the domestic social convention. That is why, as Minxin Pei comments, the Chinese leaders "spent so much political capital to try to get practically all the foreign leaders to attend the [Beijing

⁵¹ Yong Deng, *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 8.

Olympics'] opening ceremony."⁵² Such a purposive action of the state corroborates Andrews' viewpoint. As he vividly puts it, if an "international project is transformed into conventional and social action," the diplomatic aims of the state "may at times be nothing more than a political channeling and articulation of domestic expectation."⁵³ To the extent that the CCP's foreign policy choice and its diplomatic performance are shaped by the identity-constitutive norms, China's pursuit of external legitimation can be defined as a means, rather than an end, toward the social purpose engraved on its national identity.

IDENTITY PREDICAMENT: THE COGNITIVE SCAFFOLD OF COLLECTIVE EMOTION

China's strong sense of entitlement to international, particularly Western, acclamation is a characteristic of its national identity that is of a social and cultural nature. It is an emotional and cognitive practice integrating history and the present reality. Given the collective memory of national defeat and the resultant humiliation, the compulsion to re-attain the long-denied international prestige has been at the core of Chinese nationhood and statehood. In pursuing such a purposive action, China's excessive attention to outward appearance and its catering to "world opinion" lend support to the role theory in IR. As proposed by K. J. Holsti, the social position of a state on the international stage is not only determined by the ego's role conception, but is also "influenced or restrained by the international counterpart of the social alter."⁵⁴ Insofar as regaining national glory involves grave contradictions between the Chinese "self" and the foreign "other" in their

⁵² Quoted in Larisa Epatko, "Olympics Mark China's 'Coming of Age' " PBS Newshours, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/asia/china/2008/olympics.html.

⁵³ Andrews, "Social Rules and the State as a Social Actor," 523, 26.

⁵⁴ Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," 243.

prescriptions of China's international role status, the disparity between these two lines of social understanding has been bedeviling the Chinese state's purposive action in reconstituting its great-power identity. On the part of China, attaining a position of prominence that is consistent with the self-image that prevailed during the long period prior to the "century of national humiliation" is destined to be an arduous journey.

Today, after more than three decades of phenomenal growth and development, China does meet the tangible criteria for the designation as a great power, as it has been transformed from the "sick man of East Asia" to an independent and strengthening nation-state in terms of influence, prestige, and international reach. However, China's external legitimation is no longer premised, as was the case under the *tianxia* order, upon the compliance of the subordinate states with the dominant actor. In contemporary hierarchical international system, the socially-conferred power status is to be validated by the shared understanding among those powerful actors already in this social category regarding the role ascriptions of the state in question. Although China does hold the entry card of the great-power club, its social position in the current international society is rather equivocal.⁵⁵ It may be true that Beijing has bid farewell to the possibility of a new Cold War between China and the West, but the non-democratic regime's handling of a dizzying array of domestic and external issues, such as human rights, media freedom, as well as the Tibet and Taiwan issues, is under intensified external scrutiny. The mismatch between the ego's self-attributed position on the basis of its material and moral power and the social rank assigned by the alter often makes the aspirant to international stature and respect feel frustrated, or even alienated in the Westphalian system. Given that the

⁵⁵ Shogo Suzuki, "The Importance of 'Othering' in China's National Identity: Sino-Japanese Relations as a Stage of Identity Conflicts," *The Pacific Review* 20, no. 1 (2007): 33.

purposive norm innate in the national identity has rendered China's social mobility on the world stage a culturally-defined core in a society predisposed with "post-colonial consciousness,"⁵⁶ once the action of the state in seeking the credentials accredited for the social status that it perceives to be rightfully deserved is obstructed, the Chinese populace can be rallied around the "self-protective urge to re-establish [the state's] 'rightful position'" to defend the challenged "ontological security" of the nation-state.⁵⁷ As the group value of the state is disparaged, the coalescing function of national identity and the resultant emotional work of both its leaders and the public at large come to light in the intergroup interactions.

The suspicion and resistance that China has met with along its odyssey to acquire national honor and prestige serve as an activator of emotional arousal, on the basis of the perception that the reigning Western powers are—according to a commentator in *Qiushi*, the most influential and authoritative CCP magazine devoted to policy making and theoretical studies—"unwilling to see an independent, powerful, prosperous China" stand alongside them on the international stage.⁵⁸ This statement made by the CCP's propaganda organ can be viewed as an annotation on the identity predicament of the emerging power, in which its habitual assurance of cultural supremacy and assertion of rectifying the injustice deep-seated in the collective traumatic memory are disconfirmed by the depreciating behavior of the foreign "other." Such a national feeling explicates why large numbers of Chinese citizens were awash in venomous fury in response to what

⁵⁶ Zheng Wang, "Never Forget National Humiliation: Postcolonial Consciousness and China's Rise," (The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), 2012).

⁵⁷ Reinhard Wolf, "Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition," *International Theory* 3, no. 1 (2011): 106

⁵⁸ Shizhong Xing, "'Zhongguo Weixie Lun' Keyi Xiuyi ['China Threat' Thesis Can Be Stopped]" *Qiushi* 1996, 20.

they saw as grossly unfair criticism from the West, while confidently embracing the world with the celebration of common humanity as manifested in the motto of the Beijing Olympics—"One world. One Dream."

At the same time that the state was laboring to frame the high-wire public spectacles as a decisive proof of its international emergence, riots erupting in Lhasa were perceived as plot, which were conspired by foreign forces bent on "defacing" China ahead of the Beijing Olympics through leveraging its handling of human rights and ethnic issues. The military crackdown on the Tibetan protests attracted a chorus of condemnation of the Chinese government in the Western media, depicting the Beijing Olympics as a "magnet for unfavorable attention to China's human-rights abuses at home."⁵⁹ The opprobrium surrounding the Olympic torch relay that the Chinese nation-state experienced was in discord with its effort to burnish a legitimate image in the international theatre of the Olympic sports. Through the lens of the Western audience, the Chinese national identity performed in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics, as manifested in the collective rage vented toward the resented opponents who stymied this state's purposive action, was arguably a paradoxical demonstration of the "humiliated pride" that was displayed by a "frustrated great power."⁶⁰

The complicated feeling of the Chinese community, informed by what William Callahan terms China's "pessoptimist national aesthetic,"⁶¹ has given life to a collective emotion. Collective identity is, as defined by social psychologist Henri Tajfel, "part of

⁵⁹ Paul Mooney, "Beijing Olympics: Shadow over a Coming-out Party," YaleGlobal Online, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/beijing-olympics-shadow-over-coming-out-party>.

⁶⁰ Julia Lovell, "Prologue: Beijing 2008--the Mixed Messages of Contemporary Chinese Nationalism," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no. 7 (2008): 765. Also see Shogo Suzuki, "Seeking 'Legitimate' Great Power Status in Post-Cold War International Society," *International Relations* 22, no. 1 (2008): 45-63.

⁶¹ William A. Callahan, *China: The Pessoptimist Nation* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10, 15.

an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group ... together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership."⁶² Consistent with this definition, the xenophobic outburst in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics was essentially the discharge of an intergroup emotion, not only expressed by the individual members of the Chinese state but also experienced and acted upon by the collectivity. In the performance of the national identity, public emotion has become a causal variable structuring the perception of the Chinese state members and shaping the behavior tendency of the in-group in the situations where the collective identity is accentuated.

According to social identity theory, the individual self can become meaningful only when it is socially identified.⁶³ So long as members of the Chinese state—including the CCP's leadership and the Chinese populace, both domestic and abroad—are “depersonalized” in the encounter with the foreign “other,”⁶⁴ even those who do not personally subscribe to the aspiration for international status or simply lack the nationalist outlook may find it difficult in the emotionally-charged situations to ignore the social value of group standing—a symbolic need ascribed by the national identity and moral agent of the individual sense of worth in the intergroup context. On the condition that individuals' self-serving evaluation of the intergroup relationship that has been framed in the vantage point of the nation-state coincides with the external attestation of China's importance and merits, the normative meanings of the Chinese in-group is empathetically

⁶² Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 255.

⁶³ See, e.g., *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁶⁴ Brent E. Sasley, “Theorizing States' Emotions,” *International Studies Review* 13, no. 3 (2011): 458. Also see John C. Turner et al., *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (New York, NY: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 50.

confirmed, which provides its members with psychological benefits and assistance. As exemplified in Beijing's victory in bidding for the Olympic Games, the emotional reward stemming from the success of the state's purposive action enormously reinforced the social cohesion of the nation-state. In response to the announcement made by the International Olympic Committee that Beijing was selected to host the 2008 Summer Olympics, the outburst of exultant nationalistic passion pervading the whole country illustrated the transference of the individual sense of self to the larger social identity of the state-as-group, which gave ground to the emotional representation of the national pride in cleansing the historical humiliation and elevating the social status of the Chinese nation-state.

Since emotion is context-specific, group identification also arises when the identity predicament comes to the fore of Chinese foreign relations. While the members of the Chinese state take pride in its emergence in the international arena, the optimistic strain in the "national aesthetic" can be overshadowed by their forceful reaction to foreign condescension. At these moments when the group-based emotion is heightened, one of the "principled beliefs" implied in the national identity⁶⁵—the conviction that the humiliating legacy of its past victimization must be vanquished—is put into question. Under such circumstances, social norms encoded in the public memory constitutes what Guobin Yang terms an "emotional schema" that moves the in-group to collective action.⁶⁶ As indicated in the nationalist indignation that roiled China in the run-up to the 2008 Olympics, this "emotional schema" establishes a mental aura, where the emotional

⁶⁵ Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," 9.

⁶⁶ Guobin Yang, "Emotional Events and the Transformation of Collective Action: The Chinese Student Movement," in *Emotions and Social Movements*, ed. Helena Flam and Debra King (London, UK: Routledge, 2005), 80-81.

state of the individual members is resonated within a larger collectivity and is transcribed into a habitus, specifying the "meanings, motivations, and recipes for [a certain] social action."⁶⁷ In the context of the Chinese state, the purposive element of the national identity driving the social action of securing a deserved international status works as an affective conveyor. With this emotional bond, the messages concerning the connoted meanings of the resented actor's infringement on the state's self-esteem and the actions needed to restore its depreciated role status are subtly transmitted to those in-group members who are not on the scene of foreign slight or did not experience the national trauma in the modern history of the country. In the eye of a typical member of the Chinese state, the Tibetan protest was not simply an attack on the Chinese government, but a violation of the norms constituting what it means to be Chinese. The relay of the Olympic flame was rich in symbolic meanings; at least it signified the "quintessentially Chinese idea" that it had sprung forth onto the world stage as a great nation it once had been. Any offense or contempt targeting this potent symbol could be interpreted as an egregious affront to the in-group and called for overt retribution. As seen by a large relevant audience, militant attacks of the indignant counterdemonstrators against the Tibetan exiles and their supporters impeding the torch relay aligned with the emotional overtone prevalent in the antagonistic intergroup interaction, and were thus accepted as a legitimate response on the part of the Chinese in-group.

The "emotional schema" informing the above-mentioned public anger is concomitant with the affective bias inherent in the social understanding of the in-group members in their unpleasant experience vis-à-vis the out-group entity. In the view of

⁶⁷ William H. Jr. Sewell, "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille," *Theory and Society* 25, no. 6 (1996): 842.

some constructivist theorists, emotions are learned and malleable, in that they are “context-sensitive shared expectations prescribed by social groups for specific social situations.”⁶⁸ The relational ties between a post-colonial state and the past transgressors of its sovereignty and territory are invariably colored by the persistent shame revolving around the former’s woeful memory. The perennial concern with historical redress and the reinstatement of the lost dignity in the intergroup relations are thus the embodied meanings of the post-traumatic “emotional schema” that are often employed by the Chinese citizens to unscramble the implication of the out-group behavior. In the cognitive process of the Chinese in-group members, the information incongruent with such “affective tags” that are intimately attached to the social data stored in the traumatic memory can be readily screened out,⁶⁹ while those messages that bolster the preexisting beliefs concerning the culprits of hurtful experience tend to homogenize the in-group members’ negative perception of the intergroup adversary. For a nation-state that is instinctively hardwired to detect the illegitimate motives of the former wrongdoer, the siege of the Olympic torch in a sacred journey, in which the historical agony suffered by the in-group was vigorously redressed, is a prototypical case where a predicted pattern of “causal regularity”⁷⁰ featuring the subjective judgment of its members can be applied. Given the propensity of threat perception, the stereotypical discourse—that the farce was actually a scheme by, or hidden agenda of, the Western powers to besmirch China’s national honor and sabotage the progress of realizing its century-old Olympic dream—

⁶⁸ Neta C. Crawford, “The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationship,” *International Security* 24, no. 4 (2000): 129.

⁶⁹ Eric Groenendyk, “Current Emotion Research in Political Science: How Emotions Help Democracy Overcome Its Collective Action Problem,” *Emotion Review* 3, no. 4 (2011): 458.

⁷⁰ Andrews, “Social Rules and the State as a Social Actor,” 527.

was viewed as a most appropriate interpretation of the provocative acts that would naturally incite outright hatred of the out-group members.

In the formation of collective emotion, group identification is also an antecedent to the operation of threat perception. It has been observed by some social identity theorists that people tend to have preference toward their own group while showing bias against out-group members.⁷¹ In-group favoritism, however, is not a sufficient condition for out-group discrimination, which requires certain exogenous "social structural and motivational conditions."⁷² A case in point of this sort of external stimulant in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics is the pro-Tibet demonstrations in several cities outside China, which intruded on the torch relay when the state was ready to realize its Olympic dream. The intolerable breach of the conventional norms underpinning the concerted effort of the Chinese nation-state animated the "antagonistic identity constructions" in a particularly visible manner,⁷³ wherein the adversarial identities were engaged in intractable conflicts. As a manifestation of the tendency of "automatic prejudice" observed by some social psychologists,⁷⁴ the anti-Olympic protestors and those relevant actors were strongly discriminated against by the Chinese state members. A powerful indicator of the antipathetic collective emotion under such circumstances, which sharpens the demarcation of conflicting groups, is the resentful actor's active denigration of the moral

⁷¹ E.g., Michael A. Hogg and John C. Turner, "Interpersonal Attraction, Social Identification and Psychological Group Formation," *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 1 (1985). William J. McGuire and Alice Padawer-Singer, "Trait Salience in the Spontaneous Self-Concept," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 33, no. 6 (1976).

⁷² Marilynn B. Brewer, "In-Group Identification and Inter-Group Conflict," in *Social Identity and Inter-Group Conflict Reduction*, ed. Richard Ashmore, Lee Jussim, and David Wilder (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2001), 19.

⁷³ Wolf, "Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition," 101-11.

⁷⁴ See David DeSteno et al., "Prejudice from Thin Air: The Effect of Emotion on Automatic Intergroup Attitudes," *Psychological Science* 15, no. 5 (2004).

status of its resented foe,⁷⁵ whose motives are also construed in an extremely negative way. In the wake of the Tibetan riots, for instance, Dalai Lama, the paramount out-group leader of the exiled Tibetan government, was vilified by the then head of the CCP in the Tibet Autonomous Region as “a wolf wrapped in a monk’s robe” and “a monster with a human face, but the heart of a beast.”⁷⁶ Seen through the emotional lens, both the Dalai clique and the indigenous protestors were portrayed by the Chinese media as puppets of Western forces that contrived to negate China’s global status. With the reinforcement of group differentiation, for the Chinese audience of the Western media coverage on the journey of Olympic torch, their attention was fixed on a fray in which their state was demeaned in public, rather than the oppressed Tibetans seeking a redress of grievances. Since the state members had converged on a highly unified “emotional schema,” their judgment of the out-group behavior was framed in a cognitive pattern that had significantly raised the likelihood of threat perception directed toward the foreign out-group.

Along with its representation in the verbal and cognitive dimensions, the collective emotion animated by the Chinese identity predicament can augment the tendency of radical behavior by the frustrated in-group. In the dramaturgical sense, the acute categorization of conflicting identities has the promise of escalating emotional venting beyond a rational level, so much so that the targeted opponents are embarrassed or shamed by the emotional performers who resort to the “dramatic techniques.”⁷⁷ For

⁷⁵ Reinhard Wolf, “Resentment in International Relations” (paper presented at the The Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, San Francisco, CA, 2013).

⁷⁶ Quoted in Orville Schell, “China: Humiliation & the Olympics,” *The New York Review of Books* 55, no. 13 (2008).

⁷⁷ See Robert D. Benford and Scott A. Hunt, “Dramaturgy and Social Movements: The Social Construction and Communication of Power,” *Social Inquiry* 2, no. 1 (1995).

example, because of their coverage of the Tibetan riots and the ensuing crackdown by Chinese security forces, some Beijing-based foreign correspondents received sensational assaults and even death threats that were credible enough to prompt them to move offices.⁷⁸ Iconic figures in the precipitating events of antagonistic intergroup relations, in which the identity categorization is particularly salient and may even be oversimplified, can be branded as either national “heroes” or “traitors,” as part of the “dramatic techniques” to propagate the negative perception of resented political objects. In the unruly reception of the Olympic torch in Paris, Jin Jing, a torchbearer and Paralympic fencer, earned herself such honorifics as “the wheelchair angel” for protecting the torch from the pro-Tibet protesters. Jin’s fans even issued a “global Chinese arrest warrant” for the protester who attempted to snatch the torch from her. When she questioned the rationality of the nationalist call for the boycott of the French retail chain Carrefour, Jin found herself subjected to a torrent of abuse on the Internet.⁷⁹ The original “hero,” whose private grievance intersected with collective acrimony against the out-group and hence induced an emotional arousal, was dramatically turned into the internal target of the in-group emotion. Two days after Jin’s encounter with the pro-Tibet protesters, Grace Wang, a Chinese freshman student who had tried to mediate a skirmish between the pro-China and the pro-Tibet demonstrators at Duke University, quickly became another object of public loathing. Wang’s photo, labeled “traitor to her country,” was posted on the Internet, and a video of Wang, titled “The Ugliest Overseas Student,” appeared on

⁷⁸ Simon Elegant, “Why China’s Burning Mad,” *Time* April 24, 2008.

⁷⁹ EastSouthWestNorth, “The Olympic Torch Tour as Public Relations Disaster,” http://zonaeuropa.com/20080410_1.htm. (accessed on May 1, 2013).

China Central Television's website.⁸⁰ In the chaotic progress leading up to the Beijing Olympics, the putative rejection of China's craving for the dutiful recognition of the self-righteous status elicited the convergence of the emotions of the participants and audience who were involved in the state's purposive action. The virulent behavior vis-à-vis the out-group entity by those who stage emotional scenes in such symbolic moments can be so dominant that some other behaviors by the in-group members are gravely inhibited. As a testament to the fever pitch of collective emotion, the mere acts of moderating the animosity in the communication of intergroup interaction, just as what Jin and Wang tried to do in their cases, can arouse the strong dissent of their peers and are thus equated with disloyalty to the in-group.

A significant factor influencing the constraining effect of collective emotion is the domestic normative environment. Given that emotion is culturally-specific and identity-related, the working of collective emotion cannot be properly understood without simultaneously focusing on its normative elements ingrained in the national identity and the political culture where it has evolved. The more attached an in-group is to the collectivist norms predominating in the domestic society, the more intense the collective emotion will be, and correspondingly, the more likely it is that the group-based emotion prevents those behaviors or foreign policy choices that are deemed incompatible to the consensual norms.⁸¹

As analyzed above, the resolute defense of state sovereignty and national territories, as well as the loyal efforts in upholding national dignity, has instilled as the

⁸⁰ Grace Wang, "Caught in the Middle. Called a Traitor," *The Washington Post* April 20, 2008. Shaila Dewan, "Chinese Student in U.S. Is Caught in Confrontation," *The New York Times* April 17, 2008.

⁸¹ Reinhard Wolf, "Prickly States? Recognition and Disrespect Between Persons and Peoples," in *The International Politics of Recognition*, ed. Thomas Lindemann and Erik Ringmar (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2012), 49-50.

normative substance of the Chinese national identity and the moral codes mandating the behavior of the state members in the intergroup interactions. In a society suffused with a “culture of pain,” these memory-encoded norms are central to the “emotional schema” in the flashpoint events that can readily induce the antagonistic inter-group relations.⁸² In those cases where the “motivational conditions” hark back to past indignities of the post-colonial state, collective memory activates the group identification and emotional convergence of the in-group members, and the emotional work of the Chinese state members is thus intertwined with the cognitive operation of historical analogy. The codified causal pattern provided by this sort of mental shortcut tends to steer the public perception in the adversarial intergroup relations and shape the decision-making of the state leaders, who also succumb to the cognitive tendency of “rush to memory.”⁸³ As the immediate trigger of the ongoing *Senkaku/Diaoyu* standoff, for example, Japan’s intension to nationalize the islets is intimately connected to its annexation of the territory in the Chinese maritime sphere. The poignant symbol of Japanese invasion is employed as a “preemptive metaphor,”⁸⁴ which associates the current diplomatic conflicts with those in the traumatic history when the Chinese nation-state was victimized by the Western and Japanese “other.” The fixation of the Chinese domestic audience on the alleged moral deficiency of the out-group entity has led them to identify a certain pattern of foreign policy as legitimate.

In such an emotional event that is directly germane to the issue of historical redress, as will be illustrated in Chapter 5, collective memory is a causal ideational factor

⁸² See David B. Morris, *The Culture of Pain* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

⁸³ Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 73-91.

⁸⁴ Jerome Bruner, *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 13-14.

that helps define the nature of the diplomatic situation and evaluate the stakes of the Chinese state and the moral justification of its behavior. Guided by the “logic of appropriateness” inherent in the historical institution, decision-makers have to “act upon the emotional domestic complaints”⁸⁵ as warranted by the normative requirements of the Chinese political culture. As the rationality of the CCP’s foreign policy choice is significantly bounded by the historical institution of memory-encoded norms, the cost-efficient trade-offs in Beijing’s diplomatic calculation that may be in the interest of the state in the material sense can be ruled out in the emotional and cognitive practice of the domestic audience of the state’s diplomacy.

⁸⁵ Wolf, “Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition,” 120; March and Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics*, 160-66.

CHAPTER V

MOBILIZATION VERSUS CONTESTATION: CONSTRAINTS OF
NATIONALISM ON BEIJING'S FOREIGN POLICY MAKING

In regard to China-Japan relations, reaction among youths, especially students, are strong. If difficult problems were to appear still further, it will become impossible to explain them to the people. It will become impossible to control them. I want you to understand this position which we are in.

—Deng Xiaoping¹

Cadres and the Masses must believe in the Party and the government's ability to properly handle all issues linked to Sino-Japanese relations.

—Li Zhaoxing, former Chinese Foreign Minister²

Following the examination of the formation and institutionalization of collective memory and national identity in Chapter 4, this dissertation moves to the third stage of its research program, focusing on the way that the historical-institutional elements in Chinese nationalism affect the political behavior of both the Chinese state and societal forces in the domestic-foreign-policy interaction. Since collective memory and national identity do not shape the policy outcome on their own, Chinese foreign policy ideas shaped by these historical institutions become causally important only by influencing their human hosts—the actor of and the audience for the PRC's diplomacy. To build convincing arguments on the causal effects of the social norms that are encoded in the

¹ This is a remark made by Deng Xiaoping made he spoke to senior Japanese officials on June 28, 1987. Quoted in Whiting, *China Eyes Japan*, 164.

² Quoted in Li's speech made at a meeting of the Communist Party's propaganda department on April 15, 2005, when anti-Japan demonstrations rocked Beijing, Shanghai, and other Chinese cities. Joseph Kahn, "Chinese Official Orders End to Anti-Japanese Demonstrations," *New York Times*, April 19, 2005.

traumatic remembrance of the Chinese public and are thus constitutive of the national identity, this chapter explores how these ideational variables condition the rationality of the CCP's diplomatic decision-making and enable the political claim-making of Chinese societal forces in contending with the authoritarian state.

As analyzed in the previous chapters, an important reason why the symbolic enhancement of the Chinese state legitimation in the Post-Tiananmen era obtains wide political resonance is that the role identity of the CCP regime and the moral justification of the PRC's international status are enmeshed in the inter-subjective understandings of the Chinese populace, which are conventionalized as the social norms embedded in the Chinese collective memory and national identity. These historical institutions, while they are effective in mobilizing visceral nationalist sentiment toward the foreign "other," also supply the context that render political actors' policy practice and claim-making socially intelligible. Thus, the ideational variables of Chinese foreign policy serve as the "road maps" that guide the popular cognition in the assessment of the state's action on the diplomatic stage.³ The drama of China's diplomacy, it is worth noting, can also be related to the CCP's performance on the domestic front. When the popular discontent over the state's conduct of diplomatic affairs is transposed to the resentment toward the poorly-handled domestic sociopolitical problems, historical institutions can enable the deliberation of societal forces in their contestation with the authoritarian state in a legitimate narrative framework. In light of the belligerent popular response to diplomatic disputes that are related to controversial historical issues, the memory-based legitimacy

³ For the elaboration of ideas as "road maps" in foreign policy, see, among others, Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," 13-17.

of the regime has backed the CCP leadership into a dilemma in the domestic-foreign policy interaction.

To illustrate these major arguments, this chapter proceeds as follows. The first part of the chapter delves into Sino-Japanese relations, one of the areas that allow less room for the CCP's rational diplomacy than other bilateral relations. By examining the way that Beijing's decision-making is hemmed in by historical institutions, this part answers the question of why the CCP leadership is unable to "switch off" the traumas Japan inflicted upon China.⁴ Beijing's quandary is further captured in the second part, which investigates the rhetoric transaction between the propaganda state and societal forces in the foreign policy marketplace. In China's transformed communicative environment, market-oriented media offers the domestic audience of foreign affairs coverage the autonomy in choosing a narrative frame that is congruent with the normative paradigm decided by historical institutions. It is under this legitimate banner, as discussed in the third part of the chapter, that the counter-narratives projected by the Chinese societal articulate their dissent at the manipulator of the collective memory.

TRAUMATIC COLLECTIVE MEMORY: ALWAYS READY ON-DEMAND?⁵

As noted in Chapter 3, the CCP's representativeness propagated in the master historical account appeals to the normative and purposive elements of the Chinese national identity that are derived from the collective memory of national trauma. Along this logic, the memory-based legitimacy of the regime is premised on its embrace of the historical institutions that are widely shared in the national community. In accord with

⁴ Kishore Mahbubani, "Results Matter: Pragmatism Prevails in Asia," *Global Asia* 5, no. 1 (2010).

⁵ This section contains materials in Ning Liao, "Presentist or Cultural Memory: Chinese Nationalism as Constraint on Beijing's Foreign Policy Making," *Asian Politics & Policy* 5, no. 4 (2013): 554-59.

Elkins and Simeon's proposition, such "proper modes of conduct" ingrained in political culture are the normative caliber for the populace to judge whether the actions of the political actor are legitimate.⁶ Given the woeful experience of dismemberment and subjugation of the Chinese nation-state by foreign aggression and intrusion—a mythic symbol highlighted in the master historical account, the preservation of national territories and state sovereignty, as well as the upholding of national dignity, has been ingrained in the ethical agenda of Chinese foreign policy making. Only a social practice living up to these consensual norms and aligning with the normative substance of the nationhood can be seen as supporting the moral justification of the policy option and therefore deserves the recognition of the members of the nation-state.

A metaphor of the normative principles underscoring the principles of sovereignty, territoriality, and dignity is to liken these historical institutions to the "scripts" that the state actor must follow on the performance stage of China's diplomacy.⁷ The formulation and execution of China's foreign policy must uphold these socially-held beliefs, as they provide the ethical criteria for the domestic audience to assess the legitimacy of state action. It is thus not difficult to understand that authoritarian regimes are not given a free hand in devising foreign policies. Historical institutions, which have been settled as domestic convention regulating the state's diplomatic behavior, impart a higher normative content to Beijing's foreign affairs than does the foreign policy that is primarily informed by realist calculations. Insofar as the collective convention has

⁶ Elkins and Simeon, "A Cause in Search of Its Effect, or What Does Political Culture Explain?," 127-28.

⁷ For the conception of such "scripts" in political communication, see Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance between Ritual and Strategy," in *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 58-64; ÓTuathail, "Theorizing Practical Geopolitical Reasoning: The Case of the United States' Response to the War in Bosnia," 619-20.

constructed a normative structure that shape the CCP's diplomatic agenda, only those policy options delimited within the "scripted" frame of reference can be socially intelligible and accepted by the audience for the PRC's diplomacy. On the symbolic stage of diplomatic performance, the CCP regime that is expected to consistently play to the pre-existing role of national savior is largely legitimized through its commitment to the diffuse social norms and its fulfillment of the symbolic role narrated in the master narrative account.

The way that historical institutions condition the diplomatic behavior of the Chinese state can be interpreted within the realm of identity politics. The victimhood identity engraved on the collective memory in the traumatized community has become a "symbolic marker" in Chinese political culture.⁸ Through the socialization of patriotic education, the memory-encoded norms that are communicated in the master historical narratives have accumulated what Michael Schudson calls the "self-perpetuating rhetorical power" in the popular imagination.⁹ In this sense, the victimhood identity instantiated in the state-crafted historical accounts is all the more likely to predispose the public perceptions toward the perceived culprits of the national humiliation.

A typical manifestation of such post-traumatic emotion is the cognitive effect of "time collapse," which is defined by Vamik Volkan as "the fears, expectations, fantasies and defenses associated with a chosen trauma that reappear when both conscious and unconscious connections are made between the mental representation of the past trauma

⁸ As Gerard Delanty and Chris Rumford point out, the relationship between the self and the other, on the basis of which collective identification is formed, is "considered in symbolic markers." See Delanty and Rumford, *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization*, 51.

⁹ Schudson, "The Present in the Past Versus the Past in the Present," 109.

and a contemporary threat.”¹⁰ Due to the intimate relation of the past agony of the Chinese nation-state in the hands of Japanese military imperialism to the current action of the resented object, the mere thought of this political actor can stimulate “antagonistic identity construction” in the bilateral relations.¹¹ Operationalized in the collective memory, the evoked set underpins the visceral antagonism within the Chinese community toward Japan’s stance on “revisionist” history, a primary issue that has been plaguing the bilateral relationship.

The operation of the cognitive template in the Chinese historical institutions is particularly salient during the flare-up between China and Japan in late 2012. As the fuse in the current round of the Sino-Japanese dispute over *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands, the announcement made by the Japanese government in 2012 to nationalize the disputed islands is intimately connected to its annexation of the Chinese territory in the maritime sphere—a symbol signifying the onset of Japanese imperialist invasion. The motion proposed by the Japanese government is deemed as a fundamental breach of the normative principle of sovereign whole that is ingrained in the Chinese national identity. Following the diplomatic “scripts,” the Chinese government reacted stridently. The official stance is stated in the commentary of Xinhua News Agency, “In history, Japan stole the so-called ‘administrative rights’ of the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands through unjust means.”¹² To attest to China’s determination to protest Japan’s action, the official commentary sternly announced: “Long gone are the days when the Chinese nation was

¹⁰ Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity,” 89.

¹¹ Wolf, “Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition,” 109.

¹² Liming Wu, “Commentary: China’s Determination to Safeguard Sovereignty Unshakable,” English.xinhuanet.com, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-09/11/e_131842996.htm (accessed on June 1, 2013).

subject to bullying and humiliation from others.”¹³ The historical analogy enables the “shared sense of the Chinese populace based on the common past of the community, as Jerez Jedlicki argues, to “burden the present conflict with strong resentments and make it appear to be either a historical repetition, or a historical redress.”¹⁴

On the side of the Chinese victim state, the traumatic symbol of national humiliation under the aggression of Japanese imperialism is employed as a “preemptive metaphor” in the popular conception,¹⁵ which readily magnifies the negative image of the out-group and calls for overt retribution for its flagrant breach of the identity-constitutive norms. Because the regime has styled itself as the paramount patriotic force capable of leading the Chinese nation to undo foreign subjugation, the CCP is obliged to meet the warranted expectation to prevent historical repetition. In this sense, collective memory, while serving as a foreground to valorize the regime’s legitimacy in domestic and international politics, has given ground to the “logic of appropriateness” as the moral foundation of the diplomatic “scripts.”¹⁶

With reference to Beijing’s rational thinking in dealing with Sino-Japanese relations, in fact, the CCP leadership is aware that overly anti-Japanese nationalism does not make rational sense in that it would deteriorate the mutually negative perception and thus fray the already fragile bilateral relations. In the 2012 annual survey jointly conducted by the Genron NPO and the China Daily of public opinion in the two countries, while 64.5 percent of the Chinese polled held an unfavorable opinion of Japan, 84.2 of the Japanese respondents expressed negative attitudes of China, six points higher than

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Jerez Jedlicki, “Historical Memory as a Source of Conflicts in Eastern Europe,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 32, no. 3 (1999): 226.

¹⁵ Bruner, *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand*, 13-14.

¹⁶ March and Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics*, 160-66.

that registered in the previous year's survey and the highest negative since it was initiated in 2005.¹⁷ As some Chinese scholars observe, the two nations have seen each other as the "unforgettable other."¹⁸ With the reminiscence of historical conflicts, the interaction between the two countries is always implicated in the cross-reference relations based on adversarial nationalisms.¹⁹ Not only does China instinctively view Japan as the "victimizing other," given fanatical Chinese nationalism and the critical role played by the PRC in regional and world affairs, China is also perceived by Japan as a major threat containing its grand diplomacy as a political power.

Despite Beijing's rebuttal of the "China threat" thesis in the official diplomatic rhetoric, to be sure, the inveterate animosity of the Chinese populace toward Japan has instigated a vicious interaction between the two sides and the threat reputation attributed to China. Significantly influenced by domestic opinion that the government must scrap its postwar constitutional restrictions on its military expansions and achieve military normalization, Tokyo is often pushed closer to Washington in its security activism. Apparently, the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance in the Pacific Asia does not bode well for China's security environment, since it can impede the implementation of Beijing's regional diplomacy and complicate the prolonged Taiwan issue.²⁰ While American officials have publicly said the United States does not take sides on the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* rows, they also have confirmed that the Japan-U.S. defense treaty covers

¹⁷ "Half of Chinese Foresee Military Dispute with Japan, Genron Npo Opinion Poll Shows," Genron NPO, http://www.genron-npo.net/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=43:japanchinapoll8&catid=1:advocacy&Itemid=3. (accessed on June 15, 2013)

¹⁸ Li and Liang, *Wenming Shijiao Xia De Zhongri Guanxi [the Sino-Japanese Relations in a Civilizational Perspective]*, 259.

¹⁹ Yunxiang Liang, "Zhongri Minzuzhuyi Bijiao Yanjiu [the Comparative Studies of Chinese and Japanese Nationalisms]," *Guoji zhengzhi yanjiu [International Politics Studies]* 1(2009): 89-92.

²⁰ See, e.g., Rex Li, *A Rising China and Security in East Asia: Identity Construction and Security Discourse* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009).

the Islands.²¹ Chinese military conflict with Japan would invoke the defense treaty, thereby obligating the U.S. to assist Japan in defending the Islands. Moreover, the deep scars of wartime memory notwithstanding, the growing economic interdependence between China and Japan has proved the profitability of the bilateral economic partnership, which has been evidenced in the continued tension of “cool politics and hot economics” (*zhengleng jingre*) in the bilateral relations.²²

Inasmuch as the risk of a hardline diplomacy may offset China's interests in the regional security configuration, Beijing does wish to tone down the bilateral issues. However, in light of the longstanding animus of the Chinese general populace toward the militarist invasion of Japanese imperialism, when high-profile events, especially those evoking emotionally-charged controversies come to the stage, the sense of “post-colonial consciousness” embedded in the Chinese collective memory is likely to be activated.²³ In such instances, the domestic audience, whose attention is overwhelmingly framed by historical institutions as consensual social norms, tends to identify a certain pattern of foreign policy, and correspondingly, the range of alternative policy options that are deemed legitimate is significantly reduced.

Here, one can see that the rationality of the political actor in the policy making is “bounded” by the collective memory as a sort of historical institution. The cost-efficient trades-off in Beijing's diplomatic calculation that may be in the interests of the state can be relentlessly ruled out, as they are heresy to the “scripts” underlining the state's diplomatic behavior. Take Beijing's policies on the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* issue in the 1990s

²¹ “Panetta Tells China That Senkakus under Japan-U.S. Security Treaty,” *The Asahi Shimbun*, <http://ajw.asahi.com/article/asia/china/AJ201209210061>. (accessed on June 1, 2013).

²² Reilly, “China's History Activism and Sino-Japanese Relations,” 216.

²³ Wang, “Never Forget National Humiliation: Postcolonial Consciousness and China's Rise.”

as an example. After China restated its claims to the island in the 1992 Territorial Law, Beijing opted for joint development and shelving the dispute.²⁴ During the escalated tension in 1996, which was initiated by Hong Kong civilian groups committed to maintaining Chinese sovereignty over the islets (*baodiao*), the Chinese government constrained the upsurge of public sentiment. This moderate stance was attacked by the popular nationalists, particularly those *baodiao* activists who were furious at the government's inability of preempting Japan's "effective control" over the island.²⁵

In the 2010 *Senkaku/Diaoyu* crisis, starting from the detainment of a Chinese captain whose fishing boat rammed a Japanese Coast Guard vessel near the disputed islands, large-scale anti-Japanese protests swept across many Chinese cities. With the outpouring of nationalist sentiments, the crisis continued after the release of the Chinese captain. The pressure of public opinion played a significant role in pushing the Chinese government to demand Japan's official apology and compensation.²⁶ More recently, soon after Japan's government made the decision to purchase *Senkaku/Diaoyu* in September 2012, the *baodiao* groups landed on the island to display Chinese determination to defend its sovereignty. In its thinly veiled critique, an editorial published in *Global Times* (*Huanqiu shibao*), a national newspaper devoted to international news and an offshoot of the People's Daily (*Renmin ribao*), stated, "The Chinese public is wondering why the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands, a part of China's territory,

²⁴ Young C. Kim, "Japanese Policy Towards China: Politics of the Imperial Visit to China in 1992," *Pacific Affairs* (2001): 225-42.

²⁵ James Reilly, "The Rebirth of *Minjian Waijiao*: China's Popular Diplomacy toward Japan," (Japan Policy Research Institute (Working Paper No. 115), the University of San Francisco Center for the Pacific Rim, 2009).

²⁶ Yves Tiberghien, "The Diaoyu Crisis of 2010: Domestic Games and Diplomatic Conflict," *Harvard Asia Quarterly* 12, no. 3/4 (2010): 75.

is occupied by Japan and why the PLA doesn't send ships to escort activists. The Chinese government is thought of as being 'weak'.²⁷

In the current Sino-Japanese stand-off in *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands, Xi Jinping, appointed as the head of the "Office of Respond to the *Diaoyu* Crisis" soon after the Japanese government announced the purchasing decision, is implementing a step-by-step plan to force the Japanese government to acknowledge that the sovereignty of the islands is disputed. The new Chinese top leader, who is consolidating his power base within various factions of the Communist Party, is cognizant of the necessity of winning more political support through appeals to nationalism by establishing his credentials as a firm adherent of state sovereignty. Xi's tough stance—which is evidenced in Beijing actions that are intensifying the pressure on Tokyo to change its current position, in an attempt to undermine Japan's de-facto control of the islands—indicates that the new leadership will not, and actually has little room to, make concessions in the issues of territorial disputes. Given that the out-group affront has steamed up the sensitive victimhood of the in-group members, Chinese leaders "who sense they have the emotional consensus and support from citizens," to borrow Brent Sasley's words, "will feel ... strengthened to pursue a given course of action."²⁸ Under such circumstances, the normative "scripts" inherent in historical institutions that have shaped the popular perception toward the self-other interaction become most salient when foreign affronts steam up the Chinese sense of victimhood signified from the traumatic memory.

²⁷ Adam Minter, "Barren Islands Bring China to a Boil," (August 20, 2012), <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-08-20/barren-islands-bring-china-to-a-boil.html>, (accessed on May 1, 2013).

²⁸ Sasley, "Theorizing States' Emotions," 468.

The constraint of domestic nationalist public opinion on Beijing's "satisficing" diplomatic decision-making corroborates James Fearon's formalization of international crisis in a nondemocratic setting. According to Fearon's model, the state's decisions to attack, back down, or escalate the interstate conflicts are all constrained by the domestic audience costs.²⁹ In its negotiation with Tokyo over history-related issues, Beijing's acquiescence to popular mobilization does signal the vulnerability of the authoritarian regime to domestic nationalist protests, which strengthens its bargaining leverage in negotiating with Tokyo.³⁰ However, this does not mean that the historical institutions underlying the swell of nationalist sentiments can be dismissed as a result of the top-down manipulation of the CCP in its attempt to achieve diplomatic gains.

The Chinese government has to walk a tightrope between allowing the nationalist venting and losing control of the popular protests that will turn against the state itself. When Japan was alleged to have "staged the farce" of nationalizing the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands, nationalists protests flared in Chinese cities. The irate protesters, besides calling for the boycott of Japanese products, vented their indignation against their erstwhile colonial overlord with violent actions, such as vandalizing Japanese property and looting Japanese-invested businesses. Such bigotry is not completely orchestrated, although tacitly sanctioned, by the Chinese government.³¹ Despite the temptation to beat the anti-Japanese nationalist drum, Beijing is acutely aware that the bitter memory of Japanese invasion and the resultant historical grudge harbored by the general populace can make

²⁹ Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," 577-92.

³⁰ See Weiss, "Autocratic Signaling, Mass Audiences and Nationalist Protest in China," 1-35; *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations*.

³¹ For the state-manipulated view of nationalist protesters, see, e.g., Rodger Baker, "Understanding the China-Japan Island Conflict," Stratfor Global Intelligence, <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/understanding-china-japan-island-conflict>. (accessed on May 1, 2013).

domestic public opinion highly mobilized around a flashpoint issue such as the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* rows. In these instances, it is costly for the CCP to take policy steps in contradiction to articulated public sentiments. As Susan Shirk argues, authoritarian Chinese leaders, unlike democratically elected leaders, are not concerned with the opinion of the "media voter," but only with the opinions of the few who are willing to organize a protest and upset the political status quo.³² Nationalist protests, even though they are staged by the "loud minority," will snowball into a broader movement that could build a coalition against the regime. For this reason, as Alistair Iain Johnston notes, "There is considerable evidence that the [CCP leadership] focuses on more extremist attitudes ..., presumably because these views are a barometer of the kinds of emotions that would get protesters into the streets."³³ Given the risk to regime stability outweighing the diplomatic gains from making a credible signal to the foreign "other," nationalist protests over a foreign relations issue threaten to simulate the impulse of domestic social riots. The likelihood that Beijing's diplomatic decision-makers will fail to meet domestic expectations, as Jessica Weiss acknowledges, has "added more unpredictability ... for China's government and for outside observers trying to discern Beijing's political objectives."³⁴

Viewed in this light, nationalist mobilization cannot be fully manipulated by the CCP to achieve its rational purposes. If the anti-Japanese protests mentioned above were under the full control of Chinese foreign policy decision-makers, then traumatic memory,

³² Susan L. Shirk, "Changing Media, Changing Foreign Policy in China," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 8, no. 1 (2007): 60.

³³ Alistair Iain Johnston, "China Middle Class Attitudes toward International Affairs," *The China Quarterly* 179 (2004): 626.

³⁴ Quoted in Julie Makinen, "Anti-Japan Protests in China Spread to More Cities," *Los Angeles Times* September 16, 2012.

as some Western scholars have claimed, could be seen as an on-demand “sutured wound” that the Chinese authoritarian state can “tear open and let bleed when expedient” and “stir up against lest [it] risk control.”³⁵ This point of view is actually a counterargument that problematizes the independent impact of historical institutions on Beijing’s foreign policy making. One way to test the validity of this argument is to see whether collective memory and national identity can only be exploited to externalize internal conflicts, without any possibility of threatening the internal legitimacy of the regime.

As analyzed in Chapter 3, the master historical account harping on the collective memory of national humiliation is effective in legitimizing Chinese authoritarian regime. As a symbolic element communicated in the state-centric strategic narrative, national trauma does redirect the domestic grievance, emanating from internal tensions arising in post-Mao reform, to external entities, which are perceived as perpetrators violating the normative and purposive norms embedded in the Chinese national identity. However, the instrumental function of collective memory and national identity does not preclude the independent impact of historical institutions on the Chinese foreign policy making. As Jack Levy points out in his critique of the diversionary theory of war, scapegoating is not just a process of one-way diversion.³⁶ One of the preconditions for transferring domestic tension to external entities is, according to Mayers and Coser, the preexisting level of internal cohesion. In other words, domestic constituencies have to perceive themselves

³⁵ Peter Wynn Kirby, “China Would Be Wise to Accept Japan’s Olive Branch over the Senkaku Islands,” *The Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/oct/14/china-japan-senkaku-islands>, (accessed on July 1, 2013).

³⁶ Jack S. Levy, “The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique,” in *Handbook of War Studies* ed. Manus I. Midlarsky (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 267.

"as a group and the preservation of the group as worthwhile," and believe that "the external threat menaces the in-group as a whole and not just one part of it."³⁷

In a transitional society like China, as pointed out in Chapter 2, the socioeconomic transformation has brought about glaring disparity between the "winners" and "losers" of the reform. To the extent that the Chinese society is increasingly pluralistic and complex, internal cohesion cannot be guaranteed. If a new crisis were to take place in the socioeconomic sphere wherein the government falls short of the social expectations engendered by its ill governance, the populace could readily blame the government for the economic woes. Actually, the erosion of the "utilitarian justification" of the Communist regime has heightened the constraint of domestic public opinion in foreign affairs. To shore up its legitimacy, the CCP has to rely on the "original justification" to corroborate its moral character and glean the diffuse support of the Chinese populace.

On the foreign relations front, the source of such popular support of the authoritarian regime lies in the normative scripts of the PRC's diplomacy, which denotes the "logic of appropriateness" inherent in the historical institutions. In the case of emotionally-charged diplomatic issues involving traumatic collective memory, any response perceived as too soft on the part of the state government could be conceived as the regime's lack of commitment to fulfilling domestic social convention determined by the memory-encoded and identity-constitutive norms. On the other hand, even though the confident vein of Chinese nationalism is taking shape along with the increase of China's prowess, the nationalist aspiration of achieving the "Chinese dream" (*zhongguo*

³⁷ "The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique," in *Handbook of War Studies* ed. Manus I. Midlarsky (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 261.

meng)--the purposive element ingrained in the national identity--has deep roots stretching back to the indignities foisted on China in the "century of national humiliation." This has been evidenced in the near-pathological Chinese yearning for national dignity and its zero tolerance for foreign provocation in issues concerning sovereignty and territoriality. As the sources of these motivational elements of the state's diplomatic behavior, historical institutions are the endogenous variable of the regime's policy making. Failure to follow the institutionalist "scripts" of China's diplomatic drama can be transposed to the realm of the CCP's internal legitimation. Chinese foreign policy making, therefore, is not the function of a monolithic Party-state unilaterally formulating the decisions about what the best plan of action is.

STATE-CENTRIC OR SOCIETY-DRIVEN: INTERACTIVITY IN THE CONTESTED ARENA OF MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Nowhere is the CCP's diplomatic decision-making dilemma, most notably its Japan policy, better illustrated than in contemporary China's media ecology, in which the formation and projection of foreign policy information and the state's diplomatic formulation can be seen as an ever-negotiated product of the interaction between the propaganda state and the Chinese public. As a primary trader of information pertinent to foreign affairs, mass media are an intervening variable indispensable to the rhetoric transaction between elites and masses. Understanding how this discrete actor facilitates the disruption of state-driven strategic narratives and the mediation of counter-narratives at the popular level is the key to unlocking the discursive dimension of Beijing's foreign policy making. In such a dynamic process, the authoritarian state has demonstrated

increasing responsiveness to, and on some occasions is even hijacked by, belligerent public opinions enabled by the historical institutions in Chinese nationalism.

In pre-reform China, the projection of foreign policy information was typically a top-down process, so that the state's consensus building was achieved at the expense of the autonomy of the public audience in voicing any heterodox social discourse.³⁸ The distribution of foreign-policy information was predominantly controlled by political elites whose conduct of diplomacy was unfettered by domestic audience cost. Given the informational disadvantage of the populace vis-à-vis the leadership and the penal power of the vast coercive propaganda apparatus imposed from above, there was no need for the decision-makers to be responsive to domestic public opinion. With regard to the Chinese media in the circulation of information, its role as the "throat and tongue" (*houshe*) of the state government was comparable to what some Western scholars view as an accommodating linkage in the political communication system, simply transmitting elite rhetoric to the passive recipients,³⁸ who were unable to wield significant influence on Beijing's foreign policy making.

Due to structural changes in China's media sector since the 1990s onward, the communication environment of Beijing's diplomacy has been qualitatively transformed, with mass media engaged in a tug-of-war between the supply and demand sides of

³⁸ See, e.g., Yaeli Bloch-Elkon and Sam Lehman-Wilzig, "An Exploratory Model of Media-Government Relations," in *Media and Conflict: Framing Issues, Making Policy, Shaping Opinions*, ed. Eytan Gilboa (New York, NY: Transnational, 2002). Richard A. Brody, *Assessing the President. The Media, Elite Opinion, and Public Support* (Stanford, VA: Stanford University Press, 1991). W. Lance Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States," *Journal of Communications* 40, no. 2 (1990). W. Lance Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence, and Steven Livingston, "None Dare Call It Torture: Indexing and the Limits of Press Independence in the Abu Ghraib Scandal," *ibid.* 56, no. 3 (2006). Bruce W. Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *International Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1992). John Zaller and Dennis Chiu, "Government's Little Helper: U.S. Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crises, 1946-1999," in *Decisionmaking in a Glass House: Mass Media, Public Opinion, and American and European Foreign Policy in the 21st Century*, ed. Brigitte L. Nacos, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Pierangelo Isernia (New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).

commodified information. Just as Baum and Potter illustrate in their model depicting the interaction among three interdependent actors in such a discursive arena, media serve as a critical middleman in the information flow between the leadership and the public and thus has its agency in shifting the foreign policy marketplace equilibrium favoring either the elites or the masses.³⁹ Despite the social engineering of the Party-state in molding uniform public thinking, the low discursive power of the Chinese public does not mean a lack of demand for information. While being fed up with the large-dose propaganda inculcation, the mass public is dissatisfied with the meager fare obtained from the state controlled media. The Chinese populace today stops short of taking credence in leaders' perorations that are rife with vacuous platitude and the editorials glutted with stale sloganeering. Assuming that the state-crafted narratives are inevitably slanted and are in one way or another colored by the intention of "political thought work" (*sixiang zhengzhi zongguo*), the audience is actively seeking additional sources for unframed and objective reporting on China and the outside world.

On the part of the former provider of monopolized information, the Party-state is desperate for an innovative, professional, and empathetic media to enhance the persuasive power of official discourse. In the grave transformation to a globalized economy, China's media, which were immune to any form of competition in the centralized, planned economy, are now harnessed by the economic logic of profit maximization. Whereas the state does not abdicate its control in this sector, various media outlets, including subsidiaries of the propaganda press, have evolved from being solely the mouthpiece of the Party-state to economic entities operating on a competitive

³⁹ Matthew A. Baum and Philip B. K. Potter, "The Relationship between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11(2008).

basis.⁴⁰ The growing, albeit partial, deregulated market forces have become a catalyst and accelerator for the mass media to meet the popular demand for quality coverage, by reporting those flashpoint issues in China's foreign affairs that can readily engender strong emotional response from the public.

A lifting of the strict restrictions on the informational flow is crucial for the state's engagement with an increasingly pluralistic and incombiant public. Such "liberalized authoritarianism," as noted by O'Donnell and Schmitter, is expected to "relieve various pressures and obtain needed information and support [for the authoritarian state] *without* altering the structure of authority."⁴¹ The discursive sphere of Chinese nationalism under the mantle of patriotism, in which the CCP's regime legitimacy is instituted, has been opened up for interest articulation and political claim-making by the general populace, which is closely monitored by the authoritarian state. While the agenda of official nationalism remains chiefly in the custody of the regime and its ideologues, nongovernmental actors, particularly commercialized media, have joined the state in whipping up the subject of patriotism. As Geremie Barme observes, "Patriotic sentiment is no longer the sole province of the Party and its propagandists. . . . [Nationalism] is functioning as a form of consensus beyond the bounds of official culture."⁴²

In Chinese foreign affairs, such a consensus is most likely to reach over the spat over Japan's historical behavior, which tends to stand out from the repertoire of the

⁴⁰ E.g., Shirk, "Changing Media, Changing Foreign Policy in China." Chengju Huang, "Trace the Stones in Crossing the River: Media Structural Changes in Post-Wto China," *The International Communication Gazette* 69, no. 5 (2007).

⁴¹ Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Part Four: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies," in *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*, ed. Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 9. Emphasis added.

⁴² Geremie R. Barmé, "To Screw Foreigners Is Patriotic: China's Avant-Garde Nationalist," *The China Journal*, no. 34 (1995): 211-12.

source materials for media coverage. External affronts evincing Japan's attitude toward its imperial colonialism are prone to be perceived as violating the Chinese memory-encoded norm, thus providing market-driven media with the meat and potatoes to win a large readership. By activating the collective emotion in the Chinese community, media coverage of such focal issues satisfies the ravenous hunger of the populace for "trustworthy and credible information,"⁴³ while conveying the state's policy commitment on the diplomatic stage to consumers of foreign-policy information. In the cut-throat competition, radicalizing the flashpoint diplomatic events that are most likely to catalyze the historical analogy function of the national-trauma symbol has become a common market strategy for the commercialized media to make their products distinguishable in the state-defined orbit.

China's communicative environment featuring "liberalized authoritarianism" does not rule out the state's continued grip on managing public opinion. Given the intention of decision-making elites to ease constraints of their policymaking, foreign-policy information flowing from the official source "usually comes prepackaged in a frame that leaders would prefer that the media retain."⁴⁴ As an element of the CCP's diplomatic decision-making environment, the anti-Japanese enmity always requires the elite framing in the official media coverage, so as to shape the opinion of consumers of foreign-policy information and legitimize the policy shift. Since the Sino-Japanese relationship sank to a historical nadir in 2005, the state propaganda has been seeking a turnaround in the

⁴³ Ithiel de Sola Pool, "Communication in Totalitarian Societies," in *Handbook of Communication* ed. Ithiel de Sola Pool, et al. (Chicago, IL: Rand McNally, 1973), 463.

⁴⁴ Baum and Potter, "The Relationship between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis," 50.

representation of Japan, which is tailored to synergize with the momentum of public diplomacy in an attempt to restore the strained ties.⁴⁵

As part of the effort in curtailing anti-Japanese activism, Beijing goes out of its way to temper media coverage of the troubled relationship, wary of presenting an overly negative out-group image that would stir up antagonistic public opinion. In October 2006, after a five-year hiatus in formal summits, Japan's Prime Minister Abe Shinzo selected China as the destination of his first state visit when he came to power. Without obtaining Abe's promise of not paying homage to Yasukuni—a sensitive issue where the harsh stance of his predecessor, Junichiro Koizumi, had soured the bilateral relations, Beijing treated this “ice-breaking trip” as a real treasure to restore the festered relations with Tokyo. In reporting Abe's inaugural speech to the Diet, while highlighting his stated goodwill in rebuilding a “forward-looking” relationship with China and South Korea, official Xinhua News Agency glossed over his pledge to propel Japan's bid for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the disputed call for more “patriotism” in Japan's history education.⁴⁶ Considering the critical position Beijing normally took toward Japanese conservatives, the anodyne coverage of the right-wing Prime Minister, alongside the propaganda blitz of the state-run media augmenting a friendly aura for then-Premier Wen Jiabo's “ice-melting visit” to Japan in April 2007, was conceivably the CCP's strategy designed to reciprocate the olive branch extended by the new Japanese government.

⁴⁵ James Reilly, “Remember History, Not Hatred: Collective Remembrance of China's War of Resistance to Japan,” *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 2 (2011): 14-23.

⁴⁶ Christopher R. Hughes, “Japan in the Politics of Chinese Leadership Legitimacy: Recent Developments in Historical Perspective,” *Japan Forum* 20, no. 2 (2008): 259.

Having said this, the positive spin on Japan in line with Beijing's diplomatic outreach is not without a limit. Once the high-profile events involving "hot" history issues come to the fore, the sanitized reportage of the bilateral issues deliberately woven in the elite-preferred frame tends to disconfirm the preexisting beliefs of the Chinese audience concerning the out-group culprit as engrained in the collective memory. Such cognitive discord indicates that the state-driven narratives have overstretched what Baum and Potter term the "elasticity of reality,"⁴⁷ thereby prompting the public demand for a "*realpolitik* account" that is congruent with the "schemata" of the audience.⁴⁸

In the aggressive exploitation of a commercial goldmine, market-oriented media may not be a pro-regime ally, but a significant non-state actor, which, by stereotyping nationalist opponents as irremediably threatening and worthy of vigilant attack, is able to distort the narrative maneuvering of the elites in inculcating a "prepackaged" version of foreign affairs. To the extent that their professional pendulum tends to swing more toward the "commercial bottom line" than the "Party line,"⁴⁹ commercialized media have incentive to run prominent stories in a narrative frame contrary to the one retained in the official reportage. In a controversial remark made in March 2007, Abe boldly cast doubt on the coercion of the sexual service provided by Asian "comfort women" during the War World II. In response to Abe's comment on this sensitive history issue, the flood of indignation outpoured in the coverage of Chinese tabloids was in stark contrast to the

⁴⁷ Baum and Potter, "The Relationship between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis," 56-57.

⁴⁸ Cao, "Confucian Vision of a New World Order? Culturalist Discourse, Foreign Policy and the Press in Contemporary China," 443.

⁴⁹ David Shambaugh, "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy," *The China Journal*, no. 57 (2007).

restrained approach adopted by the mainstream media.⁵⁰ The contestation between the propaganda-oriented media and their commercialized counterpart—with the former attempting to placate jingoistic public opinion by selling what the domestic audience is supposed to buy while the latter trying to appeal to the nationalist taste with sensationalist messages—has offered the Chinese public competing frames of foreign affairs. The autonomy of the domestic audience in the processing of the foreign-policy information has dramatically increased with the expansion of its discursive capacity.

A significant force contributing to the shift of the equilibrium on the foreign policy marketplace in a direction favoring the Chinese populace is the new information and communication technologies (ICTs). The increased reach and availability of ICTs, while rendering the market-driven media less dependent on the state-sanctioned messages, have brought growing transnational information flows onto the scene. In the situations where Party-controlled press has spun the foreign affairs beyond the “elasticity of reality,” which leads to popular distrust of official media accounts, the alternative news sources introduce information transparency to the landscape of Chinese mass communication. In spring 2005, at the initial stage of the popular protests against Japan’s quest for a permanent seat in the UNSC, although Chinese media were not allowed to run incendiary reports, news coverage that were prohibited in domestic public access and traditional media were available from transnational sources. After comparing the Xinhua version of reporting Japan’s bid with those released from foreign media, some Chinese netizens participating in the discussion on the China-Japan forum—an online bulletin board under the Strong Nation Forum (*qiangguo luntan*) affiliated with *People’s Daily*—

⁵⁰ Reilly, “Remember History, Not Hatred: Collective Remembrance of China’s War of Resistance to Japan,” 24-25.

expressed their resentment by questioning “why the Chinese media still pretended to be deaf and dumb.”⁵¹ As evidenced in the online contestation, the multiplication of news suppliers enabled by ICTs, which makes the total control of information flow increasingly difficult on the part of the authoritarian state, has engendered what Steven Livingston calls the “imposed transparency” on the cyberspace platform,⁵² where the networked crowd can vigorously exchange news items obtained from external sources of foreign affairs coverage, thereby forcing the government to respond to and account for the queries and debates aroused in the virtual public sphere.

Since the discursive power of the CCP leadership is gradually evened out in the restructured pattern of information distribution, Beijing’s foreign policymakers often find themselves unable to keep contentious issues off the public agenda. As the transmission of dramatic events has been broadened by the boom of ICTs, under the conditions where public opinions are highly mobilized around an emotionally-charged issue, traditional location-based nationalist protests can be replaced by transnational modes of digital contention. In the protest against Japan’s bid for UNSC membership, the online petition initiated by a U.S.-based overseas Chinese civilian group in March 2005 was immediately followed by similar actions on domestic popular news portals such as sina.com, urging the Chinese government to block Japan’s attempt.⁵³ Insofar as the Internet-based mass mobilization has sped up cross-national coalition building, transnational information flows also bring in “systematic transparency” by publicizing flashpoint diplomatic issues and coordinating collective actions on a large populace

⁵¹ Shih-Ding Liu, “China’s Popular Nationalism on the Internet: Report on the 2005 Anti-Japan Network Struggles,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7, no. 1 (2006): 146.

⁵² Steven Livingston, “Transparency and the News Media,” in *Power and Conflict in the Age of Transparency*, ed. Bernard I. Finel and Kristin M. Lord (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2002), 257.

⁵³ Zhang, “The Influence of Chinese Nationalism on Sino-Japanese Relations,” 24-25.

base.⁵⁴ In spring 2005, the “common knowledge” generated in the real-time mediation of the signature campaign swiftly formed a “shared symbolic system” in the cyberspace.⁵⁵ As individuals in this virtual community were aware that their peers all received the mobilizing message, information transparency caused by the internationalized news flow reinforced the collective identity of the Chinese in-group and thus brought its members into action.

In such a crisis situation where inflammatory nationalist sentiments are incited, the marriage of ICTs with political advocacy not only dissipates the spatial constraints for the horizontal linkage between the Chinese diaspora and its domestic compatriot, but connects the nationalist ire expressed online with offline protests as well. In spring 2005, when the scale and intensity of nationalist uproar toward Japan reached a new zenith, even though the Chinese government did not hesitate to twist arms in banning the coverage of anti-Japanese demonstrations in an effort to tamp down popular wrath, Chinese cyberspace was buzzing with detailed information visualizing anti-Japanese rows. The shrilling attack on Japan inflated on the virtual emotional scene soon spilled over into the street. Thanks to digital communication devices, which accelerated the dissemination of logistical information in the run-up to physical protests, the government’s attempt to dissuade young students from attending the demonstrations was defied.⁵⁶ In April 2005, when mass protest was mobilized in Shanghai, just as *New York Times* reporter Jim Yardley wrote, “An underground conversation was raging via email, text messages and instant online messaging that inflamed public opinion and served as an

⁵⁴ Livingston, “Transparency and the News Media,” 257.

⁵⁵ See Michael Suk-Young Chwe, *Rational Ritual: Culture, Coordination, and Common Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 7-8.

⁵⁶ Qiao Xiang, “Control Mechanism Cracked in the Face of Technology,” *Asian Wall Street Journal*, April 27 2005.

organizing tool for protesters.”⁵⁷ Given that the multiplier effect of ICTs in spreading the “common knowledge” for collective actions has made it a daunting task for the government to halt popular nationalist contention in “a web of transparency,”⁵⁸ public opinions have made their way to the decision-making circle affecting Beijing’s stance toward Japan.

Therefore, given the decentralized and technology-facilitated nature of Chinese popular nationalism, the roles of the CCP leadership and the public as the communicator and audience in the foreign policy marketplace have proved to be interchangeable in the Chinese foreign policy marketplace. In reconfiguring the way in which foreign-policy information is framed, collected, and circulated, mass media have constituted an integral part of an “information loop,” through which the leadership can receive the feedback of public opinion on the state’s diplomatic behavior and the diplomatic position taken by the state can also shift accordingly.⁵⁹

With regard to Japan’s bid for the UNSC permanent membership, given its reluctance to see a global power on par with itself in East Asia, Beijing did not show enthusiasm for the proposal of UN reform aimed at involving more countries in the decision-making process. However, until early 2005, Chinese foreign policy elites did not flatly oppose Japan’s quest and even refrained from claiming that Beijing did not support Tokyo on this issue.⁶⁰ With much at stake in the bilateral relations, the government chose to “take a backseat” by allowing other states to express a position that

⁵⁷ Jim Yardley, “A Hundred Cellphones Bloom, and Chinese Take to the Streets,” *New York Times*, April 25 2005.

⁵⁸ Livingston, “Transparency and the News Media,” 258.

⁵⁹ Shirk, “Changing Media, Changing Foreign Policy in China,” 57.

⁶⁰ Ming Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Interaction, Logic, and Transformation* (Washington, D.C. & Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press & Stanford University Press, 2006), 125-26.

it shared.⁶¹ As the unprecedented wave of massive protests spun out of control, Beijing's non-support position became more explicit, which was signaled in the comment made by the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman at a press briefing in March 2005 that the online petition campaign, rather than a venting of "anti-Japanese sentiment," was a "responsible act" causing Japan to reflect upon its historical wrongs.⁶² Two weeks after the explosion of anti-Japanese protests, this remark was confirmed in a public statement made by Wen Jiabao's in his state visit to India, which was the first announcement of a top Chinese leader making clear Beijing's disapproval of Japan's candidacy. In the two-way informational flow between the leadership and the public, Chinese mass media are no longer a passive conduit parroting official accounts, but an indispensable channel sending nationalist voice at the popular level back to *Zhongnanhai*, the leadership compound in Beijing. Among other circumstantial evidence manifested in the trajectory of Beijing's response to Japan's bid, it was conceivable that the staggering 46 million digital signatures collected in the internet campaigns prompted the Chinese government to preempt a firestorm of popular complaints of its inaction on this sensitive issue. The articulated public sentiment catalyzed Beijing's departure from the initial low-keep approach to explicit opposition to public rejection—a dynamic process in which the government's foreign policy agenda was reconstructed under the pressure of nationalist opinion communicated through the media-enabled "information loop."

⁶¹ Peter Hays Gries, "Chinese Nationalism: Challenging the State?," *Current History* 104, no. 683 (2005): 254.

⁶² Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Interaction, Logic, and Transformation*, 390.

“LOGIC OF CONTENTION”: THE SUBVERSIVE DIMENSION OF TRAUMATIC MEMORY

As evidenced in the interactivity between the propaganda state and Chinese societal forces in the media environment, the most sensitive issue areas in China's diplomacy, in which the CCP leadership is obliged to accommodate the public opinion, are those that touch upon nationalist sentiments. The reason for Beijing's receptivity to the opinion of its domestic audience in this arena is that emotionally-charged diplomatic events can readily evoke public agitation and make pronounced the social norms ingrained in the collective memory and national identity, thereby rendering the CCP's diplomatic performance susceptible to the assessment of the Chinese populace. If viewed in the domain of memory politics, the drama of the PRC's diplomacy involves the interaction of three types of factors, according to Wulf Kansteiner's conceptualization: the political culture in which public remembrance is embedded, the “memory makers” who capitalize on the culture repertoire to formulate commemorative narratives, and the “memory consumers” who “use, ignore, or transform” these narratives in their own interests.⁶³ While the role identity of the CCP fits nicely into the mindsets of “memory consumers,” in the social consumption of traumatic memory, the latter has its agency in putting forth their contentious claims by referencing the historical narratives that eulogizes the regime's representativeness. As such, the construction and consumption of collective memory is not a one-way process. The public recollection can be resistant to the present interests of the “memory makers” in a way that transcends the volition of the formulator of historical narratives.

⁶³ Wulf Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2002): 180.

Along this line of reasoning, the “logic of appropriateness” inherent in the historical institutions of Chinese nationalism has dual roles. On the one hand, it provides the “logic of legitimation” for the symbolic representation of the CCP’s regime legitimacy. On the other hand, if the regime’s performance goes against the “proper modes of conduct” widely accepted in the Chinese political culture, historical institutions provide the “logic of contention,” the basic grammar underlying popular discourse in the contestation with the authoritarian state. In Chinese history, the impressive record of popular resistance and rebellion is exemplary of the rich tradition of toppling illegitimate regimes.⁶⁴ As the origin of the Chinese nationalist movement, the May Fourth Movement in 1919, emerging from the popular outrage against the Versailles Treaty that transferred Germany’s China concession to Japan, was a symbol of popular contention aimed at overthrowing an authoritarian regime, which failed to protect the national interest by surrendering Chinese territories and sovereignty to foreign demands. In a similar way, in the contemporary era, sovereignty and territoriality—the normative principles encoded in the “scripts” of the PRC’s diplomacy—inspire challenges to the CCP’s memory based legitimacy by the popular assessment of the state’s behavior. As James Scott explains,

[The] very process of attempting to legitimate a social order by idealizing it ... provides its subjects with the means, the symbolic tools, the very ideas for a critique. ... For most purposes, then, it is not at all necessary for subordinate classes to set foot outside the confines of the ruling ideals in order to formulate a critique of power.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 8; Elizabeth J. Perry, “Challenging the Mandate of Heaven: Popular Protest in Modern China,” *Critical Asian Studies* 33, no. 2 (2001): 162.

⁶⁵ James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 338.

In the linkage politics of Chinese foreign affairs, the “symbolic tools” that allow the Chinese populace to articulate their opinion in opposition to a repressive regime are the collective memory and national identity in the enterprise of nationalism. In issues where the audience for the China’s diplomatic drama perceives the actor as “too soft,” or in the foreign provocations where the audience feels that humiliation of the Chinese nation is not undone, historical institutions shaping Beijing’s foreign policy making provide an effective issue frame to mobilize the emotion and opinion of the “memory consumers” and express their discontent with the performance and hence the legitimacy of the “memory makers.” In this regard, the interaction between “memory makers” and “memory consumers” actually reflects the relationship between the principal (nation) and the agency (state/regime) in the state legitimization project. Inasmuch as the virtual rule of the CCP is legitimized in the indissoluble linkage between the state agency and the national principal, the “ruling ideals” narrated in the official nationalist discourse endow the “national subjects” with “an inalienable political right to appeal directly to the principal.”⁶⁶ As long as the master historical account highlighting the regime’s memory-based legitimacy fails to ring true on the foreign relations front, the accusing finger that the Chinese populace points to the nation’s putative enemy can be turned inward.

In the age of multimedia communication, as elucidated in the second part of this chapter, the proliferation of ICTs has provided an effective platform where anti-foreign nationalist fervor can forcefully mutate into discontent with the state-centric strategic narratives that are aimed at justifying the government’s actions. In the virtual public space, Chinese netizens can project counter-narratives to express their discontent with the leviathan state. As the audience of the PRC’s diplomacy, they are entitled to the

⁶⁶ Seo, “Nationalism and the Problem of Political Legitimacy in China,” 143.

right to the "principal" of the Chinese nation and articulate their own viewpoints in the assessment of the state agency's commitment to the foreign policy "script." During April 2005, when anti-Japanese demonstrators rocked dozens of Chinese cities, *Liberalization Daily* (*Jiefang ribao*), a propaganda-focused media run by Shanghai municipal government, editorialized a formal warning that the large-scale protests were part of a conspiracy that was designed to sabotage the state government. Along with calling for a hardline approach to Japan, online activists launched a bitter diatribe against the blackout of the media coverage and the deliberate attempt to rein-in mass protests.⁶⁷ As the resentment toward the state-run media and the government's action erupted in the cyberspace community, some participants on the Strong Nation Forum deplored the state's performance in the thinly veiled critique of the *Liberalization Daily's* editorial. One dissenter forcefully pointed out the mistakes of the state-run media:

First, it did not report the protest from beginning ... as a result the whole news report on the protest was dominated by foreign media. Second, the news report was serious biased. It did not pay attention to any positive side of the protest; instead of report on the patriotic passion of the majority of the participants, the media deliberately exaggerated the vandalism committed by a few mobs. The report just echoed with the foreign media and misguided the international society. It has produced a very negative influence. Third, [the media and the government] did not encourage the young students' enthusiastic patriotism and lead them to a more rational way, but rather accused them of damaging the stability of overall situation and committing street politics.⁶⁸

As the bearer of state sovereignty, the domestic audience can highlight the historical institutions of Chinese foreign policy ideas by invoking the moral claims to the national principal. In an attempt to halt anti-Japanese demonstrations in April 2005,

⁶⁷ Liu, "China's Popular Nationalism on the Internet: Report on the 2005 Anti-Japan Network Struggles," 147-48.

⁶⁸ "China's Popular Nationalism on the Internet: Report on the 2005 Anti-Japan Network Struggles," 148.

People's Daily also called for young people to "act calmly and reasonably" in an editorial entitled "Sustaining Stability through the construction of a Harmonious Society" on the front page of the April 17 issue.⁶⁹ In the raging criticism with the government-inspired article, collective memory of national humiliation and the related notion of national interests, which denotes the normative elements of Chinese foreign policy ideas, were used by some netizens as a comparison device to refute the official discourse and justify their discontent with the government:

Should a "harmonious society" that is being assaulted and bullied still be called "harmonious? We'd rather not have such a "harmonious society. ... Concentration on the development is just a utopian self-fantasy. The real situation would not evolve according to your own imagination. Foreign antagonistic forces would never give up their ambition. ... [They] would never allow you to develop ... peacefully and stably. ... This is a just self-deceiving slogan fooling ordinary people! Be watchful of the collusion that takes the construction of harmonious society as an excuse but surrenders and betrays the national interest!⁷⁰

In the battleground where the negotiation and contestation of the propaganda state and societal forces are unfolded, the authoritarian regime could not stifle the above counter-narratives at will. Just as the irate demonstrators chanted in the anti-Japanese protests, "patriotism is sacred" (*aiguo wuzui*) is a legitimate pretext for the Chinese audience to express their dissent views on the state's performance. With such a "logic of contention" appropriated from official discourse, the criticism of the government was framed in a bulwark, where the historical institutions of Chinese foreign policy ideas serve as what Caroline Humphery calls an "evocative transcript," a text intended to

⁶⁹ James Reilly, "Harmonious World and Public Opinion in China's Japan Policy," in *"Harmonious World" and China's New Foreign Policy*, ed. Suijian Guo and Jean-Marc F. Blanchard (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 209.

⁷⁰ Liu, "China's Popular Nationalism on the Internet: Report on the 2005 Anti-Japan Network Struggles," 146.

evokes popular invective on the government's misconduct of China's diplomacy.⁷¹

Without "stepping foot outside the confines" of the propaganda state, such discursive resistance operating in full view of hegemonic authority has become a coded way of directing popular dissent at the authoritarian regime, while effectively weeding out the official narratives that are deemed unconvincing by the domestic audience.

Further, given the emotional dimension of historical institutions and their wide acceptance in the Chinese political culture, the narrative frame employed in the assessment of the Chinese public concerning the CCP's handling of memory-related diplomatic issues is an effective means of coalition building. The affective mobilization of such a form of popular contention, as Shirk argues, can "meld various discontented social groups into a revolutionary movement."⁷² On an emotional platform constituted in the interaction of the actor and audience for the PRC's diplomatic drama, pressures from the audience are placed on the actor on the diplomatic stage to resolve flashpoint issues in a way that satisfies the social needs inherent in the national identity.

In this process, the counter-framing endeavor enabled by historical institutions is capable of disrupting the political agenda defined by the CCP leadership. As an encapsulation of the inalienable right of the Chinese populace to the "principal" of the nation, the counter-narratives projected in the domestic-foreign-policy interaction can link the state's failure to adhere to the normative "scripts" of diplomatic drama to a broader critique of the state's performance in the domestic arena. Such issue linkages, cloaked under the banner of patriotism, are an adaptive strategy of the Chinese

⁷¹ Caroline Humphrey, "Remembering an 'Enemy': The Bogd Khaan in Twentieth-Century Mongolia," in *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism*, ed. Rubie S. Watson (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1994), 23.

⁷² Shirk, *China, Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics Could Derail Its Peaceful Rise* 64.

nationalist activists in their initiatives, which span the politically permissible boundary in their contestation with the repressive regime while garnering the support of receptive national members of their claims.⁷³

In the attempt of political dissents to nibble away at the boundaries of hegemonic state control, according to David Snow and his colleagues, what really matters is “not merely the presence or absence of grievance, but the manner in which grievances are interpreted and the generation and diffusion of those interpretations.”⁷⁴ In the case of China, the indissoluble linkage between the national principal and state agency, which is incessantly propagated in the state legitimation, serves as the “metonymic frame” for social movement, which, as Patricia Thornton argues, “[contributes] to the formation of a social consensus ... by clearly defining and assigning blame for a particular problem to an agent ... and then offering solutions.”⁷⁵ In the domestic audience’s interpretation of emotionally-charged diplomatic issues, the popular blame may not always be assigned to the putative foreign enemy, but to the state government that is held accountable for being too “soft” in dealing with the crises. As such, popular dissatisfaction with the state’s performance in foreign affairs can further morph into resentment toward domestic socioeconomic pains. In suggesting possible courses, nationalist activists can frame popular imagination outside the parameter endorsed by the state. For instance, while identifying the government against Western powers, popular nationalists have suggested

⁷³ See Kevin J. O’Brien, “Neither Transgressive nor Contained: Boundary-Spanning Contention in China,” in *State and Society in 21st-Century China: Crisis, Contention, and Legitimation*, ed. Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 105-22.

⁷⁴ Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” 465-66.

⁷⁵ Patricia M. Thornton, “Framing Dissent in Contemporary China: Irony, Ambiguity and Metonymy,” *The China Quarterly* 171(2002): 661, 63.

the asked for "people's diplomacy."⁷⁶ In proposing their rival claims, they shift the ire stemming from the original events to the current issue of domestic politics. When Wang Xiaodong, a leading liberal nationalist, expressed his dissatisfaction with the government's news blackout over the \$2.87 million compensation payment to the United States for the damage caused to the U.S. diplomatic property in China after the anti-American demonstrators protesting the NATO bombing of the American embassy in Beijing, he demanded popular participation in China's foreign policy making. Only in this way, he believed, would the government be held accountable to the Chinese public for safeguarding national interests.⁷⁷

In the anti-Japanese demonstrations that flared in a range of Chinese cities in 2012, moving beyond the protest against Japan's motion of purchasing the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* islands, popular disgruntlement with the CCP's regime's diplomatic performance was connected to its domestic governance. One photo circulated on *weibo*, China's most popular micro-blog, tweeted a demonstrator wearing a shirt reading, "I am willing to feed the corrupted officials and become a housing slave, but I will never give up on the *Diaoyu* Islands."⁷⁸ In their political claim-making, not only do nationalists activists assign the blame of domestic sociopolitical pains to the CCP—the "agent" of the Chinese nation, they also press for a liberal national condition, as a "solution" to the internal and external crises. When deploring that the protesting landing on the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands was initiated by the *baodiao* activists in Hong Kong but not

⁷⁶ Peter Hays Gries, "Popular Nationalism and State Legitimation in China," in *State and Society in 21st-Century China: Crisis, Contention, and Legitimation*, ed. Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen (New York and London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 186. Also see, e.g., Song Qiang et al., ed. *Zhongguo Haishi Neng Shuobu* [China Can Still Say No] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 1996).

⁷⁷ Zhao, "China's Pragmatic Nationalism: Is It Manageable?" 138; Susan V. Lawrence, "China—the Say No Club," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 13, 2000.

⁷⁸ Makinen, "Anti-Japan Protests in China Spread to More Cities."

mainlanders, some popular nationalists have boldly related the ability to defend Chinese sovereignty to the democratic freedom and political participation on Sina *Weibo*,

In a place where patriotism and protest require approval, it's all but inevitable that the pursuit of the national interest will be impaired ... [This] is a lesson the Hong Kong people have taught the mainland people. So how can we protest the national interest, and the best interest of the community? We need the freedom of association, speech and press. Only a free man can keep his country in his heart.⁷⁹

Indeed, casting liberal ideas within the framework of Chinese foreign policy ideas has become an effective channel for popular nationalists to advance their political agenda while expressing their dissent toward the incumbent regime. For an authoritarian regime that resorts to nationalism to revamp legitimating ideology, the CCP regime has to depend on its nationalist credential to rule. Given that the historical institutions within the enterprise of Chinese nationalism provide a viable means for the authoritarian state to engage with the pluralistic society, clamping down nationalist protests, as Shawn Breslin and Simon Shen argue, "runs the risk of not only making the Party look out of step with patriotic public opinion, but also of removing the one political sphere that has emerged as a legitimate medium for interest articulation and thus could decrease rather than reinforce regime legitimacy."⁸⁰ In the view of the dual role of historical institutions, if the performance of the CCP falls short of the social expectation of the audience for the PRC's diplomatic drama, Beijing's foreign policy making always carries with it the risk of the internalization of external conflicts. The CCP has to walk a fine line between emerging external conflicts and staggering internal challenges.

⁷⁹ Minter, "Barren Islands Bring China to a Boil".

⁸⁰ Shawn Breslin and Simon Shen, "Online Chinese Nationalism(s): Comparisons and Findings," in *Online Chinese Nationalism and China's Bilateral Relations*, ed. Simon Shen and Shawn Breslin (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 275.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: NATIONAL TRAUMA, VICTIMHOOD IDENTITY,
AND CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY IDEAS

History is indeed an argument without end.

—Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.¹

History can begin again, anew, on its old foundation but facing a new future. As it does so, it will transform national and international issues and decision-making structures.

—Gerrit W. Gong²

China's meteoric rise is hardly controversial in today's world politics. The global giant has transformed itself from an impoverished, repressive state into an economic and political powerhouse; yet conflicting impressions of the country and its leadership abound. Besides its economic take-off that alarms the West, the ascending oriental power is indisputably in a state of universal changes—political, diplomatic and cultural—and the signs of its startling rise have generated both enthusiasm and trepidation in the international community. In the West, especially in the arena of foreign policy making and the academic circle of international relations, what remains a contentious topic is whether China is a status quo state or a revisionist power in world politics.³

The polarized nature of the continuing debate is, to a large extent, associated with China's dualistic diplomatic profile observed from outside. One facet of Beijing's

¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Cycles of American History* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 164.

² Gerrit W. Gong, "Preface," in *Memory and History in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Gerrit W. Gong (Washington, DC: CSIS Press, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2001), 1.

³ Among others, see Alastair Iain Johnston, "Is China a Status Quo Power?," *International Security* 27, no. 4 (2003): 5-56.

diplomatic image is related to its grand-power diplomacy, which is motivated by its ambition of acquiring global recognition of its rightful status in the world order through nurturing a cooperative relationship with Western powers and peripheral states. Once viewed as an aloof and recalcitrant actor in world politics, China has become more disciplined and is making sustained efforts to project a benign great-power image.⁴

While taking a close look at Beijing's exercise of soft power, however, the international society is often taken aback by China's hardline diplomacy. When embroiled in interstate conflicts involving historical legacies, cases wherein China's fundamental national interests are perceived to be threatened, Beijing tends to adopt a muscular position. As such, Beijing's diplomacy features the coexistence of its conciliatory stance evinced by the "responsible great power" and its "emotional face" expressed toward perceived foreign provocations.

For an in-depth understanding of the mercurial profile of China's international conduct, this dissertation disentangles the PRC's diplomatic "inside-out." With an analytic focus on the relationship between the Chinese state and society in domestic-foreign-policy interaction, this study explores the impact of Chinese popular nationalism—a domestic factor causing the PRC's dualistic diplomatic image—on Beijing's foreign policy making. In the wake of the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, nationalism is revamped as an official ideology to shore up the legitimacy of an authoritarian regime. The legitimization of the CCP's regime is intertwined with the production and consumption of the collective memory of national humiliation, which have given rise to the normative and purposive elements of national identity. It is these historical institutions, collective memory and national identity, that shape the conception

⁴ For example, see Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World*.

of the state's interests and the goals of national foreign policy. As the key variables in the linkage politics of Chinese foreign affairs, these ideational factors constitute a belief system upon which Chinese foreign policy ideas are formed and the state's diplomatic behavior is reasoned.

In the field of memory study, a dominant approach is the presentist perspective, which holds that collective memory is fashioned in its "use value" for the solution of the present preoccupations.⁵ In the legitimation of the Chinese authoritarian state, this viewpoint conforms to the analytic approach of rational choice. As an ideational resource constructed by the rational political actor in the ideological education, public recollection of the traumatic experience of the Chinese nation in its modern history is instrumentalized in the legitimacy enhancement of the CCP regime. The victimhood identity of the nation, as instantiated in the traumatic memory, is also instrumental in asserting the moral justification of the PRC's persistent quest for the legitimate great power status on the international stage.

However, rational choice insight is inadequate to explain China's dualistic image on the world stage. In the normative environment of China's diplomacy, collective memory and national identity are the independent variables shaping the decision-making of the CCP. The normative elements ingrained in these ideational factors have been institutionalized as the "scripts" of the China's diplomatic drama. Tethered to the ethical standard of Chinese foreign policy making and the assessment of the domestic audience, China's diplomatic behavior does not always follow the rational thinking of the CCP leadership. In cases where the normative and emotional aspects of historical institutions are animated in the antagonistic inter-group relations, Beijing is often compelled to adopt

⁵ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 30, 224.

an uncompromising stance, which might otherwise have been averted by more temperate responses in view of its preference to act with more prudence. In this sense, China's paradoxical external conduct can be attributed to the inconsistency between the CCP's preference for a pragmatic diplomacy and the constraint of historical institutions that are highly related to the state's internal and external legitimacy.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY: AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT OF REGIME LEGITIMACY ENHANCEMENT⁶

Corresponding to the "democratic peace" proposition that peace is empirically evident only within democracies, some Western observers, especially those who espouse the "China threat" thesis, argue that the rise of the illiberal Communist regime will inevitably challenge the status quo of the liberal world order.⁷ Although evaluating this argument is beyond the scope of this concluding chapter, an important line of reasoning underlying such a viewpoint can be identified in the linkage politics of Chinese foreign relations; that is, so long as the CCP remains a non-democratic regime, the international apprehension over Beijing's intentions and commitments in its diplomacy will not dissipate.

Along this line of reasoning, a sound interpretation of the CCP's conduct of Chinese foreign relations can only start from the analysis of domestic politics. In the internal-external linkage of a state's foreign affairs, as Richard Rosecrance argues,

⁶ This section contains materials in Liao, "Presentist or Cultural Memory: Chinese Nationalism as Constraint on Beijing's Foreign Policy Making," 545-50.

⁷ See, e.g., Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part I," 205-35; James Lee Ray, "Does Democracy Cause Peace?," *American Review of Political Science* 1(1998): 27-46; Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 76(1997): 22-43; Bill Gertz, *The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America* (Washington, DC: Regency, 2000).

"domestic stability and internal peace [are] the vehicle of international stability and external peace."⁸ Internal political stability, in accord with Rosecrance's argument, is one of the prerequisites of China's peaceful rise. However, domestic stability is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for a state's pacific behavior on the global stage. China's political stability, and hence the state behavior on the international arena, according to Baogang Guo's research on the relationship between these two mutually constitutive factors, depends first and foremost on the legitimacy of the regime. China's peaceful rise on the global stage primarily hinges on the endurance of the CCP's regime legitimacy, and "a failure to continue to rebuild and strengthen its bases of political legitimacy at home," in Guo's account, may "compromise its stability, and consequently undermine the peaceful nature of its development."⁹

How, then, does the CCP maintain its regime legitimacy? After the 1989 Tiananmen crisis, the anticipation prevalent in the West was the speedy downfall of the Chinese Communist regime.¹⁰ In the new millennium, the erroneous predictions of a "coming collapse" of the CCP regime has not disappeared from the Western discourse of Chinese politics. A primary fallacy in such propositions is their underestimation of the CCP's capability of mobilizing popular support, which is manifested in public opinion toward the non-democratic regime. For an authoritarian regime lacking established procedural legitimacy, the political authority of the Party-state has to rely on the performance of its governance and some ideational factors to foster popular trust of the Party-state. With regard to the latter, legitimacy can be conceived as a moral property of

⁸ Richard Rosecrance, *Action and Reaction in World Politics: International Systems in Perspective* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1963), 306.

⁹ Guo, "China's Peaceful Development, Regime Stability and Political Legitimacy," 40.

¹⁰ Among others, see Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China*.

the regime that leads the ruled to “believe that it is appropriate, proper and just.”¹¹

Within the enterprise of Chinese nationalism, a prototypical example of this moral property is the national feeling derived from the collective memory of national humiliation. This cultural resource is constructed in the ideological framework of nationalism to endow the incumbent regime with moral value and thus to legitimize its monopolistic rule.

In the political communication system, the official nationalist discourse is communicated through the symbolic representation of national history. At the critical moment when the moral standing of the CCP was at an all-time low in the aftermath of the Tiananmen crackdown, the most pressing task of the regime was to “sustain and legitimize existing relations of power,” through the transformative reproduction of the impoverished official discourse that was incompatible with the fluid nature of the Chinese society.¹² For an authoritarian state facing a severe legitimacy crisis in the wake of social disruption, the endemic memory of national victimization in the “century of humiliation” provides a “symbolic reserve” for the reconstruction of the CCP’s legitimating ideology in the form of official nationalist discourse.¹³

Hinging upon this traumatic symbol, the state-centric patriotic education adroitly links China’s past (the specter of national humiliation in its modern history), present (the reconstruction of a powerful state on the international scene), and the future (national

¹¹ Tom R. Tyler, “Psychological Perspectives on Legitimacy and Legitimation,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 57, no. 1 (2006): 375.

¹² According to Norman Fairclough’s conceptualization of the mutual constitutive relationship between discourse and social structure, the dynamics of social change are interrelated to the conservative and transformative reproduction of discourse. With the loss of appeal of the orthodox ideology of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism, the CCP could only resort to transformative reproduction of nationalist discourse to legitimate the authoritarian regime. See Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 37-40.

¹³ Liu and Atsumi, “Historical Conflict and Resolution between Japan and China: Developing and Applying a Narrative Theory of History and Identity,” 330.

rejuvenation) of the Chinese nation-state. Within this mainstay narrative structure, the decisive role that the Communist regime has played along the independence, liberation, and modern development of the Chinese nation validates the capability and competency of the CCP leadership. The representativeness of the regime in the reconstruction of a modern Chinese state—a persistent dynamic in the Chinese identity politics, fits into the ongoing purposive action of the Chinese nation in recovering great-power status in the international community.

Inferred from the traumatic experience of national humiliation, the absolutist notions of sovereignty and territoriality and the social need of safeguarding the national identity have been valorized in the Chinese political culture as the “constitutive norms” of national identity.¹⁴ The CCP’s historical agency in restoring the national unity has reified the inseparable linkage between the Party-state—as the indefatigable defender of China’s territoriality and sovereignty—and the nation, whose need of redeeming national humiliation can be fulfilled by the incumbent regime. By relating the irreplaceable status of the Communist regime along China’s historical trajectory to the purposive and constitutive elements of the national identity, the official nationalist discourse ingeniously captures the popular remembrance and meshes with the Chinese political culture in which the collective memory is embedded.

In terms of its narrative power, the overriding theme of the patriotic education—the incessant articulation of the CCP’s role identity as the sole savior and guardian of the Chinese nation and its credentials to an entitled grip on political power—has effectively fostered the public perception identifying the Party-state with the nation. Such “true” discourse flowing from the collective memory bestows legitimate moral value upon the

¹⁴ Abdelal et al., “Identity as a Variable,” 697.

CCP by symbolically enhancing the “original justification” of the regime as a “divine being,” whose governance is based on the will of the people.¹⁵ Communicated via the connoted meanings of the traumatic symbol that has been projected into the collective memory, this protagonist in the master historical account—narrated as the paramount patriotic force capable of protecting the nation from foreign intrusion and leading it to modernization—has been portrayed as a “regime of truth” represented in the national history that is mythologized by the propaganda state.¹⁶ Correspondingly, the CCP’s role identity has been transformed into the official “truth” knowledge institutionalized in the patriotic education. Insofar as the Party-state is legitimized through its appeals to the consensual assumptions inherent in the Chinese political culture, the populace has been exhorted to rally around the Communist state on the basis of the instructed motto that the love of nation is indistinguishable from support of the state. In instituting the memory-based legitimacy of the CCP regime, nationalism has taken the place of the official ideology as the coalescing force in the post-Tiananmen era.

Today, more than two decades after the Tiananmen crackdown, nationalism remains crucial to the regime legitimacy of the CCP. While deferring the political threats to the authoritarian regime and reducing the pressures on political liberalization, the material achievements in China’s economic take-off have temporality concealed and offset the poor governance by the authoritarian regime. Regime legitimacy based on economic performance, however, is not a panacea for tackling perceived challenges to the CCP’s political authority. The three-decade-plus surge in economic growth since the inception of its market-oriented internationalization has left the Party-state a multitude of

¹⁵ Guo, “Political Legitimacy and China’s Transition,” 3.

¹⁶ Foucault, “Truth and Power,” 131.

social tensions with fewer resources at the CCP's disposal.¹⁷ Particularly, in the cauldron of the socioeconomic problems that are imperiling the Party-state's capacity to garner popular support, the CCP is susceptible to the incestuous relationship between unchecked power and illicit wealth, as burgeoning wealth is funneled to the political-economic elites. The authoritarian state's dominance over the economy has formed what Minxin Pei describes a dangerous mix of "crony capitalism," which has hoisted many CCP cadres into a stratosphere of opulent wealth at the expense of distributional equality and economic efficiency.¹⁸ Thus, behind the façade of China's economic presence, the very policies implemented by the state government to sustain the phenomenal growth have brought about a series of thorny social and political ills.

As such, the intense tensions and mass alienation induced by the defects of the socioeconomic system have threatened to erode another aspect of the CCP's regime legitimacy—the "utilitarian justification," which lies in the ability of the state government to maximize the wellbeing of the individuals.¹⁹ Indeed, domestic protests in recent years have not only increased in number and size, but have become better organized as well. With the erosion of the "utilitarian justification" and the rise of public disgruntlement, as contended by Shirk, the contemporary CCP leadership is more vulnerable than ever to impending sociopolitical shocks, which can be conceived of as the sword of Damocles whose fall will topple the regime.²⁰ Retaining a persistent sense of insecurity, the CCP has to resort to official ideology, which is synergized with economic performance, to mobilize popular support for the regime.

¹⁷ Some western observers share such an opinion. See, e.g., Francois Mengin and Jean-Louise Rocca, eds., *Politics in China: Moving Frontiers* (New York, NY: Plagrave MacMillan, 2002).

¹⁸ Minxin Pei, "The Dark Side of China's Rise," *Foreign Policy* 153(2006): 37.

¹⁹ Guo, "Political Legitimacy and China's Transition," 5-6.

²⁰ Shirk, *China, Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics Could Derail Its Peaceful Rise*

In today's China, popular political support, a source of popular legitimacy that Easton labels "diffuse support,"²¹ is highly associated with the normative and purposive aspects of national identity that are widely shared in the Chinese community. In the enactment of its memory-based legitimacy, the regime's purported credentials, which are founded on the social norms ingrained with the Chinese national identity, sustain the "moral bond" between the state and society" and hence the "original justification" as the rightful source of the regime's political authority.²² Despite the dizzying array of socioeconomic problems that are plaguing the CCP's domestic governance, the moral dimension of the regime legitimacy has played a significant role in shaping people's "supportive attitudes or sentiment" toward the regime.²³

In the post-Tiananmen era, one of the major instrumental usages of official nationalism lies in its scapegoating function in the process of socioeconomic transformation, which inevitably involves the politicization of national identity. In this process, the construction of collective memory—a raw material of communal connection in forming the metaphorical kinship bond of an "extended family"—is shaped by the present focus. While forging the affection for and loyalty toward the in-group, the collective memory of national trauma has generated a sense of alienation, mistrust, and even antagonism toward the out-group entities that are perceived to pose threats to the continued social practice of the Chinese nation-state in rejuvenating its historical glory.

It is hardly surprising then that the notion of the "Chinese dream" (*zhongguo meng*) can take hold in the Chinese political imaginary. Since taking over the paramount

²¹ Easton, *A System Analysis of Political Life*.

²² Tong, "Morality, Benevolence, and Responsibility: Regime Legitimacy in China from Past to the Present," 152.

²³ In his definition of political support, Easton designates "supportive actions as overt support and supportive attitudes or sentiments as cover support." See Easton, *A System Analysis of Political Life*, 159.

leadership position of the Party-state in November 2012, Xi Jinping, the CCP's new General Secretary, has reinvigorated a heated discussion over this catchphrase in an effort to galvanize the populace. Soon after the Standing Committee of the Politburo stepped in, in a high-profile visit of the top leadership to "the Road toward Renewal" (*fixing zhilu*) exhibition at the National Museum of China in Beijing highlighting the Opium Wars and the subsequent national humiliation, Xi issued a call for action to realize "the cause of national rejuvenation," which he described as "the greatest dream for the Chinese nation in modern history."²⁴ In defining the group identity of the Chinese nation-state and determining how this collective group behaves in conflict situations, such a symbolic message is an irresistible ingredient of the official nationalist discourse with pragmatic function. As Mansfield and Snyder posit, a regime equipped with fragile institutions in a transitional society tends to utilize nationalistic rhetoric and diversionary conflict to remain in power.²⁵ The perpetuating victimhood mentality stemming from the traumatic memory of the Chinese nation-state has constituted a revenging motif of its identity politics: As the country grows strong, it should settle scores with those that had bullied it in the "century of national humiliation."

This expectation explains the coherence of the Chinese populace siding with the state government in their response to the Western pressures on China concerning issues such as human rights, intellectual rights, and trade deficits. When the national pride is at stake, foreign pressures often backfire, as the Chinese people do not cheer Western

²⁴ Xinhua News Agency, "Xi Pledges 'Great Renewal of Chinese Nation',"

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-11/29/c_132008231.htm?utm_source=Sinocism+Newsletter&utm_campaign=f8bd49f786-)

[11/29/c_132008231.htm?utm_source=Sinocism+Newsletter&utm_campaign=f8bd49f786-](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-11/29/c_132008231.htm?utm_source=Sinocism+Newsletter&utm_campaign=f8bd49f786-)

[The_Sinocism_China_Newsletter_For_11_30_2012&utm_medium=email](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-11/29/c_132008231.htm?utm_source=Sinocism+Newsletter&utm_campaign=f8bd49f786-). (accessed on May 1, 2013).

²⁵ Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Domestic Transitions: Institutional Strength, and War," *International Organization* 56, no. 2 (2002): 297-337.

criticism of their state government. Viewed through the lens of nationalism, the negative comments from outside often do not agitate the discontent of the Chinese populace with the regime, but rather bolster the cohesion of the Chinese nation-state. For instance, former U.S. President George W. Bush's public criticism of Beijing's human rights record before the Olympic moment invoked virulent nationalist resentment among the Chinese public. To the surprise of the Western media, they rallied around the state's position that China has made unprecedented progress in improving the people's living standards, and reminded the ungracious speaker that "the internal affairs of one nation are no business of other nations."²⁶ In the collective action of the nation-state in realizing the "Chinese dream," official nationalist discourse harping on the collective memory has helped legitimize the authoritarian regime by redirecting domestic grievance emanating from the internal tensions to external entities that are perceived as perpetrators violating the purposive element of the national identity.

DIVERGENCE OF ROLE CONCEPTIONS: THE EXTERNAL LEGITIMATION OF A "FRUSTRATED GREAT POWER"²⁷

In the Chinese state legitimation project, the collective memory of national humiliation is also a critical component in shoring up the PRC state's external legitimacy. With the enterprise of nationalism, the sense of victimhood, the pessimistic dimension of the Chinese national identity reaffirmed in the traumatic collective memory, is exploited in Beijing's foreign affairs to enhance the PRC's moral character in its pursuit of legitimate great-power status in the international arena.

²⁶ Muhammad Cohen, "Why China Loves the Olympics," *The Guardian*, August 11, 2008.

²⁷ This section contains materials in Liao, "Presentist or Cultural Memory: Chinese Nationalism as Constraint on Beijing's Foreign Policy Making," 550-54.

Nationalism, according to Rosecrance, is "fundamentally the creation of 'we-feeling' among members of a nation to the point where national loyalties take precedence over most other obligations."²⁸ Rosecrance's assertion raises an obvious question: How is the "we-feeling," or the identity of self, formed? As Jeffrey Olick and Iver Neumann point out, the "self" identity cannot be assumed as *a priori*; rather, it is only through social interaction that the "we-feeling" comes into being.²⁹ In view of the relational feature of collective identities, national identity is constructed in a self-other interaction that has both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Collective memory, which infuses national identities with connoted meanings, is constitutive of the formation and construction of the present self of a nation.

Along this line of logic, the PRC's ambition to reposition itself in world politics as a powerful state is invariably colored by the collective psyche of victimhood and closely related to the issues of historical redemption of the national humiliation inflicted in modern Chinese history, which was in stark contrast to the *tianxia* (all-under-heaven) system envisioned by the Central Kingdom when the pre-modern China attained its cultural superiority. As indicated in the emotional message of the "Chinese dream" that has come to the fore of the official nationalist discourse, attaining a position of prominence consistent with the self-image that prevailed during the long period prior to the "century of humiliation" remains an unfailing dynamic of the Chinese national identity shaping the state's purposive action on the international stage. However, although it has to a certain degree regained recognition as a great power with its impressive economic prowess and its critical role played in global and regional affairs,

²⁸ Richard Rosecrance, *International Relations: Peace and War* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 16.

²⁹ Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," 343; Iver B. Neumann, "Self and Other in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 2, no. 2 (1996): 139.

the PRC's social position in the contemporary international society is not commensurate with its grandiose history of cultural supremacy. Instead, as noted by Jia Qingguo, China is often attributed "an international pariah status" in the international society.³⁰ Being defined as an out-group entity and denied social status equal to that of Western powers, China often finds itself surrounded by "victimizing others"—those that marginalize it and keep it at the periphery of the great power community.³¹ Therefore, both the horizontal and vertical aspects of the national identity associated with the traumatic symbol in the collective memory attach the purposive implication to the Chinese nationhood.

According to Rawi Abdelal et al.'s analytical framework of social identity, the PRC's external legitimation is inherent in the "relational comparison" with out-group entities.³² In the Sino-Japanese relations, for instance, the alarming signal that some prominent Japanese politicians and public intellectuals refuse to atone for Japanese imperialist atrocities committed in the World War II makes Japan a desirable choice as a referent country for China to project its moral image of a "responsible great power" in the international scene.³³ The historical grievance of the past war sufferings associated with the victimhood identity creates the ethical foundation for China to develop what psychologist Vamik Volkan terms the "entitlement ideology."³⁴ The long-term irredentist aspiration provides the past victimizing states with a belief system to assert what they wish in contemporary international affairs. Given that the collective memory

³⁰ Qingguo Jia, "Disrespect and Distrust: The External Origins of Contemporary Chinese Nationalism," *Journal of Contemporary China* 14, no. 42 (2005): 20.

³¹ Suzuki, "The Importance of 'Othering' in China's National Identity: Sino-Japanese Relations as a Stage of Identity Conflicts," 35.

³² Abdelal et al., "Identity as a Variable," 699.

³³ Suzuki, "The Importance of 'Othering' in China's National Identity: Sino-Japanese Relations as a Stage of Identity Conflicts," 35-37.

³⁴ Vamik D. Volkan, "Psychoanalysis and International Relations: Large Group Identity, Traumas at the Hand of the 'Other,' and Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma," in *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on a Turbulent World*, ed. Halina Brunning and Mario Perini (London: Karnac Books, 2010), 53.

of national humiliation can substantiate China's undeserved treatment in the current international society, the CCP leadership does have the temptation to leverage the polemics over sensitive historical issues in international negotiations. Popular nationalism, if expressed in a moderate manner, is conceived to be tandem with the national interests. In actuality, China's victimization by colonialist predators and imperialist invaders—on the basis of which it claims to have a thorough understanding of the value of peace and price of inequality in the Westphalian institutional context—is often articulated as a compelling “ethical argument,”³⁵ justifying its acquisition of great-power status in the Western-based international system

In a similar vein, some core Chinese foreign policy elites, convinced that their state is morally qualified to redefine the international order, have suggested the reproduction of the social structure derived from the Chinese *tianxia* concept. Holding the belief that the current international system is inadequate with respect to the attainment of the goal of global peace and equality, some intellectualists in Chinese academia have pointed out that the normative principles underscoring the Sino-centric *tianxia* order offer a feasible institutional vision of how international politics might be re-organized.³⁶

However, the legitimization of the re-envisioned Sino-centric system, or the revival of the normative principles underlying the international politics under the *tianxia* order, that was premised on the moral hierarchy between the Middle Kingdom and those

³⁵ Narlikar, “All That Glitters Is Not Gold: India's Rise to Power,” 986.

³⁶ For instance, Yan Xuetong, a renowned civilian scholar in Chinese foreign relations, drawing on the contemporary relevance of the moral and ethical principles proposed by Chinese philosopher Xun Zi, elucidates a historically framed Chinese perspective of a normative international order. See Yan Xuetong, “Xun Zi's Thoughts on International Politics and Their Implications,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2, no. 1 (2008): 135–65. For a lively discussion in this vein, see, among others, Allen Carlson, “Moving Beyond Sovereignty: A Brief Consideration of Recent Changes in China's Approach to International Order and the Emergence of the Tianxia Concept,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 20, no. 68 (2011): 89–102.

secondary states on the circumference would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve in today's international system. According to the role theory in international relations, the status of a state on the international stage is not only determined by the ego's role conception, but is also, in Holsti's account, "influenced or restrained by the international counterpart of the social alter."³⁷ Along this line of logic, Beijing's diplomatic behavior is, to a large degree, determined by the "preexisting beliefs" of the in-group members, which are framed in different dimensions of the national identity and are causal in attributing the out-groups' motives.³⁸ In terms of China's current power base that has qualified the PRC as a major actor in the international affairs, the recognition from, and near equality with, the West allows China to vanquish its humiliating legacy of victimization and spring forth onto the world stage as the great nation it once was. Given that foreign acclamation caters to the need of the Chinese nation-state to reconstruct a non-humiliating national identity, the warm "preexisting beliefs" that the West is contributive to its external legitimation gives ground to the empathetic understanding of the Chinese "self" toward the foreign "other." On the other hand, in the cases where China is mired in interstate conflicts triggering the collective memory of the traumatized community, such as the ongoing territorial disputes with Japan over the *Senkaku/Diaoyu* Islands, the negative "preexisting beliefs" that the out-group references infringe upon the Chinese identity-constitutive norms and jeopardize the crusade of its national renaissance will prevail in the inter-group relationship. With the intuitive desire to rectify the original injustice, the in-groups victimhood identity comes to the forefront of the foreign relations, and the assertive streak of Chinese nationalism is incited.

³⁷ Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," 243.

³⁸ Crawford, "The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationship," 134-35.

Apparently, domestic brittle and confrontational nationalism emerging in the Chinese society, which has elicited external apprehension of a rising China, does not contribute to the alter's role prescription that is desired by the PRC. In the eye of the West, it is the authoritarian regime that orchestrates the domestic frenzied hatred against the foreign 'other.' In an international society where the social hierarchy is largely premised on adherence to the principles of democratic governance embodied in the Westphalian international system rather than the moral high ground that held the key to the stability of the Sino-centric *tianxia* system, the prevailing social values and legal principles, among other sources of the alter's perceptions of China's role, are not in conformity with China's role conception as shaped by its indigenous socioeconomic needs and ideological values. Due to the longstanding mismatch between the Chinese foreign policy makers' conceptions as to China's international status and the role prescribed by the 'democratic cores' to an illiberal political regime,³⁹ the "ethical argument" frequently cited by the Chinese state to justify its entitlement to a legitimate power status on the world stage does not effectively persuade the international audience, especially Western powers. The structural divergence of the role conceptions between China and the reigning Western powers often renders the PRC a "frustrated great power," to borrow Shogo Suzuki's phrase.⁴⁰ The recurring distance that opens up between the swelling of China's sociopolitical prowess and the prestige and esteem it attains in the international community has contributed to the state's persistent sense of insecurity and has led to its paradoxical role performance in the foreign affairs.

³⁹ Suzuki, "Seeking 'Legitimate' Great Power Status in Post-Cold War International Society," 51.

⁴⁰ See "Seeking 'Legitimate' Great Power Status in Post-Cold War International Society," 45-63.

China's frustration arising in its pursuit of great-power status—accompanied with the political trepidation of a regime facing potential threats from the top-ranking democratic states in the hierarchical international system—has been clearly present in Beijing's diplomatic thinking. External disrespect has worsened the regime's anxiety in sustaining its internal legitimacy. In light of the mounting socioeconomic challenges in domestic politics, which make the Party-state appear fragile in dealing with the popular discontent and resentment that have gripped large sections of the Chinese society, the Communist regime is vulnerable to the perceived threats of Western constraints. In a speech on the historic mission of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping's predecessor, explicitly pointed out that "Western hostile forces have not given up the wild ambition of trying to subjugate us, intensifying the political strategy of Westernizing and dividing up China."⁴¹ This acute sense of being under-siege is concomitant to its uncertainty about the current international order—an institutional context that China opines discriminates against newcomers seeking social recognition and a corresponding membership in the club of legitimate great powers. Even though it holds the entry card to this social group, China believes that it is still regarded as a marginalized "other."⁴² Encountering this externally prescribed role conception, the state is left to contemplate whether its structural conflicts with the reigning powers of the current international system—the intended external audience of China's performance whose recognition of its membership in the power club enjoys a prominent position in influencing the "world opinion" concerning the PRC's socially conferred status—will

⁴¹ Hu Jintao, "*Renqing Xinshiji Xinjieduan Wojun Lishi Shiming* [Understanding the New Historic Mission of Our Military in the New Period of the New Century]," <http://gfjy.jxnews.com.cn/system/2010/04/16/011353408.shtml>. (accessed on July 1, 2012).

⁴² Suzuki, "The Importance of 'Othering' in China's National Identity: Sino-Japanese Relations as a Stage of Identity Conflicts," 24.

sharpen. Even in the post-September 11 era, when the preoccupation of these “democratic cores,” most notably the U.S., has decisively shifted away from the normative issues, such as human rights, to the war on terrorism, Beijing is still hemmed in by a peculiar sense of insecurity.⁴³ In the view of Fei-Ling Wang, Beijing’s “beleaguered mentality” stemming from the regime preservation of its internal and external legitimacy has led to the “conservative, reactive, and risk-averse” fashion in the praxis of its diplomacy.⁴⁴

While the transformation of the environment of Chinese diplomacy has prompted the debate on the conceptual soundness and the practical applicability of *taoguang yanghui* (hiding capacities and biding time), a tactic dictum proposed by the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, in the exercise of China’s diplomacy, Beijing still has to maintain a balance between keeping a low profile and proactively “getting something done” (*yousuo zuowei*) in foreign affairs.⁴⁵ Given the constraint of “world opinion” on China’s international status in its external legitimation, Beijing’s foreign policy makers have to heed the aliter’s response to the ego’s toughness and assertiveness, which, they believe, will energize “anti-China” forces and fortify the negative prescription of the West to China’s role on the world stage. As such, China’s contested legitimacy in the international society has compelled Beijing to project a pacifist and accommodationist image, with the purpose of avoiding any suspicion or misconception that will undercut

⁴³ Shi Yinhong and Song Deji, “21 Shiji Qianqi Zhongguo Guoji Taidu, Waijiao Zhixue He Genben Zhanlue Sikao [China’s International Attitude, Diplomatic Philosophy, and Basic Strategic Thinking in the First Part of the 21st Century],” *Zhanlue yu guanli [Strategy and Management]* 1 (2001): 10-11.

⁴⁴ Fei-Ling Wang, “Preservation, Prosperity and Power: What Motivates China’s Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 14, no. 45 (2005): 673, 86.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Dingding Chen and Jianwei Wang, “Lying Low No More? China’s New Thinking on the Tao Guang Yang Hui Strategy,” *China: An International Journal* 9, no. 2 (2011): 195-216.

the cultivation of a positive environment for its domestic environment and abort its quest for the rightful, but once deprived, great-power status.

Meanwhile, the CCP leadership is simultaneously facing a domestic audience, who can hold different opinions on Beijing's rational diplomacy. Given that the frustration with China's unfulfilled power status has penetrated the consciousness of the Chinese populace, nationalist aspiration taking the form of patriotism has emboldened the combative line of public opinion and heightened expectations for the government to seek external respect for the state. The call for an activist approach to Beijing's diplomacy is especially strong in military circles. A growing number of senior Chinese military officers are arguing for an explicit departure from Deng's admonition "never claim leadership" (*juebu dangtong*), suggesting a more assertive stance in order to push back against the Western powers over sensitive issues in China's foreign affairs. For instance, two years before Xi reiterated the "Chinese dream" notion in his gallery speech, Liu Mingfu, a senior colonel at the PLA's National Defense University, advocated China abandon its modest foreign policy in a popular nationalist book with the same title. Given its material capabilities, Liu argues, China should seek global leadership by building up its military power and counteracting the dominant position of the U.S.⁴⁶ Before the publication of Liu's *The China Dream*, another popular nationalist piece by Colonel Dai Xu also stood out for its audacity amid a chorus of nationalist expression. In this provocative book, Dai asserts that as China is encircled by hostilities and wariness of countries beholden to the U.S., China should preemptively light a fire in America's

⁴⁶ Liu Mingfu, *Zhongguo Meng: Hou Meiguo Shidai De Daguo Siwei Yu Zhanlue Dingwei [the China Dream: Major Power Thinking and Strategic Planning in a Post-American Era]* (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi chubanshe, 2010).

backyard, in order to avoid the calamity of a not too distant war.⁴⁷ Whether these outspoken hawkish hard line opinions will be incorporated into Beijing's foreign policy remains to be seen. But it is noteworthy that the appeal for assertive and even aggressive diplomacy does have its market among Chinese popular nationalists and has formed the battling public opinion that the CCP leadership has to reckon with in the diplomatic decision-making.

ENABLING OR CONSTRAINING: THE DUAL EFFECTS OF TRAUMATIC MEMORY

The emerging irredentist demand mentioned above, as the "loud minority" in the public opinion of Beijing's foreign policy decision-making, actually reflects a social expectation that is deeply rooted in the historical institutions in the enterprise of Chinese nationalism. As the cognitive and emotional foundation of Chinese foreign policy ideas and hence the state's diplomatic behavior, the social norms embedded in the collective memory and national identity have forged the instrumental awareness that links the goals and purposive action of the Chinese state on the foreign relations front. In this sense, a sober assessment of the PRC's diplomacy should start from the formation, institutionalization of these motivational elements upon which Chinese foreign policy ideas are founded and transformed into the state's diplomatic behavior. Drawing on the social-psychological understanding of the collective memory and national identity, it is possible to spell out the way that these ideational factors shape the Chinese state-society relationship in the domestic-foreign-policy interaction.

⁴⁷ Xu Dai, *C-Xing Baowei: Neiyouwaihuan Xia De Zhongguo Tuwei* [*C Sahpe Encircle: China's Breakthrough with the Internal Concerns and External Dangers*] (Beijing: Wenhui chubanshe, 2009).

With regard to the origin of the historical institutions, in Chinese political culture, the dichotomy of the “civilized self” and the “barbarian other” has been intermingled with the primordial sense of “Chineseness” in the construction of national identity. The position of Chinese political actors and their foreign counterparts in the dialectic self-other relationship are not static. In the pre-modern era, the *tianxia* (all-under-heaven) order, with its emphasis on the moral hierarchy of the Sino-centric vision and the superiority of Chinese civilization, constituted a source of the positive dimension of the Chinese national identity. The destruction of the Sino-centric system, as a consequence of the attacks and predatory actions by Western power and Japanese imperialists in modern Chinese history, imprinted the Chinese mentality with the trauma of humiliation—a “key part of modern Chinese subjectivity” that has been instantiated as a historically informed and culturally sensitive component of the Chinese identity politics.⁴⁸ It is in the context of institutional and cultural collision between the *tianxia* order and the Westphalian system that Chinese nationalism came into being and the notion of state sovereignty and national territoriality became sustained in the normative institutions of Chinese foreign policy ideas.

An indispensable component of the collective memory and national trauma and victimhood identity is their affection dimension, which shapes the Chinese in-group’s behavior and perception toward the foreign out-groups. With the working of collective emotion that can be prompted in the antagonistic inter-group interaction, the resentment felt by the Chinese “self” in the contemporary international society tends to be analogized to the traumatic experience of the nation. The ontological insecurity of the “frustrated

⁴⁸ William A. Callahan, “National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism,” *Alternatives* 29, no. 2 (2004): 206.

great power" in its external legitimation parallels the confidence of its resurgence on the world stage. In this sense, Pye's contention that China has been coping with what he viewed as confused" and "incoherent" nationalism is an annotation on its identity predicament, which has constituted the character of Chinese nationhood and statehood.⁴⁹ In light of this elusive nature, it would be too hasty to conclude, as some influential China scholars have claimed, that Chinese national identity as a victim of foreign aggression and subjugation has been replaced with a cosmopolitan "great power mentality" (*daguo xintai*).⁵⁰ Under the situation where emotion is actualized by the external factor with the "affective tags" attached to the traumatic collective memory,⁵¹ the pessimistic and insecure ingredients of the national identity are brought to the forefront of Chinese foreign relations, which fortifies the causal effect of the identity-constitutive norms on the emotional practice of the state members in performing the national identity.

Thus, viewed from the perspective of political sociology, the commemoration and remembrance of the immoral bullying by foreign invasion is less a "background-looking ideology or strategy" of a nation obsessed with national humiliation and historical grandeur than an amplifier of the moral justification of China's aspiration for the great power status.⁵² The social norms encoded in the collective memory, including sovereignty, territoriality, and the national dignity stemming from a deserved international status, both enable and constrain the state's action on the foreign relations front. With regard to the state-society relationship, these "ideational codes,"⁵³ as the

⁴⁹ See Pye, "China: Not Your Typical Superpower," 3-16.

⁵⁰ Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 6 (2003): 32.

⁵¹ Groenendyk, "Current Emotion Research in Political Science: How Emotions Help Democracy Overcome its Collective Action Problem," 458.

⁵² Quoted in Guang, "Realpolitik Nationalism: International Sources of Chinese Nationalism," 495.

⁵³ Elkins and Simeon, "A Cause in Search of Its Effect, or What Does Political Culture Explain?," 128.

normative underpinnings of the purposive action of the Chinese state, have given rise to Chinese foreign policy ideas and serve as the “scripts” for the PRC’s diplomatic drama and the ethical criteria for the domestic audience to assess the legitimacy of the state’s behavior on the performance stage.

As summarized in the first section of this concluding chapter, the collective memory of foreign aggression and subjugation is instrumental in the state legitimation. Just as Barbara Biesecker contends regarding the social pragmatics of public remembrance, “the political entailments of collective memory are an effect of what and how we remember, and the uses to which those memories are put.”⁵⁴ The traumatic symbol in the Chinese collective memory is instrumental in shaping “what and how” the Chinese people remember in the state’s historical mythmaking. As a discursive product of the CCP’s political agenda of regime legitimacy enhancement, the victimhood discourse representing the mythic symbol of national trauma has been essentialized as official “truth” in the projection of state-centric strategic narratives.

Such a master commemorative account, which enacts the collectivity of the state and the nation in mustering popular support of the authoritarian regime, can be construed as a hegemonic construct that is inextricably linked to the policy environment of the CCP’s diplomatic decision-making. According to Raymond Williams, hegemony is not a fixed state domination, but is “continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all of its own.”⁵⁵ Because the narrative schema of the CCP’s master historical account is enmeshed with a series of “ideational codes” embedded in the historical institutions of Chinese nationalism, it appeals to the patriotic consensus reached

⁵⁴ Barbara A. Biesecker, “Remembering World War Two: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the 21st Century,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002): 406.

⁵⁵ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 112.

in the national community, which helps to institute the CCP's memory-based legitimacy. Historical institutions implicated in the hegemonic discourse, however, have taken on a life of their own in the Chinese political culture, thereby constituting a normative framework of inter-subjective understanding of the Chinese populace. In cases where social norms that are encoded in the collective memory and constitutive of the national identity are reinforced by the systemic divergence of the role prescription of the Chinese "self" and the foreign "other," the domestic audience for the PRC's diplomacy tends to identify a certain pattern of foreign policy as legitimate and convincing. If the state's diplomatic stance departs from the presupposed vision of its action, the legitimacy of the regime will be at stake. Such a case of "social deviance" exemplifies the regulative and constraining effects of Chinese foreign policy ideas on Beijing's diplomatic decision-making.⁵⁶

Viewed in this light, the collective memory of national humiliation is not completely malleable; nor does it conveniently succumb to the presentist manipulation of the regime. The inconsistency between Beijing's diplomatic thinking and domestic nationalist demands is a rich case showing how the subversive collective memory is directed against the "memory makers." To the extent that the determined meanings of the traumatic memory have shaped popular cognition in the ethical judgment of the CCP's diplomatic performance, China's foreign policy behavior can be both prescribed and proscribed by the normative "scripts" of the diplomatic drama that are connoted in the hegemonic discourse of master historic account. In this sense, the strategic narratives projected by the Party-state itself have animated the formation of what Thomas Rochon

⁵⁶ Andrews, "Social Rules and the State as a Social Actor," 332.

dubs the politically and morally engaged “critical community,”⁵⁷ in which the social norms communicated through the victimhood discourse are institutionalized as the “ideational codes” that the CCP’s diplomatic decision-making is obliged to follow.

Indeed, collective memory can be “highly resistant to efforts to make it over.”⁵⁸ As a discursive force, it can be employed in the political claim-making of both the state and societal forces. The state’s mythmaking hinging upon the selected symbol embedded in the Chinese collective memory simultaneously engenders the internal dynamism of social resistance, something that the state projector of strategic narratives does not intend to provoke. With the “connotative property” of the mythic symbol of national humiliation,⁵⁹ Chinese collective memory has invoked a viscera sense of entitlement among the in-group members toward those foreign “others” that are deemed responsible for the national disgrace in its modern history. In the belief system of Chinese foreign policy ideas, collective memory and national identity, while forging social coherence and nationalist aspiration, can cause a backlash against Beijing’s rational foreign policy making. In light of their discursive power that has been fortified in the market-oriented media, these ideational factors have constituted a societal force that brings high audience costs to the CCP’s foreign policy making. So long as the CCP continues to resort to nationalism as the memory-based of its regime legitimacy, the master historical account that blows up the public remembrance of Chinese wartime sufferings is capable of bounding the rationality of its diplomatic decision-making.

⁵⁷ See Thomas Rochon, *Culture Moves: Ideas, Activism and Changing Values* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 22-53.

⁵⁸ Schudson, “The Present in the Past Versus the Past in the Present,” 107.

⁵⁹ Dittmer, “Political Culture and Political Symbolism: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis,” 568.

As such, the hegemonic discourse projected as elite-driven strategic narratives has, to borrow Stanley Hoffman's words, "mobilized believers who will propagate it and do battle for it."⁶⁰ This can be seen from the counter-narratives projected by the Chinese societal forces in the technology-enabled and commercialized media ecology. As a convenient way to direct popular dissent with the authoritarian regime, the insinuation of the government's diplomatic performance and the civic discourse, which are justified by the normative components of Chinese foreign policy making, reveals the interchangeable roles of actor and audience on the performance platform of the PRC's diplomacy. Whereas nationalist discourse is exploited by the CCP leadership to legitimize its foreign policy choice, the narrative frame of the official discourse can also be employed in the publicly communicated evaluation of the validity of the positions taken by the state on the diplomatic performance stage. As popular discourse is no longer the accessory of the state manipulation but increasingly works with the commercialized media, the transformed communicative environment has provided the Chinese public with a discursive means to express its loyalty to a national principal that is not in tune with the sustainment of the regime's legitimacy. Political actors in this increasingly pluralistic society can consciously, perhaps even cynically, appropriate the hegemonic discourse to ground their political claim-making.

In the realm of domestic-foreign-policy interaction, the CCP is indeed stuck between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, it does need the historical institutions in the political enterprise of nationalism to substantiate the inseparable linkage between the state and the nation to solidify social cohesion, while on the other hand nationalist

⁶⁰ Stanley Hoffman, "Nationalism and World Order," in *Nationalism and Internationalism in the Post-Cold War Era*, ed. Kjell Goldmann, Ulf Hannerz, and Charles Westin (London: Routledge, 2000), 198.

discourse has worked to internalize the external conflicts that cannot be adroitly mitigated due to the normative requirement of Chinese foreign policy ideas. Moreover, facing an external audience suspicious of China's rise, Beijing has made strenuous efforts to water down the aggressive implication of an aggrieved image projected by a post-colonial state on the international scene. However, with the leeway of conducting a pragmatic diplomacy heavily constrained by the emotional needs of the Chinese public, anything less than a forceful move on the part of a victimhood state, most notably in the boisterous Sino-Japanese relations, renders Beijing's foreign policy makers liable to domestic castigation. The raging criticism over the government's diplomatic performance can further morph into disgruntlement with domestic sociopolitical pains.

As manifested in the Internet-based discursive resistance that the propaganda state cannot bully into silence, the CCP's monolithic control of nationalist discourse is undermined in the increasingly society-driven media ecology. With the emerging social resistance to the state's hegemonic control in the production and circulation of hegemonic discourse, strategic narratives projected in such a legitimate narrative frame has become part of the rhetoric menu of the Chinese populace to voice their discontent with the CCP's foreign policy and with its domestic governance. In interrogating the discrepancy between state's behavior on the foreign relations front and the moral claim that is projected in the official nationalist discourse to depict the regime's role playing, the diplomatic "scripts" that are implicated in the Chinese collective memory and national identity have significantly empowered popular agency in the contestation with the regime. Historical institutions, as Peter Gries vividly describes, "[weakened] the hyphen that

holds the Chinese Party nation together."⁶¹ As the constructor and consumer of communicative historical institutions, the Chinese state and society cannot be simplistically dichotomized in the internal-external linkage of Chinese foreign affairs. Just as Joel Migdal posits, the state can be "harmed in—indeed transformed"—by the internal forces of a transformed society.⁶²

⁶¹ Gries, "Chinese Nationalism: Challenging the State?," 256.

⁶² Migdal, "The State in Society," 76. Also see *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*.

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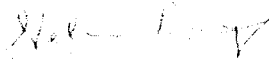
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