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Master's Thesis of Tzeng Shiau Yuan

**An Evaluation of Chinese Nationalism and Its
Dynamic Evolution in Xi's Era**

중국의 민족주의에 대한 평가와 시진핑 주석 시대의 역동적인
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Seoul National University

Area studies Major

An Evaluation of Chinese Nationalism and Its Dynamics Evolution in Xi's Era

Cheong Young-Rok

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Area Studies

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Graduate School of International Studies

Seoul National University

Area Studies Major

Tzeng Shiau Yuan

Confirming the master's thesis written by

Tzeng Shiau Yuan

August 2023

Chair Moon, Woo-Sik (Seal)

Vice Chair Oh Yoon, Ah (Seal)

Examiner Cheong, Young-Rok (Seal)

Abstract

This thesis traces the development of Chinese nationalism and explores its relationship with Chinese government policy. Through an analytical framework and case studies, this thesis argues that Chinese nationalism has long been utilized by the regime as a means to accomplish its political objectives and bolster its legitimacy. This phenomenon has become particularly evident since the 1990s, as the irrational and assertive manifestations of Chinese nationalism have transformed into rational calculations and ambitious policy practices by political leaders.

After President Xi Jinping took office in 2012, a more pronounced radical nationalist sentiment emerged as one of the prominent characteristics of Xi's era. The international community often perceives Chinese nationalism in the Xi era as irrational, exclusive, and fanatical. However, this thesis argues that Chinese nationalism in the Xi Jinping era continues the pragmatism of the past.

However, the Xi administration has demonstrated increased caution in response to diplomatic conflicts arising from domestic and international instability. In addition, new communication technologies, methods of political propaganda, and other factors significantly increase the risks associated with the Xi Jinping regime's nationalist policies. This thesis, therefore, assesses the future of Chinese nationalism and concludes that while it remains a core ideology that the Xi Jinping government cannot abandon, it also poses significant risks.

Keyword: China, Chinese nationalism, Xi Jinping, national humiliation

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Table of Cotents

1. **Introduction**
 - 1.1. Topic
 - 1.2. Literature Review
 - 1.3. Research Methodology

2. **The New Chinese Nationalism in the 1990s**
 - 2.1. The Revive of Chinese Nationalism
 - 2.1.1. International Environment
 - 2.1.2. Domestic Stress to a new ideology
 - 2.2. Comparison to nationalism in the 19th

3. **Two Case Studies: How nationalism affects the Chinese Government's strategy**
 - 3.1. 1999: The Embassy Booming
 - 3.1.1. Case analysis

 - 3.2. 2001 The EP-3 Incident
 - 3.2.1. Case analysis

4. **Nationalism in Xi Jinping Era**
 - 4.1. The China Dream
 - 4.2. Comparison to nationalism in the 1990s
 - 4.3. Case studies : THADD deployment dispute
 - 4.4. Case studies : Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan

5. **Conclusion**

List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1. China's GDP growth rate between 1979-1988.

Source: world bank

Figure 2. % of Americans who have a(n)_ view of China

Source: Spring 2022 Global Attitudes Survey. Q5b.

“Negative Views of China Tied to Critical Views of Its Policies on Human Rights”

Figure 3. % of Korean who have a(n)_ view of China

Source: Spring 2022 Global Attitudes Survey. Q5b.

“Negative Views of China Tied to Critical Views of Its Policies on Human Rights”

Figure 4. China's individuals using the Internet (% of population)

Source: The World Bank

Figure 5. The GDP growth rate of the world's major economies in 2008-2009

Source: The World Bank

Table 1. Analysis framework

Table 2. Analyze Chinese nationalism with the Analysis framework

Table 3. Analyze Chinese nationalism with the Analysis framework -2

Table 4. List of China's ethnic minority groups

Source: http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-07/26/content_17366_3.htm

(The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China)

Table 5. The policy spirit of Chinese leaders

Table 6 China's economic strength has grown rapidly since 1978

Source: World Bank, 国家外汇管理局

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. [Topic](#)

In the last four decades, the People's Republic of China has undergone significant advancements, both in terms of its economic strength and its political influence. This remarkable transformation is widely attributed to the implementation of the reform and opening-up strategy (改革開放) initiated by the late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping in 1979. Through this strategy, China has been able to attain unprecedented levels of growth and development. Notably, China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001 marked a significant milestone, as it opened the country's doors to global markets and further enhanced its influence as a major player in the international arena.

In the early years of China's reform and opening-up period, many scholars and policymakers around the world, especially in the U.S., believed that increased communication and the exchange of interests would eventually result in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) abandoning its communist ideology. Moreover, they suggested that these developments would lead to democratization in China.

Despite the aforementioned optimism, the Chinese government's decisive response to the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests highlighted its unwavering commitment to communist ideology. By the 1990s, the CCP had shifted its cultural rhetoric towards a more conservative trajectory and reintroduced Confucianism, a philosophy that had long been abandoned. This cultural transformation accompanied a shift in political direction, with nationalism gradually becoming a key component of the CCP's strategy and a widely held sentiment among the Chinese population. Some scholars have referred to the resurgence of nationalism in the 1990s as "New Nationalism," as it brought back memories of the nationalist movement that propelled China's modernization in the late 19th century. Since then, nationalism has played an undeniable role in China's propaganda and diplomatic strategies. In recent years, the Chinese government has sought to cultivate nationalist sentiments through President Xi Jinping's "Chinese Dream" campaign, which has emerged as a significant aspect of China's domestic and foreign policies in the last decade.

Therefore, to understand the policy changes in China in recent decades, it is necessary to examine the evolution of Chinese nationalism. This thesis will focus on the following two objectives:

- 1) This paper assesses the development of Chinese nationalism since the 1990s and its relationship to the policy of the CCP).
- 2) Examine the continuity and sustainability of Chinese nationalism as a policy tool under the leadership of President Xi Jinping.

This analysis will delve into the evolution of Chinese nationalism, analyze the adjustments in CCP policies, and scrutinize the Chinese government's propaganda methods to explore the role of Chinese nationalism in policy formulation. Additionally, particular attention will be given to the policy changes under the leadership of President Xi Jinping in order to understand the current status and influence of Chinese nationalism in modern China. This thesis will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the nature of Chinese nationalism and its implications for policy formulation, as well as domestic and international relations in China.

1.2. Literature review

While the primary objective of this thesis is to evaluate Chinese nationalism since the 1990s, a thorough understanding of the origins and characteristics of Chinese nationalism is crucial to comprehending its current manifestations.

The question of whether the concept of a nation (民族) existed in China prior to the late nineteenth century remains a subject of significant scholarly debate. Due to the complexity of this issue, this thesis refrains from engaging in such a discussion. Instead, the primary focus of this study is to examine the nature of nationalism that emerged in China after the nation was subjected to Western invasion during the late 19th century. By analyzing the historical, social, and political factors that contributed to the development of Chinese nationalism, this thesis seeks to shed light on the nature of this phenomenon and its impact on contemporary Chinese society and politics.

Shen Sung-Chiao's (2002) study explores the origins of Chinese nationalism within the context of the social movement. According to Shen, the defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War was a crucial moment for the emergence of Chinese nationalism. He argues that the joint protest by Chinese intellectuals was the first instance of collective participation in national politics by the Chinese people. In his analysis, Shen draws on the approach of James Townsend and Partha Chatterjee, dividing the development of Chinese nationalism into three distinct phases. The period from 1895 to 1918 is characterized as a moment of departure, from 1919 to 1949 as a moment of maneuver, and from 1949 onwards as a moment of arrival.¹ By examining the development of Chinese nationalism during each of these stages, Shen's study provides valuable insights into the historical, social, and political influences that contributed to this phenomenon in China.

Hu Wan-Ting (2012) investigated the origins of Chinese nationalism through the

¹ 沈松僑 (2002)。近代中國民族主義的發展：兼論民族主義的兩個問題。政治與社會哲學評論, (3), 2002。
[Shen Sung-Chiao. (2002). The Development of Nationalism in Modern China: On Two Issues of Nationalism, A Journal for Philosophical Study of Public Affairs, (3), 2002]

analysis of linguistic evidence.² Utilizing the Database for the Study of Modern Chinese Thoughts and Literature (1830-1930), Hu found that the term "nationalism" was first introduced by Liang Qichao in his article titled "The Similarities and Differences of National Thought Changes." The objective of this article is to educate the Chinese population about the evolution of the concept of nation in European countries.

Scholars may differ in their approaches, but Chinese nationalism is generally regarded as a response to Western imperialist invasion. One of the most prominent characteristics of Chinese nationalism is the emphasis on national humiliation (國恥). Meissner (2006) argues that despite variations in the conceptualization of the Chinese nation, late 19th-century Chinese people shared certain cultural and national identity markers. These markers included pride in China's long history of at least four or five thousand years, the recognition of foreign domination throughout the succession of dynasties, and the identification of the Han people as descendants of the legendary Yellow Emperor.³

These factors, combined with the centuries of Chinese dominance over neighboring countries, contributed to a sense of superiority among the Chinese. During the late 19th century, China experienced a decline in its status as a dominant empire, resulting in a weakened state. This loss of power generated feelings of shame and anger among the Chinese population, leaving a lasting impact on the Chinese psyche. This traumatic experience continues to be easily manipulated and provoked by the media or government, even today.

The second distinguishing feature of Chinese nationalism is its strong drive for national salvation from the beginning, which laid the foundation for its later development into state nationalism. The revolutionary Kuomintang (KMT), under the leadership of Sun Wen, overthrew the Qing Dynasty in 1911. A shift in discourse and slogans can be observed as the revolutionaries launched the revolution and subsequently gained power, revealing the conflation of the drive to rescue the nation with the desire to maintain the legitimacy of the regime.

Wei-Ziqei (2020) has observed that the revolutionaries initially advocated for the establishment of a nation exclusively for the Han ethnicity. However, in order to prevent potential chaos among ethnic minorities, they eventually adopted the concept of "Five Races Under One Union" ⁴after seizing power. Similarly, Shing-Ren Liu's study in (year) highlights a similar pattern in the development of CCP governance. Mao Zedong expounded on the idea that the definition of "Chinese people" was flexible and could change based on the needs of national development. In 1949, he declared that the bourgeoisie was also part of the "people" and had a duty to participate in nation-building. However, this statement was later revised in 1958 when Mao mobilized the Chinese people to eliminate all elements associated with capitalism.

² 胡婉庭(2012)。近代中國「民族主義」一詞的興起與演變—以1901至1935年為限。東亞觀念史集刊, (2), 2012。 [Hu Wang-Ting.(2012). The Emergence and Evolution of the Word “Nationalism” in Modern China (1901-1935), Journal of the History of Ideas in East Asia, , (2), 2012]

³ WERNER MEISSNER(2006), China's Search for Cultural and National Identity from the Nineteenth Century to the Present.*China Perspectives* .(NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2006), pp. 41-54

⁴ Wei-Ziqei,(2020) An Analysis of the Changes in the Nationalist Thought of the Revolutionaries Before and After the Revolution of 1911 , Modern business trade industry, (1), p.128-129

The two cases being discussed align with Fitzgerald's (1995) utilization of the term "nationless state" to emphasize the inherently disputed nature of the notion of nation in contemporary Chinese history. Fitzgerald argues that the definition of a nation is constantly being shaped and redefined by the ruling regime's need to maintain power and legitimacy.⁵

The literature mentioned above constitutes a foundational knowledge base regarding the characteristics of Chinese nationalism. Although the prominence of nationalism as an ideology was superseded by communism and class revolution during Mao's China, these characteristics maintained their significance and continued to exert influence when nationalism resurged in the 1990s. Drawing on previous research, this thesis will examine the evolution of Chinese nationalism after the 1990s and its impact on the policies of the CCP.

1.3. Research Methodology

Through a literature review, it becomes evident that both the intellectuals who first introduced the concept of "nationalism" in the late 19th century and the CCP that assumed power after 1949, have extensively deliberated on the question of "who can be considered Chinese." This underscores the significance of identity in Chinese nationalism.

As previously mentioned, strong state nationalism has consistently influenced the development of Chinese nationalism. Expanding upon this foundation, one can observe changes in the ideology of Chinese nationalism in response to domestic and international dynamics.

The policies formulated by the authorities reflect changes in identity and ideology. Given that the Chinese territory has incorporated regions inhabited by diverse ethnic groups since the modern era, the language policies of each regime should recognize and accommodate such variations.

Moreover, Chinese nationalism is often characterized by two extremes: deliberate instigation by the government and fervent enthusiasm among the general public. Exploring the interactions among different communities will contribute to a better understanding of Chinese nationalism. Scholar Simon Shen, in his work *"Deconstructing the Chinese Dream: The Dynamics of Chinese Nationalism and Sino-American Relations,"*⁶ identifies three groups involved in the discourse of Chinese nationalism: the political and military apparatus of the CCP, intellectuals, and the broader society. This thesis draws inspiration from Shen's approach to analyze the dynamics of these three groups during various periods of Chinese nationalism.

⁵ John Fitzgerald, *The Nationless State: The Search for a Nation in Modern Chinese Nationalism*

⁶ Simon Shen. (2015). *Deconstructing the Chinese Dream: The Dynamics of Chinese Nationalism and Sino-American Relations* Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.

To summarize, this thesis proposes an analytical framework consisting of four dimensions.:

- Identity
- Ideology
- Language
- Major actors

These dimensions facilitate an in-depth examination of various aspects of Chinese nationalism and provide a comprehensive framework to enhance our understanding of its development and transformations.

Additionally, it divides modern China into three distinct periods:

- 1) the birth of Chinese nationalism at the end of the 19th century
- 2) the resurgence of Chinese nationalism in the 1990s
- 3) the era of Xi Jinping that followed in 2012.

After summarizing the characteristics and changes of each period, this study further selects several significant diplomatic conflicts during the 1990s and the Xi Jinping era as research subjects. The reason for choosing diplomatic conflicts is that they are urgent issues related to national security that demand immediate responses from the CCP. As such, they can better highlight the CCP's ability to utilize nationalism to accomplish political goals.

Furthermore, considering that the U.S. is the primary competitor of the CCP, the CCP has consistently exercised caution in its policy towards the U.S. In addition, Sino-US relations are not merely bilateral, and China's stance towards the U.S. may have a ripple effect on other nations. Therefore, this paper has selected diplomatic conflicts connected to the U.S. as research objects to analyze how nationalism has influenced the Chinese government and its people, and how it may impact the future development of the Xi regime.

Chapter 2. In The New Chinese Nationalism in the 1990s

2.1. The Revive of Chinese Nationalism

This chapter will begin by analyzing the revival of Chinese nationalism in the 1990s from the perspectives of domestic and international environments. Regarding the domestic environment, we will examine the influences of political, economic, and social transformations on nationalism, as well as the shifts in values and reinterpretation of history within Chinese society. In terms of the international environment, we will examine the influence of globalization, shifts in international relations, and interactions with other nations on Chinese nationalism.

Subsequently, we will employ the previously mentioned analytical framework to compare the characteristics of Chinese nationalism in the late 19th century and the 1990s, with the aim of clarifying their similarities and differences. This comparison will cover key aspects of identity, ideologies, the primary actors in nationalism, and the language policies implemented by the regime. By conducting this comparative analysis, we can gain a deeper understanding of the distinctive characteristics of Chinese nationalism in the 1990s and offer a suitable assessment.

2.1.1. International Environment

Since China's reform and opening up in 1978, the country has become increasingly active in international affairs. From 1978 to 1989, a period marked by significant events such as the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and the U.S., the radical changes in Eastern Europe, and the disintegration of the USSR, China faced numerous challenges. One of these challenges was the Tiananmen Square protests, which resulted in diplomatic setbacks. These events pushed the Chinese government to repeatedly re-evaluate its policies, leading the CCP to gradually shift its focus from the ideology of communism towards the promotion of nationalism, thereby consolidating the legitimacy of its rule.

This session will analyze how the international political environment of the 1990s influenced the CCP's strategy to promote a wave of nationalism.

China's economic development following the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy has garnered global attention. From 1978 to 1997, the percentage of China's exports relative to its GDP rose from under 5% to 20%, with manufactured goods comprising almost 75% of exports in the 1990s.⁷ China's merchandise exports, measured in

⁷ State Council of China. (2011). China's Foreign Trade. Retrieved from The Information Office of the State Council, China's Cabinet. Web site: <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/2011/Document/1060560/1060560.htm>

U.S. dollars, experienced an average annual growth rate of 16.7%, surpassing that of nearly all other countries during the same period.

The mutually beneficial trade relationships that China has established with other countries have yielded positive outcomes for both parties. However, the increase in bilateral financial and political interactions has not only improved China's image in other countries but has also led to distrust. As per the assumptions of the new realism theory, represented by Kenneth Waltz, countries, as the primary actors in international politics, are more concerned about the distribution of power and seek relative benefits in order to balance power. China's remarkable growth has generated concerns that it may disrupt the international order.

The "China threat theory" has been a highly debated topic among politicians and scholars in the field of international studies. Samuel Phillips Huntington's renowned work is titled "*The Clash of Civilizations*." Huntington argued that future international politics will revolve around the interaction between Western and non-Western civilizations. Among non-Western civilizations, Islamic and Chinese civilizations are perceived as posing the greatest threat to Western civilization.

The discussion of China's perceived threat has been most prominent in the U.S. Within this context, observers of China have taken two extreme viewpoints. On one hand, "panda huggers" believe that China's progress brings a positive influence to the U.S. On the other hand, "Dragon Slayers" see China as a challenger to the U.S., and there has been a prolonged competition between these two groups to influence U.S. diplomatic policy. China is fully aware of the suspicions held by the international community. In the 1990s, Deng officially proposed the policy of "hide your strengths, bide your time, and never take the lead" (韜光養晦, 絕不當頭) to mitigate international speculation regarding China's ambitions.⁸

China's active participation in the international regime reflects its position as a "cooperator" rather than a "challenger" in international politics. However, despite China's claim that it will never become a hegemon, it is evident that the CCP has positioned China as a crucial actor in international politics and has gradually developed its policies with a "great country" mindset. Deng referred to China as a "pole" in the early 1990s, and in 1994, the Sino-Russian joint statement referred to each other as "great powers of the world". Michael Pillsbury, an American CIA China expert, likened China's foreign policy to a "hundred-year marathon." He stated that China's initiative is not necessarily a clear policy blueprint. Instead, like all the dynasties in Chinese history, the CCP also has the ambition to achieve reunification and regain world hegemony. According to Pillsbury, Chinese leaders are likely to attempt to achieve this goal by 2049, which marks the centennial of the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

Another issue that challenged the CCP's ideology was the collapse of the communist bloc in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and the subsequent dissolution of the USSR. The collapse of the communist camp undoubtedly had a significant impact on China, which was already experiencing unrest at the time due to the Tiananmen Square protests.

⁸ 鄧小平 (1994)。鄧小平文選 第三卷(1)。北京:外文出版社。[Deng xiaoping (1994).*SELECTED WORKS OF DENG XIAOPING-(Volume III)*. Beijing:Foreign Languages Press]

The CCP believed that the main cause of the disintegration of the communist bloc was Gorbachev's overly dramatic social reforms, which resulted in social and ideological confusion, as well as the government's inability to control other political forces that took power. Therefore, the CCP insisted on implementing economic reforms under the premise of "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" in order to maintain the party's one-party ruling status.

To preserve the legitimacy of its regime and mitigate the erosion of socialist values caused by the introduction of capitalism during the reform and opening up, as well as to prevent Western countries from perceiving China as the next target of communist overthrow, the Chinese government has had to diminish its longstanding focus on the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism. To ensure that the legitimacy of the CCP is still recognized, the government has turned to nationalism as a safer alternative to connect the party's legitimacy with other unquestioned values.

In the era of Mao, the CCP differentiated the people by class and connected the national revolution with the class revolution. The love for the country, the proletariat, and the Chinese nation were intertwined. After the introduction of economic reforms and opening up, the CCP minimized its emphasis on class identity and made concerted efforts to establish the perception that it represents the sole voice of China. By equating the love of the country and the party with the love of socialism with Chinese characteristics, Chinese nationalism has been used as a means to strengthen the CCP's legitimacy.

The analysis above reveals that the strengthening of China's national power, shifts in China's self-perception, and changes in the global political landscape have made it necessary for the CCP to adapt its policy direction. Additionally, in conjunction with domestic turbulence, the Chinese government's policies have become more conservative and nationalistic since the 1990s.

2.1.2 Domestic Stress to a new ideology

This section will focus on the domestic factors that contributed to the rise of nationalism in China during the 1990s.

The reform and opening-up policy was initiated by Deng Xiaoping, Mao's successor, during the third plenary session of the Eleventh Central Committee in 1978. The CCP's decision to shift the focus of the party's work to socialist modernization and carry out reform and opening up sparked a series of policy implementations aimed at driving economic reform. Subsequently, China experienced a period of rapid economic growth, with an annual GDP growth rate of over 5% between 1979 and 1988, driven by radical reforms.

Figure 1. China's GDP growth rate between 1979-1988.



Source: world bank

During this period, China embarked on a series of reforms, including agricultural reform, urban reform, and state-owned enterprise reform. China also drew on the experiences of emerging economies to establish special economic zones in coastal areas that were open to foreign investment. Meanwhile, there was a revival of cultural activities and events, including various seminars, academic conferences, salons, and foreign-funded magazines. Additionally, there was an abundance of entertainment and popular products from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Social groups also reached their peak during this time. Although China's social organizations were not uniformly managed by state organs until 1989, relevant data shows that there were approximately 100 national and 6,000 local social organizations in 1965. In 1989, when the Ministry of Civil Affairs assumed responsibility for managing associations, it was estimated that there were 1,600 national associations and 200,000 local ones.

With China's opening up to the outside world, there was a flourishing exchange of cultures between China and foreign countries. Throughout the 1980s, Chinese intellectuals began to embrace Western fashion and reflect on traditional Chinese culture, blaming it as the fundamental reason for China's loss to the West. This trend later became known as the "culture craze" (文化熱). Scholar Liu Xiaobo's provocative speech on "300 years of colonialism" in 1986 was a representative example of this group. The trend of embracing Western culture reached its peak with the government-owned CCTV television program "River Elegy," which had a significant impact across China. The preference for Westernization, coupled with the political unrest in Eastern Europe and the USSR, heightened the Chinese people's aspiration for democratization. The wave of democratization raised concerns within the CCP and further intensified the divisions between the reformists and conservatives.

During the 1980s, while Zhao Ziyang, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China at the time, advocated for a change in the party's

governing method and the establishment of democratic politics as the ultimate goal, the de facto top leader Deng Xiaoping adhered to socialist ideology and promoted an administrative reform line aimed at enhancing efficiency.

The conflicts reached their peak when the Tiananmen massacre erupted in 1989, shaking the CCP's rule and providing an opportunity for the conservatives led by Deng to eliminate the reformists. After the Tiananmen massacre, the reformists in the party completely lost power. Jiang Zemin, the successor appointed by Deng, followed Deng's political line and tightened his control over all aspects of society, particularly ideology.

During the 1990s, the CCP faced an ideological dilemma. The reform and opening-up policies implemented by Deng Xiaoping deviated from Marxist-Leninist and communist ideology. As a result, the CCP had to turn to other paradigms in order to maintain its ideological legitimacy.

This period also witnessed significant economic and military development in China, which bolstered the self-confidence of the Chinese people and heightened their patriotism. The growth of China has also attracted the attention of scholars in the U.S., Japan, and other countries, further fueling Chinese pride.

Against this backdrop, the CCP adopted nationalism as a new doctrine, as reflected in Jiang Zemin's 1990 speech titled "Nationalism and the Mission of Chinese Intellectuals." In this speech, he asserted that socialism and nationalism were essentially the same.

2.2. [Comparison to the nationalism in the 19th](#)

This section aims to investigate the transformations in Chinese nationalism by drawing a comparison between the nature of Chinese nationalism in the late 19th century and the 1990s. To analyze nationalism, scholars have often employed various dimensions. In this paper, four dimensions will serve as the analytical framework:

Table 1. Analytical framework

Identity	In Imperial China, the concept of Hua-Yi distinction was widely adopted, intentionally blurring the ethnic and national boundaries in the collective recognition of Confucianism. However, in modern times, the definition of Chinese ethnicity has become a central topic of discussion in Chinese nationalism.
Ideology	In China and many developing countries, nationalism has often emerged and flourished in response to various crises facing the nation. As a result, the beliefs and connotations of nationalism are often clearly stated and defined by the regime or those in power. They aim to make their ideology a creed embraced by the entire nation.

Language	According to Samuel Huntington, language is one of the important pillars that unites identity within civilizations. Due to the diversity of Chinese languages, the development of an official language and changes in language policy can be seen as practices of nationalism.
Main Actors	In the evolution of nationalism, certain groups or individuals have the ability to wield more discourse power, thus exerting a greater influence on the development of nationalism and its ultimate goals.

Table 2. Analyze Chinese nationalism with the analytical framework

	Late 19th century	the 1990s
Identity	Various imagination about the Chinese nation : -Constitutionalists (Social nationalism) -Revolutionary -Power holder	Power holders monopolize the discourse power
Ideology	Save the nation	Embody the power
Language	Advocating Chinese as the official language, but the policy has not been implemented	Chinese is the official language. Minority languages have not been granted the equal status promised by the Constitution
Main Actors	-Intellectuals -student	-The CCP -The weak public

- **Identity**

The late 19th century

After the invasion of the Qing Dynasty by Western powers in the late 19th century, Chinese intellectuals were eager to save the country and had diverse ideas on how to transform the ancient empire into a modern nation. The central issue of the intellectual debate was the definition of the Chinese as an ethnic group.

1) The constitutional royalists

Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were representatives of constitutional monarchists. They advocated for the idea that anyone who received an education in Chinese culture should be considered "Chinese," regardless of their race. This proposal was based on the idea of distinguishing between "Chinese" and "barbarians" during China's imperial era. It aimed to differentiate the "civilized" Chinese from the "barbarians" based on their adherence to Confucian culture. The purpose of constitutional monarchism was to defend the Qing Dynasty, which belonged to the minority Manchu ethnic group. The dynasty consolidated its political legitimacy by embracing Confucian culture. Therefore, Kang proposed transforming

the Qing government, which was struggling to face the challenges from the West, into a constitutional monarchy. The vision of the constitutional monarchists for the "Chinese nation" aligns with the concept of "social nationalism" proposed by James G. Kwak. This concept defines a nation based on shared social ties and culture.⁹

It is also consistent with E.J. Hobsbawm argues that a nation is not limited to a regional collection of pure-blood groups, but rather is a political community founded on the idea of modern citizenship.¹⁰

2) **The revolutionaries**

The revolutionaries, led by Sun Wen, advocated a more inclusive notion of the "Chinese nation". Their slogan, "Expel the Tatars and restore China" (驅除韃虜, 恢復中華), initially called for the establishment of a new regime for the Han nationality and demanded the expulsion of the Manchu Qing royals. Their position is consistent with James G. Kellas's definition of ethnic nationalism, which defines a nation in an exclusive manner, with national identity primarily limited to individuals within the same nation.

3) **The power holder**

After the successful overthrow of the Qing regime in 1911, the revolutionaries became the new ruling party. However, the vast territory inherited from the Qing Dynasty contained many diverse ethnic groups, which posed a significant risk of seeking independence and undermined the legitimacy of the KMT government. To justify their rule, Sun Wen changed his discourse from "expelling the Tatars" to "five ethnic republics" (五族共和), emphasizing the KMT's aspiration to establish a multi-ethnic "Chinese nation" by uniting the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui, and Tibetan ethnic groups. This new definition of the Chinese nation represents a significant departure from the original intention of the KMT, which was to restore the glory of the Han nationality. Instead, it was constructed with the aim of preserving the territorial integrity of the former empire. As a result, it can be categorized as an example of "state nationalism" since it was constructed to maintain the stability of the regime.

The 1990s

After 1949, the CCP continued to adopt the concept of state nationalism inherited from the KMT. As stated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, "The People's

⁹ James G. Kellas. (1998). *Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity* (2nd Ed.). London:Palgrave.

¹⁰ E. J. Hobsbawm(2012).*Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality (Canto Classics)*.(2nd Ed.). London:Cambridge University Press

Republic of China is a unified multi-ethnic country that was collectively established by the people of all ethnic groups within the nation."

Although the CCP divides China's ethnic groups into Han and 55 ethnic minorities, which is much higher than the "five ethnic groups" mentioned by Sun Wen, both the CCP and the KMT government shared the same goal of constructing a multi-ethnic "Chinese nation" to maintain their power status. Therefore, it can be argued that the adoption of state nationalism remained consistent from the KMT era to the CCP era. This was a practical tactic employed to secure the CCP's rule.

The adoption of state nationalism did not undergo significant changes in the 1990s. However, the CCP began to emphasize that the concept of a "multi-ethnic Chinese nation" has existed since the imperial era in order to strengthen its legitimacy. The CCP's official website provides a brief introduction to the Chinese nation, tracing the history of China's "multi-ethnic country" back to the Qin Shihuang era. It also concludes that "although regimes have divided and merged, national unity has always been the mainstream and foundation of historical development."¹¹

Nationalism and Patriotism

When discussing the concept of nationality in China, it is important to distinguish between the terms nationalism and patriotism. In English, although these two words are often used interchangeably, there are subtle differences in meaning. Patriotism usually refers to the love and loyalty one has towards their country. It is primarily based on the values that the country represents, such as democracy and freedom. Generally, patriotism evokes positive emotions. In contrast, while nationalism can also represent loyalty and love for one's country, it is often used in a more extreme context to describe people who believe in their own culture and power to the point of viewing other countries as rivals and may have a sense of superiority over them. Sydney J. Harris once described patriotism as "loving the country for what it does" and nationalism as "loving the country regardless of what it does."

In the Chinese context, nationalism is often associated with separatism among ethnic minorities in China, making it a sensitive term. Therefore, both Chinese citizens and the government use the term patriotism (愛國主義) to describe loyalty and support for the country. In the Chinese context, the distinction between these two terms is blurred in comparison to the Western context. However, due to the way the Chinese government operates and the way the people express their love for their country, which aligns more closely with the concept of "nationalism" in English, this thesis will continue to use the term Chinese nationalism.

- **Ideology**

¹¹ National Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China . Chinese ethnic groups. Retrieved Nov 2, 2022, from http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-07/26/content_17366.htm

The late 19th century

Since the late 19th century, China has undergone a profound transformation in its worldview, shifting from an imperial perspective that positioned China as the center of the world to a modern national consciousness. This period witnessed the significant influence of Yan Fu's translation of Herbert Spencer's "Evolution and Ethics" on the Chinese intellectuals' understanding of international politics. Yan Fu incorporated his own ideas, which bore resemblance to social Darwinism, into the book. He proposed that the principles of natural evolution could be extended to human society. Yan's book not only educated Chinese intellectuals but also reflected the prevailing sense of crisis experienced by the Chinese in the face of Western powers' invasion. Although Chinese intellectuals had diverse definitions of the "Chinese nation," they were united in their conviction that China must be saved from extinction.

Compared to the "top-down" reform attempts by the Qing government, the true impact came from the "bottom-up" revolutionary action, exemplified by the democratic revolution led by Sun Yat-sen and the May Fourth Movement in 1918. The influence of these movements expanded from intellectuals and the middle class to warlords and the general population. Therefore, scholars often view this wave of grassroots activism as the initial peak of Chinese nationalism.

The 1990s

Since the 1990s, China's national power has grown significantly, generating high expectations for the country's continued prosperity and strength. While the motivation for Chinese nationalism in the late 19th century focused on "saving the nation," the emphasis of Chinese nationalism after the 1990s shifted towards "embodying power." Nonetheless, China's progress has not erased the Chinese people's memory of "national humiliation." For many Chinese, China's resurgence holds symbolic significance in overcoming the humiliation that has plagued them since the late 19th century.

The concept of "national humiliation" remains deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness of the Chinese people, not only as a legacy of the imperial era but also due to its ongoing reinforcement and reinterpretation by those in positions of authority. Since the end of the 19th century, the concept of "national humiliation" has been used to advocate for revolution and the downfall of the Qing Dynasty. During Mao's era, it was used to intensify hatred towards "imperialist countries" and the bourgeoisie. In the post-1990s era, as the CCP increasingly relied on nationalism to solidify the legitimacy of its regime, it made nationalism a mandatory element in elementary education. This was achieved through the inclusion of nationalist content in history textbooks and frequent emphasis on nationalism in speeches by leaders and officials. As a result, nationalism has persisted as a crucial component of Chinese nationalism.

- **Language**

The late 19th century

In the late 19th century, Chinese intellectuals recognized that classical Chinese was incomprehensible to the general population. This posed a hindrance to the absorption of Western knowledge and the dissemination of information. This recognition led to the "vernacular movement," which aimed to promote the development of the vernacular language. After the KMT established the Republic of China, it also designated Mandarin as the official language.

Although the government of the Republic of China has acknowledged that the "Chinese nation" is made up of multiple ethnic groups, its policies have consistently favored the Han majority. This is particularly evident in the education policies implemented for minority children, which aim to instill a "complete national consciousness" and achieve "national cultural unity" as the primary objectives.¹²

The KMT government promoted the use of Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan, and Hui languages in education, with Chinese being the primary language in higher-level schools. However, the government's propaganda efforts mainly focused on promoting Chinese culture. This is evident through the creation of publications in minority languages, such as Tibetan Tears and Xinjiang Daily.¹³ This suggests that the use of minority languages was primarily determined by their usefulness to the government in promoting Chinese culture, rather than by a genuine desire to promote cultural diversity and inclusivity.

In practice, the language policy of the KMT government was not effectively implemented due to various factors. These factors included the incomplete unification of regions like Xinjiang and Tibet at the time, as well as the relatively short duration of KMT rule. The policy serves to underscore an important point: those in power tend to marginalize the cultural identities of ethnic minorities and promote assimilation to the dominant Han culture in order to consolidate political power and ensure regime stability.

The 1990s

Despite the fact that the *Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference* and the Constitution guarantee the rights of ethnic minorities to use their own languages and scripts, the CCP has failed to ensure equal treatment of all ethnic groups. While there appears to be a policy of promoting joint education in Mandarin Chinese

¹² 周慶生。(2015)。语言生活与语言政策：中国少数民族研究，北京：社会科学文献出版社。[Zhou Qingsheng,(2015), Yuyanshenghuo yu yuyanzhengce: zhongguo sahosuminzu yanjiu, Beijing:Social Science Academy Press (China)]

¹³ 同 16 (周慶生)

and minority languages, the CCP has actually perpetuated the Han-centric ideology inherited from the KMT government.

Since the 1990s, the CCP has increasingly relied on Chinese nationalism to bolster its legitimacy. As a result, there has been a rise in scrutiny towards ethnic minorities who have had historical conflicts with the Han community. This has led to a decline in tolerance for minority languages. In 2002, the CCP abolished the requirement for Tibetan to be the primary language used in schools, government offices, and shops, and instead mandated the use of Mandarin Chinese. Therefore, despite official claims of ensuring equal treatment for ethnic minorities, both the KMT government and the subsequent CCP have implemented policies that are detrimental to minority languages and cultures in order to maintain political stability. This reflects a tendency towards nationalistic assimilation of ethnic minorities into the "Chinese nation."

- **Main Actors**

The late 19th century

The primary champions of Chinese nationalism in the late 19th century were intellectuals who had studied or lived abroad. According to a study by Chen-Hui Wang (cited by Shen, 2002), the number of Chinese students studying in Japan alone between 1901 and 1910 reached as high as 32,428.¹⁴

Among these students were constitutionalists such as Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei, as well as revolutionaries like Sun Yat-sen, Huang Xing, and Song Jiaoren. The precursor to the KMT, the Tongmenghui, was also established in Tokyo. These students living overseas were exposed to various Western ideologies and gradually developed their perspectives on Chinese nationalism. They disseminated their ideas through translations, writings, and social clubs. With the emergence of large-scale commercial printing, publications like *Min Pao* (The People's Journal) and *Xinmin Cong Pao* (The New Citizen's News) were produced in significant numbers and extensively distributed throughout China. These publications played a crucial role in educating the Chinese population about the idea of the nation.

Chinese nationalism in the late 19th century can be classified as a "polity-seeking" practice from the bottom-up, according to Brubaker's (1996) definition. This classification is based on the dissatisfaction with the Qing government and the emphasis on people's sovereignty.¹⁵

The 1990s

¹⁴ 沈松桥(2002)。近代中国民族主义的发展:兼论民族主义的两个问题。政治與社會哲學評論, (3), 49-119。 [Sung-Chiao Shen. (2002). The Development of Modern Chinese Nationalism: with a Consideration of Two Problems Concerning Nationalism, *A Journal for Philosophical Study of Public Affairs*, 3, 49-119.]

¹⁵ Rogers Brubaker . (1996). *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge :Cambridge University Press

In contrast, Chinese nationalism in the 1990s was primarily driven by the goal of "polity-maintaining" (Brubaker 1996). During this period, the CCP had shifted away from Mao's strategy of "continuous revolution" and began to position itself as a ruling rather than a revolutionary party. To strengthen its political legitimacy, the CCP began to emphasize nationalist rhetoric in its propaganda. The CCP monopolized the discourse on nationalism by equating support for the nation with support for communism, thereby consolidating the legitimacy of its regime. For example, when the CCP amended the Constitution in 1982, Article 24 stipulated:

"The state advocates the public morals of loving the country, the people, labor, science, and socialism, and conducts nationalism, collectivism, internationalism, and communism among the people. education, education in dialectical and historical materialism, against capitalist, feudal and other corrupt ideas" (The Eighth National People's Congress 1993:16).

In this article, "love of the country" has been mentioned in the first place.

During this period, the CCP also emphasized China's victimhood by reinterpreting the narrative of "national humiliation". In the field of history education, there was a strong emphasis on the concept of national humiliation. Wang (cited by Shen, 2002) referenced Weizhong Pu's records, which indicated that "Love the Motherland" served as a criterion for upper-grade primary school education. This criterion encompassed two aspects: "Understanding the heroic resistance of the Chinese nation against imperialist aggression and being able to articulate these historical events" and "Recognizing Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau as integral parts of the motherland's territory." In the middle and high school stages, students should be able to learn about China's century-old history of humiliation. At the high school stage, education should guide students to analyze the causes, processes, and results of the Century of Humiliation so that students not only develop a sense of shame but also cultivate a sense of responsibility and mission (Wang, 2014).¹⁶ Since the 1980s, the CCP has undertaken a reinterpretation of Japan's invasion of China in light of the controversy surrounding Japan's history textbooks and the Japanese Prime Minister's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. The "Nanjing Massacre" was frequently mentioned in official publications and gradually became an important symbol of nationalist sentiment. From the mid-1980s to the 1990s, several memorial halls were established, including the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre of the Japanese Invaders, the Memorial Hall of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, and the September 18th History Museum. These actions highlighted the Japanese army's aggressive atrocities against China and portrayed the Chinese as victims, repeatedly fueling the Chinese people's resentment of "national humiliation". The combination of the continuously evoked historical memory of humiliation and the CCP's historical narrative (the CCP ending China's "century of national humiliation" and establishing a new China) has subtly deepened the Chinese people's confidence in the CCP.

¹⁶ 汪宏倫(2012)。淺談兩岸國族問題中的情感結構。載於 徐斯儉、曾國祥(編)文明的呼喚：尋找兩岸三地和平之路(181-231頁)。台北:左岸文化。[Wang, Horng-Luen(2012). Qiantan liangan guozu wenti zhong de qingganjiegou. recorded in Hsu Szu-chien, Roy Tseng (editor) Wenming de huhuan:Xunzhao liangansandi hepingzhilu. Taipei:Rivegauche]

The Chinese government played a crucial role in the resurgence of Chinese nationalism in the 1990s. However, it would be inaccurate to view Chinese nationalism as solely an ideology constructed by the state. During this time, China encountered a series of conflicts with Western countries, such as its failed bid for the 1993 Olympics, then-Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui's visit to the U.S. in 1995, and the bombing of the Chinese embassy in the U.S. in 1999. These events shattered the Chinese people's illusion of Western politics and created a sense of disappointment and dissatisfaction with the capitalist and free market system that China had adopted since the economic reform in the 1980s. The peak of this sentiment was reached with the publication of the book "China Can Say No" in 1996. The Chinese people primarily expressed their nationalist sentiment through the publication of periodicals and spontaneous protests during sudden diplomatic conflicts, especially those involving the U.S., Japan, and other countries. These expressions often took the form of xenophobia.

In contrast to the earlier bottom-up "polity-seeking" Chinese nationalism of the late nineteenth century, the nationalism of the 1990s was characterized by a process of ideological reinforcement led by the CCP. However, the Chinese people were not merely passive recipients of the government's nationalist agenda; instead, they actively participated in the rise of nationalism. In fact, at times, the government had to suppress nationalist sentiments in order to prevent social unrest.

By comparing Chinese nationalism in the late 19th century with that of the 1990s, it can be observed that Chinese nationalism has continued to serve as a policy tool for the regime since the 1990s, with the aim of maintaining its legitimacy. The CCP has monopolized the interpretation of identity and shifted its ideological emphasis, particularly due to changing domestic and international circumstances, to emphasize the concept of "embodying prosperity." Furthermore, there has been a greater exclusion of minority languages in language policies. It is due to the active promotion by the regime and the participation of the population that nationalism gained significant momentum in the post-1990s era and has continued to the present day.

Chapter 3. Two Case Studies:

How nationalism affects the Chinese Government's strategy

Based on the analysis of the preceding chapters, it can be concluded that the resurgence of Chinese nationalism after the 1990s was not solely due to the CCP's policy adjustments, but also a collective sentiment among the Chinese public.

In this chapter, we present case studies to investigate how the CCP navigates and responds to nationalist sentiments in order to achieve its political objectives. The cases chosen for this section are the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade by the U.S. and the EP-3 incident. Both of these incidents were significant diplomatic disputes for China in the post-1990s era. The reason for choosing diplomatic conflicts as case studies is that these conflicts are often unpredictable and can quickly evoke intense emotions among the general public. For the CCP, which prioritizes maintaining stability, it is imperative to swiftly evaluate the situation and adopt an appropriate stance before public emotions escalate. By examining the divergent approaches taken by the CCP in handling sudden diplomatic crises, we can gain valuable insights into how the party incorporates Chinese nationalism into its policies.

These two diplomatic events were selected as the analysis objects because:

- 1) Both conflicts occurred within a relatively brief timeframe of two years during Jiang Zemin's tenure, and there was no significant shift in policy strategy between the two incidents. Moreover, during Jiang's era, the decision-making process of the CCP evolved towards a collective leadership system. This system allowed for a more stable and orderly formulation of policy directions, preventing policy swings that could result from the idiosyncratic leadership of individual leaders.
- 2) Both incidents were marked by diplomatic disputes between China and the U.S., which constitute the most significant bilateral relationship in Chinese diplomacy. The significance of Sino-US diplomatic tensions is evident, considering that the U.S. has consistently been the subject of Chinese xenophobic sentiments during periods of increased nationalism in China. Furthermore, as the most influential global power, US foreign policy has an impact on the policies of other countries. As a result, China tends to approach matters related to the U.S. with greater caution.

3.1. 1999: The Embassy Bombing

The incident occurred on May 7, 1999, during NATO's bombing campaign against the Yugoslav alliance. A U.S. B-2 bomber fired five joint direct attack munitions, which mistakenly hit the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia. This tragic event resulted in the deaths of three Chinese journalists and caused injuries to dozens of others. This event led to a surge of intense public anger in China, resulting in student protests taking place in various locations. Vice President Hu Jintao stated the CCP's position on the student protests, expressing firm support and protection for all legal protest activities, while also warning against overreaction and the potential for individuals to exploit the situation in order to disrupt public order and social stability (Weiss, 2014).¹⁷

Moreover, some reports and testimonies from participants in the demonstrations suggest that the Chinese government may have played a role in organizing the protests.

The U.S. attributed the incident to the misuse of outdated maps, while U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and President Clinton publicly apologized several times through letters. However, the Chinese government did not accept their apologies until a week after the incident, reflecting the uncompromising stance of the CCP.

In the aftermath of the incident, the Chinese media did not report on the US government's apology, thereby contributing to the spread of conspiracy theories. Many CCP officials and members of the public believed that the incident was a deliberate act by the US government to test China's stance. This statement has circulated widely in China, and many Chinese people continue to believe it today.

While the conflict between China and the U.S. over the Belgrade embassy bombing ended relatively peacefully, with both sides paying compensation, the CCP's attitude during this incident has raised questions and prompted investigations.

The fact that the CCP allowed mass protests intrigues scholars because:

- 1) The incident took place during a sensitive time for the CCP, as it coincided with the anniversary of significant pro-democracy events in China. Specifically, the May Fourth Movement and the June Fourth Tiananmen Incident hold symbolic significance for the democratic movement in China. As the CCP opposed democratic reforms, this period was one of heightened vigilance for the party.
- 2) The CCP suppression of Falun Gong practitioners intensified in the months leading up to the incident, with the party carrying out a massive arrest of over 10,000 practitioners. The crackdown created panic among the Chinese people and internal

¹⁷ Jessica Chen Weiss. . (2014). *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations* . New York: Oxford University Press.

divisions within the CCP, exacerbating the party's already heightened state of tension at the time.

To comprehend why the CCP permitted nationalist protests with a strong anti-foreign sentiment at this particular time, it is necessary to examine China's domestic and international contexts.

3.1.1 Case analysis

For an authoritarian state like China, allowing xenophobic demonstrations by the population is risky as it can create various threats to the stability of the regime. Such as:

1) Obscure protest goals :

In an authoritarian state like China, allowing xenophobic protests by the public poses significant risks of instability for the regime. When the public takes part in a protest against foreign aggression, their anger can quickly turn towards criticizing the government's incompetence. Nationalism can either bolster popular support for the regime or undermine its legitimacy.

2) Risks of evolving into a democratization movement:

In authoritarian states, citizens have limited opportunities to participate in politics. However, allowing protests provides a platform for the public to express their views and engage in mobilization. However, this can also lead to social instability and disrupt the regime's hold on power. The potential costs of restoring order after a protest can be significant, and the regime may resort to violence in order to maintain control. Furthermore, protests can spread beyond major cities, potentially leading to a democratization movement that poses a threat to the regime's survival.

3) Possibility of provoking a potential regime split:

Protests have the potential to expose vulnerabilities within a regime or solicit support from elites, creating internal divisions between hardliners and moderates that can undermine the regime (Weiss, 2014). The Tiananmen incident provides an example of such regime-splitting effects of public protests, as the sympathy expressed by the then-premier of the CCP, Zhao Ziyang, for the protesting students caused a rift with conservative factions within the party, leading to a power struggle within the CCP.

However, if an authoritarian regime represses a protest, it risks undermining its own legitimacy, especially in the case of xenophobic protests where nationalism often acts as the main driving force for mass mobilization. Refusing to allow people to express their emotions could lead to the regime being perceived as betraying the nation. Therefore, the CCP likely considered various factors when deciding to allow, and even incite, nationalist sentiment among the public. There are at least three factors that likely influenced the CCP's decision-making.

1) The anger of the people cannot be easily suppressed:

Prior to the embassy bombing, there were already diplomatic conflicts between China and the U.S., including the Yinhe incident in 1993, the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996, and the U.S.'s obstruction of China's accession to the WTO negotiations. These incidents have contributed to a growing negative sentiment among the Chinese people towards the U.S. Furthermore, China's political propaganda has continuously emphasized the "century of national humiliation," which has fueled grief and anger among Chinese citizens. The embassy bombing thus became a catalyst, triggering outrage among the Chinese public towards the U.S. The vague explanation provided by the US regarding the incident only served to deepen suspicions and fuel nationalist sentiment among both CCP officials and the general public. According to Weiss (2014), many Chinese leaders believed that the bombing was a deliberate act aimed at testing China's determination.¹⁸ As a result, the CCP regarded the US's action as a provocative act, and media coverage controlled by the government only served to further inflame public anger.

Given the heightened nationalist sentiment among the Chinese public, if the CCP were to suppress protests, it could potentially become the target of public anger or be criticized for being "weak towards the U.S. and harsh towards the people."

2) Rising nationalism among the people could help the CCP show a tough stance in dealing with the U.S.

Although the Clinton administration at that time generally maintained friendly relations with China, its policy was inconsistent, and it showed a tendency to align with Taiwan. This alarmed China and even resulted in the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996. Although President Clinton visited China in person after the incident and made a "Three Nos" declaration in an attempt to repair Sino-US relations, the CCP has always been on alert because the Taiwan issue involves the CCP's core interests. However, because the Taiwan issue involves the core interests of the CCP, China is still wary of the U.S. In addition, there had been numerous diplomatic conflicts between China and the U.S. prior to 1999. As a result, the Chinese government believed it was necessary to take a strong stance on the bombing incident in order to maintain China's future position in international affairs. Former

¹⁸ Same as 1 (Weiss)

Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan mentioned in his memoir that "How to deal with this unexpected event was a critical test of the CCP's ability and also proved to be an important issue for China's development."(2011)¹⁹ According to the transcript of the conversation with Jiang and others at that time, it is clear that the CCP leadership decided that the incident was a provocative act by the U.S.' Thus, they decided that a tough stance should be taken against the U.S., as Jiang said at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee:

"They hit not one, but multiple missiles, hitting the embassy from different directions. The United States and other NATO countries will certainly make excuses in every possible way, but no matter what they say, this is the result of the blatant war of aggression launched by NATO led by the United States. We need to carry out comprehensive and thoughtful thinking and deployment. A serious attitude must be taken to condemn this barbaric atrocity in the strongest terms. We must declare to NATO headed by the United States: the Chinese people cannot be insulted! The Chinese nation cannot be bullied!" (Jiang, 2012)

As information regarding the Chinese student protests reached international audiences, it further reinforced the legitimacy of the Chinese government's actions. China's undeniable victim status in the incident has also allowed the CCP to maintain a tough stance, refusing to accept the US apology and condemning the US behavior on numerous occasions. Additionally, the CCP suspended bilateral talks on various issues such as trade, human rights, and proliferation, which were widely reported by the Chinese media. This further demonstrates the CCP's ability to protect China and reinforces the public's identification with the party.

3) Possible economic benefit

Prior to the embassy bombing incident, the U.S. and China were experiencing diplomatic tensions due to several issues, such as the Taiwan dispute, the Kosovo War, and China's ongoing negotiations for accession to the WTO. China's negotiations for accession to the WTO had been ongoing for several years. As rumors started to circulate that the Chinese government might have been involved in organizing the student protests, the U.S. began to suspect that the CCP was trying to exploit the incident for political advantage, especially in relation to the WTO negotiations. In fact, U.S. Trade Representative Barshefsky directly warned China against linking the events in Yugoslavia with its accession to the WTO. Despite these warnings, the CCP maintained its tough stance, which enjoyed widespread support from the Chinese public. The WTO talks were not resumed until November. This situation further reinforced the legitimacy of the CCP in the eyes of the Chinese public.

¹⁹ Tang Jiaxuan. (2011). *Heavy Storms and Gentle Breeze*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press

It is widely believed that China achieved a favorable outcome in the WTO negotiations. However, the embassy bombing incident complicates the assessment of whether China truly benefited from the negotiations. However, the incident did provide the CCP with the opportunity to use nationalism as a bargaining chip to consolidate its legitimacy and bolster its public support. Since the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident, the CCP has been extremely cautious regarding the potential dangers of mass mobilization and has seldom permitted public protests. However, during the embassy bombing incident in 1999, the CCP saw an opportunity to capitalize on the growing nationalist sentiment in order to strengthen its legitimacy and retain public support. This incident serves as a case study of how nationalism has influenced the decision-making of the CCP since the 1990s.

3.2. 2001 EP-3 Incident

Only two years after the embassy bombing, on April 1, 2001, another serious mid-air collision between Chinese and U.S. military aircraft occurred in the South China Sea. Tensions between China and the U.S. escalated as both countries blamed each other for the incident.

After days of negotiations, the two countries finally made concessions. The U.S. formally apologized twice, expressing regret over the death of the Chinese pilot and the unauthorized entry into Chinese airspace. China subsequently released the detained U.S. military personnel.

Although the embassy bombing and the incident in the South China Sea have not occurred far apart, there are significant differences in the way the CCP handles anti-American sentiment.

3.2.1 Case analysis

The EP-3 incident, similar to the embassy bombing incident in 1999, provoked strong nationalist sentiment among the Chinese public. In major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Nanjing, college students organized protests the day after the incident, and the public demanded protests in front of the US embassy. However, unlike in the embassy bombing incident, the CCP rejected all demands for protest. In 2001, there were no significant anniversaries or instances of social unrest, such as the Falun Gong movement, indicating a relatively stable domestic environment. Therefore, allowing public protests could strengthen the legitimacy of the regime while causing less harm to social stability. Conversely, suppressing the people's need to express their sentiments could lead to the public perceiving the government as weak towards the U.S. and harsh towards its own people. Although freedom of speech was restricted in the 1990s, the development of the internet provided a new platform for expressing public opinion. After the Hainan Island incident, there was a

significant public outcry urging the government to take a tough stance against the U.S. The CCP's decision to ban civil protests could potentially go against nationalist sentiment.

However, contrary to expectations, in 1999, Jiang, who advocated a tough stance on the U.S. in the embassy bombing incident, established principles for dealing with the collision incident as soon as it occurred:

“*Not doing anything to negatively impact the long-term relationship with the U.S.*” (Shrik, 2007)²⁰

Similar to the analysis of the embassy bombing incident, the CCP's cautious approach to the Hainan Island incident can be understood by examining the domestic and international environment in 2001. There were at least three factors that the CCP needed to consider at the time.

1) Sino-US relations under the Bush Administration

The Hainan Island incident took place within three months after the inauguration of the George W. Bush administration, which had adopted a different approach from its predecessor, the Clinton administration. While the Clinton administration regarded China as a strategic partner, the Bush administration saw China as a strategic competitor (Shambaugh, 2000a).²¹

At the beginning of the Bush administration, its China policy shifted from viewing China as a strategic partner, as the Clinton administration did, to viewing it as a strategic competitor, similar to the containment policy employed towards the USSR during the Cold War.²² The CCP was cautious about this strategic change and sent Vice Premier Qian Qichen to the U.S. in March 2001 to meet with senior U.S. government officials and discuss the maintenance of stable Sino-U.S. relations. Qian took a tougher stance on the issue of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan; however, overall, the visit helped enhance friendly relations between the two countries. Following the visit, the U.S. replaced the aggressive terminology of "strategic competitor" with "not strategic partners, but not irreconcilable enemies."²³ (Wu, 2007)

However, less than three weeks after Qian's successful visit, the incident on Hainan Island occurred. For the CCP, the potential deterioration of the recently improved Sino-US relationship would further complicate its diplomatic situation. Moreover, the passionate anti-US protests during the embassy bombing incident in 1999 raised doubts among other

²⁰ Shrik, Susan . 2007. China: Fragile Superpower. Oxford: Oxford :Oxford university Press

²¹ Shambaugh, David.(2000a). Sino-American Strategic Relations: From Partners to Competitors.” *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 97-115.

²² Joseph Jung-Hsiang Tsai.(2007). The Continuity and Change of Washington-Beijing-Taipei Relations during the Bush Administration.*Taiwan International Studies Quarterly* , Vol.3 (No.1),p.71-98

²³ Wu, Jianmin.2007a Waijiao Anli [Case studies in diplomacy].Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe

countries about the possibility of the CCP deliberately inciting nationalist sentiments among the public. Therefore, if the CCP allowed the public to protest on the streets again, it would once again face scrutiny from Western countries, particularly the U.S.

2) **American Public Opinion**

The legitimacy of George W. Bush's presidency was called into question due to the closely contested presidential election, which impacted the perception of his diplomatic abilities. When the Hainan Island incident occurred, it marked the first diplomatic conflict faced by the Bush administration. This incident may have influenced the administration's decision to adopt a strong stance, demonstrating their determination to toughen their policy towards China. For instance, President Bush publicly demanded that China release the crew and warned that every day that passed could harm relations between the two countries. The U.S.'s tough stance drew the attention of the American public, and Western media reports on the incident primarily focused on the detention of American personnel and aircraft, as well as the provocative actions of the Chinese pilot. These events sparked anger among the American public. This heightened attention and firm stance raised the possibility that the crash could escalate into a more serious diplomatic crisis. However, the CCP may have realized that by inciting Chinese nationalism to pressure the U.S. at this point, it could decrease the likelihood of peaceful negotiations with the U.S.

3) **The cause of the accident was unclear**

The controversy between China and the U.S. regarding the incident primarily revolves around the causes of the accident and the question of responsibility. Despite the Chinese government repeatedly asserting that the U.S. is responsible for the collision and portraying the deceased pilot as a hero, no evidence has been provided to support this claim.

However, in 2001, the Internet was gradually gaining popularity in China, providing Chinese people with easier access to foreign information. According to the statistical report on the development of the internet in China, which has been released every six months since 1997, the number of internet users in China increased from 2.1 million in January 1999²⁴ to 26.5 million in July 2001, representing an increase of nearly 13 times in three years.²⁵ This growth in electronic communications and forums has enabled society to express their views

²⁴ Cyberspace Administration of China (1999). *China Statistical Report on Internet Development* (3rd). Beijing: Cyberspace Administration of China

²⁵ Cyberspace Administration of China (1999). *China Statistical Report on Internet Development* (7th). Beijing: Cyberspace Administration of China

on political matters, particularly on nationalism, more widely.²⁶ From the end of the 1990s, online forums such as "Qiangguo" (強國) and "Xic hutong" (西祠胡同) attracted a large number of people to engage in discussions about current affairs both domestically and internationally. Although these online communities were still under the control and influence of the government, the anonymity of the internet provided an advantage for Chinese people's desire for political participation. Weiss reported the opinion of a Chinese journalist who participated in the 1999 embassy bombing protest, stating that "these two incidents were not the same." There were many unanswered questions about the plane collision. By 2001, we had the ability to go online and access numerous reports from overseas media, allowing us to see both perspectives of the dispute. Unlike the embassy bombing incident, responsibility for the Hainan Island incident was unclear. Despite the Communist Party's insistence on holding the U.S. responsible and promoting a favorable narrative through the media, the Chinese response was not as enthusiastic as it was in 1999. This could be attributed to the rapid growth of Internet access in China. This growth weakened the authorities' ability to control information. While the Hainan Island incident did trigger anti-American nationalism in China, the absence of evidence supporting the Communist Party's position meant that permitting protests could result in a significant diplomatic crisis and raise doubts about the true cause of the incident.

Based on the analysis above, it is evident that despite the CCP having a relatively stable and controllable domestic environment in 2001, it acknowledged the importance of promptly resolving the Hainan Island incident due to differences in the U.S. government's position and the nature of the incident. The CCP's conciliatory attitude helped facilitate later negotiations and a final compromise, which ended the conflict with the U.S. publicly expressing "sorry," a word that could mean both "regret" in English and "apology" in Chinese.

The Hainan Island incident of 2001 revealed the complexity and nuances of Chinese nationalism and its role in the country's foreign policy. Despite the CCP's efforts to stoke nationalist sentiment, it has also demonstrated its ability to selectively manipulate public opinion for its own purposes. The incident also highlighted the increasing influence of the internet and its impact on the dissemination of information, which has weakened the government's ability to control the narrative. This study suggests that Chinese nationalism after the 1990s should not be viewed solely as an irrational and overzealous phenomenon, but rather as a pragmatic tool used by the CCP to achieve its political objectives.

²⁶ David M. Lampton (2001.), *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press

Chapter 4 :Nationalism in Xi Jinping Era

In 2012, Xi Jinping became the new leader of the CCP. Prior to his appointment, Xi's leadership style was relatively unknown to the rest of the world. During this period, China encountered various social challenges, such as environmental pollution and corruption. Furthermore, the decentralization of power within the party has weakened its ability to govern effectively. In addition, the country's economic growth has slowed down, resulting in a widening gap between the rich and the poor, and increased social tension. The growth of the Internet has provided people with greater access to information and opportunities to express opinions that differ from the government, thereby adding to the pressures faced by the authorities. Despite domestic instability, China also experienced unprecedented diplomatic opportunities during this period.

After the September 11 attacks, the U.S. shifted its foreign policy focus to the Middle East and enhanced cooperation with China in areas such as the economy, trade, and international security. Additionally, the relatively moderate diplomatic strategies of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao helped to alleviate the West's concerns about China's ascent, granting China a decade of opportunities for robust growth. In 2008, the major economies of the world, led by the U.S., were severely impacted by the Asian financial crisis, while China was the only country among these economies to sustain significant economic growth. This fact drew attention to China's rapid ascent among countries worldwide. In 2010, China's GDP surpassed that of Japan, making it the second-largest economy in the world after the U.S. This further deepened the sense that China was poised to catch up with the U.S.

During the early years of Xi Jinping's tenure, some scholars predicted that his top priority would be to stabilize China's domestic situation and that there would be minimal changes in foreign policy. However, as Xi made the strongly nationalist "China Dream" (中國夢) his policy focus, it became apparent that his leadership style differed significantly from that of his predecessors.

The objective of this chapter is to assess the evolution of Chinese nationalism during the era of Xi Jinping. Firstly, we will apply the analytical framework used in the previous two chapters to examine the characteristics of Chinese nationalism during the Xi era across four dimensions: identity, ideology, language, and the main actor. Next, we will examine how the Xi administration incorporates nationalism into its policies through case studies.

4.1. The China Dream

In 2012, Xi Jinping introduced the concept of the Chinese Dream at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Xi defined the Chinese Dream as "realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, which is the greatest aspiration of the Chinese people in modern times." He also stated that "History tells us that everyone's future and

destiny are closely related to the future and destiny of the country and the nation." "When the country and the nation prosper, everyone will benefit." The CCP has connected the Chinese Dream with China and its people. As the CCP and state-controlled media have increasingly promoted the concept of the Chinese Dream, it has become clear that the policies and guidelines of the Xi administration will revolve around this narrative.

The policy strategies of Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao were primarily based on pragmatism. The rhetoric used in their policies often focused on "peace" and "sustainable development." In contrast, the narrative of the "Chinese Dream" frequently promoted by Xi includes rhetoric such as "achieving prosperity" and "rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." This demonstrates that Xi's leadership attitude and stance differ from Deng Xiaoping's approach of "keeping a low profile and biding your time." While Xi later proposed the "New Type of Great Power Relations," which seemed to continue the peaceful development line of former leaders like Jiang and Hu, the CCP has not adequately provided the context for this initiative. Therefore, scholars generally believe that its practical significance is limited, and it can only be seen as a pacification strategy used by the CCP to alleviate other countries' concerns about China's rise. The "Chinese Dream," with its positive and proactive approach, remains at the core of Xi's policy.

As Xi's policy direction has changed, the diplomacy of the Xi era has also appeared to be very different from that of previous leaders. It is primarily manifested in diplomatic attitudes, international foreign propaganda measures, and policy initiatives. In terms of diplomatic attitude, China's approach to handling foreign affairs has become increasingly tough, especially after the deterioration of the Sino-US relationship due to the trade war and the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach often deviates from diplomatic etiquette. The most representative example is a series of offensive and provocative remarks made by Chinese diplomats, which researchers refer to as "Wolf Warrior Diplomacy." Well-known cases, such as China's ambassador to Canada, Cong Peiwu, warning Canada not to offer asylum to Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters in 2020, were seen as open threats. He stated that Canada would only endanger the safety of 300,000 Canadian citizens and business people in Hong Kong. Another example is the 2020 response of Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian to the request of the Five Eyes Foreign Ministers for China to withdraw the decision of the National People's Congress to authorize the revocation of the qualifications of four members in Hong Kong SAR. Zhao said at a press conference, "It doesn't matter if they have five eyes or ten eyes. As long as they dare to damage China's sovereignty, security, and development interests, we must be cautious that their actions may have consequences" Although the Chinese government does not officially recognize the existence of "Wolf Warrior Diplomacy," the change in Chinese diplomats' work style is believed to have official support or acquiescence. Therefore, "Wolf Warrior Diplomacy" is viewed as an expression of Xi's aggressive policy approach.

In terms of external propaganda, the Chinese government has invested 45 billion yuan in the "Great External Propaganda" program since 2009.²⁷ During the Xi era, China's

²⁷ He Qinglian.(2019).*Red Infiltration: the Truth About the Global Expansion of Chinese Media*.Taipei:Güsa Press

approach to external propaganda has become more aggressive, sophisticated, and often subtle. The CCP's usual tactics include interfering with the coverage of foreign news outlets by acquiring shares in them, establishing media outlets in foreign countries, using fake accounts to manipulate social media opinions, and so on. Another initiative that has faced criticism from many countries in recent years is the "Confucius Institute," which has been established by the CCP in foreign universities. The Confucius Institute has been accused of promoting the CCP's historical views and ideology to foreign students through language education. According to the CCP's official website of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), as of May 2020, the number of Confucius Institutes worldwide has reached 541. The Belt and Road Initiative, first proposed by the Communist Party of China in 2013, is a policy initiative aimed at establishing and dominating a vast economic belt that spans Europe, Asia, Africa, South Asia, and other regions. This initiative is often viewed as a counter to the US "pivot to Asia" strategy.

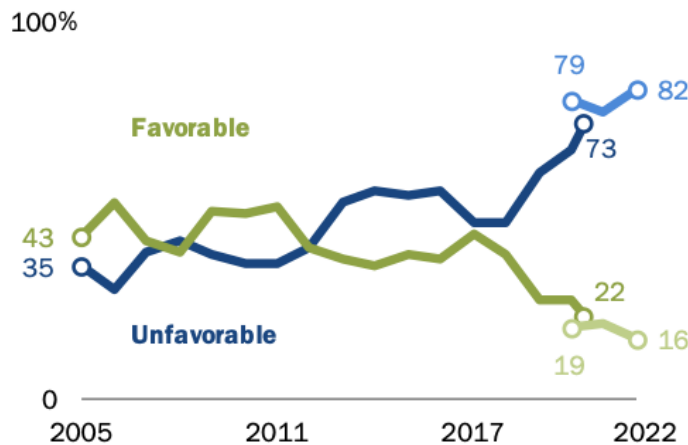
According to the official website of the CCP, as of 2021, China has established scientific and technological cooperation relations with 84 countries, with a total investment of 2.99 trillion yuan. The total import and export of countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative reached 10.43 trillion yuan, representing a 23.5 percent increase compared to the previous year. The Belt and Road Initiative involves numerous countries and substantial investment. If successful, this initiative will expand China's partnerships to over 70 countries, encompassing a population of 4.4 billion people, which is approximately 63% of the global population. This initiative is a testament to China's ambition for global influence.

Since the 1990s, the CCP's legitimacy has increasingly relied on its monopoly of nationalist discourse power. To fulfill Xi's China Dream, it will require not only more proactive diplomacy from the government but also a fervent nationalist response from the Chinese public. To break away from the rigidity of previous political propaganda, nationalist propaganda in Xi's era often combines technology and popular culture to carry out domestic political propaganda in a more flexible manner. The CCP supported the well-received nationalistic movie "Wolf Warrior", which was a commercial success. The CCP also effectively utilizes the internet to quickly disseminate information, shaping public opinion and attracting influential artists to promote their values through the government propaganda apparatus. Through a strategy that is closely intertwined with people's daily lives, the CCP enables nationalist propaganda to permeate every facet of society. To advance its vision of a "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," the CCP has also intensified its control over domestic stability in recent years. This includes the prohibition of nearly all large civil protests and gatherings, as well as the suppression of free speech. Additionally, the CCP has increased its supervision of cyberspace, employing internet police extensively to regulate public discourse in the online realm.

In line with Xi's more proactive and confident policy stance, it is understandable that the CCP is committed to enhancing China's international influence and bolstering the Chinese people's confidence in the country. However, China's assertive actions have resulted in significant repercussions both domestically and internationally. Internationally, Wolf Warrior diplomacy has sparked protests from governments worldwide, especially following the

outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. China has clashed with Western countries over the investigation into the origin of the epidemic. According to a 2022 report by the Pew Research Center, the proportion of people in many countries with a negative view of China has significantly increased. Among them, the U.S. has grown from 52% in 2012 to 82%, while Korea has significantly increased from 31% in 2002 to 80% in 2022.²⁸

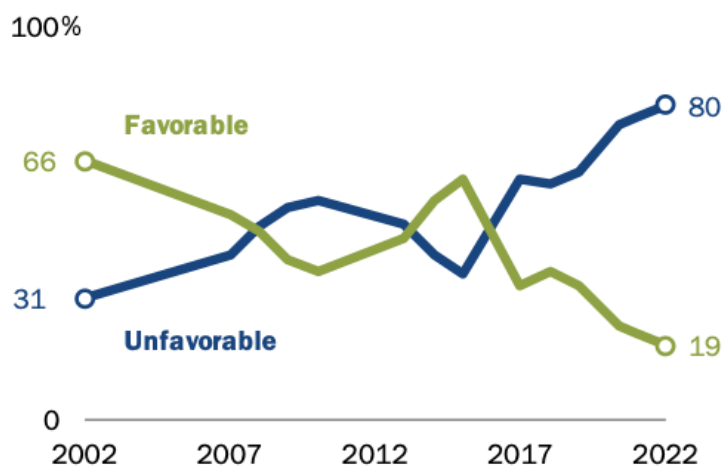
Figure 2. % of Americans who have a(n)_ view of China



Source: Spring 2022 Global Attitudes Survey. Q5b.

“Negative Views of China Tied to Critical Views of Its Policies on Human Rights”

Figure 3. % of Korean who have a(n)_ view of China



Source: Spring 2022 Global Attitudes Survey. Q5b.

“Negative Views of China Tied to Critical Views of Its Policies on Human Rights”

²⁸ Laura Silver, Christine Huang AND Laura Clancy (2022). How Global Public Opinion of China Has Shifted in the Xi Era. Retrieved Nov 4, 2022, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/09/28/how-global-public-opinion-of-china-has-shifted-in-the-xi-era/>

The Confucius Institute has also generated dissatisfaction in many countries. For example, the United Kingdom, France, and other nations have criticized the Confucius Institute for infringing on academic freedom and engaging in aggressive political propaganda. Consequently, many Confucius Institutes have been closed due to boycotts by various countries. In China, the government's efforts to maintain stability have expanded to include culture, finance, capital security, and other aspects of people's lives. This expansion has also encompassed Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other territories, resulting in increased public security expenditure for the Communist Party of China. In 2020, China's budget for maintaining stability, under the name of public security expenditure, reached 210 billion US dollars. This amount is more than double what it was 10 years ago and 7% higher than the military expenditure in the same year. This not only increases the financial burden but also indicates the tension between the government and the people in China. The more dissatisfied the populace is with the regime, the more the government needs to spend to suppress their discontent.

The analysis above indicates that while the propaganda strategies in the era of Xi Jinping's leadership in China have shown adaptability to various needs in order to stabilize its rule, they often generate negative consequences both domestically and internationally. To suppress these negative effects, the government is compelled to enhance social control, thus creating a vicious cycle.

4.2. Comparison to nationalism in the 1990s

The analysis above highlights that since Xi first proposed the concept of the "Chinese Dream," it has sparked widespread discussion among the Chinese public. Scholars such as Xu Gang and Zhang Jingzhi have argued that the Chinese dream is an "economic dream" and a "dream of great power," while Hong Xianghua has suggested that it is "the dream of becoming a major political power." The meaning of the Chinese Dream has gradually expanded to include areas such as the economy, the rule of law, environmental protection, and diplomacy, reflecting the priorities of the CCP. However, its core remains the realization of the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" as a call to unite the Chinese people and strengthen their loyalty to the country and the CCP. This section explores the characteristics of Chinese nationalism in Xi's era by contrasting it with Chinese nationalism in the 1990s.

Table 3. Analyze Chinese nationalism with the Analytics framework -2

	The 1990s	Xi's era
Identity	Power holders with no competitor	Power holders with no competitor
Ideology	Embody the power	The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.
Language	The space for the development of minority languages is compressed	Tolerance of minority languages shrinks even sharply
Main Actors	-The CCP -The public	-The CCP -The netizens

- **Identity**

As the successor to the KMT government, the CCP's definition of the "Chinese nation" embraces the concept of constructing a pluralistic nation that is inclusive of all nationalities. In the 1980s, the CCP defined the Chinese nation as consisting of "56 ethnic groups, including the Han majority and 55 ethnic minorities." This foundation has not changed in the Xi era. The "Chinese nation" constructed by the CCP is still a form of state nationalism that serves the interests of the ruling party. However, in the Xi era, the CCP showed a stronger tendency to assimilate ethnic minorities. As the Zhuang, Hui, and other ethnic groups have already undergone significant sinicization, changes in ethnic policies are primarily observed in regions with high levels of conflict, such as Xinjiang and Tibet. The Silk Road Economic Belt, which is part of the Belt and Road Initiative, encompasses Xinjiang and Qinghai, regions where ethnic minorities reside, as key areas for development. Therefore, ensuring the stability of ethnic minorities is a top priority in China's development efforts. The frequent riots and protests in Xinjiang, Tibet, and other regions have been labeled as acts of terrorism and separatism by the CCP. As a result, the CCP has heightened its vigilance in ethnic minority areas. Since 2014, the CCP has established "vocational skills education and training centers" in Xinjiang. However, these centers have faced accusations from the international community of imprisoning and abusing Uyghurs. China claims that the purpose of these centers is to promote the learning of the country's common language, vocational skills, and to combat terrorism. Regardless of the facts, Xi's positive and assertive approach to assimilating ethnic minorities differs from the previous leaders' emphasis on ethnic assimilation primarily through immigration and economic incentives.

Table 4. List of China's ethnic minority groups

	Chinese name	English Name		Chinese name	English Name
1	阿昌族	Achang nationality	29	傈僳族	Lisu
2	白族	Bai (Pai)	30	黎族	Li
3	保安族	Bonan	31	满族	Man
4	布朗族	Blang	32	毛南族	Maonan
5	布依族	Bouyei	33	门巴族	Moinba
6	朝鲜族	Chaoxian (Korean)	34	蒙古族	Monggol
7	达斡尔族	Daur	35	苗族	Miao
8	傣族	Dai (Tai)	36	仫佬族	Mulam
9	德昂族	Deang	37	纳西族	Naxi
10	东乡族	Dongxiang	38	怒族	Nu
11	侗族	Dong (Tung)	39	普米族	Pumi
12	独龙族	Drung	40	羌族	Qiang
13	鄂伦春族	Oroqen	41	撒拉族	Salar
14	俄罗斯族	Eluosi	42	畲族	She
15	鄂温克族	Ewenki	43	水族	Shui
16	高山族	Taiwanese aborigine	44	塔吉克族	Tajik
17	仡佬族	Gelo	45	塔塔尔族	Tatar
18	汉族	Han	46	土家族	Tujia
19	哈尼族	Hani	47	土族	Tu
20	哈萨克族	Kazak	48	佯族	Va (Wa)
21	赫哲族	Hezhe	49	维吾尔族	Uygur
22	回族	Hui	50	乌孜别克族	Ozbek
23	基诺族	Jino	51	锡伯族	Xibe
24	景颇族	Jingpo	52	瑶族	Yao
25	京族	Jing	53	彝族	Yi
26	柯尔克孜族	Kirgiz	54	裕固族	Yugur
27	拉祜族	Lahu	55	藏族	Zang (Tibetan)
28	珞巴族	Lhoba	56	壮族	Zhuang

Source: http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-07/26/content_17366_3.htm

- **Ideology**

"The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" is the core of Xi's China Dream narrative. On the past glory of the Chinese nation and its historical development, the CC described it as follows:

*"Our nation is a great nation. In the course of more than 5,000 years of civilization development, the Chinese nation has made indelible contributions to the progress of human civilization..... After suffering, the Chinese nation went through the most dangerous time..... until the emergence of the Communist Party of China, China was rescued from poverty."*²⁹

It can be observed that Xi's discourse on the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" is rooted in the narrative of "national humiliation," which has been intensified and reinterpreted since the late 19th century. This narrative conveys the idea that China's current revival is necessary due to the humiliations it faced in the past. The concept of "national humiliation" has been consistently emphasized in the CCP's political propaganda, and it is not exclusive to the Xi era. However, unlike previous leaders, Xi has directly linked the discourse of "national humiliation" to the core of his policy discourse in order to inspire the Chinese people's belief in national "rejuvenation" and confidence in the CCP.

Compared to the political philosophies of previous leaders, such as Deng's "hide the light and bide his time" and Jiang's "steering the way according to the situation" to maintain a low profile and accumulate strength, Xi has taken on the mission of achieving "complete" national rejuvenation.

Table 5. The policy spirit of Chinese leaders

Leader	Belief
Deng Xiaoping	"Hide the light and bide his time"
Jing Zeming	"Steering the way according to the situation"
Xi Jinping	"Complete" national rejuvenation"

various speculations circulate regarding the reasons behind Xi Jinping's increasingly assertive political stance. Some scholars trace his personal upbringing and suggest that he has been deeply influenced by Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution. This influence may have led him to adopt a more extreme authoritarian political position. While this viewpoint has gained acceptance as Xi has elevated his own authority to unprecedented heights, it should not be overlooked that his strategies may also be the result of pragmatic considerations.

Since the reform and opening up, the traditional socialist ideology of the Communist Party of China has faced challenges. The CCP relies on rapid economic development and

²⁹ Xi Jinping. (2013). *Excerpts from Xi Jinping's Remarks on Realizing the Chinese Dream of the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation*. Beijing: Central Party Literature Press.

patriotic propaganda to maintain its legitimacy. However, since the mid-2000s, China's economic growth has slowed, accompanied by increasing domestic inequality, official corruption, severe pollution, and governance problems. These issues have all eroded confidence in the CCP. At the international level, China has been given an opportunity. Despite the slowdown in economic growth, the gap between China and the U.S. has significantly narrowed. In 2012, when Xi Jinping took power, China's GDP reached 52% of that of the U.S. By 2021, China's GDP has reached 77% of that of the U.S., and China's total export trade has exceeded that of the U.S. Furthermore, the Chinese economy has maintained its growth momentum since the 2008 financial crisis, convincing many of the superiority of the "Chinese socialist model." The relative decline of the West has provided a unique opportunity for China's development.

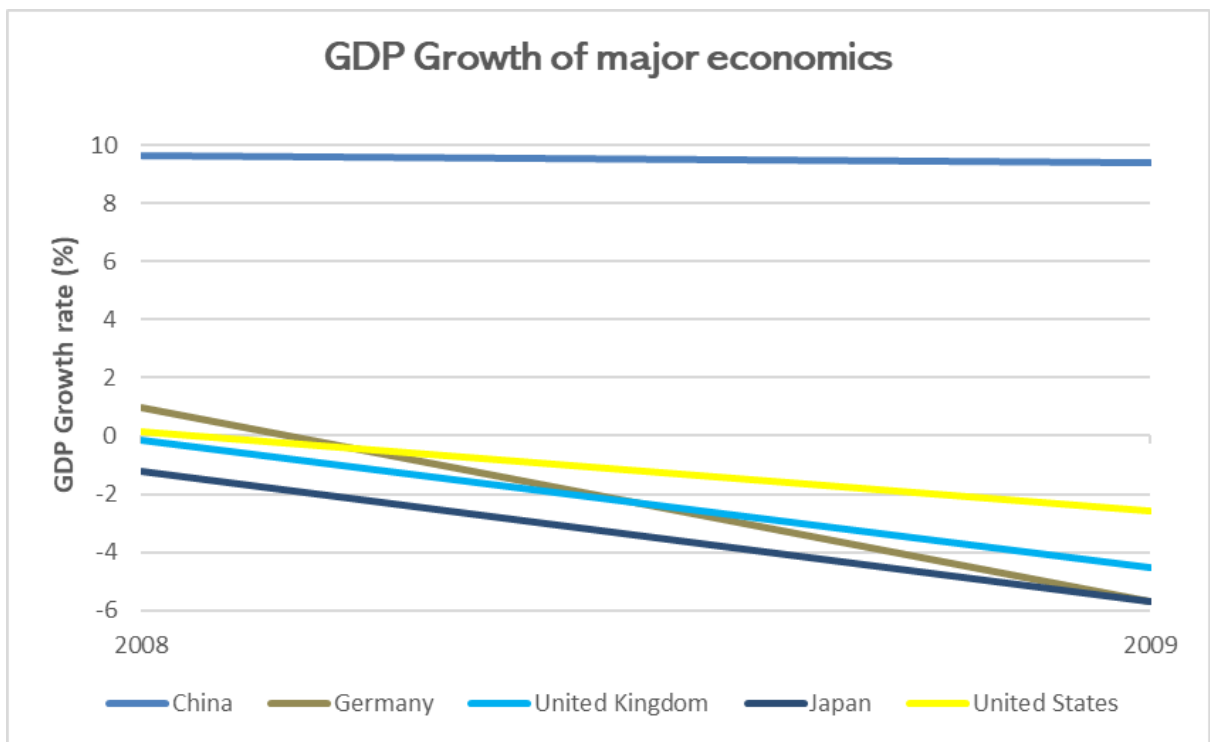
A more proactive nationalist policy in response to domestic turmoil and international opportunities will not only assist China in its pursuit of international influence but also help alleviate domestic dissatisfaction with the government. This will reinforce the narrative that only the CCP can improve the lives of the Chinese people.

Table 6 China's economic strength has grown rapidly since 1978

	1978	1990	2001	2012	2021
GDP (CN/US)	5%	10%	22%	52%	77%
Export trade volume (CN/US)	4%	8%	26%	98%	140%
China's FXR (One hundred million USD)	1.67	110.93	2121.65	33115.89	32501.66

Source: world bank.国家外汇管理局

Figure 5. The GDP growth rate of the world's major economies in 2008-2009



Source : world bank

- **Language**

Although China's constitution guarantees the rights of ethnic minorities to use their own languages, the CCP has been more focused on promoting the widespread use of Mandarin Chinese. Under Xi's leadership, along with more comprehensive nationalist propaganda, the CCP has intensified its efforts to promote Mandarin Chinese among ethnic

minorities. For example, in 2020, the government of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region mandated that certain subjects in local minority schools be taught in Chinese instead of Mongolian. This decision caused a significant outcry among Mongolians. In 2021, the CCP issued the "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening the Work of Spoken and Written Languages in the New Era." This initiative aims to increase the prevalence of Mandarin Chinese in China to 85 percent by 2025. The document specifically calls for more efforts to promote Mandarin Chinese among ethnic minorities and in rural areas. It also advocates for providing support and services for Mandarin Chinese education in Hong Kong and Macau, and cooperating with Hong Kong and Macau to conduct Mandarin proficiency tests in order to enhance the proficiency of Mandarin Chinese in these regions. These measures not only restrict the development of minority languages but also aim to eliminate the differences between Hong Kong, Macau, and mainland China, where the "one country, two systems" policy is implemented. Under Xi's leadership, the CCP has employed language to suppress differences among groups to an extreme extent. This, along with its harsh policies towards ethnic minorities and Hong Kong, has sparked concerns about human rights violations in the international community.

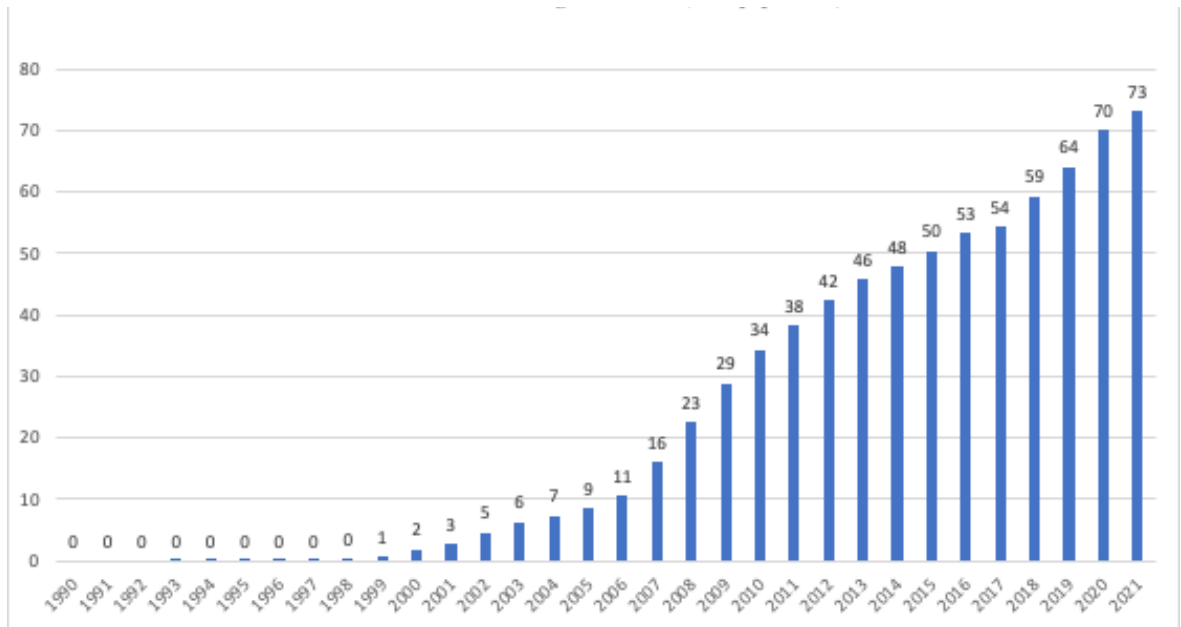
- **Main Actors**

After a relatively liberal decade in the 1980s, China became more conservative in the 1990s as the CCP strengthened its control over public opinion. At that time, the discourse of Chinese nationalism was primarily controlled by the government's political propaganda. However, the Chinese people were not simply passive recipients of political propaganda. For example, when major diplomatic events, such as conflicts with the U.S., Japan, and other countries, occurred, xenophobic and nationalistic sentiments suddenly arose among the Chinese public. These sentiments could even influence the government's strategy. It can be seen that in the 1990s, China's nationalism had already exhibited a two-way interaction model between the government and the public. However, China's external image was primarily influenced by the government's diplomatic practices.

This situation has changed dramatically during Xi's era, primarily because of the widespread use of the internet. China's internet has grown rapidly since the 2000s. By the end of Xi's first term in 2017, the number of internet users in China had reached 54% of the population, which accounted for one-fifth of the world's total number of internet users. The rapid rise of online communities, such as Weibo (微博) and Tieba (贴吧), has become closely integrated with Chinese life. The significant growth of cyberspace has provided the Chinese people with more opportunities to express their opinions. However, there has also been a notable increase in the number of individuals who are punished for their online speech, largely due to the heightened supervision by the internet police. Therefore, China's online community has not become an independent voice channel for citizens separate from the government, but it is often included in the government's political propaganda apparatus. Among them, three groups stand out as the most dynamic: the young generation of netizens,

influencers, and speculative self-media operators.

Figure 4. China's individuals using the Internet (% of population)



Source: The World Bank

1) The young generation of netizens

The younger generation, born after the 1990s (often referred to as the "post-90s"), grew up under the influence of nationalist education. Being born in the era of China's rapid economic development, they have a strong sense of recognition towards the CCP's rule. Since 2010, there has been a growing number of Chinese young people who have been able to access information that is not subject to China's information control, thanks to the use of VPNs. They frequently engage in online arguments with foreign netizens regarding China's territorial disputes and human rights issues. In some instances, they even mobilize to paralyze foreign online communities, bullying brands and artists through a large number of abusive messages, memes, and other methods, demanding apologies for unjustified accusations of "insulting China". This group of young netizens is proficient in using various overseas social media platforms, has high mobilization efficiency, and exhibits extreme loyalty to the CCP. The government also recognizes the value of integrating them into the propaganda system. Due to the government's acquiescence and even praise, the internet atrocities committed by Chinese netizens have repeatedly occurred. This, combined with China's official "wolf warrior diplomacy," has deteriorated China's international image.

2) The influencers

Another group worth paying attention to is the many "big Vs" (大V, meaning influencers certified by social platforms) who have a huge following in the online community. These influencers have millions of followers and have to a significant extent replaced the former role of opinion leaders. In the past, many influencers frequently criticized and monitored the government. However, since Xi took office, the CCP has implemented a series of crackdowns on prominent social media users, either assimilating them into the propaganda machinery and utilizing their influence to disseminate officially approved ideas, or effectively silencing them altogether. For example, Weibo blogger Xue Manzi, who has more than 12 million followers, was detained in August 2013 for "allegedly soliciting prostitutes." On April 17, 2014, influencer Qin Huohuo (real name Qin Zhihui) was sentenced to three years in prison for defamation and provoking trouble.³⁰ Following the authorities' recent crackdown on online speech, the number of influential individuals who openly express their opinions and have hundreds of thousands of followers has significantly decreased.

3) The speculative self-media operators

The active promotion of nationalist propaganda by the government on the Internet provides opportunities for China's self-media operators to profit from relevant subjects. Since content praising the government and the country is less subject to political censorship, many speculators mass-produce relevant content to make a profit. However, due to the sameness and excessive false content of some creators, the government has criticized their style. For example, in 2021, some self-media speculated about the reason for power rationing in some provinces, saying that it was the government's next grand game or a financial war between countries. These baseless speculations were criticized by the official media.³¹ Some analysts believe that such provocative content violates Xi's goal of "telling China's stories well" and could affect the Chinese people's views on the country's politics and diplomacy. Therefore, the regime needs to stop such content to ensure it dominates the discourse power of nationalism. In summary, the public, including young netizens, influencers, and speculative self-media operators, is an important actor of Chinese nationalism in the Xi era, creating a strong and unstoppable wave of nationalism through the combined power of the state and the

³⁰ Gu, Qinger. (2020). 揭祕大陸敢言網絡大V凋零過程 [Jiemi dalu ganyan wangludaV diaoling guocheng]. Retrieved Nov 4, 2022, <https://www.epochtimes.com/b5/20/10/8/n12460942.htm>.

³¹ Chen Yun. (2021). 中国再掀爱国主义浪潮 爱国还是爱钱? [Zhongguo zai xian aiguo zhuyi langchao aiguo haishi aiqian]. Retrieved Nov 4, 2022, <https://www.voachinese.com/a/why-does-patriotic-business-have-a-market-in-China-20211016/6271919.html>.

people.

To summarize the above analysis, it can be concluded that in addition to the government, the public is also a significant actor in Chinese nationalism during the Xi era. Among them, young netizens, influencers, and speculative self-media operators are the main players. The combined power of the state and the people has created a strong and unstoppable wave of nationalism.

Through a comparison of Chinese nationalism in the 1990s and the Xi Jinping era, it can be observed that Chinese nationalism in the Xi era largely continues the direction established since the 1990s. Under Xi's leadership, there has been a heightened sense of nationalism, primarily driven by more radical policy directions. For instance, the concept of the "Chinese Dream" has been widely promoted as a collective mission for all Chinese people. However, this promotion has coincided with a decrease in tolerance for minority ethnic languages. Additionally, the development of the internet and social media has enabled greater public participation in the dissemination and formation of nationalist narratives, making it an important component of nationalism in the Xi era. However, the inherent difficulty in controlling online spaces suggests a potential threat to the monopolistic power of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over nationalist discourse.

4.3. Case studies: THAAD deployment dispute

The conclusion drawn in the third chapter is that whenever a diplomatic conflict arises, nationalist sentiment among the Chinese people is easily aroused, and the CCP can choose to suppress or incite it to achieve its political goals based on the current domestic and foreign environment. Therefore, even though the international community may perceive Chinese nationalism as irrational and aggressive, it is still the result of the practical considerations of the Communist Party of China. The objective of this section is to analyze whether the CCP's control over popular nationalist sentiments remains effective and whether its methods of manipulating nationalism to achieve political objectives have changed.

This section will analyze the diplomatic conflict between China and the U.S. during the Xi era. The relationship between the two countries has gradually deteriorated, and conflicts have arisen on various issues. To maintain consistency with the previous analytical framework that focuses on military conflict, this paper will analyze the THAAD deployment dispute.

The THAAD deployment dispute arose from the agreement between South Korea and the U.S. in 2017 to deploy the THAAD anti-missile system in South Korea. Although the THAAD deployment plan was initially a bilateral military cooperation between the U.S. and South Korea, the Chinese side believed that the actual purpose of this deployment was to expand the U.S.'s influence in East Asia and further integrate South Korea into the alliance between the U.S. and Japan, thereby threatening China's national security. The Chinese side actively protested and launched a series of countermeasures. South Korea argued that the

deployment was only a defensive measure against North Korea and went ahead with the missile defense system's deployment in 2017. The incident brought Sino-U.S. and Sino-South Korean relations to a new low. China's countermeasures included restrictions on the import of South Korean entertainment products and tourism, as well as a widespread boycott of South Korean products and companies by the Chinese people. While the CCP denied the existence of any official ban on travel to South Korea or the activities of South Korean artists, the extent of the boycott was palpable from the sudden cooling of bilateral exchanges and the significant losses incurred by South Korean companies such as Lotte in China. The extensive media coverage of the boycott also indicated the official acquiescence to this popular nationalist sentiment.

As the THAAD incident did not directly violate any symbols of China's sovereignty, unlike previous incidents such as the embassy bombing and the Hainan Island incident, the level of public indignation was not sufficient to spark large-scale protests, even though Chinese citizens were highly concerned about the incident. Additionally, the complexity of the military technology involved in the THAAD missile meant that it would not have garnered much attention from the Chinese public if the CCP had not first claimed that it posed a threat to China. Therefore, Chinese anger towards the US and South Korea in the THAAD incident was largely incited by the Chinese regime.

Continuing the analysis in Chapter 3, the highest priority for the Communist Party of China is the stability of the regime. Therefore, the party's stance on public opinion must be carefully considered in light of the advantages and disadvantages of the regime. If nationalism is too strong, it may threaten the stability of the government. On the contrary, it can become a bargaining chip for the Communist Party of China in foreign negotiations. In the case of the THAAD incident, where the government played a more dominant role, observing how the government instigated and channeled popular sentiment can help us understand the influence of nationalism in the Xi era.

Regardless of the purpose behind the deployment of THAAD by the US and South Korea, the Chinese side perceived it as a threat to the regional balance in East Asia, thus prompting a response from the CCP. Regarding the international environment at that time, the CCP had to consider at least two points:

1) China's relations with its Asian neighbors

At that time, China had just faced international criticism for the South China Sea arbitration case and had a strained relationship with Japan over the Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea. If China had clashed with South Korea at that time, it would have been surrounded by adversaries. Therefore, despite its anger, China did not escalate the conflict by military means, but only issued a statement of protest through its Foreign Ministry.

2) The Sino-US relation

Since 2010, the U.S. has redirected its global strategic focus from the Middle East to Asia in order to counter the increasing threat posed by China. In response to the wariness of the CCP proposed a framework for a "New Type of Great Power Relations." In 2014, Xi Jinping told then-President Obama of the U.S. that "China and the U.S. must forge a new path that diverges from the historical pattern of inevitable confrontation and conflict between major powers." Although the framework of the "New Type of Great Power Relations" has been questioned due to Xi's assertive diplomatic approach, it is a fact that China's comprehensive national power is not comparable to that of the U.S. If China takes the initiative to provoke a conflict with the U.S., it might harm Chinese diplomacy more than it would benefit it. In contrast, it would be better to direct public criticism towards South Korea, the U.S.'s proxy, which is significantly smaller in size. Therefore, despite China's concern about the THAAD deployment being from the U.S., its public anger and retaliation were directed towards South Korea.

The Chinese public's retaliation against the deployment of THAAD missiles was orchestrated by the CCP through official and social media. For instance, the state-run Xinhua News Agency published an editorial titled "China Does Not Welcome 'Lotte'" and encouraged the Chinese people to boycott the Lotte Group.³² According to statistics from Initium Media, numerous media organizations, marketing accounts, and corporate accounts actively shared relevant articles, pictures, and videos on Sina Weibo and other social media platforms. They also actively responded to the call for boycotting Lotte. In China, the government tightly controls the Internet and social media, which limits the spread of relevant information and prevents it from becoming a trend that represents government recognition.

The well-developed internet environment played a crucial role in rapidly spreading the boycott against South Korea throughout China. Statistics show that the majority of Internet users in China are aged 30-39, with a significant proportion belonging to the younger generation born after 1990. These individuals have not only benefited from China's economic growth since their childhood, but they have also been strongly influenced by nationalist education. As a result, some individuals strongly identify with China under the rule of the CCP and respond positively to boycotts.

There are several reasons why the CCP chose to incite anti-Korean sentiment:

- 1) The enthusiasm exhibited by the Chinese population can strengthen the CCP's confidence in projecting a determined attitude towards the international community. Moreover, both the U.S. and South Korea have expressed skepticism regarding the legitimacy of China's opposition to the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in South Korea. Despite China's protests, the U.S. government has refrained from taking any significant action on this matter. By

³² Editor office of Initium Media. (2017). Zhongguo guanfang han meiti yindao wangmin xianqi dizhi nanhan leitian de rechao[中國官方和媒體引導網民掀起抵制南韓樂天的熱潮]. Retrieved Nov 20, 2022, <https://theinitium.com/article/20170301-dailynews-Lotte/>

highlighting the outrage expressed by the Chinese people over the THAAD deployment, China can further legitimize its efforts to exert pressure on South Korea.

- 2) Since the turn of the millennium, Chinese citizens have become accustomed to using social media as a platform to express nationalist sentiment. During the 2010 conflict between China and Japan over the Diaoyu Islands and the 2017 South China Sea arbitration incident, Chinese netizens were observed engaging in group discussions on social media and even launching attacks on foreign websites. Channeling public anger towards foreign countries can help to unite public enthusiasm for China, while the government's strong external actions can generate public support and recognition of the CCP. Given the relatively straightforward nature of the THAAD incident, it is less likely to pose a threat to the regime. As a result, for the CCP, fueling nationalist sentiment among the population is the most advantageous choice when considering the pros and cons.

While China's boycotts and protests ultimately failed to prevent South Korea from deploying THAAD missiles, the strong resistance mounted by Chinese officials and citizens still compelled South Korea to negotiate with China. As a result, South Korea made a statement indicating that it would not consider adding the THAAD system, joining the U.S. anti-missile system, or developing a tripartite military alliance with the U.S. and Japan. While the two sides continue to disagree over whether this statement represents a position or a commitment, the CCP likely views the negotiation as an opportunity to demonstrate a tough and protective stance towards the Chinese people at a lower political cost. Given the divergence of views between South Korea and the U.S., as well as the domestic political turmoil in South Korea, the deployment of THAAD proceeded at a slow pace. For the Chinese people, what they will ultimately remember is not whether South Korea deployed missiles, but the CCP's resistance against South Korea and the U.S.

In the THAAD incident, the CCP demonstrated its ability to provoke nationalist sentiment among the people in order to bolster the legitimacy of its official political stance. However, unlike in the 1990s when people mainly expressed their opinions through domestic publications or large-scale protests, Chinese people in the Xi era often responded to the government's call by using the convenient and low-cost online community, actively gathering on the Internet. Netizens have emerged as a significant force in their own right, and the power of Chinese nationalism in the Xi era is no longer solely dominated by the government. The CCP relies on the power of netizens to fuel nationalism, but it also worries that online speech may be used against the regime itself. Consequently, the censorship of online speech has become increasingly strict in recent years. According to Reporter Without Borders, the State Internet Information Office of China revealed that the government shut down nearly 130,000 social media accounts and more than 12,000 websites in September 2020. Additionally, the website "China Digital Space" released internal review documents of the Chinese social platform "Xiaohongshu" that showed more than 560 words were added to the platform's list

of banned content or subjected to supervision in the first three months of 2020. The CCP's wariness of cyberspace is evident. However, extreme internet censorship not only burdens China's already struggling economy (the Jamestown Foundation in the US estimates that the Chinese government will spend at least \$6.6 billion on national internet censorship in 2020), but it also fails to guarantee the protection of the CCP against all potential threats. In particular, when China is faced with sensitive incidents, relevant information often circulates on the Internet for some time before it is officially censored. Moreover, despite the government's use of the "Internet Firewall" to restrict access to most foreign websites, the number of Chinese individuals who have become adept at bypassing these restrictions has steadily increased over the years. This has provided people with more opportunities to access information that is intentionally concealed by the government and unfavorable to the CCP. All of these factors pose risks to the CCP's continued use of nationalist practices during the Xi era.

4.4. Case studies : Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan

In 2022, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, becoming the second serving US House Speaker to visit Taiwan since the US severed diplomatic ties with the Republic of China in 1979. The visit caused shock on both sides of the Strait, and China had been trying to prevent it for months. After confirmation of the trip, the CCP's foreign ministry repeatedly threatened to respond strongly. Since then, the CCP has imposed a series of economic sanctions on Taiwan and conducted military exercises to demonstrate its readiness to defend against any attempts at independence by the island.

Pelosi's visit to Taiwan sparked heated discussions among Chinese citizens. The topic quickly became one of the top 10 most searched topics on Sina Weibo, China's largest social media platform, causing the site to crash due to the influx of traffic. Some Chinese netizens also launched cyber attacks against Taiwanese government websites and the social media accounts of political figures.

Given the history of political friction and patriotic education between China and Taiwan, it was not surprising that the Chinese had a particularly sensitive attitude towards Pelosi's visit.

The surge in public sentiment, coupled with strong government warnings, led many Chinese citizens to anticipate more than mere verbal protests, but concrete retaliatory actions. At that time, there were numerous public opinions on the internet calling for "preparation for war" and "preparation for the military reunification of Taiwan". Therefore, when it emerged that the government had not actually prevented Pelosi's plane from landing, many people's nationalist fervor turned into frustration with the CCP. Many claimed that the government had failed to meet people's expectations, and its diplomatic behavior was too timid. Some individuals even threw eggs and vandalized cars in front of City Hall to express their dissatisfaction.

Some scholars view Pelosi's visit as an indication that the rising nationalist sentiment in recent years has become a double-edged sword for the CCP. Nationalism has become the foundation of the party's legitimacy. On one hand, public sentiment has forced the government to take a strong position on foreign affairs, allowing little flexibility. However, when the government fails to respond to popular sentiment, this force can also become a threat to the regime.

In the 1990s, the CCP was able to control civil protests as a way to prevent potential counterattacks from civil forces when it perceived threats. However, in the era of Xi, people's voices can spread through cyberspace, and no amount of cyber policing can completely prevent it. The government must rely on the online community as a platform to promote nationalism. It can be said that nationalism has become one of the sources of instability for the Xi regime.

To summarize this chapter, China's nationalism has remained consistent in terms of national identity during both the Xi era and the 1990s. However, under Xi's leadership, China has become more active in exporting its culture in foreign relations and taking a stronger stance on international disputes. Domestically, the CCP has effectively utilized the internet, entertainment resources, and other means to closely integrate nationalist propaganda with people's lives. The trend of nationalism reaching a new peak in the Xi era also heavily relies on the active participation of the people, particularly the younger generation of Chinese who have grown up with internet technology. As a result, they have developed natural nationalist sentiments.

As analyzed in Chapter 3, mass mobilization of the people often carries the risk of blurred protest objectives and a shift toward anger against the government. However, suppressing the people's willingness to protest undermines the government's legitimacy and raises questions about its status as the representative of the people. Since Xi took office, the CCP has significantly curtailed large-scale civil gatherings and protests against diplomatic events, in stark contrast to the 1990s. This suggests that the Xi government is more concerned about the potential risks of civil mobilization than it was in the 1990s and is unwilling to relax its control over civil protests.

Since physical rallies and parades are not allowed, online communities have become a platform for the expression of civil pressure. The CCP has leveraged the power of the internet by utilizing official media and self-media platforms that align with the government's agenda. This strategy allows them to shape public opinion, disseminate officially endorsed perspectives rapidly, and bolster public confidence in the government's firm stance on external matters. Ultimately, this approach strengthens the CCP's legitimacy and control over the country.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

According to the analysis of Chinese nationalism in the late 19th century, the 1990s, and the era of Xi Jinping, it can be concluded that "identity" is the core of Chinese nationalism. Since revolutionaries overthrew the imperial system and established the first modern regime in China, the discourse of nation and state has been monopolized by the ruling elite. This form of state nationalism aims to uphold the legitimacy of the regime and has continued to exist under the leadership of the CCP. For example, while the CCP claims that China is a multi-ethnic country, it is not fully consistent with the clear dominance of the Han ethnicity in Chinese society.

In terms of ideology, Chinese nationalism has undergone different phases. In the late 19th century, it was characterized by a "from below" approach, where people aimed to save the nation by overthrowing the imperial system. In the 1990s, there was a transition to a "from above" approach, as the CCP promoted the pursuit of prosperity to safeguard its own interests. In the era of Xi Jinping, Chinese nationalism has become even more assertive in advocating for the restoration of the glory of the imperial era.

The collective trauma of "national humiliation" has always been at the core of Chinese nationalism. The actions of the revolutionaries in the late 19th century were driven by grief and anger over the sudden collapse of a powerful empire. Since the 1990s, China has aspired to become a prosperous and powerful nation, with the goal of restoring the glory of its empire. This mission has become even more apparent during the era of Xi Jinping. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why present-day Chinese exclusivism often draws on historical factors. This includes viewing the political actions of Western countries as "foreign forces," disregarding neighboring cultures, or emphasizing China's origins in neighboring cultures.

In the 1990s, Chinese nationalism was primarily driven by the government. In the 1980s, the government suppressed the growing wave of Western cultural advocacy among the public, limiting the dissemination of ideas that contradicted its stance. However, a small number of individuals were still able to publish books. With the development of the Internet and social media, people have once again become important participants in nationalism. The strong nationalist sentiments among the younger generation enable them to quickly assimilate into the regime's system.

Based on the analysis, this thesis evaluates Chinese nationalism in modern times and argues that Chinese nationalism gradually became a pragmatic policy tool of the regime after the 1990s. The CCP in the era of Xi Jinping has continued this trend and relies, to some extent, on nationalism as its policy core. However, there is a significant gap between the increasingly extreme nationalist propaganda and the internal pressures within Chinese society, which may have negative effects on the stability of the regime and diplomatic relations. In the 1990s, the CCP could relax its control over public protest activities as necessary. However, in the era of Xi Jinping, the CCP has virtually banned all assembly

activities and used nationalism and aggressive diplomatic measures to shift domestic pressure, despite facing numerous social issues. This has resulted in significant pressure accumulating within Chinese society, causing the regime to lose flexibility in foreign relations and sometimes even harming it. After Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, dissatisfaction among the Chinese people sparked unrest on the Internet. Since the beginning of the reform and opening-up era, one of the reasons the CCP has consolidated its power is its ability to maintain legitimacy through economic development achievements, policy flexibility, and stability. However, under the Xi regime, these traits have gradually eroded, and legitimacy is now being established through a more aggressive form of nationalism, which makes China's future more unpredictable.

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Abstract

본 논문은 중국의 민족주의의 발전을 추적하고 이것이 중국 정부 정책과의 관계를 탐구한다. 분석적인 틀과 사례 연구를 통해, 본 논문은 중국의 민족주의가 오랫동안 정권에 의해 정치적 목표를 달성하고 정당성을 강화하는 도구로 사용되어온 것을 주장한다. 특히 1990년대 이후 중국 민족주의의 비이성적이고 독점적이며 광신적인 표현들은 정치 지도자들에 의한 합리적인 계산과 야심찬 정책 실천의 표현이 되었다고 주장한다.

2012년에 시진핑 주석 시대로 들어오면서 보다 급진적인 민족주의적 감정이 시대의 특징 중 하나로 부각되었다. 국제사회는 종종 시진핑 시대의 중국 민족주의를 비이성적이고 배타적이며 광신적이라고 인식한다. 그러나 본 논문은 시진핑 시대의 중국 민족주의는 여전히 과거의 실용주의의 연속이라는 주장을 시도한다.

그러나 시 정부는 국내외의 불안정함에 대응하여 외교적 갈등에 대해 보다 조심스러운 입장을 보였다. 또한 새로운 통신 기술, 정치적 선전 방법 등 다른 요인들은 시진핑 정권의 민족주의적 정책과 관련된 위협을 상당히 증가시켰다. 따라서 본 논문은 중국 민족주의의 미래를 평가하고 시진핑 정부가 버릴 수 없는 핵심 이념이지만 동시에 상당한 위협을 내포하고 있다고 결론 짓는다.