The University of Nottingham

Humiliation, Pride and Identity in the Digital Age:

Unpacking Chinese Online Nationalism

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2017

Abstract

Nationalism has been an important issue for China in both domestic politics and international relations. In the Post-Tiananmen Era, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) turned to nationalism as an ideological instrument to bolster the faith of the Chinese people and legitimise the Party's rule. Meanwhile, the early 1990s also witnessed rapid developments in information and communications technologies (ICTs) in China, which have catalysed the emergence of online nationalism. Much of the existing literature focuses on either the external impact of Chinese nationalism on foreign policy or highlights the rise of popular nationalism as an independent force that makes the state fragile. There is, however, insufficient attention paid to the internal construct of Chinese nationalism. In the digital age, it also becomes increasingly evident that contemporary Chinese nationalism cannot be properly understood without reference to the role of digital communication.

This thesis analyses the politics of Chinese nationalism through the lens of digital communicative practices. This offers an original and nuanced understanding of the political and social dynamics in contemporary China. The thesis focuses on two dimensions. First, it highlights the link between official nationalism and popular nationalism, revealing the changing dynamics within the construction of Chinese nationalism. Second, it focuses on Chinese *online* nationalism, illuminating the relationship between nationalism and technology.

The thesis presents the first major work in examining both top-down construction and popular reception in Chinese nationalism studies from an ethnosymbolic approach. It highlights that the theoretical framework of ethno-symbolism is helpful in providing a more situated, nuanced understanding from a historical and cultural dimension. This thesis considers the (re)construction of China's national myths of the Second Sino-Japanese War and examines the construction of national humiliation and national pride in the changing state-society dynamics. The study primarily focuses on discourse, in both textual and visual modes, relating to national humiliation and national pride that constitute the two key ingredients of Chinese nationalism. Accordingly, two cases are chosen for empirical investigation: the commemoration events for the Nanjing Massacre and the 2015 Victory Day Parade

event. The study uses discourse analytical tools from Discourse Historical Approach and multimodal approach and highlights the importance of having a situated understanding of Chinese nationalism from historical and cultural perspective. It argues that Chinese online nationalism is (re)constructed by a multiplicity of discourses via digital practices, characterised by the evolving dynamics between state and society and situated in the wider political and cultural contexts.

The thesis shows that digital communication has changed the means by which the landscape of Chinese nationalism is shaped, which is manifest in two ways. Firstly, national symbols and rituals, as an important means of patriotic education for the CCP, have been "relocated" from physical space, such as Nanjing and Tiananmen, to virtual cyberspace. By incorporating technology into its patriotic education framework, the CCP increasingly extends its discursive power in propagating patriotism, thereby making the Internet an institutionalised patriotic education venue. Secondly, online nationalist expressions and communication provide fertile ground for Chinese Internet users to explore their discursive space in political communication, allowing them to reshape the mythscape of the national past and reconstruct national identity.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank, first of all, the Institute of Asia and Pacific Studies (IAPS), as well as the School of Politics and International Relations, for providing me with the generous financial support for my research project. This journey would not have been possible without the scholarship of the IAPS Tomlinson Award.

I am deeply indebted to my supervisors, Dr Jonathan Sullivan and Dr Pauline Eadie as well as Dr Miwa Hirono for all their continued guidance and strong support. Their contribution has been indispensable to me. I sincerely thank Prof. Katharine Adeney, Dr Carole Spary, Dr Chun-yi Lee, and the whole IAPS community for making my PhD an enjoyable and intellectually rewarding experience.

Many thanks to Dr Christopher Hill, once my MA dissertation supervisor, for his kind encouragement and advice when I applied for this PhD project in 2013. I would like to thank Prof. Zhang Lihua for her hospitality and kindness in hosting me at Tsinghua University during my fieldwork in 2015. I have also benefited greatly from the discussions with the scholars I have met at various conferences. I thank them for the intellectual enlightenment and enjoyable time.

I would also like to thank all my friends for bringing into my life so much warmth, joy and laughter. I have become a stronger person thanks to the emotional support from both my colleagues, including Jamie, Filippo, Yumiko, Yared, Adam, Carlos, and all my Chinese friends, including Zhenxing, Yudan, and Yate, as well as all those who have accompanied me along the way. Without their friendship and support, I could not have endured the hardships of this journey and the long, gloomy winter.

Finally, my deepest gratitude is reserved for my partner, Dong Liu (刘冬), for always being by my side on this rollercoaster journey, no matter in tears or joy. He is the one that keeps telling me how great I am, for which I will always feel grateful! My daughter, Yiyi Liu (刘依依), is such a sweet girl that constantly reminds me of the pleasure of the present and the promise of the future. I want to thank both my parents and parents-in-law for their endless love and support. This thesis is especially dedicated to them.

List of Abbreviations

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCTV	China Central Television
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CL	Corpus Linguistics
CNNIC	China Internet Network Information Centre
DHA	Discourse-Historical Analysis
ICTs	Information and Communications Technologies
KMT	Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomingtang)
MIP	Multi-Institutional Politics
MND	Ministry of National Defense
MOE	Ministry of Education
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NMO	National Memorial Online
PRC	People's Republic of China
SAA	State Archives Administration
SCIO	State Council Information Office

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Chapter 1 Introduction

When discussing the relationship between the Internet and politics, Andrew Chadwick (2006, 1) has rightly pointed out, "the issue is no longer whether politics is online, but *in what form and with what consequences*" (original italics). This is particularly true in the age of contemporary Internet politics, and it is also applicable to an authoritarian country – China, in its rapid economic and social transformation. By the end of 2016, according to the latest China Statistical Report on Internet Development, Chinese Internet users reached 731 million, almost the total population of all European countries, with a penetration rate of 53.2%. The rapid diffusion of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has profoundly changed the landscape of political communication in China and created new forms of social interaction between state and society. Against this backdrop, the political landscape of nationalism is reshaped. Chinese nationalism is being redefined, articulated and exercised in cyberspace (see for example Zhou 2005, 545). Nationalism, represented by digital means, becomes increasingly notable. Many nationalist cases have displayed to the world the massive use of the Internet in disseminating and articulating nationalist sentiments and organising both online and offline protests. For instance, the movement against Japanese militarism after Japan's bid for permanent membership of the UN Security Council in 2005, the nationwide anti-Japanese demonstrations due to the dispute over Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 2010 and 2012, and the recent nationalist protests against the THADD plan in South Korea. These cases manifest the impact of the Internet on Chinese nationalism politics. Contemporary Chinese nationalism cannot be properly understood without reference to the role of digital communication technologies.

As China continues to grow into a superpower and exerts political influence on both regional politics and international affairs, a noticeable amount of scholarly and media attention has focused on the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. Much of the attention, understandably, is on the CCP's instrumental use of nationalism in legitimizing its authoritarian rule or the foreign policy implications of Chinese nationalism (see for example Gries 2004; Chen 2005; Hughes 2005a; Tang and Darr

2012; Whiting 1995; Zhao 2008, 2013). It is largely set against the background of the decay of communism in China after the 1989 Tiananmen Event and the subsequent nationwide patriotic education campaign, which heavily employed a never-forget-national-humiliation narrative that aimed to bolster political legitimacy. While the official discourse of nationalism is primarily centred on the Party as the embodiment and object of nationalist or patriotic sentiment, it is a commonly-held assumption that the Chinese government is always playing the nationalist card.

Meanwhile, a growing amount of scholarly attention tends to examine the rise of public opinion and the importance of popular nationalism (see for example Gries et al. 2015; Reilly 2012; Shirk 2007; Weiss 2014; Wu 2007; Yu G. 2012). Notably, nationalism is no longer simply regarded as the sole province of state propaganda, and grassroots nationalist voices are playing an important part of "the nationalist orchestra" (Zhao 2004, 11). Zhao Suisheng argues that nationalism can act as "a double-edged sword" (2008, 54). In this regard, the CCP may gain political legitimacy by the use of nationalism on the one hand, but it is confronted with the nationalists' criticisms on the other. Xu Wu defines Chinese online nationalism (in his term cyber nationalism) as a "non-government sponsored ideology and movement that has originated, existed, and developed in China's online sphere" (Wu 2007, 155). Even though this definition is problematic in the first place (see further discussion in Chapter 2), his work illuminates the importance of Chinese popular online nationalism today. He legitimately argues that Chinese online nationalism will play a substantial role in shaping China's future. Admittedly, nationalism is an inseparable component of the contemporary Chinese political culture (Tang 2016).

In this debate on contemporary Chinese nationalism, insufficient attention is paid to the interplay between official nationalism and popular nationalism. Ultimately, I view Chinese nationalism produced and reproduced by state-society dynamics, as an ongoing process of adaptation, reception, and change in the process of nation-building. Therefore, the monolithic view of Chinese nationalism may fail to grasp the full picture and can be misleading. Chinese contemporary nationalism is not simply an ideological tool of the CCP, or an independent grassroots ideology and movement. Rather, it is constructed and reconstructed in the changing state-society dynamics in interaction, negotiation, and discussion, increasingly in digital practices.

As Callahan argues, Chinese nationalism is produced and consumed in "an interactive and intersubjective process" (2010, 25) between the dynamism of official policy and popular feelings. In the Internet era, the emergence of online nationalism makes any attempt to separate one from another even more problematic.

Given the deficit in the existing literature on Chinese nationalism, this thesis shifts scholarly attention onto two dimensions. First, it focuses on the link between official nationalism and popular nationalism, revealing the changing dynamics within the construction of Chinese nationalism. I argue that the interplay between official nationalism and popular nationalism is of greater significance to understand Chinese nationalism and Chinese social and political transformation. Second, it focuses on Chinese *online* nationalism, illuminating the relationship between nationalism and technology (see other studies on the topic such as Shen and Breslin 2010; Jiang 2012; Wu 2007; Wang F. 2013; Wang J. 2010; Weiss 2014). Yang Guobin (2009) points out that the Internet has fostered the emergence of a citizen's discourse space in China. Despite state censorship, nowhere else do Chinese citizens participate more actively and directly in communication about public affairs and nowhere else are so many issues discussed at the grassroots level on a daily basis (Yang 2009, 217). One essential issue in public discussion concerns nationalism because it constitutes the safe (if not the safest) discursive ground in which netizens[1] gain and resist power. This thesis suggests that contemporary nationalist politics needs to be viewed through digital practices and interactions in order to be fully understood. As Manuel Castells claims, "who are the interacting and who are the interacted….largely frames the system of domination and the processes of liberation in the informational society" (1997, 374). By shifting the focus onto the official/popular nationalism dynamism on the Internet and viewing the politics of nationalism through the lens of the Internet, this thesis aims to contribute to the study of Chinese nationalism and Internet studies as well as China studies in general.

1.1 Research questions

[1] Netizen is a term referring to the Internet users. The word is a portmanteau of the English words Internet and citizen. In Chinese the term is wangmin (网民), literally meaning net-people. The use of this term in this thesis does not intend to imply that the virtual world "netizens" live in is a distinct world from their physical one. This term is used, because it is the commonly used term in both Chinese state policies and among Chinese Internet users.

This thesis aims to examine the discursive (re)construction of Chinese nationalism on the Internet. It regards Chinese online nationalism as predominantly discursive, because it concerns meaning making and identity shaping largely through language. Specifically, discourse is the primary arena in which power and meaning-making play out online and are joined together in digital communication. The central question of this thesis is thus: How is nationalism discursively (re)constructed in the state-society power dynamics in China's cyberspace? It ultimately considers the discursive construction of Chinese nationalism and examines the power dynamics between official nationalism and popular nationalism in digital practices. To answer the overarching research question, the thesis distinguishes four sub-questions.

1) How is nationalism produced in official nation-building projects?
2) How is nationalism interpreted and reconstructed in the popular narratives?
3) What discursive strategies do the state and non-state actors use to construct ingroup and outgroup identities and to shape the mythscape of remembrance (and forgetting)?
4) To what extent does online nationalism reflect the power dynamics between state and society in China's digital transformation?

The objective of the thesis is to examine the phenomenon of nationalist politics through the lens of digital communicative practices and assess the dynamics between official and popular nationalism. The thesis focuses on the digitally mediated, discursive construction of nationalism and examines the role of the Internet in shaping a landscape in which nationalist politics is embedded. The thesis draws upon and develops a framework based on the ethnosymbolic approach to nationalism studies. The study applies a discourse analytical approach to examining the mythscape of national humiliation and national pride in online discourse. In the thesis, both top-down nation-building projects and bottom-up reception and reconstruction are examined. It illuminates how the Internet intersects and interacts with the mythscape in remembrance of national trauma and victory unfolded in Chinese online nationalism. The thesis can contribute to the study on Chinese nationalism and Internet studies by providing a more nuanced understanding of contemporary Chinese nationalism with empirical evidence and offering an insight into the changing landscape of political communication and power dynamics in China's social-political transition today. The next section will address the conceptual framework which theoretically guides the subsequent empirical investigation.

1.2 Conceptual framework

An inter-disciplinary conceptual framework is set up in order to accommodate a dialogue to address my research questions which involve nationalism studies, sociology, media studies and China studies. The framework consists of the following three dimensions: 1) collective memory and mythscape, 2) discourse and power, and 3) multi-institutional politics and digital memories. The first dimension concerns national symbols and collective memory from the perspective of ethno-symbolism. In the general theories on nationalism, ethno-symbolism lays special emphasis on the cultural aspects of nations and nationalism and highlights subjective and symbolic resources, including "traditions, memories, values, myths and symbols that compose the accumulated heritage of cultural units of population" (Smith 2009, 16). Focusing on elements of myth, memory and symbols, this theoretical approach seeks to supplement structural analysis with an exploration of the symbolic and cultural dimension (Smith 2009). Smith defines *nationalism* as "an ideological movement to attain and maintain autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population" (2010, 9). It highlights a cultural link with the national past in the construction of myths and symbols for the present.

This theoretical perspective is particularly important for the thesis because a historical and cultural angle is essential to understanding Chinese nationalism. Furthermore, nation-building is not simply an elite project: it is constituted by the complex interplay between elites and various sections of the wider population in nationalist social practices. In other words, nations may be partly forged by political institutions; nonetheless, but over the long term, symbolic resources about a nation's past are necessary for generating resonance among the wider population and creating a solidary community. History is employed selectively to instil in people's minds emotions and beliefs by reminding them of past victories and defeats (Guibernau 2013, 126). Historical memories have been acknowledged as essential variables in the construction of Chinese nationalism, which have implications for Chinese domestic politics and foreign relations (Callahan 2010; Gries 2005; Moore 2010; Wang Z. 2012). The historical and cultural perspective and the focus on the official/popular nationalism dynamism, as entailed in the ethnosymbolic approach to nationalism studies, help me to examine the role of collective memories and

national myths in the construction of Chinese nationalism and probe the relationship between elite projects and popular reception.

Second, this thesis regards online nationalism as a predominantly discursive practice. Therefore, it investigates the relationship between discourse and power in the construction of Chinese online nationalism through the paradigm of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I focus on the discursive aspect of online nationalism because discourse is the primary arena in which power and meaning-making play out and are joined together in the landscape of online nationalism[2]. Wodak and Meyer (2009) argue that social actions that index and also express power can be manifest in the discursive construction of national identity. The construction of national identity in discourse is also the process of constructing meaning and relationships. Therefore, a critical perspective of discourse is helpful for this thesis in order to understand how language functions in constituting and transforming the landscape of nationalism and changing state-society dynamics with digital practices.

In CDA, *discourse* is perceived as "a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action" (Reisigl and Wodak 2009, 89). It should be noted that discourse is not restricted to textual forms, but also visual, or even musical ones, or very often a combination of various discursive elements (Kansteiner 2002, 190). Online discourse, in particular, is particularly featured in its multimodal forms of discursive elements. Discourse is viewed as an element of the social process which is "dialectically related" to others (Fairclough 2009, 163). That means there is a dialectical relationship between discursive practices and social structures in which they are embedded (Fairclough 2009; Wodak 2009). Discourse can contribute to the reproduction and maintenance of social identities, relationships and representations, and at the same time may transform them (Fairclough 2003). That is to say, discourse is a sphere where relations of power are exercised and enacted on the one hand, and there are relations of power behind discourse on the other (Fairclough 2001). The meaning making and the identity shaping process is embedded in its particular social contexts. Therefore, wider historical, cultural and political factors are effective discursive means by which national identity can be built upon. Wider political and cultural contexts are thus

[2] There are other forms of online nationalism such as hacking and other manifestations of cyberwarfare.

important when analysing the relationship between discourse and power in the construction of online nationalism today.

Third, this thesis focuses on inter-discursive relationships within and between state and non-state discourses, which requires a multi-institutional politics (MIP) approach to the understanding of Internet politics. For the scope of the research, it is categorised as the top-down force of the state and the bottom-up force of netizens. The MIP perspective regards society as organised around multiple sources of power that are both material and symbolic. That means social movements can involve multiple institutions, practices, systems of knowledge, and cultural norms (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008). Such multiplicity pertains to online nationalism. For this thesis, the multi-perspectival approach to online activism is helpful, because digitally-enhanced social communication magnifies the dialogized interrelation of discourse that involves multiple voices and groups.

Through a multi-perspectival lens, the Internet can be interpreted as an actual space of social interactions. While the Internet has greatly enhanced social communication, it has changed the landscape of memory politics, bringing about digital memories. Notably, online social knowledge-networking makes it possible for people to engage in multidirectional and multiparty interactions through innovative uses of technology. Memory becomes "ever more flexible and adjustable" to present needs of individual and collective remembering (Pogacar 2009, 27). As a vehicle of memory and a supplement to older forms of commemoration, the Internet provides the technological capacity for virtually unlimited storage and potential to engage diverse audiences in content production (Haskins 2007). The visual symbolism and external storage of the past have a transformational impact on "cognitive architecture" (Donald 1991, 17). In this sense, technology can facilitate digital imagination and re-imagination of the past, which has significant implications for the reconstruction of national identity today.

Building on the three-dimensional conceptual framework, this thesis investigates Chinese online nationalism specifically through the discursive construction and reconstruction of national symbols and collective memories. It has theoretical implications for applying Western approaches to non-Western cases with empirical

evidence. In the following two sections, important conceptual terms will be clarified, and the themes and cases for examination will be specified.

1.2.1 Clarifying terms: Nationalism and patriotism

While popular understandings often suggest "nationalism is bad and patriotism is good", it should be noted that in the Chinese case, the two terms are often used interchangeably. The People's Republic of China is an ethnically diverse country with a pivotal majority of 92% belonging to the Han nation (汉族 *hanzu*) and the remaining 8% of the Chinese population to 55 non-Han minority ethnic groups (少数民族 *shaoshu minzu*). These groups mainly live in peripheral regions such as Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and Yunnan, some of which are Minority Ethnic Autonomous Regions[3] (民族自治区 *minzu zizhiqu*) as administrative subdivisions in China. Due to ethnic diversity and historical issues, it is inadequate and inappropriate to conceptualise Chinese nationalism completely based on the Western nation-plus-state framework (see for example Bislev and Li 2013). To trace nationalism back to the late 19th century, Chinese nationalists such as Liang Qichao believed that the Han nation needed to be tied to all other minority ethnic groups to fight against imperialist aggression and introduced the Western concept of nationalism to China. The humiliation that China suffered from Western aggression led to the transformation from culturalism to nationalism (Duara 1996). As a consequence of both external pressure and internal weakness, the notion of territorial integrity and national unity[4] underpins the growth of nationalism and redefines the meaning of being patriotic in Chinese society.

Nationalism in Chinese literally is "*minzu zhuyi*" (民族主义), meaning "love-nation-ism", while patriotism is "*aiguo zhuyi*" (爱国主义), referring to "love-state-ism". The

[3] There are five Minority Ethnic Autonomous Regions (少数民族自治区) in China, which include Tibet Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. These regions have their own local governments with more legislative rights.

[4] Growing tensions among ethnic minorities (particularly in Tibet and Xinjiang) makes nationalism in China more complicated. It poses serious questions to the notion of territorial integrity and national unity. However, the ethnic component of nationalism in China is not the focus of this study due to its limited scope, and nationalism examined for the purpose of this research may primarily represent Han nationalism. However, it should be acknowledged that ethnic tension has become a significant issue. There are many scholars researching on the ethnic tension in China, for example, Bhattacharya (2007), Veg (2009), and Tang and He (2010). Enze Han (2013) looks into the dynamics of ethnic nationalism and examines the internal and external factors that lead to contestation and/or adaption of different minority ethnic groups in China.

use of different terms in language seems to suggest a divided loyalty toward the nation and the state. The former is toward the Chinese nation, and the latter the Party-state. There have been many attempts in distinguishing the two concepts (see for example Gries et. al 2011; Sinkkonen 2013; Viroli 1995). It is argued that patriotism predates the advent of nation-states, and it is "much older and more general than modern nationalism" (Kelman 1997, 166). While both concepts pertain to love of and loyalty to one's country, some studies tend to regard patriotism as *good* and nationalism *bad*, claiming that patriotism focuses on pride and loyalty while nationalism has chauvinistic and xenophobic features. Following this line of thinking, patriotism is defensive, and nationalism is offensive. For instance, Sinkkonen (2013) claims that the key difference is that patriotism relates only to internal qualities that appeal to the positive notion of loyalty to the state, whereas nationalism compares one's nation's qualities with those of other nations. The distinction is often made between malign nationalism and benign patriotism (Chen 2005).

Nonetheless, as regards Chinese nationalism, I argue that the distinction between the two terms can be problematic for the following two reasons. First of all, empirically, it can be observed that patriotism in China does not necessarily fit neatly into the positive notion of loyalty and love. Particularly under the influence of the patriotic education campaign, patriotism in China has both internal qualities of pride and loyalty and external implications of aggression and conflict. Patriotism is not necessarily benign. Patriotism can be expressed in various ways, which may be far from positive and benign. For instance anger, hatred and xenophobia are represented in the anti-Japanese demonstrations under the banner of patriotism. Second, terminologically, the two concepts are used in different social contexts: patriotism is the term the Chinese (both at the official and popular level) use more often, while nationalism is the term Western academics and practitioners use more frequently. Just as Gustafsson (2016, 151) argues, the term "patriotism" occupies a fundamental position in Chinese identity politics, and there is no clear-cut distinction between patriotism and nationalism. It can be problematic to interpret Chinese nationalism in the commonly-held assumption of good patriotism and bad nationalism.

In this thesis, I follow Anthony Smith's definition of nationalism as "*an ideological movement to attain and maintain autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population*" (2010, 9). Under the influence of the patriotic education campaign (to be addressed in Chapter 2), patriotism in China today has strong imprints of the love of the "Party-state" and can sometimes manifest itself in xenophobic nationalism. Patriotism can be a manifestation of nationalism with Chinese characteristics due to the Chinese historical evolution of nationalism. Given the social-political contexts, I would argue that nationalism and patriotism in contemporary China have significant overlaps and cannot be treated as separate and distinct concepts with presumed connotations. The separation and connotation are not helpful. In the Chinese case, the two concepts have been constructed as the two sides of one coin, which tries to embrace the integration of state and nation and stresses the link with China's past of glory and suffering.

1.2.2 Identifying themes: National humiliation and national pride in national mythmaking

A review of the existing literature suggests that the key theme to understanding Chinese nationalism is a Chinese *pride and humiliation complex*, which can give an insight into the important myths and symbols created and recreated to differentiate self from other (see detailed discussion in Chapter 2). William Callahan describes China as a "*pessoptimist* nation" (2010, 9) to highlight the impact of this complex. By examining the Chinese celebration of national humiliation and the civilisation/barbarism distinction, Callahan argues, "Chinese identity emerges through a curious combination of modern victimisation and ancient civilisation" (2010, 19). The past glory and civilisation of the Middle Kingdom have been taken as a reference point upon which modern victimisation is constructed. Many scholars have also acknowledged the significance of national humiliation in the construct of Chinese nationalism (for example Wang G. 1995; He 2007; Wang Z. 2012). As a consequence of this *pessoptimist* complex, China's sovereignty, national interests and its proper relations with other nation-states are of pivotal significance in the minds of Chinese nationalists. Similarly, Peter Gries even described this nationalist complex as "face nationalism" (2004) which highlights the significance of non-material aspects. Face nationalism is manifest mainly in two aspects in the Chinese context. One is that China does not want to be humiliated by other countries again and Japan is taken as the significant Other particularly in this regard. The other is that this mentality can

be seen from the effort and determination of almost all powerful Chinese leaders to restore China's pride and rejuvenate the Chinese nation.

The pessoptimist complex and face dimension are of great significance to understanding Chinese nationalism. They are particularly manifest in anti-Japanese Chinese nationalism, as Japan has been established as the significant Other in the construction of Chinese national identity (see for example Suzuki 2007). Notably, Chinese nationalism focuses on Japan more than any other country[5], while the Century of National Humiliation is a pivotal component in Chinese remembrance of its past and in its aspirations for returning to the "rightful" place in the international community. Those memories concerning a nation's past are fundamental. In particular, the Chinese experience of war has fundamentally shaped Chinese national identity. In Hutchinson's words, war can generate a set of national myths that lodge in the consciousness of the population and thus become a framework for explaining events and evaluating self-positioning in the world (2009, 401-2).

Of prominent importance in the Century of National Humiliation is the Second Sino-Japanese War, which constituted the Asia-Pacific battle front of the Second World War. In China, it is called as "the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japan" (中国人民抗日战争; the resistance war or the War hereafter). The long, brutal war started with the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in September 1931, later escalated into full-scale conflict and an open war in July 1937 with the *Lugouqiao* Incident (also known as Marco Polo Bridge Incident) near Beijing, and ended with Japan's official surrender in September 1945. The war caused between 20 and 35 million causalities depending on different estimates and has profound domestic and international implications. Chinese experience in WWII was "one of the single most turbulent, traumatic and destructive experiences that China has ever gone through" (Mitter 2013). The war is an important source of national myths that ultimately shapes, and at the same time reflects the construct of Chinese national identity. Given the importance of China-Japan relations, Joshua Fogel (2009) argues that China can only be fully understood by bringing Japan into account. Therefore, anti-Japanese nationalism is the focal point of this thesis. Furthermore, from an ethnosymbolic perspective, the war myths are appropriate entry points for

[5] The reason why Japan is constructed as the significant other will be addressed in the historical and cultural contextualization in Chapter 3.

attempting to decode China's pessoptimism, consisting of national humiliation and China's pride - in the discursive construction of nationalism today.

1.3 Methods and data

To analyse the discursive construction of nationalism, this thesis leverages two case studies based on their relevance and significance to national mythmaking. The first empirical case focuses on a series of Nanjing Massacre commemoration events to investigate the discursive construction of national humiliation (Chapter 5). The second empirical case focuses on the 2015 Victory Parade to investigate the discourse of national pride (Chapter 6). The criteria used in my case selection were derived from my review of existing scholarly work on Chinese nationalism and my preliminary examination of online discussion. Specifically, the reasons for choosing these two cases are two-fold. First, both are national holidays with symbolic significance in national mythmaking, and they commemorate the Chinese resistance during the War in two respects. While the national Memorial Day for the victims of the Nanking Massacre symbolically represents China's past defeat and humiliation, the Victory Day is to celebrate its victory and bolster national pride. The two commemorative events fit comfortably with my research focus under the theoretical guidance of ethno-symbolism. Second, the official media campaign and online discussion concerning the events can generate rich empirical data for understanding the landscape of national commemoration in contemporary China. It can offer insight into how the government sets up the agenda in discourse and how it is received and (re)interpreted by an online audience, contributing to (re)constructing the national past with discursive, digital practices.

Empirical data is derived from three major sources: relevant issue-specific websites, online portal sites, and online discussion groups listed as follows.

- Issue-specific websites: www.cngongji.cn (国家公祭网, The National Memorial Online; the NMO hereafter), special event webpages on the China Central Television (CCTV) website
- Commercial sites: mainly www.sina.com.cn (新浪) and www.qq.com (腾讯), the two most popular Chinese commercial portal sites, and online discussion forum: Baidu Tieba (百度帖吧)

These sites are taken as the main sites for study, because a key word search, using the event-related words such as 抗日战争 (the War of Resistance against Japanese)，国耻 (national humiliation), 南京大屠杀 (the Nanjing Massacre), and/or 胜利日 (Victory Day), and 阅兵 (parade), led me to these sites and also they provide rich data on the themes under study. The news reports in the NMO website, and CCTV website, as well as the portal sites, are taken as the source for the official discourse; the online comments and discussions as sources for popular discourse. Due to the large number of comments and discussions, I primarily select two types of comments for detailed qualitative analysis - the popularly liked comments and the top interactive comments, because they can help illuminate the key issues that invite discussion and debate among netizens. Certainly, the issue concerning censorship (and self-censorship) can be an important factor that may potentially influence the validity of my data for analysis. However, rather than an intervening variable, censorship is viewed as part of the ecological environment of the Internet politics under examination, which reflects dominance, acceptance and resistance in the digital age. This thesis attempts to include this factor into the analysis, wherever possible.

In analysing the data, I use discourse analytical tools primarily from Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) and the Multimodal approach to discourse. While DHA focuses on the analysis of the linguistic means and discursive strategies in self/other representation, the Multimodal approach can supplement with the multimodality of the discourse under study, as the Internet language consists of not only textual but also, increasingly, multimodal, non-textual forms. The focus of the analysis is not to simply draw on the use of language in and for itself, but to contextualise language within “social and cultural processes and structures” (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, 271). The analytical part primarily involves two-step procedure (see Krzyzanowski 2010). The first step is thematic analysis, which aims to map out the contents of analysed texts and identify discourse topics. The second step is an in-depth analysis of discursive strategies and multi-modal representation. The operationalization of my methods is testified in a pilot study before it is applied to the dataset.

To make CDA more applicable to my study, I firstly conduct a historical analysis of the event for historical contextualization. Secondly, Chinese traditional culture is

addressed for cultural contextualization, and besides, during analysis, it is supplemented by adding Chinese linguistic features, including new Internet language features, and cultural codes into the analysis of discursive strategies. Tian suggests a "wider angle" of critical perspective be implemented (Tian 2008; Tian and Chilton 2014). Chilton (2012, 1) advocates that Chinese discourse analysis should have its focus on the role of Chinese language. That means the researcher should have cultural sensitivity to the link between discourse and culture. Thirdly, I include the emergent Internet culture into account, as the discourse under study manifests new digital communication features. In this thesis, cultural elements concern not only Chinese traditional culture but also the emerging Internet culture.

1.4 Significance of the research

This thesis contributes to the existing literature as follows. First, it presents an original study in applying general Western theories to a non-Western case. It is among the first to examine both the top-down construction and the popular reception in the study on Chinese nationalism from an ethnosymbolic approach. It highlights the importance of having a situated understanding of nationalism in its social contexts. By shifting the attention from the sole dominance of state nationalism or the impact of nationalism on Chinese foreign policy, this thesis provides a window to the complex facets of Chinese nationalism and offers a more nuanced understanding of the political and social dynamics in contemporary China.

Second, it provides empirical evidence to show that Chinese online nationalism is neither a government tool for propaganda and legitimacy nor an independent popular ideological movement, but rather constitute both of them and involve emergent Internet governance and the Internet popular culture features. Additionally, through a cultural and historical angle, my thesis provides counter-arguments to existing literature on Chinese online nationalism that regards online nationalism as an independent social force that may necessarily threaten the Party's rule and make the state fragile (for example Wang F. 2013; Wu 2005, 2007).

Third, it provides a detailed empirical study on the case studies of the recent commemorative events, through which the construction of national myths can be examined. It has the novelty in shedding light on these events and looking into the national myths created and recreated in the changing social-political contexts.

Through the analysis, the historical and culture contexts, in which Chinese nationalism evolves and develops in the new digital age, are highlighted as important wider political structure. The study provides empirical data for digital memory studies and also for the state-society dynamics in the digital age. My study suggests to Internet studies in general that the focus should be shifted from the role of the technology itself onto how the technology is used and in what ways.

Fourth, it contributes to the methodological application of CDA to Chinese discourse studies. I adjust the method tools according to the features of the data collected for analysis. I use both DHA and multimodal approach in my empirical chapters in order to capture more fully the picture of the online language use on the basis of the data. My reseasrch highlights that both Chinese language/culture and the emergent Internet language/culture deserve close examination in order to make sense of the online phenomenon of a digitalized China. Having outlined the significance of the research, I acknowledge that there are limitations in it due to the scope of my research and research design, which will be addressed both in the methodology chapter as well as the concluding chapter. The next section will provide a brief overview of this thesis.

1.5 Thesis overview

This chapter has introduced my research topic – Chinese online nationalism and set the scene against which the project unfolds. It briefly addressed my conceptual framework and methodology. Above all, it pointed to the necessity to view contemporary Chinese nationalism through the lens of Internet politics in China's transformation.

Chapter 2 will examine the existing literature on Chinese nationalism and identify the research gap and important themes in understanding Chinese nationalism. It points out the necessity of situating it in the specific historical and cultural contexts in order not to make an arbitrary judgement from the Western framework. Rather than taking Chinese nationalism as state-led, this thesis regards it an ideological movement involving ongoing processes of interactions between elite projects and popular nationhood. It draws attention on the subjective and inter-subjective feature of nationalism and chooses the ethnosymbolism approach to nationalism

studies, which emphasises the importance of culture, memory and symbols in the construction of national identity.

Chapter 3 will set out an inter-disciplinary conceptual framework and contextualise Chinese nationalism in cultural terms. The first section addresses the conceptual framework that incorporates three dimensions – collective memory and mythscape, discourse and power, and multi-institutional politics and digital memories – in order to accommodate the different angles in looking at the concept of nationalism in China. The framework illustrates how the concept of memory, discourse, power and technology all connect to each other in examining the (re)construction of Chinese nationalism in the digital age. The nationalist-drum frame is visualised to show the conceptual framework for this thesis. The second section contextualises the concepts of humiliation, pride and legitimacy in Chinese history and culture, which provides the cultural framework under which discourse analysis of Chinese nationalism can be conducted. It aims to provide the context against which we can better understand these concepts in Chinese case without falling into the arbitrary notion of imposing the Western notion and framework upon non-Western experience.

Chapter 4 will specify the methodological approach by firstly outlining the significance of discourse analysis to this study, and then identifying the Discourse-Historical Approach and multimodal approach as my key analytical toolkits in conducting discourse analysis. It highlights the importance of culturally contextualising discourse studies and specifies the operationalization of my methodology. Reflections upon the potential limitations of my research methods and my role as a researcher are also addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 will closely examine the two case studies of national commemoration events. Chapter 5 looks into a series of events of the Nanjing Massacre commemoration and examines how the national past of tragedy, death and trauma is constructed and discussed in China's cyberspace. Chapter 6 examines the construction of the mythscape of national pride in the 2015 V-day commemoration event and makes a comparison between the construct of humiliation and that of pride. Both cases studies closely examine the discursive dimension of nationalism through the lens of both top-down construction and

bottom-up reception. They illuminate remembrance of the national past is a dynamic and socially constructed phenomenon set within the changing social-political environment. Furthermore, nationalist discourse is the realm over which state and non-state actors attempt to maintain/gain power via digital communication.

Finally, Chapter 7 will discuss the key research findings and address the theoretical, methodological and political implications of this thesis. It discusses the complex and changing sphere of memory, history, and identity, and highlights the role of the Internet in the changing state-society relations under China's transformation. It finally summarises the contributions of the research and points out its limitations and potential areas for future research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Drawing upon the rise of nationalism in China in recent decades, there is a large body of literature that examines nationalism in the Chinese context. The impact of nationalism on Chinese foreign policy making and regional stability have drawn particular attention (see for example Gries 2004; Chen 2005; Hughes 2005a; Shirk 2011; Zhao 2004; Zhang 2007). While much attention is focused on the discourse of state-led nationalism, the shifting nature of nationalism and the changing political dynamics between state and non-state actors are largely ignored. The preoccupation with state-led nationalism, to a large extent, overlooks the relationship between nation-building projects and popular resonance. While the rise of public opinion and the impact of digital technologies have raised the attention of Western and Chinese scholars (for example Jiang 2012; Reilly 2012; Shirk 2007; Zhao 2013), online nationalism (or cyber nationalism), as a new topic in the field, remains understudied. Empirical research that focuses on the use of the Internet in articulating and negotiating nationalism is limited. This thesis focuses on how the dynamics between official nationalism and popular nationalism inform the construct of Chinese nationalism. It examines the changing power dynamics between state and society in the digital age. The objective of this study is to present a picture showing the complex and shifting nature of Chinese nationalism and shed light on the impact of the Internet on the process of social and political transformation of contemporary China.

This chapter identifies the key debates in the existing literature and clarifies pivotal themes for understanding Chinese nationalism. It starts with a review of the theories of nationalism which allow us to understand the central mechanisms that drive nationalism. Then it situates nationalism in the Chinese context and highlights key themes in Chinese nationalist discourses and accordingly suggests approaching Chinese nationalism from an alternative theoretical framework – ethno-symbolism. The next section reviews the development of the Internet in China and the debate surrounding its impact on Chinese society and politics. Government control of the Internet and public responses to it are also addressed. The chapter then highlights the importance of Chinese online nationalism. In conclusion, I argue that there is

value in moving beyond the official/popular, and primordial/instrumental nationalism dichotomy and paying attention to the multi-dimensionality of Chinese nationalism as well as the dynamics between state and society in the digital age.

2.1. Nationalism

2.1.1 Primordialism and modernism

Nationalism is a complex phenomenon that has been defined and theorised in many different ways[6]. In these theoretical approaches to nationalism, nationalism can mean differently - a political principle (Gellner 1983), a state of mind (Kohn 1994), cultural artefacts of a particular kind (Anderson 1991), or an ideological movement (Smith 2010). The literature on nationalism is divided among those who urge some subjective primordial ties and others who focus on an objective modern construction.

For primordialists, group identity is a given, nationality is a natural part of human beings, and the nation can be found in all periods of history. The role of descent, history and emotional bonds is significant, and thus nationalism is viewed as a development of much older processes of ethnicity (Hearn 2009, 20). Primordialism is an umbrella term that includes different versions such as culturalist and perennialist approaches. The common belief of these approaches lies in the naturalness and/or antiquity of nations (Ozkirimli 2017, 52). Clifford Geertz (1993, 6) emphasised the importance of "primordial loyalties", an attachment that stems from the subject's sense of the 'givens' of social existence regarding language, religion, family, history and place. He suggests that ethnic ties are of inherent nature that associate us with some people and dissociate us from others (Geertz 1993, 259-260). Nation is seen as a constant and fundamental feature of human life through recorded history (Smith 1998a, 159). The us/them relationship is, from this perspective, given and pre-determined. In the influential book, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel Huntington (1998) propagated a primordial perspective and argued that states belonging to different civilisations would have a higher propensity to be involved in international conflict during the post-Cold War era. However, primordialism is largely criticised for its theoretical and empirical shortcomings. Theoretically, it tends to regard social existence as given and unchanging, ignore

[6] This thesis follows the general categorization of theories in nationalism studies - primordialism, modernism and ethnosymbolism. Such categorization can be found in books such as Hearn (2006) and Ozkirimli (2017).

dynamics and changes, and oversimplify complex situations in real world settings. Empirically, there is insufficient evidence to support arguments for natural ethnic conflicts (see for example Chiozza 2002). Also, ethnic ties change according to real-life economic, social and political circumstances. Primordialism cannot account for the change and evolution of nationalism.

Another approach to nationalism study is modernism, which focuses on the forces of state-building and modernization. In modernist perspectives nation is a territorialized and autonomous legal-political community. Ethnic ties and national identities are often convenient tools at the hands of elites for generating public support in the pursuit of modernity. Ernest Gellner defines nationalism as "primarily a principle that holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" (Gellner 1983, 1). In Gellner's theory, nationalism arose as a result of "objective need" for industrial rationality (Haas 1986, 720). It was represented as "a compatible ideological companion to industrialisation" (Eriksen 2007, 4). According to Hobsbawm (1983), both nations and nationalism are products of "social engineering" through "the invention of tradition"[7]. Benedict Anderson defines the nation as "an imagined community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (1991, 6). He asserted that national consciousness was facilitated by the convergence of print technology[8] and capitalism in addition to the fatality of human linguistic diversity[9]. In this light, in comparison to the role of print technology in constructing "imagined community", the role of the Internet today seems to be playing an even more powerful role in economic modernization and social communication among different groups within "homeland" and beyond. Modernism is rather dominant in nationalism studies. However, critics argue that its concepts are too closely tied to a particular period in European history (Erikesen 2007, 2). Modernism reflects the characteristics of the 18th and 19th century in Western Europe, and only provides a

[7] Hobsbawm (1983) distinguishes between two processes of invention. One concerns adapting old traditions and institutions to new situations, and the other occurs in periods of rapid social change when deliberate inventions of new traditions become useful.

[8] Print technology was first invented in ancient China during Tang (618-906) Dynasty, but Chinese people did not become national conscious until the late 19th century. In terms of the "Four Inventions" (四大发明 *sida faming*) in Chinese history, it is interesting to ask why technologies have not led to industrialization in Chinese society. Joseph Needman raised the Needman Puzzle: why did the industrial revolution not originate in China?

[9] Chinese language was unified by Qin Shi Huang (260-210BC) when he unified the warring states into one kingdom and established Qin Dynasty in 221BC. Therefore, it is also interesting to note that the fatality of human linguistic diversity in Anderson's imagined community was not a significant factor in raising national consciousness in the Chinese context.

definition of a particular kind of nation, the *modern* nation (Smith 2005, 95). This makes modernist theorization very Eurocentric and partial. Modernism also focuses on the construction of nationalism from above and does not draw adequate attention to the view from below. Modernism also tends to ignore the shifting dynamism of modernity and overlook the emergence of new nationalism in the process of globalisation (Hearn 2009, 8). For instance, increasingly, globalisation is regarded as the cultural dominance of the West over the rest of the world, which leads to new nationalist appeals to resist against it (ibid.). Such dynamic aspects of nationalism need to be addressed in specific contexts.

2.1.2 Nationalism in the Chinese context

2.1.2.1 From *Tianxia* to *Guojia*

The Chinese historical experience is very different from the mainly European experience that underpins major theories of nationalism. It is, therefore, necessary to look beyond the primordial and modernist paradigms and take further historical and cultural factors into consideration for alternative theoretical explanations. As advocated by Zheng Yongnian (1999, 10), new approaches should be explored to discover China's nationalism *in China* and dig out Chinese *internal* forces of nationalism (italics for emphasis). Nation and nationalism are very new concepts in the Chinese context. Before the turn of the 20th century, the predominate Chinese approach to foreign relations was culturalism - civilization rather than nation-state was the basic unit of *tianxia* (all-under-heaven) and state legitimacy was determined by divine right, by bloodline, and by mandate of heaven, which appealed to no national identity (Townsend 1996, 2-6). Civilisation/barbarism distinction was a central imperial governance system in ancient China. It involved a hierarchy of civilisation that divided the Chinese Self from the barbaric other; its ultimate goal was to promote China's "Great Unity" (大一统 *da yitong*) (Callahan 2010, 22-23). China had to replace its Sinocentric worldview with the European nation-state concept particularly after its defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) (Jin and Liu 2006). In the struggle against Western and Japanese dominance, China was confronted with the "mismatch between Western nationalism and Chinese culturalism" (Dittmer and Kim 1993, 249). Nationalism eventually found its way into

the Chinese mind after the Pax Sinica[10] fell apart with the foreign intrusion (Chen 2005, 36). The Chinese emperor's international status was suddenly turned upside down, and the *tianxia* was transformed into *guojia* (nation-state) in the early 20th century. In the transformation process, Chinese people had to face the harsh reality of China's dramatic reversal in international status from a highly civilised "middle kingdom" to a humiliated nation-state. China's fate, thereafter, became intricately intertwined with the general conception of "*neiyou waihuan*" (内忧外患, troubles from within and threats from without), which was propagated and instrumentalised by elites.

To meet the political needs for the development of the unitary concept of 国家 *guojia*, Chinese elites tried to invent new discourses such as 民族 *minzu* (nation), 民族主义 *minzu zhuyi* (nationalism), 中华民族 *zhonghua minzu* (Chinese nation), appropriating the non-indigenous concepts for the context of late imperial China. The Chinese term *minzu* was initially imported from Japan into Chinese vocabulary by Liang Qichao (1873-1929), the most outspoken reformist (改良派 *gailiang pai)*, in 1899. The word – *minzu* - combines the notion of *min* (referring to a group of subordinated people) with that of *zu* (referring to ethnic lineage). Two years later, Liang used 民族主义 *minzu zhuyi* for "nationalism" for the first time. It would be problematic to define China with such diverse ethnicity backgrounds as a nation, and therefore, Liang Qichao additionally introduced two Chinese terms, "large nationalism" (大民族主义 *da minzu zhuyi*) and "small nationalism" (小民族主义 *xiao minzu zhuyi*). Liang explicated that "small nationalism concerned with the Han nation as opposed to the other nations in the country. Large nationalism is the various nations within the country as opposed to the various nations abroad" (Zhao 2004, 65). Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), the founding father and first president of the Republic of China, and his successor, Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) defined all Chinese people as one race in order to obscure the ethnic distinction between the Han and non-Han ethnic groups and promote a policy of ethnic assimilation. In order to resist Western imperialism with united effort, the republican elites traced the origins of the Chinese nation back to *Huang Di* (the Yellow Emperor) and forged various ethnic groups (largely five ethnicities: Han, Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans and Hui) arguably

[10] Pax Sinica is Latin for Chinese peace. It refers to the imperial Chinese world order based on Oriental pacificism, which prevailed in Chinese history for more than two millenniums. See Zhang, Yongjin (2001). System, Empire and State in Chinese International Relations. *Review of International Studies*, 27: 43-63

around their common ancestral roots into one officially defined Chinese nation.

When the People's Republic of China was founded by Mao-led Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949, it was declared in the Constitution that "The People's Republic of China is unitary multi-ethnic state created jointly by the people of all its nationalities". In the pluralist-unitary structure, there are officially 56 ethnic groups, and according to the 6th population census conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) of China, the Han people as the ethnic majority take up to 91.5% of the population (NBS 2011). The CCP appealed to using the term - 中华民族 *zhonghua minzu* (Chinese nation) so as to maintain stability and harmony among all ethnic groups and even recruit overseas Chinese to rejuvenate the Chinese race. The preference to using *zhonghua minzu* results from the political need to formulate a collective singular that is able to incorporate different ethnic groups into one nation (Matten 2012, 96). This term is an umbrella word including all ethnic groups in China as well as overseas Chinese. It should be noted that given China's huge landscape and ethnic diversity, the collective identity of China as a nation remains fragile (Zhao 2004, 70). It has been challenged by the rise of non-Han ethnic groups manifested in the rising ethnic nationalism in Tibet and Xinjiang, which has raised much scholarly attention on the ethnic issues in China (for example Gladney 1996; Hao 2000; Lafitte 2013; Tang and He 2010). In this regard, the definition of Chinese nationalism can be fragmented and multi-layered. I acknowledge such complexity of nationalism that constitutes both internal dimension and external dimension. This thesis primarily focuses on Chinese nationalism that pertains to the external dimension, which has been shaped by the consciousness of pride/humiliation in the shifting official/popular dynamics in contemporary China, as the following sections will address.

2.1.2.2 Pride/humiliation complex

Understanding Chinese national identity is significant because it offers us insight into what China is and what China wants. Put it in Zheng Wang's words, "who we think we are defines what we think we want" (2013, 11). In the existing literature, there are different issues surrounding "who we are", such as ethnicity, citizenship and modernity, and they are all significant to the definition of Chinese national identity. It should, therefore, be clarified that due to the scope and the aim of my research, this study regards China as a unitary concept of a nation-state as the People's Republic of

China (P.R.C.). This section highlights that the key theme to understanding "what China is" and "what China wants" is through Chinese *pride and humiliation complex*, which can give an insight into the important myths of the past created and recreated to construct the concept of self and other in Chinese nationalism.

Ultimately, the pride/humiliation complex is closely related to the discourse of "5,000 years of Civilisation" and the "Century of Humiliation". William Callahan vividly characterizes China as "the pessoptimist nation" (2010, 10). He highlights the inherent paradox between being superior and being inferior in Chinese national identity. By examining the Chinese ancient civilisation/barbarism distinction and its narratives of national humiliation, Callahan claims, "Chinese identity emerges through a curious combination of modern victimisation and ancient civilisation" (2010, 19). Modern victimisation relates to the bitter transition from *tianxia* to *guojia*, as addressed previously, and Chinese collective trauma particularly during the Second Sino-Japanese War. This gives rise to national humiliation narratives. It has been commonly acknowledged that national humiliation is a significant component in the construct of Chinese nationalism (Callahan 2006, 2010; Gries 2005; He 2007; Wang G. 1995; Wang Z. 2008; Zhao 2004; Zheng Y. 1999). Wang Gungwu claims that Chinese nationalism was inspired by the national consciousness of humiliation after a succession of military defeats that led to "unequal status for Chinese everywhere, to extraterritorial privileges for foreign residents within China, and to the increasing dominance of foreign enterprises on Chinese soil" (Wang G. 1995, 47-8). There is a close relationship between sense of (in)security and national identity (Callahan 2006, 181). Arguably, Chinese modern victimisation is constructed upon the reference foundation of the past glory and civilisation of the Middle Kingdom.

Callahan (2010) draws attention to the importance of examining the Chinese identity dilemma when studying Chinese pessoptimist nationalism. The disjuncture in China's view of itself in the international arena, either as too small as a poor developing country or too large as the new superpower is central to this dilemma. At the turn of the 20th century, China was confronted with its first identity crisis, struggling between a bullied China and a glorious China. This continues to exert significant influence over Chinese mentality when interacting with the world, as highlighted previously. Therefore, when it comes to sensitive issues such as the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute and the Taiwan Issue, the sense of inferiority comes

into play as China is depicted as a victim; however, when it comes to China's rise especially its growing economic development, the sense of superiority arises as China is depicted as a victor, a reviving power. As a consequence of this pessoptimist complex, China's sovereignty, national interests and its proper relations with other nation-states are of pivotal significance in the minds of Chinese nationalists. The deep mentality under this pursuit of national interests, as Zheng Wang (2012, 10) argues, relates to the shared collective memory of the past pride and humiliation so that non-material interests such as national dignity and respect from others, to a large extent, matter more than material interests such as trade.

Peter Gries (2004) analysed Chinese newspapers and reports and described this nationalist complex as "face nationalism", illuminating the significance of the non-material aspects and cultural factors (see further discussion on cultural contextualization in Chapter 3). The face dimension of nationalism highlights the argument that, due to the historical experience and identity transformation that Chinese people have gone through, China does not want to be humiliated by other countries again. Japan is often taken as the significant other in this regard. This mentality can be seen from the effort and determination of almost all Chinese leaders to restore China's pride and rejuvenate the nation so as to win respect in the world of nation-states. For example, in the post-cold war era, Jiang Zemin's "great power diplomacy" (大国外交 *daguo waijiao*), Hu Jintao's "peaceful rise" (和平崛起 *heping jueqi*), and now Xi Jinping's "Chinese dream" (中国梦 *zhongguo meng*) all demonstrate the CCP's ambition for the revival of China as a leading power, which echoes the voices from below recalling the glorious past and appealing to regaining respect in the international community.

In the contemporary political landscape, the pride/humiliation complex, as well as the face dimension, is largely manifest in the shifting narratives of being a victor or being a victim in the War. National mythmaking has constructed China as a victor, highlighting Chinese heroic resistance against Japanese imperialist aggression on the one hand, and also as a victim, underlining Chinese collective trauma and suffering during the War on the other. While modern Chinese victimisation is constructed with reference to past glory and civilisation in national mythmaking, Chinese victimhood sets the foundation upon which Chinese victor-hood is shaped. Over

time, there has been an ongoing interplay between victor narratives and victim narratives in the construction of the myths regarding the War. This interplay has been an essential point for Chinese nationalism. While heroic resistance as a victor over Japanese aggression was the main theme during Mao's era, the post-Mao era has witnessed a shift onto the victimisation of Chinese war experience. This is particularly notable in the Patriotic Education Campaign.

2.1.2.3 Patriotic Education Campaign

The nationwide Patriotic Education Campaign, launched shortly after the Tiananmen Square Incident (1989), is key to understanding the changing content of state-defined nationalism and patriotism. In the early 1990s, the CCP was confronted with serious ideological challenges because of the pro-democracy movement, as well as the international collapse of Communism after the end of Cold War. Therefore, the CCP began to look into the past, and Deng Xiaoping recognised the "biggest mistake" was in ideological and political education. The Party decided to exploit the powerful tool of propaganda to fill the ideological vacuum and re-educate Chinese people to love the country and stay loyal to the Party. Ultimately, the campaign is a history re-education campaign, in which the CCP turned to nationalism as an ideological instrument to bolster the faith of the Chinese people and legitimise the Party's rule (Gries 2004; Tang and Darr 2012; Zhao 2004, 2013).

In 1994, the Central Propaganda Department issued "General Outline on Implementing Patriotic Education", which made it clear that the objective was to enhance national cohesion and rally the people's patriotism to "build socialism with Chinese characteristics" (Wang Z. 2008, 790). The Patriotic Education Campaign represented a large-scale political mobilisation to fundamentally re-educate Chinese youths to remember historical lessons, and not to forget imperialist invasion and Chinese people's heroic resistance (Reilly 2012, 102). The campaign propagates the leadership role played by the CCP in the social and political transformation of China, highlights the unique Chinese national conditions (国情 *guoqing*) and calls for people's loyalty to the party-state in the effort to build socialism with Chinese characteristics.

There are two significant facets of the patriotic education campaign. The first facet is that it depicts the Party as the embodiment and object of nationalist or patriotic

sentiment. In the official discourse under patriotic education, patriotism (爱国主义 *aiguo zhuyi*) is paralleled to nationalism (民族主义 *minzu zhuyi*). Under this framework, loyalty to the nation means loyalty to the Party-state (Zhao 2004, 79). Put simply, the CCP tries to instil a notion that loving the country means loving the state, which also means loving the Party. The equation of the nation-state to the Party-state highlights the unshakable status of the CCP as the saviour and leader of China and points to the "correct path" of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The second facet largely draws on the use of humiliation narratives. In the patriotic education, the content of official nationalist discourse is closely related to the history of Western antagonism and present hostility on the part of the West (Zhu 2001, 4). It fundamentally diverted from the victor narratives and emphasised the victimhood of Chinese people at the hands of foreign invaders, especially the Japanese. Chinese national consciousness, as Zheng Wang (2008) points out, is constituted by the Chosenness-Myths-Trauma (CMT) complex largely related to the Century of National Humiliation. In the official discourse, the Century of National Humiliation started from the first Opium War 1839-42 and ended in 1949 when the People's Republic of China was founded. There is "a heavy dose of national humiliation" included to remind people of the miserable memory of China being bullied by imperialists (Callahan 2010, 14). Tsu has highlighted, such "perpetually incitable sense of injury" can provide "the most versatile and undying desire for ambition" (2005, 24). To incite nationalist feelings of injury and trauma, history is selectively remembered while others are left silenced and/or forgotten (see for example Lim 2014). Through selective remembering and forgetting of history, in-group identities are strengthened while out-group identities highlighted in the national humiliation narratives. In particular, the Second Sino-Japanese War is used as a significant source, most indisputably, for strengthening national humiliation (see also Chapter 3).

A clear message conveyed in the patriotic education campaign is that the CCP is the Party of national salvation; that means, without the CCP, there is no new China.[11] The

[11] This slogan came from a very popular song in China. The song was written before the founding of the People's Republic of China, but it became a part of the PRC government propaganda in early 1990s. The lyric goes, "Without the CCP, there is no new China. The CCP does everything for the people. The CCP

campaign is ultimately aimed at sustaining and bolstering support for state legitimacy. According to Lipset, legitimacy "involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate one for the society" (1981, 64). Put it in another way, legitimacy concerns the public belief in the existing regime. Whether people perceive the regime as legitimate or illegitimate is largely based on "the way in which its values fit with theirs" (ibid.). Many studies have argued for the close relationship between nationalism and the CCP's political legitimacy in contemporary China (for example Darr 2011; Gries 2004; Tang and Darr 2012; Zhao 2004), highlighting that nationalism has been used as an ideological tool to bolster public support and legitimise the Party's rule.

Under the patriotic campaign, Chinese people are reminded that it is the CCP who saved China and is leading China into prosperity, glory and respect. They should unite under the CCP's leadership and develop China's national power in order to avoid a recurrence of the miserable sufferings at the hands of foreign powers; therefore, they need to hold strong belief in the legitimacy of the political regime. Chinese people are asked to "bear in mind that weakness, disunity, and disorder at home would invite foreign aggression and result in the loss of Chinese identity, as China's century-long humiliation and suffering before 1949 demonstrated (Zhao 2004, 232-33). Ultimately, Beijing's reconstruction of Chinese war myths in the patriotic education campaign manifests "the shift in stress, in attempts at regime legitimation, from previously dominant iconoclastic and utopian communist ideas toward nationalistic and patriotic themes" (Waldron 1996, 947).

2.1.2.4 Official/Popular nationalism mix

Given the scale and influence of the Patriotic Education Campaign, a large part of the arguments, understandably, tends to focus on the CCP's political instrumentalisation of nationalism to gain legitimacy in the face of the decline of Communism in the Post-Tiananmen era. Official nationalism ultimately defines the nation as a territorial-political unit, represented in the nation-building projects and state policies. Nonetheless, the whole picture of Chinese nationalism does not become clear if it is simply reduced to the CCP's ideological instrument, as nationalism is no

is determined to save China…." Singing red songs is a part of propagating "red classics", and it is part of the patriotic education campaign.

longer the sole province of state propaganda, and grassroots nationalist voices are playing an important part of "the nationalist orchestra" (Zhao 2004, 11).

Increasingly, popular nationalism constitutes an important part of Chinese nationalism today. Popular nationalism concerns popular attitudes toward the nation-state, exhibited by "non-elite member of a set of people" (Whitmeyer 2002, 322). It is about nationalistic sentiments and expressions from the grassroots. Zheng Wang (2012) examines the use of national humiliation discourse in building collective memory and emphasises that there is a linkage between the top-down official nationalism and the bottom-up popular nationalism. The linkage is historical consciousness, referring to national consciousness about the national past. Only with the existence of historical consciousness is top-down political propaganda likely to succeed in appealing to the public. He Yinan's work emphasises the instrumental purposes of national mythmaking by ruling elites but notes that it is rarely implemented in a top-down, coherent fashion as the landscape of memory is constructed in the contestation between ruling elites and societal forces (He 2007, 45-7). She argues that elite effort in shaping memory politics can gain wider public support only if it "invokes beliefs and values shared by the public" (ibid, 55). The role of popular nationalism cannot be ignored.

The emerging role of Chinese popular nationalism today challenges the long-held "democratic disadvantage" view[12] in foreign policy making (see for example, Gries 2005; Shirk 2011). China's foreign policy makers' hands are increasingly bound by popular nationalism, and Chinese foreign policy is now a two-level game (Gries 2005; Weiss 2014). Zhao Suisheng (2004) describes nationalism as "a double-edged sword". While the ruling party uses nationalism as a legitimating device, popular nationalist sentiments may spill over into mass action that targets criticism at the party-state itself (Holmes 1993; Callahan 2010). For instance, if the Chinese government takes a soft stance in foreign relations, Chinese people, whose collective memory is still imbued with the national humiliation and history, tend to question the Party's legitimacy. The CCP thus has to take more aggressive foreign policy at the cost of economic and cultural ties with other countries. Some scholars are worried that China will threaten regional and world stability by resorting to military power if the

[12] According to "democratic disadvantage view", democracies are constrained by elections and public opinions and thus at a disadvantage in foreign policy making. Authoritarian governments, conversely, are seen as free of domestic constraints and thus they are at a diplomatic advantage (see Gries 2005).

CCP has to retain its legitimacy by meeting the popular nationalists' demands of being "tough" (强硬 *qiangying*) (see for example Shirk 2011).

While much focus is either put on top-down official nationalism or bottom-up popular nationalism, the dichotomy between the two fails to capture the full picture. The two should not be regarded as distinct from each other; rather, they are intimately intertwined. Prioritising one over the other tends to disregard the significance of the other and thus invite misrepresentation of the issue, which may jeopardise the understanding of contemporary China. On the one hand, we should not assume that the Chinese people are just the passive recipient of state ideology, and on the other, we should not regard official nationalism simply as political propaganda or ideology (Wang H. 2014, 192). Rather, in (re)making the myths and shaping the political landscape of memory and identity, the top-down elite mythmaking and the bottom-up reactions are "the twin driving forces" (He 2007, 67). Chinese nationalist politics involve both top-down and bottom-up forces. As Callahan correctly argues, Chinese nationalism is produced and consumed in "an interactive and intersubjective process" (2010, 25). It is (re)produced in the dynamism of official policy and popular feelings. While the former can speak to the latter, the public may steer attention toward certain domains and affect official initiatives. The dynamism between nationalism from above and that from below is essential to a more nuanced understanding of nationalism.

2.1.3 Toward an ethno-symbolism approach

Existing research on Chinese nationalism suggests that the Chinese experience is different from the general Western experience[13]. The historic pride/humiliation complex and specific official/popular dynamics are important themes in understanding Chinese nationalism. Given the limitations of the primordialism/modernism approaches discussed previously, it is useful to examine Chinese nationalism in an alternative framework that may better account for China's historical experiences.

[13] National consciousness in the European experience was intimately related to the intellectual Enlightenment process. Nationalism was originated in late 18th-century Europe, arguably as a particular consequence of the French Revolution (1789-1799). The early-modern republicans firstly ascribed *natio* (latin word meant place of origin) to the whole free population of a city or state. The concept of nation was identified by Rousseau as "a people constituted by individuals who, deliberating without distinction of birth, religion, or wealth, voluntarily establish their own governing authority" (Benner 2013, 38).

Among those who made attempts to provide alternative approaches to nationalism studies (for example, Billig 1995; Smith 1991, 1996, 2009), Anthony Smith worked on John Armstrong's concept of the "myth-symbol complex" and raised ethno-symbolism, which challenges the primordialism/modernism dichotomy. The ethnosymbolic approach lays special emphasis on the cultural aspects of nations and nationalism and highlights the subjective and symbolic resources. Smith (2009, 16) highlights the significance of "traditions, memories, values, myths and symbols that compose the accumulated heritage of cultural units of population", as well as the socialisation in ensuring a common culture and motivating ideologies and collective actions. Ethnosymbolism rejects the modernist notion that nations can be forged, or invented by elites over short time-spans. Rather, nations are formed in close relation to "earlier cultural and political forms of society" (Smith 2009, 17). Smith defines nationalism as "an ideological movement to attain and maintain autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population" (2010, 9). In this definition, nationalism is an *ideological movement*. From my perspective, I refer to nationalism as both an ideology and movement in that it can be manifested, explicitly or implicitly, as a system of thoughts and beliefs or social-political actions and practices. Ideology and movement are inter-related in the terrain of nationalism. National identity provides the psychological or ideational basis of nationalism (Zheng Y. 1999, 10). Ethno-symbolism is adopted as the alternative theoretical framework for this thesis primarily because of its following strengths[14].

First of all, ethno-symbolism focuses on elements of myth, memory, value, symbol, and tradition and seeks to supplement structural analysis with an exploration of the symbolic and cultural dimension of nationalism. While the nation-state is not a visible entity, national symbols and rituals provide a framework under which the nation can be visualised and imagined. This framework provides an alternative to crossing the objective/subjective line. Smith (2009) highlights the importance of the ethnocultural dimension in creating a solidary community and points out that the study of nationalism is a form of "political archaeology", in which both the unity and the diversity of nationalism are regarded as equally important. Cultural elements endow different nations with distinctive symbols that help sharpen the boundaries

[14] Ethno-symbolism has been critiqued for its lack of a clear distinction between the concept of nation and state and its inability to address nations without states (see for example Guibernau 2004). Nonetheless, the theoretical framework, compared to the other two major branches of nationalism theories, is more helpful in accounting for the Chinese case, as unfolded in the thesis.

between “us” and “them”. Traditions, myths, and symbols generate feelings of affinity or exclusion among groups. Nonetheless, there can never be a single version of the national past, just as there can never be a homogeneous national community. This is particularly true for countries with diverse ethnic groups and in rapid transformation. In particular, China has a long history and many symbolic resources from the past to mobilise. Examination of the symbolic and cultural dimension of nationalism can help move beyond the primordialism/modernism dichotomy and examine both the objective and subjective dimensions of nationalism.

Second, for ethno-symbolists, historical and cultural contexts are regarded as essential to the understanding of nationalism. In placing myth, symbol, memory and value at the centre of analysis, ethno-symbolism advocates situating the role of nations and nationalism in a broader historical context and offers a more nuanced analysis (Smith 2009, 23-30). This relates to the “double historicity” of nations that refers to embeddedness in specific historical contexts and rootedness in the memories and customs of populations (ibid, 30). It points to non-western experience and understandings as well as the ethnic lineage of nations in earlier periods. These are regarded as important factors having continuing impact on the character of modern nations of today. The relationship between the past and the present should be two-way: our view of the past is influenced by the needs and the interests of the present, and the selected aspects of the past create the frames of reference in which we make sense of our present. Contextualisation is important for ethno-symbolism.

Third, ethno-symbolic approach directs our attention to the role of different actors and give due weight to “elite projects” and “popular nationhood” in their contribution to forging the nation. The important question, for ethno-symbolists, lies in how the nation is forged through the interplay between elites and non-elites who may “accept, reject or reshape” elite national projects (Smith 2009, 31). Dismissing the idea of “invented traditions” of elite projects, ethno-symbolists claim that only those symbolic elements that have prior resonance among the population (particularly its dominant ethnic community) can shape the content of national projects (ibid). The interplay between elites and non-elites is subject to conflict and change, which constitutes a process of construction and reconstruction as well as dynamics of power. Smith claims,

> Although nations may be partly forged by political institutions, over the long term, they require ethnocultural resources to create a solidary community, mainly because of the critical importance for a sense of national identity of subjective dimensions. That is also the reason why nations cannot simply be seen as elite projects. We need to understand the often complex interplay between elites and various sections of the wider population whom they may seek to mobilise in terms of symbols, myths and memories that resonate with them....[I]t is the inner changes and reinterpretations that are so critical for the shaping and persistence of nations (2009, 21).

Along the similar line, Kleinman (1996, 118) argues, a nation is not wholly unified behind a single shared memory of the past; Levy and Dierkes think that nations are "contested terrain on which groups with competing memories struggle to generalise their ideal conception of society" (2002, 244). From this perspective, there is no unitary all-encompassing discourse of the national past. Rather, national memory is plural and elastic. Therefore, nationalism should be regarded as evolving rather than fixed, as the construction of national "self" and "other" is changing in its interactions with other nations.

In the case of Chinese nationalism, myth-symbols, including the "5000 years of civilisation" and "100 years of humiliation" narratives, play a significant role in shaping imagined national self against other. As the Sinologist Lucian Pye argues, national myths and symbols contribute to the construction of shared memories and collective identity which are of fundamental importance for political development (1996, 21). Myths about the past constitute "the historical legacies of a people, which in turn give force to the myths of legitimacy of the country" (ibid).

There are many types of national myths. Of particular significance, among all other national symbols and rituals, are those concerning war memories, as war can generate a set of national myths that lodge in the consciousness of the population and thus become a framework for explaining events and evaluating self-positioning in the world (Hutchinson 2009, 401-2). Myths of war are associated with significant phases of the nation that shape its origins and mission and define its core values and identities (Hutchinson 2017, 53). Warfare often acts as a "mythmomoteur" (or constituting myth) in the national consciousness of a population (ibid, 52). The myths of war can strengthen identification with a national community, subject to

change and contestation (Ibid, 192). This perspective is highly influential for this thesis as an explanation of Chinese nationalism (i.e. anti-Japanese nationalism) through its commemoration of the past (i.e. war experience in the Second Sino-Japanese War).

Adopting an ethno-symbolism approach to nationalism studies, particularly following Hutchinson's claim in the role of war myths, my thesis will focus on the politics of war commemoration in the construct of Chinese nationalism. This theoretical stance allows me to consider the use of national myths and symbols in the official/popular nationalism dynamism and also situate it in specific historical and cultural contexts. Having reviewed the literature and identified my theoretical approach, the following section will proceed to an overall review of the Internet in China.

2.2. The Internet in China

The Internet constitutes a unique space for communication and interaction between state and society in contemporary China. The role of the Internet in China's social and political transformation has drawn growing scholarly attention (for example Damn 2007; Esarey and Xiao 2008; Sullivan 2014; Tang and Sampson 2012; Xiao 2011; Yang 2009, 2014; Zhang X. 2011; Zheng Y. 2008). Zhang has highlighted that the transformation of media and communications is "both a causal factor and a resulting outcome of the whole process of transformation in China" (2011, 2). To situate nationalism politics in the changing landscape of state-society communication, this section provides a review of the development of the Internet, examines the debate as regards its impact on Chinese society and politics, and then raises attention to the issues surrounding the Internet control.

2.2.1 The Internet development

The Internet, being an interactive and decentralised media, is regarded as the foremost among information and communication technologies (ICTs) that promise to significantly impact the day to day circumstances of all social relations in a globalised world (Foster 1997, 23). Remarking on the essence of globalisation, Anthony Giddens (1990) uses the term "time-space distanciation" and highlights the intensification of worldwide social relations that are lifted from local contexts and stretched across time and space. Barriers of time and space are fundamentally

broken by advanced ICTs. The Internet, as a virtual community, allows for the expansion of societies and creates opportunities for communication and participation among groups at an unprecedented level. It is increasingly integrated into everyday life and has transformed the way people live. As opposed to the traditional model of "few producers, many consumers", Internet users are offered the opportunity to generate and disseminate their own contents, allowing "many producers and many receivers" (Poster 1995). Its impact has led to an increased and widening focus on cyberspace as a playground for political participation and social engagement (see for example van de Donk et. al. 2004).

China embraced information and communication technologies later than most developed countries, but it has been catching up very quickly since the Internet became accessible to a mass audience in China in the mid-1990s. The Chinese government has been making great efforts to promote Internet development, the major motive of which was to develop the Chinese economy, modernise society and ultimately catch up with developed countries. Zhao Qizheng, Director of the State Council's Information Office, claims, "We missed a lot of the industrial revolution, but we do not want to miss the information revolution. We are determined not to be left behind this time" (cited in Hong 2005, 95). As a consequence of the momentum of catching-up and development, China's ICTs has been advancing very rapidly in the past two decades. According to the 39th report of the China Internet Network Information Centre[15] (CNNIC, 2017), China's Internet users reached up to 731 million with a penetration rate of 53.2% by December 2016, and more than 95% of Internet users gain access to the Internet via their smart phones. The proliferation of the Internet has provided Chinese people with an environment to exchange opinions and to participate in social and political transformation. This has triggered heated debate over the role of the Internet and its potential influence on democratising China (for example Damm and Thomas 2006; Herold and Marolt 2011; Zhang X. and Zheng Y. 2009).

2.2.2 Cyber-utopianism and cyber-scepticism

Surrounding the debate are two views – cyber-utopianism and cyber-scepticism. Those who hold an optimistic view have focused on the liberalising and

[15] CNNIC is the administrative agency as the state's network information centre. It operates on the principle of serving China's Internet users and enhancing the healthy and orderly development of the Internet in China. See http://www.cnnic.net.cn/gywm/.

democratising force of the Internet. It is believed that the Internet poses an insurmountable threat to authoritarian regimes and will fertilise civil society and democracy. Ronald Reagan stated, just a few days after the Tiananmen crackdown on June 4th, 1989, "Information is the oxygen of the modern age….The Goliath of totalitarianism will be brought down by the David of the microchip" (The Economist, 2003). This desired function of the Internet fits well with the European concepts of a "public sphere" – an ideal type of communicative environment, proposed by the German sociologist and philosopher, Jürgen Habermas. It is believed that information can be spread faster and further on the Internet and access to information may subsequently lead to group connections for communication and organisation. Taking into account the role of the Internet, particularly social media, in facilitating networking and communication among people (for instance in the case of the Arab Spring), many believe that the Internet is now an important tool for promoting social and political change (for example Esarey and Xiao 2011; Howard and Hussian 2011; Shirky 2011). Drawing upon the social movements in the Arab Spring, some (for example the US Senator, John McCain, and the founder of Wikipedia, Jimmy Wales) announce - inevitably, the Arab Spring is coming to China! However, two decades of Chinese Internet use has not led to the breakdown of the CCP nor the democratisation of China, as cyber-optimists expected.

Others claim that the Internet cannot lead to democracy or progressive political change (for example Breslin and Shen 2010; Gladwell 2010; Jiang 2012; Morozov 2011). For Gladwell (2010), Internet connection mostly promotes weak ties and low-risk activism (or slacktivism), which have little meaningful effects. To put in his words, the Internet simply provides "a form of organising which favours the weak-tie connections that give us access to information over the strong-tie connections that help us persevere in the face of danger" (Gladwell 2010, 31). These weak-tie connections and shallow, fleeting communication, cannot lead to social change. Following a similar argument, Morozov (2011) argues that the sheer volume of information and networks do not necessarily lead to actions or movement because they create shorter attention spans as well largely de-politicised contents.

Furthermore, Internet freedom and liberation may be an illusion: instead of liberating the world, it is actually helping authoritarian regimes (Morozov 2011). China is among one of the eight cases of authoritarian or semi-authoritarian countries studied by Kalathil and Boas (2003). Their research focuses on a broad

range of societal and political actors and found that the Internet does not necessarily threaten authoritarian regimes, just as indicated in the title of their book, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes*. They suggested that the proliferation of the Internet presents both challenges and opportunities for authoritarian regimes rather than "sounding the death knell" (2003, 136). The opportunities for the governments, first of all, lie in the role of the Internet in facilitating the administrative management of the government by creating "a responsible, predictable, listening form" of the state (Breslin and Shen 2010, 5). Additionally, the Internet can be adopted as a barometer on people's perspectives on both domestic and international affairs (Wang Z. 2012, 3). In this sense, the CCP allows public discussion and participation in a limited way and uses the Internet as a useful resource for "scientific governance", which, arguably, tends to stabilise Chinese society and reinforce, rather than threaten, the CCP's rule. Lee Kuan-Yew, the founding father of Singapore, bases his judgement on his first-hand knowledge of China and points out that the scenario of Internet-led democratisation is "the media and their fancy footwork" (Lee K. 2013, 23) and it will not take place in China.

Both of the two groups above, arguing for either a democratising or reinforcement model, tend to be technology-deterministic (Marolt 2011; Yang 2009). They are so much focused on their pre-assumed notions about technology that important issues – such as how Internet users use the Internet and what social-political context the Internet is used - are largely ignored. When technology is relied upon as the driving force of the society, they may have overestimated the role of technology and at the same time underestimated the power of rich experiences and active thoughts of people at the grassroots level. People, as self-conscious and social beings, have the ability to consciously create new qualities, to reflect about their actions, and actively plan future situations (Fuchs 2008, 43). Based on an investigation of the Internet use in China, Zhou (2005) argues that the Internet in China is more of a space where individuals can develop their faculty of independent thinking and engage actively in social and political activities. People are not robots that simply take in the official data input; rather, they receive information and may interpret it in varied ways, and then produce output (in the form of either support or resistance) with the help of modern technologies. Zheng Yongnian (2008) highlights the role of the Internet in the multual transformation of state and society, bringing about new dynamics of socio-political changes. After all, technologies are by themselves neither good nor

bad; nor are they neutral. It is thus more sensible to turn to the analysis of the use of the Internet and the social structures through which it produces its effects (Tehranian 1990, 5).

Notably, the Internet is not without hierarchies. Manuel Castells claims that "who are the interacting and who are the interacted….largely frames the system of domination and the processes of liberation in the informational society" (1997, 374). It is the amount of attention instead of the number of contacts that constitutes the biggest scarcity in social relations today (van Dijk 2012). The likelihood of being heard in cyberspace seems to be closely related to social position, education and status, as the network extension may also lead to concentration of power and attention in the hands of the people who are already powerful (Hindman 2008). The virtual world cannot literally be separated from our real world. Of particular significance to the study of the use of the Internet in authoritarian countries such as China is to consider the issue of government control of the Internet that decides which information is accessible to the public. Information flow can be manipulated to reinforce some memories over others, and promote certain identities at the expense of others (Faris 2013). For instance, in the Chinese context, some memories such as Japanese invasions and national humiliation are repeatedly reinforced in the media including the Internet, while others such as the Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen Square Event are blocked. The following section will address the government control of the Internet in China and the public response to it.

2.2.3 Internet Control in China

The social and political structures under which social actors communicate are of great significance for Internet studies. For this thesis, the CCP's propaganda and its control of the Internet should be taken into account as the social and political context that nationalist discourse is situated in. At the same time, government control (e.g. by means of censorship or Internet commentators) and resistance against it (e.g. by means of the use of VPN, irony puns, and/or silence) constitute important facets of the state-society relations under study. It is thus worthwhile reviewing how the Internet is controlled and governed in China.

When the Internet arrived in China in 1994, the CCP recognised its role in China's economic development and social modernization. Meanwhile, the party had to face challenges and risks alongside with the information flows and communication

offered by the Internet. As Deng Xiaoping once said after China's reform and opening-up, "If you open the window for fresh air, you have to expect some flies to blow in." Therefore, the CCP holds a fairly pragmatic attitude toward digital technologies. On the one hand, the Internet development is promoted to contribute to the opening-up and modernization of China, and on the other, the CCP goes to great lengths to suppress information that is likely to pose challenges and risks to social stability and threaten the government's rule. It is very similar to Deng's spirit of "seizing with both hands" *(*两手抓 *liang shou zhua).*[16] According to an editorial in *People's Daily*, the official attitude toward the Internet use is: "As long as we use more ways of properly looking at the Internet, we can make use of the best parts – we go for the good and stay away from the bad, and we use it for our purposes, then we can turn it around on them" (Wu 2005).

In order to reduce the challenges and risks, the Chinese government in the late 1990s built the Great Firewall of China, under the administration of the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), and also set up strict regulations controlling online news reports and flow of information. This is only the technical bit of the complicated control system "guarding" Chinese cyberspaces. There are other measures, notably the manual system of a large group of Internet commentators (网络评论员 *wangluo pinglun yuan*), widely known as "Fifty-cent army" (五毛党 *wumaodang*; thereafter *wumao*). Since 2005, government propaganda units have hired Internet commentators to post pro-government remarks and disseminate information in order to sway public opinion. Many studies have shed light on the massive efforts the government takes in controlling the Internet via *wumao* (for example King et al. 2013; 2016; Xu 2014). Reports have indicated that roughly between 250,000 and 300,000 Internet commentators write posts for the government (Barr 2012; Greitens 2013). In a large-scale multiple source research conducted by King et al. (2013), after comparing the content of posts censored to those not censored about multiple topics, they find that the CCP's censorship is not to suppress criticism of the CCP but to curtail collective activities by silencing voices that may spur social

[16] "Seizing with both hands" (两手抓 *liang shou zhua*) is one of the political thoughts raised by Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997). It was mentioned many times in Deng's political talk, and the key message is that we have two hands and two hands must be tough when one tries to seize reforms and opening up and the other to deal sternly with bad things (see Wang 2008). It highlights the equal importance of material civilization and spiritual civilization.

mobilisation. According to their further research in 2016, every year these online commentators write approximately 448 million posts on social media (King et al. 2016). It can be seen that government control over the Internet is carried out not only through coercive measures but, increasingly and more effectively by "soft" measures.

Since Xi Jinping came into office in early 2013, the government has paid growing attention to the control of the Internet and highlighted the significance of Internet governance, as manifest in a series of government meetings[17]. Some major ones are listed as follows.

- In August 2013, in an internal speech at the National Propaganda Work Conference, Xi declared that "the Internet has become the main battlefield for public opinion struggle".

- In November 2013, the third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee included internet development in its mission to "comprehensively deepen reform," calling for better governance through the Internet.

- In February 2014, Xi led the first meeting of China's new Central Leading Group for Cyberspace Affairs and spoke about the close relationship between Internet security and state security and called on spreading "mainstream values" (主旋律 *zhu xuanlv*) and inspiring "positive energy" (正能量 *zheng nengliang*).

- In October 2014, the fourth plenary session of the 18th CCP Central Committee decided that the Internet should be administered by law.

- In January 2016, the National Online Propaganda Work Conference was held, highlighting the importance of making the views of the Party the "strongest voice in cyberspace".

- In April 2016, in a symposium on cyber security and informatization, Xi stressed the role of the Internet in directing and representing public opinion and appealed to "the shared responsibility" of all stakeholders, including the government, enterprises, social organisations and netizens, in securing the online environment.

- In November 2016, the top legislature passed the Cyber Security Law. By adopting the law, the government will take measures to monitor, defend and handle cybersecurity risks and threats originating from within the country or overseas sources, protect key information infrastructure from attack, intrusion, disturbance and damage.

[17] There is a dedicated issue page on Xi Jinping's talks on Internet security and informatization on the website of Cyberspace Administration of China (see http://www.cac.gov.cn/ztzl/xzt/10/zt/index.htm).

Notably, the Internet is regarded by the CCP as a vital ideological battlefield. In Xi's words, it is the "biggest variable" in predicting China's future and, thus, the most serious "worry" in the "hearts and minds" of the whole Party (Xinhuanet 2014a).

In the face of the tightened control of the Internet, the netizens' response is worth noting. Some studies shed light on the administrative and technical difficulties that hinder government surveillance. Netizens also take creative measures to get away from censorship and express their dissatisfaction. Lacharite (2002) examines Internet censorship and maintains that the CCP's attempt to control the information flow is an expensive, impractical, and virtually impossible mission. The traditional control systems of the Chinese government have broken down in the face of technology (Zhang 2007, 26).

Very often, netizens use jokes, analogies, oblique references or multiple homophones in order to get around censorship. For example, the word "river crab" (河蟹 *hexie*) and "harmony" (和谐 *hexie*) are pronounced similarly in Chinese, and therefore, when netizens comment or satirize about the issue of "harmonious society" (和谐社会 *hexie shehui*), one of the state policies, "river crab" is normally written online substituting for "harmony". These discursive practices can be understood as a form of resistance, contestation or subversion that contributes to the formation of *egao*[18] (恶搞 satirical parody) Internet culture, in which online communities are creating, celebrating and instrumentalising an online carnival (Herold and Marolt 2011). Serious themes become deconstructed (and reconstructed) in the *egao* popular culture. *Egao* has drawn wide attention and enjoyed wide popularity among Internet users, young people in particular. It has become a form of "collective indulging" (Huang 2006). Through playful *egao* practices, many parts of the online sphere are "created, shaped, and abandoned" by Internet users so that they can transcend the government's information censorship and make their voices heard (Marolt 2011, 59). Nordin and Richaud (2014) examine the Chinese *egao* practices by conducting interviews with Chinese university students. They argue that netizens' *egao* practices can be new ways of negotiating official language, but *egao* Internet culture involves not only re-politicization but also de-politicization that reflects the complexity of the relationships in Chinese cyberspaces.

[18] The two characters - '*e*' meaning 'evil' and '*gao*' meaning 'work' - combine to describe a subculture that is characterized by humour, revelry, subversion, grass-root spontaneity, defiance of authority, mass participation and multi-media high-tech" (Huang 2006).

The Internet scenario reveals complexity: on the one hand, the government is tightening up the Internet environment and paying attention to Internet governance; and on the other, Internet users are creatively using digital practices to participate in political communication and resist control. Doug (2013) compares the complexity to a symphony orchestra, in which Beijing is standing as the conductor waving its baton while individual musicians are allowed certain freedom to interpret the music in their own way. In 2009 The People's Daily compared the use of the Internet to a microphone placed in front of everyone and claimed that "In this Internet era, everyone can be an information channel and a principal of opinion expression" (Shirk 2011, 7). Both the orchestra and microphone metaphors highlight the social-political transformation brought out by technology in the information age. Nonetheless, there are some interesting questions to ask. If netizens are the musicians of the orchestra, do they dare to play music out of tune with others? If netizens are the speakers holding microphones, who get microphones and in what order? Which sound volume level are their microphones (which are very often adjusted by others)? In cyberspaces some are more liable to make their voices heard than others, and some voices can be turned down or even silenced. No matter how much freedom and fun we may enjoy in cyberspaces, we have to face the reality that the Internet does not create a space apart from our social structure.

The Internet is a space of complex ambiguity that requires more nuanced investigation in order to round out the picture. Rather than treating the Internet simply as a technology that influences society from without, we need to perceive it as an integral part of social processes that take effect from within and to integrate it into human encounters embedded in our social structure. The following section will aggregate nationalism and the Internet and focus on the concept of online nationalism.

2.3. Chinese Online Nationalism

Online nationalism, as the "marriage of technology and ideology", started with the formation of "Red Hackers"[19] in the late 1990s (Baoculino 2011, 88). It is also termed cyber nationalism, Internet nationalism, or digital nationalism. Notably, it bears the

[19] Red Hackers is a Chinese hackers alliance. Hacker literally means "black guest" in Chinese. While black as a colour means something bad or evil in Chinese culture, red stands for something good or victorious and it is also a colour in Chinese national flag, and therefore red hacker or honker (*hong ke*) are coined as a symbol of Chinese nationalism (see Baoculino 2011; Xu 2007, 52-3).

imprints of Internet culture (Mao & Cai 2017, 2). Online nationalism concerns not only social forces, intellectuals, interest groups, but also government officials and state organisations. It is featured in the use of language in discussing national interests and articulating nationalist rhetoric. Online nationalists may not necessarily act upon the nationalist rhetoric offline (Hughes 2005). However, the online environment affords them the discursive sphere to react spontaneously to events and follow up with recent developments in China's foreign affairs, contributing to the nationalistic articulation, discussion and mobilisation. Now online nationalism is arguably "the most viable political discourse among Chinese netizens that is both routine in everyday discussion and of fundamental importance to the dynamics of social movements in China's cyberspace" (Qiu 2003, 15). Nationalism has become central to China's online discourse and underlines political discussion on the Internet. This highlights the significance of viewing nationalism politics through the lens of the Internet.

A comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of online nationalism in China is provided by Xu Wu's *Chinese Cyber Nationalism: Evolution, Characteristics and Implications* (2007). This book details a historical account of the development of Chinese cyber nationalism, discusses the concept of Chineseness and examines the impact of cyber nationalism on China's policy making. Wu (2007) rightly argues that Chinese cyber nationalism will play a substantial role in shaping China's future. Overall, his research is mostly informative and intriguing, and nonetheless, it is rather extensive and lacks systematic analysis. Furthermore, I find his definition of cyber nationalism problematic in the first place. He defines it as "a non-government sponsored ideology and movement that has originated, existed, and developed in China's online sphere (2007, 155). As argued previously, official nationalism and popular nationalism are greatly intertwined, particularly in the online sphere, and thus it is difficult to draw a clear line and regard online nationalism as independent, non-government sponsored. Taking a different stance from Xu's perception of online nationalism, I perceive online nationalism as an online political ideological movement that constitutes the official/popular nationalism dynamics, in which different social actors involve in interaction, negotiation and discussion in the process of (re)constructing nationalism in digital practices.

Online nationalism dynamics and its significant role has led to an increasing number of studies on the topic in recent years (for example Jiang 2012; Wu X. 2007;

Wang F. 2012; Wang J. 2010; Yang 2009; Zheng Y. 2009). Some scholars continue to regard this emergent type of nationalism as state-led and pragmatic, regarding the CCP as a "confident captain" powerfully guiding the direction of China. For one thing, they argue, online nationalism is still closely connected with state nationalism, because cyber nationalists in China stand in line with the CCP within the state-led nationalist framework (Tok 2010, 7). Very often, this is demonstrated in anti-Japanese and anti-Western protests in defence of Chinese national interests. For another, they think, nationalist activists have to phrase their self-expression in a way that can escape strict censorship and a certain level of self-censorship may lead to the widely practised art of reading and writing between the lines (Marolt 2011, 58). It consequently limits the scope of active public engagement and the influence of cyber nationalist discourse in state policy agenda.

However, it is worth noting that nationalism has found a receptive audience among groups that are not necessarily prone to state propaganda, including college students, intellectuals, and even overseas Chinese[20]. We may assume that students and intellectuals have higher education background so that they can be more critical, and overseas Chinese free from censorship can access information more freely and thus are much less prone to Chinese state propaganda. Nonetheless, they are the groups who have the loudest pro-China nationalist voices expressed in anti-Japanese and anti-American protests both online and offline in recent years when critical events took place. Examples can be found in such domestic problems as the Tibet unrest in 2008, or such historical issues as Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute in 2012 when they expressed overwhelmingly nationalist sentiments. The rise of online

[20] An interesting aspect for online nationalism is diasporic nationalism, which is not specifically studied in this research but deserves further examination. The global reach of ICTs and the speed of communication are increasingly facilitating shared cultural ties and closer social connections between overseas Chinese (海外华人, *haiwai huaren*) and their homeland (祖国, *zuguo*). Their collective identities are consolidated, strengthened and defined in the medium of the Internet, especially in the absence of a firm territorial and institutional base (Eriksen 2007, 15). This diasporic nationalism has been fertilized in the virtual community. It is termed as long-distance nationalism by Benedict Anderson (1998). He states that these diasporas can "send money and guns, circulate propaganda, and build intercontinental computer information circuits, all of which can have incalculable consequences in the zones of their ultimate destinations" (Anderson 1998, 74). Territorial boundaries are thus surpassed by identity. It is the discourse of a historized nation and shared cultural values which help construct collective identity and transnational imaginaries among Chinese diasporas, and it is on the Internet where their shared memories of this historized nation is refreshed (especially when the homeland is confronted with critical events) (Sun 2002). Hence, cyberspace is a site where outsiders can be brought back to the centre and insiders can be expanded abroad (Callahan 2005, 289). Territorially divided individuals can share ideas, exchange opinions and build relationships in virtual communities. In this light, it is indeed an imagined community.

nationalism in these incidents, particularly among better-informed groups such as angry youths[21] and overseas Chinese, challenges some existing research[22] and suggests that official propaganda and manipulation is insufficient to account for the upsurge of online nationalism. It is important to shed light on the representation of nationalism as well as the wider social contexts.

Additionally, a glimpse of a variety of online contents and heated debate about diverse topics, ranging from Chinese society to the CCP's governance, reveals that the Internet in China is not a space that can be as easily manipulated by the CCP as the conventional press. Rather, it has become a new sphere where nationalism is "being redefined, expressed and exercised" (Zhou 2005, 545). Being better-informed about the outside world as well as internal Chinese society, Chinese Internet users, rather than passively submitting to the CCP's propaganda and influence, have their own approach to receiving and interpreting information from different sources (Zhou 2005, 544-8). Besides, fast developments in information technology such as Weibo (similar to Twitter) and Weixin (微信; an emerging communication platform) have greatly stimulated self-expression and public participation on the Internet. Therefore, it is true that people within China cannot enjoy the free flow of information, but it is also true that the Internet has provided Chinese people with a new information environment in which total blockage and absolute control is no longer possible.

While the Internet provides the platform for Chinese nationalists for political communication and engagement, there is a potential danger that nationalism

[21] Angry youth literally refers to *fenqing* (愤青) in Chinese. These youths today are regarded as the Generation Y in China who were born in the era of China's reform and opening-up and as the first only-child generation after the family planning policy. On the basis of Chinese historical events such as the "Boxer Rebellion" or the "Tiananmen Square Event", one can argue that the people in their twenties or thirties are most likely to take part in aggressive protests (Obern 2013). According to the CNNIC reports, a large proportion of Chinese netizens are young and well-educated. People in their twenties and thirties constitute altogether 53.7% of the online population in China and nearly half of them are students (CNNIC, 2016). The Internet, therefore, is a good platform to investigate *fenqing* phenomennon. *Fenqing* nationalism can be found in cases such as the setup of anti-cnn.com and April Youth Club, which displays strong anti-western nationalism online among globalized Chinese youth.

[22] For example, Tang and Darr's research (2012) suggests that Chinese nationalism stem more from social and economic sources rather than cultural one, and nationalism in China is likely to decline over time as levels of urbanization and education continue to increase. On the basis of their survey, they argue that Chinese angry youths are simply outliers, a minor group of nationalists who are not representative of the broader population of youth in China. However, their argument cannot hold water in face of the recent notable level of nationalism among angry youths (and also Chinese diaspora) which are not on the decrease alongside China's economic development and modernization. On the contrary, they seem to be on the rise.

becomes more assertive or even radical in the digital age. Some research that examines the surge of nationalism during events such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics suggest that xenophobic emotions are playing a greater role and irrational voices are on the rise (e.g. Zhang T. 2012; Zhao 2008),. The Internet tends to empower those who wave the patriotic flags, and as a consequence, anyone who expresses more rational opinions is likely to be criticised heavily and be labelled as "traitor". Radical emotions and voices very often fill Chinese cyberspaces. Yu Hua, a famous Chinese writer, remarked on this phenomenon as "the hijacking of Chinese patriotism" (Yu H. 2013)[23]. Narrow-minded nationalism may impede communication and hinder social development, which would result in serious consequences. Take the Sino-Japanese relations, for example, anti-Japanese rhetoric is dominant in Chinese online discourse. Those who hold positive or moderate opinions toward Japan are mostly likely to invite severe criticism, and those who take a middle stance may be swayed and become radical.

Given the rising power of public opinion and the destructive role of popular nationalism, scholars such as Susan Shirk (2007) claim that China is a fragile superpower, being strong abroad but fragile at home under pressure. This fragile superpower, Shirk argues, has many complicated domestic problems, and its fragility should be recognised abroad so as to avoid mistakes that could provoke confrontation, especially regarding the hot-button issues involving Japan, Taiwan and the US. Other researchers suggest that the Chinese government is using the Internet as a safety valve for the public to air their discontent and let off steam so that the public dissatisfaction could find an outlet and thus be directed away from the Party (see Jackobson and Knox 2010, 46; Reilly 2013, 158; Xiao 2011, 203). The discontent that may otherwise direct inward toward the CCP is shifted outward at other countries such as Japan. However, the question is whether the CCP is such a good nationalist card player that can maintain the balance between using nationalism to its advantage and not letting it go too far. Pascual et al. portray nationalism as a double-edged sword without a handle, particularly in the information age; it becomes an increasingly powerful force which can cut in

[23] Yu Hua (2013) writes, "The patriotic education promoted by the Communist Party over the last 64 years has managed to equate 'love of country' with love of the party and the government. But when the distinction between country and ruler is erased, patriotism ends up being hijacked, and easily manipulated by a narrow-minded nationalism".

numerous directions (Baoculino 2011, 84). Highlighting the importance of online popular nationalism, Xu Wu contends that in the era of the Internet, the CCP is no longer "a confident captain" powerfully guiding the direction but "a drowned person" desperately clinging to a rescuing boat (2005, 3). These claims point to the significance of the study of online nationalism and the necessity to examine the dynamism between official nationalism and popular nationalism. It is important to see to what extent, and by what means the government can incorporate popular nationalism into its state framework.

While Xi's policies set the Internet as the biggest variable in predicting China's future, as addressed earlier, it becomes even more important to study the official/popular nationalism dynamics in the Internet-mediated space today. For clarification, this thesis focuses on the study of Chinese online nationalism during Xi's first term (2012-2017).

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of nationalism theories, Chinese nationalism, China's Internet and raised the significance of studying Chinese online nationalism. It highlighted a problem with previous research in that: Chinese nationalism seems to have been categorised into two distinct camps, either state-led or populace-led. On the one hand, nationalism is overrepresented as the ideological instrument of the CCP; and on the other, more recently the focus is being shifted to the rise of public opinion and the decisive impact of popular nationalism. This thesis disagrees with both approaches seeing Chinese nationalism as a static concept as either top-down or bottom-up. Rather, Chinese nationalism is constructed and reconstructed as a shifting and developing dynamic between state and society. This is particularly the case in the digital age when nationalism is redefined and reshaped in digital practices. Therefore, it is necessary to move beyond the official/popular, and primitive/instrumental nationalism dichotomy and to pay attention to the multi-dimensionality of Chinese nationalism and the dynamics between state and society in the digital age. A more nuanced understanding of Chinese nationalism today requires the lens of the Internet politics.

Given the deficit in the existing literature, this thesis shifts scholarly attention to 1) the link between official nationalism and popular nationalism, and 2) the role of the

Internet in nationalism politics. By having these two shifts, this thesis will illuminate the interplay between official nationalism and popular nationalism and the relationship between nationalism and technology. In the following chapter, I will elaborate the conceptual framework that consists of three dimensions accommodating different disciplines in this thesis.

Chapter 3 Framework and Context

Chinese online nationalism is a multi-dimensional construct. It constitutes both top-down state nationalism and bottom-up popular nationalism, consists of both humiliation and pride narratives, and reflects the intersection of nationalism and technology. To answer my research questions as outlined in the introduction, it is necessary to establish a conceptual framework to accommodate these dimensions. This potentially involves a range of disciplines, including nationalism studies, sociology, media studies, and China Studies. This chapter builds such a framework and also contextualises the study in the Chinese context.

The first section of this chapter builds an inter-disciplinary conceptual framework that can accommodate a dialogue between different disciplines. It demonstrates the framework from three dimensions: 1) collective memory and mythscape, 2) discourse and power, and 3) multi-institutional politics and digital memories. The first dimension, from the perspective of ethno-symbolism theory, looks into collective memory and mythscape as significant concepts in understanding nationalism. It demonstrates that memory politics constitutes contested memories between state and society and argues that the myths constructed about the resistance war are central to contemporary Chinese nationalism. The second dimension illuminates the relationship between discourse and power. It underlines the multimodality of online discourse and the power relations between state and society in the online discursive sphere. The third dimension shifts attention away from the role of state onto a multiplicity of forces in memory construction and focuses on memories constructed on digital, discursive territory leading to the formation of digital memories. These three dimensions are then integrated and visualised in one framework that guides the succeeding empirical research.

The second section of this chapter highlights the significance of situating our research in specific contexts and examines Chinese historical and cultural elements that are essential to the understanding of politics of nationalism in China. Specifically, it contextualizes the notion of humiliation and pride in Chinese society and culture. The notion of legitimacy is also addressed because nationalism is closely

linked to political legitimacy in the Chinese case, as addressed in the previous chapter. A brief review of Sino-Japanese relations is provided in order to situate Japan in the context of Chinese national mythmaking.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

3.1.1 Dimension 1: collective memory and mythscape

Collective memory plays a pivotal role in the construction of nationalism, as illustrated in the ethno-symbolistic approach to nationalism studies (Smith 2009; 2010). Primordialism regards group identity as given and unchanging; modernism tends to be Euro-centric and partial. Instrumentalism, arguably a branch of modernism, may offer a partial explanation of the top-down factors of Chinese government utilising nationalism as a tool for legitimacy; however, it fails to understand the non-rational aspect of nationalism. The emotional side of national identity, to put in Connor's words, focuses on "the passions at either extreme end of the hate-love continuum which the nation often inspires" (1994, 206). The emotional aspect of nationalism and the bonds with the national past, from the grassroots level, in particular, is an important element in understanding the dynamics and interactions between official and popular nationalism. Therefore, both primordialism and modernism are inadequate to grasp the full picture of Chinese nationalism. As stated previously, Smith's ethno-symbolism is adopted in this thesis for its strength in historical and cultural analysis and its capacity to examine nationalism as constructed in the interactions between state and society. Smith agrees that nationalism is a modern phenomenon, yet he stresses the ethnic origins of modern nations. Ethno-symbolism focuses on elements of myth, memory and symbols that distinguish in-groups from out-groups and explores the symbolic and cultural dimension in addition to structural analysis (Smith 2009). This theoretical approach allows me to investigate the role of collective memory, the interactions between official discourse and popular discourse and rational and non-rational factors in the (re)construction of nationalism in China. Following ethno-symbolism, this thesis takes the concept of collective memory as an entry point and significant facet of the conceptual framework.

Collective memory, in a general sense, refers to widely shared perceptions of the past (Bell 2006, 2). Maurice Halbwachs (1992) connects the concept of collective memory closely with social frameworks that provide implicit and explicit structures of shared

perceptions. Collective memory "shapes the story that groups of people tell about themselves, linking past, present and future in a simplified narrative. It is what keeps the past – or at least a highly selective image of it – alive in the present" (ibid). It provides group members with a feeling of sameness and sense of belonging. It concerns both the individual and the social-political: it constitutes both individual understandings of the past and knowledge of the past that transcends the individual (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2011, 51). It is involved with our ability to "build up an ammonal reservoir or relevant stories about the past and future, or about the human proclivity to forget things – such as amnesia of collective traumas or shameful episodes in our history" (Dijck 2007, 8). Put simply, the past is selectively remembered and/or forgotten. Representations of the past largely depend on "a frame of reference informed by present needs, concerns and values" (Ludi 2006, 213). Therefore, collective memory is not static. According to Schwartz (1996, 909), it is made and remade to serve changing societal interests and needs. He regards memory as a social frame, through which we engage social life in at least two ways:

> Collective memory is a model *of* society – a reflection of its needs, problems, fears, mentality, and aspirations. Second, collective memory is a model *for* society – a program that defines its experience, articulates its values and goals, and provides cognitive, affective, and moral orientation for realizing them. Collective memory affects social reality by reflecting it and shaping it (1996, 910) (italics as original).

On the one hand, memory is a language, through which present predicaments are expressed, and on the other, it is a map, which enables us to relate where we are to where we have been (ibid). How the past is interpreted serves as "a means for understanding the present and expecting the future" (Rüsen 2008, 3).

Having both expressive and orienting features, collective memory can be characterised as symbols, practices and customs, some of which may persist while others can be changed. It is backed up by "material media, symbols, and practices which have to be grafted into the hearts and minds of individuals" (Assmann, 2008, 55). It is articulated through history and commemoration, which constitutes multimodal forms such as texts, music, icons, monuments and holidays. Analysis of these symbolic representations of collective memory can shed light on the relations

between history, commemoration and individual belief. Meanwhile, it is important to connect representation of collective memory (historical and commemorative objects) and reception of it (individual understanding of the past) (Kansteriner 2002). How is collective memory represented in official narratives and commemoration? How does the public receive and interpret them? Rather than simply viewing collective memory only constructed from above, it is important to see how it received and reconstructed from below.

Nonetheless, the dominant approach to the study of Chinese collective memory tends to largely focus on the Chinese state's strategic use of war memories for legitimising the CCP's leadership and promoting political purposes. This stance is problematic because it overemphasises the state's role and capacity in "launching and sustaining a large-scale memory-based movement" (Xu and Fine 2010, 171); it underestimates the complexity of state-society interactions on the issues of memory. The politics of memory requires ongoing reproduction of the past in the mythmaking process. It is "more like a space of contestation than a body of knowledge" (Wertsch and Roediger 2008, 318). It involves an interaction among recollections of what has been experienced among different actors in the society (Cui 2012, 203). A simplistic frame that seeks to account for the phenomena of collective memory from the presentist standpoint cannot explain the dynamics and trajectory of memory movements. The transformation of memory has expanded outside of the realm of the state into social forces, and the nation-state is no longer the uncontested site for the articulation of collective identity (Nora 1989, 11). For instance, Denton's work on the politics of museums in China looks at the multifaceted nature of remembering the past via exhibition (see Denton 2014). It should be noted that the realm of collective memory is far from a static and monolithic version of the past, but an ongoing contested landscape of national myths leading to the formation of a "mythscape".

Mythscape, according to Duncan Bell, can be interpreted as a discursive realm, in which myths of the nation are "forged, transmitted, reconstructed and negotiated constantly" (2003, 63). It is debated, contested, and subverted among multiple agencies. The boundaries of the inside/outside, self/other and us/them that define the topography of nationalism are constituted by and through temporal and spatial dimensions (Bell 2003, 64). There can be fragmented, competing, and contradictory memories within the boundaries of a state (Cui 2012), and thus collective memory is

not a unitary realm of remembering the past, but rather a collection of memories. In other words, the mythscape is "the page upon which the multiple and often conflicting nationalist narratives are written and rewritten" (Bell 2003, 66). The notion of the mythscape draws our attention to the processes and struggles in building and reproducing political legitimacy and national identities.

In the memory studies of World War II in European politics, Lebrow states,

> The politics of memory in postwar Europe has an obvious starting point (1945), some critical points…but no endpoint. While there are undeniably distorted constructions of World War II…that still need to be confronted, discredited, and replaced, there is no objective truth or reading of the past to take their place. Nor do the same aspects of the past have enduring relevance; they change as a function of contemporary problems and needs (2006, 36).

It points out that memory at the national level (not to mention that at the grassroots) is neither singular nor static. Rather, it consists not only of the social practice of remembering and forgetting but also of the relationships and interactions among different social actors in the process of myth-making (Schwartz and Schuman 2005). Therefore, for the purpose of clarification, this thesis uses the singular term, collective memory, to refer to the official discourse of the national past, while mythscape and the plural term, collective memories, are used to highlight the debate and contestation in the myth-making process.

In the realm of the politics of memory in contemporary China, nationalist sentiment and rhetoric today largely focuses on the pride/humiliation complex as the major content of collective memories, as elaborated in the previous chapter. The boundaries of social inclusion and exclusion are produced and reinforced by remembering some parts of the past while forgetting others (see Kleinman and Kleinman 1996). History is employed selectively to instil in people's minds emotions and beliefs by reminding them of past victories and defeats (Guibernau 2013, 126). The past glory of thousands of years of civilisation and the trauma of a century of humiliation have been constructed as the commemorated national myths to defend and enhance in-group identity against out-group identity in China. In the construction of these national

myths, the mainstream official nationalist narratives, on the one hand, highlight the weakness and the inactivity of earlier Chinese regimes to defend China and combat against out-group aggression, in which Japan was a significant Other[24]. On the other hand, it stresses the myth that it was the CCP who was brave and determined enough in leading Chinese people to great victory over imperialist aggression and the founding of "*new* China" (新中国).

The pivotal source of Chinese myth-symbols is the Second Sino-Japanese War, which constituted the Asia-Pacific battle front of the Second World War and is known as the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (中国人民抗日战争). Wars, for Anthony Smith (1981), can extend a sense of territorial homeland and intensify a sense of national difference. Hutchison (2009; 2017) has also highlighted the significant relationship between nationalism and war. He argues war can generate a set of national myths that lodge in the consciousness of the population and thus become a framework for explaining events and evaluating self-positioning in the world. He writes,

> Wars are viewed as significant when they are associated with 'phases' of the nation, which define and redefine its core values and institutions, territorial identity, and the achievement or loss of political freedom. Such wars can take on a sacred character, *sacred* because they are perceived to establish the frameworks through which members of the nation interpret their experience in time and space." (Original italics) (Hutchinson 2017, 53).

Arguably, war myths are more significant for national identity than the war experiences themselves (ibid, 411). War myths are often developed well after the events. Public commemorations of the wars are central to nationalism, and the associated rituals and practices are often the bases of national identities (Hutchinson 2009). From this perspective, the analysis of war myths is significant to the understanding of nationalism.

[24] The Self-Other nexus is significant to the understanding of IR, according to Iver Neumann (1999). Neumann provides a comprehensive analysis of collective identity formation in Europe and highlights the role of othering the East. He thinks that international relations are constructions between relations of Self and Other. The Other, as defined in difference to the Self, can be observed in diverse contexts and dimensions in IR.

Also notably, the myth creation is a recurring process. It undergoes constant construction and reconstruction. In China past glory and trauma have been built and rebuilt on the memories of the war. Over time, the memories about Chinese war have altered regarding its content and status due to the changing social-political contexts and political subjectivity. The national myth of Chinese war experiences, including defeat and suffering, and victory and glory, has undergone a process of construction and reconstruction, as will be unfolded in my empirical chapters.

When looking into the significance of war myths, Hutchinson (2009) has also warned about the limitations in simply holding an instrumental interpretation of national myths as inventions of official elites. He rightly claims that it may fail to "recognise the spontaneity and plurality of myth production, their different purposes, and neglect the question of popular production, their different purposes, and neglect the question of popular resonance" (Hutchinson 2009, 412). In the Chinese case, the initiative to commemorate the war was taken from below more than from above. Therefore, it should be noted that social memories and the myths created from below are contributing factors to the national mythscape.

In the national mythscape, there are also contestations between remembering and forgetting. Collective memory involves purposeful selection and exclusion, "neatly separating useful from not useful, and relevant from irrelevant memories. Hence a collective memory is necessarily a *mediated* memory" (italics for emphasis) (Assmann 2008, 55). When the war is remembered, other historical moments such as the Tiananmen Event are forgotten. Such forgetting is termed as "Great Forgetting" by Louisa Lim (2014) in describing the state-imposed amnesia in China. There are competing memories between state and society in the construction of the national mythscape. Which parts of the past are deliberately remembered and which forgotten, and how different actors produce, receive and interpret the past can be analysed by critical examination of their social interactions, which have "communication power" (Castells 2009). Further, the mediated collective memory, as Edy (2011) argues, has democratic potential in that memories about the shared past can offer alternative perspectives to the state narratives and thus have the capacity to bring about more democratic forms of public discourse. Therefore, collective memory and mythscape do not only involve the remembering (and forgetting) of history, but

also power in making meaning out of it.

3.1.2 Dimension 2: Discourse and power

This section addresses the second dimension of my conceptual framework - discourse and power. In this thesis, I regard online nationalism largely as discursive, because it mainly concerns language use and meaning making through digital practices. Discourse is the primary arena in which power and meaning-making play out and are joined together in online nationalism. Hughes (2005b, 12) has pointed out a pitfall in nationalism studies, arguing that very often nationalism is treated as a monolithic object that stands over and above texts. Such stance seems to suggest that nationalism is an ideology that dominates texts and can be misleading. Rather, there is a special relationship between the texts and the rules that govern discourse. Nationalism should be regarded as something that is mediated by active discussion, interaction and political struggle for power (Hughes 2005b). Power and discourse, and the relationship between the two are essential to understanding nationalism.

Power, as Foucault suggests, is omnipresent and can be found in all social interactions. Power is "always already there, that one is never outside it" (Foucault 1980a, 141). It is a process that operates in a continuous struggle that constitutes changing relations among the network of interacting forces; power is a tool for the social construction of reality. That means power is not located in one particular social sphere but throughout the entire realm of human action. Focusing on the role of communication, Castells (2009, 10) defines power as "the *relational capacity* that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favour the empowered actor's will, interests, and values" (italics for emphasis). This definition rightly highlights that power is a property of relations rather than that of individuals and/or groups. In relations, power can be exercised by means of coercion and/or by the construction of meaning. While the means of coercion has increasingly lost its appeal, today the means of meaning construction becomes more important in maintaining power and resisting it. The effect of power is very often manifested in discourse as its primary arena in that it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together. Foucault says, "Discourse is the power which is to be seized" (1984, 110). Power is not simply repressive, but rather productive by means of discourse.

In critical theory, discourse refers to ways of thinking and speaking about aspects of "reality". It is "a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action" (Reisigl and Wodak 2009, 89). Discourse is regarded as a concept that is both socially constituted and socially constitutive (Fairclough 1992, 2001; Fairclough and Wodak 1997). There is a dialectical relationship between discursive practices and social structures in which they are embedded (Fairclough 2009; Wodak 2009). Discourse is neither transparent nor neutral. Power relations are mediated "in discourse and behind discourse" (Fairclough 2001, 36). In terms of "power in discourse", discourse can be the site of power struggles, and in terms of "power behind discourse", it is the stake in power struggles (ibid, 61). That is to say, discourse can be used to exert/reassert power or struggle over power. In any power relationships, there is, to some degree, compliance and acceptance as well as resistance and rejection. The control of discourse and discourse production is the important condition for the exercise of power and form dominance.

For critical analysts, power is not a permanent and undisputed attribute; on the contrary, those who hold power have to constantly reassert their power, and those who do not hold power are always liable to struggle for power (Fairclough 2001, 57). Power should not be understood as simply oppressive but as productive. According to Foucault,

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it does not only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression (Foucault 1980b, 119).

In this sense, discourse and power are inter-related concepts. Discourse can be "both an *instrument* and an *effect* of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (italics for emphasis) (Foucault 1990, 101). A critical analysis of discourse can provide an insight into the dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure and allow an examination of power through language use. Social identities and relationships can

be reproduced and maintained by discourse, and at the same time may be transformed by it (Fairclough 2001; Wodak and Meyer 2009). In the study of the discursive construction of national identity, Wodak et al. state, "national identities, as special forms of social identities, are produced and reproduced, as well as transformed and dismantled, *discursively*" (original italics) (2009, 3-4). Social actions that index and also express power can be manifested in the discursive construction of national identity (Wodak and Meyer 2009). In this thesis, online discourse is the site for constructing memory and identity and changing power relations in the digital age.

Text and discourse are different. Text is a product rather than a process**,** while discourse pertains to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just apart. Discourse not only relates to the texts, but also the process of production, of which the text is a product, and the process of interpretation, for which the text is a resource (Fairclough 2001, 20). A single text may resound in voices of other texts and of other genres. It invites "dialogization" in that "texture is essentially an interactive process of meaning negotiation between social actors, positions, ideologies, motivations and goals" (Duszak 2013, 212). Through the rereading and rewriting of texts, discourses undergo construction and reconstruction among social actors. In this regard, the meanings of the texts are not only dependent on the text itself, but also embedded in the context of its production, distribution and reception as well as wider social, cultural and political contexts (Fairclough 2003; O'Shaughnessy and Stadler 2008). Between discourses, there are horizontal flows across different realms, for example, media, politics, foreign policy, and education, and meanwhile, there are vertical connections – that can be found in the historical dimension - among different genres and realms (Duszak 2013). On this light, text, as a product, is just a part of the discourse, which involves an interactive process of meaning making in social relations.

It should be noted that discourse is not restricted to textual forms, but also visual, or even musical ones, or very often a combination of various discursive elements (Kansteiner 2002, 190). Kress and van Leeuwen term it "*multimodal* discourse".

Multimodal discourse can be used strategically to legitimise[25], but also to delegitimize, to critique (van Leeuwen 2008, 105-6), which are all related to power relations. The multimodality of discourse makes it a necessity to examine the multimodal forms of discourse, including texts, images, graphics and visual exhibits, often with sound and video, especially as today the information is often digitised. In particular, it pertains to online discourse in this thesis. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson claims that the print industry made it possible for people to engage in national discourse and produce a feeling of national belonging. In *Banal Nationalism*, Billig (1995) also drew attention to the critical role of newspapers in reproducing nationalist thinking through nationalising news reports and reminding readers of their own homeland. In the digital age, in which the Internet is playing a key role in mass communication, it becomes pertinent to investigate discourse. It is increasingly manifest in multimodal forms and used by different social agencies to construct nationalist ideologies in online communities.

Online discourse also involves the issue of access and resistance. Undeniably, the Internet, to some extent, reflects and reinforces existing relationships among people and groups. The empowering features of the Internet tend to favour those who are already powerful, for instance, in terms of digital skills or social status. Who has access to which discourses, who has the power to allow or constrain access, and by what means people resist dominance are important questions to ask. Resistance is manifest in multi-modal patterns too. To a certain extent, it is featured in its multimodality, using a wide range of modes including texts, pictures, music, and videos, as well as silence[26]. For instance, in China, while the CCP's control of the Internet makes some resources inaccessible to the public as a strategy for dominance, creative measures are taken by netizens in discursive forms, such as oblique references, irony metaphors and multiple homophones as well as silence, which represent popular resistance. It forms an Internet culture in China, often termed as *egao*[27], as discussed in the previous chapter. *Egao*, on the one hand, reflects a

[25] For example, the legitimization can be achieved in multimodal discourse. Van Leeuwen calls it "multimodal legitimation" (van Leeuwen 2008, 119). In this case, visual models, such as heroes (英雄 yingxiong) and traitors (汉奸 hanjian), can be studied as discourse that can represent and reinforce a form of moral evaluations in movies or online games.

[26] Silence is a rhetorical choice constituting an integral part of linguistic relationships (Parrott 2012). It works together with other elements of language to make meaning.

[27] *Egao* is a form of Chinese online culture that uses parody and satire to mock power holders and to express their dissatisfaction and anger. It can be understood as a form of resistance, contestation or

widespread feeling of powerfulness (Tang and Bhattacharya 2011), and on the other, offers Internet users a weapon to resist against the powerful. Such *egao* phenomenon reveals the discursive features of digital communication and reflects the imbalanced but changing state-society power relations in the digital age.

Taking a critical stance, this thesis examines the relationship between the use of language and power in online discourse, by analysing the discursive construction of Chinese online nationalism. It attempts to discover the dynamics between the discourse of nationalism from above and that from below. Specifically, it looks into how "powerful" groups produce dominant discourse in cyberspaces and how "powerless" actors interpret, accept or resist it.

3.1.3 Dimension 3: Multi-institutional politics and digital memories

To study the inter-discursive power relations between state and society, within and between elite and non-elite discourses (De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak 1999), a multi-institutional politics (MIP) approach is an important dimension of the conceptual framework for this thesis. According to the MIP approach, society is not organised around one central source of power – the state, but rather around multiple sources of power that are both material and symbolic (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008). Social movements can involve multiple institutions, practices, systems of knowledge, and cultural norms (ibid). That is to say, power is not vested centrally in the state, but "anchored in a variety of institutions, including the state" (ibid, 92). Carlson (2009) suggests that the social practices of peripheral forces be regarded as significant as (if not more significant than) those of the core. In looking into the state-society relations, the nature and centrality of states should not be taken for granted in that relations are dependent upon historical and cultural contexts (ibid, 87). As such, understanding of the power relations and the role of the state should be situated in specific contexts. This multi-perspectival lens is important because it helps identify the dialogized interrelation of discourse that involves multiple voices in historically variable contexts and allows for a fuller understanding of social phenomena. As I have clarified previously, Chinese nationalism and the state-society dynamics need to be understood in Chinese contexts, and our focus should not be centred on the official

subversion. The well-known *egao* activities are "Grass Mud Horse" and "River Crab". The emerging *egao* culture in Chinese cyberspaces has raised scholarly attention to the way the netizens resist the state censorship in creative ways, see for example Gong and Yang (2010); Nordin (2016).

construct.

Notably, the Internet can be interpreted as an actual space of social interactions for multi-institutional participation. Technology enables multiple actors to communicate through digital practices, which facilitate digital imagination and re-imagination among them. In contrast to traditional medium of memories, the Internet facilitates participatory memory construction from a variety of institutions and groups, many of which promote alternative memory narratives that contest official narratives (Haskins 2007; Hess 2007; Hughes 2012). The unprecedented ease with which online texts are produced and transmitted contributes to the rapid multiplication of the participants and perspectives. The multiplication of producers/mediators inevitably results in the multiple representations of the past (Kulyk 2013, 63). They can be transmitted through digital communication. It becomes possible for people to engage in multidirectional and multiparty interactions and through innovative uses of technology. Digital communication involves top-down as well as bottom-up interactions, which "enables the flow of knowledge generated bottom-up into domains at the top, both within and across societies that greatly enhance inputs into decisions" (Choucri 2000, 259). As Hoskins states, "the increasingly digitized networking of memory not only functions in a continuous present but is also a distinctive shaper of a new mediatized age of memory" (2009, 98). With the involvement of different actors, a competitive area of digital memories is created through the digital-mediated communication between them and among themselves.

The digital age has witnessed fundamental changes in representations of the past. First, it shifts the way the past is preserved with the uses and applications of new technologies for reproduction and storage (Pogacar 2009, 25). The Internet is becoming an important medium for creating digital memories texts, through which the remembering and forgetting of the past are represented, distributed and mediated. New modes and strategies, including online mementoes, memorial web pages, online museums and even computer games, are used in the digital mediated representations of the past. Second, the Internet reconfigures human capacity to remember, providing new strategies and techniques of remembering (ibid). Memory in the digital age becomes "ever more flexible and adjustable" (ibid, 27) to present needs of individual and/or collective remembering. The emergence of visual

symbolism and external storage of the past have a transformational impact on "cognitive architecture" (Donald 1991, 17). Recent studies of digital memory have highlighted the role of technologies in the way individuals and societies remember (Garde-Hansen 2009; Hess 2007; Hoskins 2009; Reading 2011; Schwarz 2014; Van Dijck 2007). Hess (2007) looks into digital remembrance of 9/11 in online memorials and argues that online commemoration is a unique form of both communal and vernacular discourse. For him, online memorial discourse provides a window to vernacular interpretations of history that surpass time and space constraints (Hess 2007, 828-9). Ultimately, the Internet has altered our capacity to remember and to forget (for example Mayer-Schonberger 2009). It may be fair to say digital technology has created a new memory ecology.

Rutten et al. (2013) argue that digital media form a pivotal discursive territory – one that provides speakers with new tools. While the digital age has eroded the state's ability to impose a unitary and unifying framework of memory, digital media is becoming a significant vehicle for transmitting knowledge and perceptions about the past and greatly influencing the formation of memory. Modern reproduction of the past in digital practices makes the past become part of the present, which is called "present pasts" by Huyssen (2003). To put in Spiegel's words, cyberspace has replaced "traditional geography" (2000, 123). It has provided a new (trans)national communicative realm where digital memories can be discursively (re)constructed. The expansion of potential online communities can reach a worldwide audience, particularly those who speak the same language and share the same culture (Kyluk 2013, 65). Digital practices are now "nestled or nested with other cultural practices, some *new* and some *old*" (Jones et.al 2015, italics for emphasis). The old and the new, the traditional and the modern, and the past and the present become increasingly intertwined in the digital realm. National boundaries and communities can be re-imagined online.

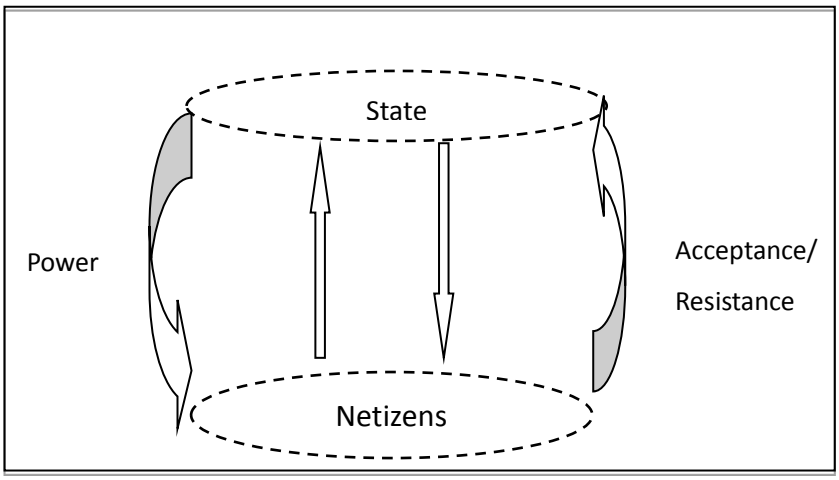
Such changes in ways that the past is remembered and collective memory is articulated can reflect and express a power shift in the state-society relationship (Schartz and Kim 2010, 11). This is particularly true for societies undergoing social, political, and digital transformations. Since 1994 China plugged into the Internet, the new communication device has enabled the production of multiple competing versions of collective memory potentially visible to vast audiences (Chilton 2012, 211).

For instance, Zhao and Liu's study on the collective remembrance of the Great Famine on Chinese social media, demonstrates that new communication media provides people with an alternative communicative sphere for sharing suppressed, marginalised memories as civil resistance against the official memory narratives and accumulating them into an alternative collective memory (Zhao and Liu 2015). Such different versions of the past are made possible through online resources, which altogether contribute to "the visioning of the past" (Wilson 2009, 195). In the flow of information, the audience can choose their own path in finding meanings from the memory narratives (Anderson 2000, 22). Therefore, understanding of power in digital memories should not be confined to the arbitrary centrality of the state. Rather, in (re)constructing the digital mythscape of the past, power is dispersed across a multiplicity of forces, and remembrance of the past involves multiples forces, strategies and practices in the digital age.

3.1.4 Summary of the framework

This section integrates the aforementioned three dimensions and summarises the conceptual framework of this thesis. The framework is a compilation of the three dimensions, 1) collective memory and mythscape, 2) discourse and power, and 3) multi-institutional politics and digital memories. To visualise the inter-relationship between the three facets, a nationalist-drum conceptual framework is compiled to demonstrate a discursive realm of Chinese online nationalism, as shown in Figure 3.1. It provides a framework to unravel how the online mythscape of contemporary Chinese nationalism is discursively (re)constructed by the state and netizens by exercising power and accepting or resisting power. It demonstrates how the concepts of nationalism, discourse, power and technology all connect to each other in the (re)construction of Chinese nationalism in the digital age.

Figure 3.1 A nationalist-drum conceptual framework: a discursive realm (compiled by the author)



The figure above shows that through the mechanism of myth-making, nationalism is represented and articulated from two directions, both top-down and bottom-up. It displays the interacting and the interacted processes of (re)constructing the mythscape of digitally-mediated memories between the state and ordinary netizens. It involves the way power is built and/or resisted in discourse in the interactions between state and non-state actors. In the critical examination of the online discourse, the research focuses on the discursive strategies and patterns that are employed by state and non-state actors to construct collective memory and shape the online mythscape. As argued previously, this conceptual framework pays particular attention to historical and cultural contexts so as to make better sense of the Chinese case under study. One cannot ignore that the dynamics between state and netizens as well as the diversity and interactivity in memory construction "work in tandem with a larger cultural context and are subject to medium-specific constraints" (Haskins 2007, 406). The next section, therefore, will turn to the conceptualisation of humiliation, pride and legitimacy in Chinese traditional cultural terms.

3.2 Contextualising Chinese Nationalism

Culture is "the *collective programming of the mind* that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (italics for emphasis) (Hofstede 2011, 3). It is a collective notion that can profoundly provide social and psychological orientations. Cultural norms "create habits of interpretations and repertoires of practice grounded in experience" (Katzenstein 1996, 19). This section highlights the significance of situating our research in specific contexts and examines Chinese cultural elements that are essential to the understanding of politics of nationalism in China. It problematises the application of the Western framework to non-Western

countries without acknowledging specific national conditions and cultures. Just as historian Frederick Mote has rightly claimed, "Ignorance of China's cultural tradition and historical experience is an absolute barrier to comprehending China today" (1999, xv). The purpose of this section is to contextualise Chinese nationalism in Chinese cultural tradition and historical experience. It should be acknowledged that Chinese society has gone through dramatic transformation and confronted a profound and serious cultural identification crisis between its own traditions and the pursuit for modernity and the present age can be described as an era of psychosis (for example Wang Y. 2014; Zhang 2006). It is not my intension to generalize the cultural understanding in this section but to provide the cultural contextualization, which can serve as the necessary entry point to the critical examination of online discourse in the empirical research.

3.2.1. Contextualising humiliation in China

The concepts of both humiliation and pride relate to the notion of face and link the individual to the group and to the nation. Nationalism implicates our identities and our emotions, and it emerges out of social interaction and communication between us and them. This section addresses the discourse of national humiliation in the context of Chinese society and culture by examining the notion of face which is similar to the Western concept of dignity or self-esteem. The concept of face captures the interactions "between self and society in the process of constructing personhood" (Gries 2004, 23). It concerns how the self is represented to others and how the self is situated in the social interactions.

Face can be defined as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman 1967, 5). Goffman argues that face forms the "traffic rules" of our social interactions. From this perspective, the significance of face is arguably a cultural concept that can be applied universally. However, Goffman's conception of face is centred on the self, and this suggests that face is an individual's end value and that the notion of face captures individualised identities (Chang 2008, 300). Face can be primarily an individual thing in Western society, and the individual relates little to the collectivity.

In the Chinese social context, the concept of face is manifested differently, and it also receives a higher degree of importance in comparison to the Western notion (Wang et

al. 2005, 318). Chinese face is a communal, as opposed to an individual concept. It appeals to social order, unity and harmony. Chang conducted a comparative analysis of face in the U.S. and China and claimed, "While American face is individual-based, rational, and self-oriented, Chinese face is relational/communal-based, emotional, and other-directed" (2008, 310). Chinese face is primarily a group value which is deeply rooted in relationships (*guanxi* 关系) (Chang and Holt 1994). It concerns respect, dignity, and honour of both the individual and the group. In high-context cultures[28] such as China and Japan, being humiliated is losing face, which is "a fate worse than death" (Rosenberg 2004). Ho (1994) suggested that full recognition should be given to the individuals' embeddedness in the social network and individuals-in-relations should be examined. The Chinese face concept is derived from the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC). In Confucianism, the emphasis is put on moral behaviour and human relationships particularly in five cardinal role relations between emperor-subject, father-son, husband-wife, elder-younger brothers and friend-friend. All these relationships involve a set of roles and obligations. In fulfilling these roles and obligations in the social relationships, face is one of the five important Confucian values (the other four being hierarchy and harmony, group orientation, *guanxi* networks, and time orientation). All these values have influenced Chinese society and culture tremendously.

In Chinese language, face means *lian* 脸 or *mianzi* 面子. Some scholars try to distinguish between *lian* and *mianzi* in the Chinese concept of face. Hu argues that *lian* is the internalised dimension of face representing the moral values of a person, and *mianzi* is the externalised notion standing for reputation achieved "through getting on in life, through success and ostentation" (1944, 45). *Lian* is the moral face relating to the internal dimension and *mianzi* is the social/positional face regarding the external dimension of face. For this study, the external dimension of face, *mianzi*, should be taken as the focus in understanding the role of emotions about status and position in the self/other identity construction. Therefore, face mentioned

[28] Anthropologist Edward Hall (1976) distinguishes high-context cultures from low-context cultures in view of the role of context in communication. According to Hall, context carries varying proportions of the meaning in communication. In high-context culture (including Asia, Africa, South America, and much of the Middle East), a large part of the meaning lies in the physical context, which includes facial expressions and gestures, and thus the message itself carries less information. In high-context culture, it is important to preserve and strengthen relationships by saving face and ensuring harmony. In low-context culture (including North America and much of Western Europe), people translate a large part of the meaning into explicit code, and therefore the spoken words carry most of the meaning. This H/L context culture distinction helps better understand the powerful effect culture has on communication.

subsequently in this thesis mainly relates to *mianzi*.

Many scholars have acknowledged face as one of the core symbols in Chinese society and culture (for example, Chang 2008; Chang and Holt 1994; Jia 2001; Zhai 2011). A review of the common use of face in the Chinese dictionary demonstrate the significance of face, for instance, *hou lianpi* 厚脸皮 (thick skin) and *mei mianzi* 没面子 (not be respected). Face is used literally to express the image and representation of self in relations to others. As a relational concept, face can only be understood by situating it in *guanxi* networks 关系 (relations). Arthur Smith, an American missionary, was the first Westerner who initiated the examination of Chinese face. He stated, more than a century ago, that face in China is literally "a compound noun of multitude" rather than simply the front part of the head (Smith 1890, 15). *Mianzi* carries meanings in *guanxi* and embodies a person's status in social relationships. It can be regarded as an intangible form of personal status and social currency (Luo 1997).

The Chinese concept of face, according to Jia (1997), includes four characteristics: relational, communal/social, hierarchical, and moral[29]. The characteristics of Chinese face being communal and being hierarchical is of special significance for this thesis. Face being a communal notion means that humiliation and pride for the individual are closely linked with that of the community. In Chinese society, it is important to save face and maintain face in order to preserve "ingroup positivity" and "collective self-esteem". Furthermore, face being hierarchical means that *mianzi* practices are taken according to the hierarchical system. That is to say, unequal social relations within the group such as age, blood ties and status, are important factors. Arguably, Chinese *mianzi* is a social practice that constructs and maintains social harmony and social inequality (Jia 2001, 5). However, it is also true that it has been a deeply rooted cultural dimension of the Chinese society that functions as Hoffman's notion of "traffic rule". People are expected to behave according to the rule in their social

[29] Specifically, the four characteristics are as follows according to Jia (1997). Relational: face is based on human feelings as an appeal to promote a harmonious human relationship; Communal/social: to lose face would negatively affect the community and as a consequence the loser would be looked down upon by the community and to keep face would contribute to the normal functioning of the community, and the member who retains it is accepted as a full member of the community; Hierarchical: *mianzi* is exercised according to the hierarchy within the family such as age, blood ties and status in the origin of Chinese face in Confucianism; Moral: it is related to *lian*, a part of humanity in the Chinese context, and the fear of losing face keeps oneself constantly conscious of moral boundaries.

communication and interaction with others. Accordingly, they connect their own dignity to the collective one. The notion of face is significant to the study of Chinese nationalism, as it sheds light on the link between an individual's dignity and a communal dignity, and ultimately the national face in the international community.

Face in Chinese culture is very relevant to the study of Chinese nationalism, as it is closely related to the representation of the collective self to others and the sense of belonging to the ingroup as opposed to the outgroup. Gries has raised particular attention to the role of face that helps capture the interplay of reason and passion central to Chinese nationalism (2004, 23). He believes that the concept of face provides a good lens through which Chinese nationalism can be understood. Taking, for example, the outbreak of anti-US demonstrations after the Belgrade bombing, he explained that Chinese demonstrators were motivated to take to the streets because they thought American actions were deliberately making China lose face and humiliating China in the eyes of the world. During such incidents, individuals related their own face to the national face and feel personal humiliation from the national incidents. When China is humiliated, individuals recall the historical exploitations and sufferings that have been constructed in the "never-forget-national humiliation" narratives, which quite often employs the humiliation rhetoric such as shame, guilt and insecurity (Callahan 2004).

The shame, guilt and insecurity derived from the Century of National Humiliation[30] are constructed and expressed in national humiliation narratives, and national humiliation is commemorated in history textbooks, museums, movies, songs, and holidays. For instance, *Yuanmingyuan* Relics Garden (*Yuanmingyuan yizhi gongyua,* 圆明园遗址公园), which was looted and ruined by the Anglo-French forces in 1860 and further destroyed by the Eight-nation Allied Forces in 1900, is a representative of national humiliation commemoration. The fragments of the ruins are preserved in a way (see Figure 5.1) that reminds the whole nation of the historical memories of a weak China under the Western imperialist humiliation. At the exhibition hall, it

[30] The Century of National Humiliation started from the invasion of the eight-nation allied force, including British, French, Germany, Italy, and Japan in the mid-19th century. However, it is notable that Japan plays the most significant role in the emergence of Chinese national consciousness and the Chinese national humiliation narratives. The reason for this will be addressed later in the historical background of Sino-Japanese relations.

states, “the destroy of *Yuanmingyuan* embodies the history of the national humiliation of *zhonghua minzu* 中华民族 (Chinese race)”, and thus it is “the beacon of Chinese people striving for national salvation” with “profound significance of alarming message”. The sharp contrast between an amazingly massive and beautiful royal garden and a horrifically damaged one reminds every visitor while they are stunned at the spectacle at its glorious time. By viewing the ruins and feeling the national humiliation in *Yuanmingyuan*, the individual visitors are liable to relate their face to the communal face, and to the national face. The lost totality is intrinsic to these ruins in various art works and more importantly, in the effort for national salvation (Wu 1998, 60). The lost totality in the *Yuanmingyuan* relics visually represents the loss of Chinese face and the sense of insecurity in the face of foreign invasions.

Figure 3.2 A photo taken by the author in *Yuanmingyuan* Relics Garden in April 2015



3.2.2 Contextualising pride in China: the individual and the nation in collectivism

Face, as discussed in the previous section, is a significant factor in Chinese culture that emphasises the relationship of an individual to the community and associates individuals to the group and to the nation. Humiliation and pride can be understood as two sides of the concept of face - losing face and gaining face. The Chinese try to avoid losing face on the one hand and strive to save face and gain face by reinforcing

ingroup positivity on the other. Having discussed the importance of the Chinese concept of face, this section addresses the relation between the individual and the nation in the Chinese context by looking into Chinese collectivism as opposed to Western individualism. The Chinese cultural mindset highlights the link between the individual fate and the fate of the nation. National pride plays a key role in promoting the sense of national belonging and reinforcing the connection between the individual and the whole nation.

According to Hofstede (1980), individualism-collectivism is one of the key dimensions that differentiate cultures (see Table 3.1). Individualism emphasises the emotional independence of individuals from groups, organisations, or other communities. It is more self-oriented, and priority is given to the dignity of the individual rather than the collectivity of people. By contrast, the sense of belonging to the collectivity such as families, work units, and communities is notably strong in most East Asian countries. Most East Asian cultures emphasise collectivism that stems from the doctrines of Confucianism which claim that five principles[31] are the key to right conduct for human beings. Those five principles are *ren* 仁 (benevolence), *yi* 义 (righteousness), *li* 礼 (propriety), *zhi* 智 (wisdom) and *xin* 信 (sincerity), which together point to the importance of proper human relationships as the basis of society. The five principles highlight the relationship between individual interest and the communal interest and appeal to the balance and unity between individuals and communities. Particularly, *ren, yi and li* embody the sense of humanism and collectivity, *zhi* represents the deep understanding and flexible implementation of this sense (Chen 2013). In collectivism, the individual is regarded as the axis of social relations grid, and communal identity is the basis of individual identity. Individual identification belongs to and should conform to the collectivity. Meanwhile, for individualism, the independence and variety of individual identity are highlighted, and the sense of belonging is not as strong as that in collectivism. In history, the Chinese have long regarded unity and harmony under heaven (*tianxia tongyi* 天下统一) as a stable world (*zhishi* 治世), and warring and segmenting as a chaotic world (*luanshi* 乱世) (Zheng 2009, 22). In traditional Chinese thinking, individuals are expected to be conscious of their responsibility to contribute to the

[31] *Ren* fundamentally means warm human feelings between people. *Ren* is the core of Confucianism. Confucius said, practicing *ren* is declining to do to another person what you yourself don't want (己所不欲勿施于人).

construction of a stable world[32].

Table 3.1 The key differences between collectivism and individualism[33]

	Face	**Social relations**	**Identification**
Collectivism	Others-oriented	Vertical	Communal identity focused
Individualism	Self-oriented	Horizontal	Individual identity focused

In collectivist cultures, the individual "me" identity is significant to the collective "us" identity. The "me" identity starts from families and should be situated in relation to the collectivity, i.e. in the family, in the community, in the society and in the nation. *Jia-guo-tianxia* 家-国-天下 (family-country-*tianxia*) is traditionally regarded as the collective objective and operational logic (Chen 2013). Following this logic, people are interdependent, and the objective of a community is superior to that of an individual. While Western culture largely emphasises the status of individuals being independent with rationality, dignity and free will and being responsible for their own achievements, Chinese culture tends to advocate that every individual exists as a part of the collectivity and be responsible for the communal development (Zhai and Li 2010, 40). Individualism concerns independence, uniqueness, personal achievements, privacy, direct communication and competition; collectivism concerns a sense of duty to in-groups, relatedness to others, harmony, sensitivity to context and social relations (Wang and Su 2006, 160).

Undeniably, there are profoundly different understandings of the role of people in society between Chinese culture and Western culture; however we should also recognise that individualism and collectivism are not mutually exclusive. There are no asocial individualists or selfless collectivists; rather, they represent two orientations that differ in the extent to which the individual versus the collective are given priority (Wang and Su 2006). In other words, while the individualistic cultures emphasise liberty and right of the individual, they do not deny the role each individual plays in

[32] For example, the blockbuster directed by Zhang Yimou, Hero (*Yingxiong*), demonstrates the essence of this Chinese traditional thinking of prioritizing the collective over the individual and of longing for a stable world.

[33] This categorization provides a perspective in examining the general differences between individualist societies and collective societies. However, it should be acknowledged that a population is not a homogenous entity, and thus there are variations at the cross-cultural and/or individual level (see for example Green et al. 2005). This table does not intend to overgeneralize cultural differences but to clarify the general distinction.

society. Meanwhile, while collectivistic cultures highlight the necessity of individuals' contribution to the unity and harmony of collectivity, they do not ignore the interest and development of the individual. It is just the priority of, the individual over the collective or vice versa, that makes individualism and collectivism different. No matter how different cultures are, all human existence has its inherent duality; that is to say, they have the basic physical separateness of human beings and meanwhile the fundamentally social nature of human functioning. From this perspective, instead of regarding the individualism/collectivism and Western-Non-western frame as bipolar single-dimension construct, we should note that the dichotomy should be made to facilitate mutual understanding. Awareness and recognition of differences are the necessary steps.

3.2.3. Contextualising legitimacy in China: Power and legitimacy in the *Minben* doctrine

The previous two sections examined the social contexts of national humiliation and pride from the angle of the Chinese concept of face and the individual/collective relationship. Since Chinese nationalism is closely linked to the political legitimacy of the CCP's rule as discussed in the previous chapter, this section contextualises political legitimacy in its historical and cultural background. While national humiliation and national pride are more about the representation of self to others, legitimacy is more concerned with power and authority on domestic issues. It has been claimed that political and cultural traditions have an unavoidable influence on political culture and popular attitude on democracy and state legitimacy (for example, Guo B. 2006; Shi and Lu 2010; Wang Z.X. 2010; Zhu 2011). If we simply use Western values without paying sufficient attention to Chinese historical-cultural traditions, it is very likely to reach a misleading claim – the CCP is illegitimate. Nonetheless, since China has different historical-cultural traditions from the West, it has different legitimacy philosophies[34] and thus has a different understanding of legitimacy (for example Tong 2011; Zeng 2014, 2016; Zhu 2011). Shi and Lu (2010) examine the residual influence of Confucianism and argue that it shapes people's political attitudes and people in different societies may understand politics in distinct ways. Concepts such as democracy and legitimacy need to be unpacked through

[34] There are many traditional philosophies in ancient Chinese school of thoughts, for example, Confucianism (儒家), Daoism (道家), and Legalism (法家). In this section, I mainly focus on the understanding of legitimacy in Confucianism because of its popularity and influence in Chinese society.

culturally embedded understanding.

In thousands of years of ancient Chinese history, Chinese emperors' right to rule was legitimised by the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命) and the *minben* 民本 (people-based) doctrine. One of the key components of the Mandate of Heaven concept is that a ruler could not entirely determine his own destiny and he had to influence heaven's will by good and moral conduct (Zhao 2009, 420). If heaven were unhappy about a particular ruler, it would send messages to him in the form of natural disasters (i.e. drought, flood, and famine) which for an agricultural state could be of serious or even devastating consequences. That is to say, the Mandate of Heaven offered the ruler the right to rule but meanwhile confined the ruler to responsibilities for the people so as to stay in power. The ruler's right to rule was given by heaven, but the rulers were constrained by a Confucian belief that unless they hold moral and ethical standards and practice benevolent governance, they would lose the mandate to rule and the people could gain the power to challenge its legitimacy and overthrow their dominant rule. In Confucianism, *wang dao* (王道 kingly rule), referring to rule by virtue, is superior to *ba dao* (霸道 rule by force). The ruler should rule by virtue rather than by force.

The *minben* doctrine focuses on the humanistic aspect of governance and regards the people as the centre of good governance. The idea about the role of the rulers and relationships between the ruler and society can be exemplified in Xunzi's wisdom that compares the king to a boat and the people to water - water can carry the boat and overturn it too. That means if the ruler did not take the people as the base of his rule and not perform his duties well, he would lose the mandate to rule. The ancient Confucian philosopher Mencius also stated that "most important are the people; next come the land and grain, and last the princes". It promotes the idea that the ruler should place the well-being of people at the centre of its ruling. This way of human-centred thinking found its way into the teachings of Confucius during the Spring and Autumn (770-481 BC) and Warring States (480-221 BC) and then became the foundation of state legitimacy during imperial China.

It is true that the Mandate of Heaven idea and the *minben* doctrine had a clear propaganda purpose at the time of its creation (arguably since Zhou Dynasty) and its

limitation laid in its internal paradox between *minben* and *junben* (emperor-based). However, it is also true that the same message was used to educate the ruler the importance of being a good one and delivering what people need (Chao 1996). The only way to hold on to the mandate, therefore, was by governing well. The domination of performance-based state legitimacy profoundly shaped people's understanding of the power of the rulers and the state in Chinese political culture. Following this doctrine, a government's legitimacy is essentially defined by the contents and outcomes of its policies, which form the core of its performance legitimacy. Performance legitimacy has shaped not only the patterns of Chinese history, but also continues to influence today's politics in China (Zhao D. 2001). Even though China has long abandoned the dynastic rule, the strong belief in the importance of performance legitimacy still underpins Chinese society and influences how people make sense of authority and legitimacy. For most Chinese people, what a government does may seem to be more important than how it came to be. Put it in another way, the end matters more than the means.

While governments in liberal democratic countries are primarily legitimised by the procedural elections, today the CCP's authoritarian rule is largely maintained by socio-political normative traditions and performance legitimacy which ties the CCP's right to rule directly to its ability to improve the people's living standards and to deliver good governance. Notably, many studies have suggested that rule by benevolent governance is still regarded as significance in the CCP's claims for legitimacy (for example Tong 2011; Zeng 2016; Zhu 2011). Historically the CCP has justified its rule on the basis of ideological appeal framed through a popular belief in communism and has been adaptive to the changing demands of governance. The Party achieved its dominant power in 1949 by portraying itself as the guardian party in pursuit of the proletarian interest under communism. The role of the CCP in founding the People's Republic of China (PRC) was recognised as a revolutionary regime striving for the proletarian interest under communism. More importantly, the Party is constructed and perceived as the saviour rescuing Chinese people out of "deep water and hot fire" (*shuishen huore* 水深火热), which was brought about by the aggressive imperialist powers as well as the weak Chinese Nationalist Party.

In the Post-Mao era, to restore political legitimacy after the disastrous Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, reform and open-up became the new political

discourse under Deng Xiaoping so as to promote economic growth and to serve the needs of the society. While the end of the Cold War witnessed growing disillusion toward the CCP's claim of authority on the basis of ideological legitimacy, it resulted in a shifting focus onto moral standards and economic development and heightened attention onto human-centred good governance. The CCP has gone to great lengths to tie its right to rule to delivering what the people perceive as the common interest. Today the CCP's so-called people-based thought (*yiren weiben* 以人为本) increasingly highlights the people as the centre of the administration. According to Pan (2008), during the first 30 years after the founding of People's Republic of China, the CCP aimed at making China strong so as not to be "beaten" (*aida* 挨打), and during the 30 years after reform and opening-up, the CCP's objective was to make Chinese people rich so as not to be starving (*buaie* 不挨饿). It can be seen from the CCP's performance strategies that it has been adaptable and flexible in adjusting its focus and remodeling its legitimacy according to the national condition and the public interest and needs, from Deng Xiaoping's "Seizing-with-both-hands", Jiang Zemin's "Three Represents", and Hu Jintao's "Harmonious Society" to Xi Jinping's "Chinese Dream". Good governance (*shanzheng* 善政) is now regarded as a core ethical standard for the CCP for its political legitimacy.

Admittedly, the Chinese *minben* doctrine is limited in constructing equal relations between the ruling government and the public, as the ruling government in dominant power limits the scope of public political participation. Some argue that today the Chinese government tends to indoctrinate its people with a guardianship discourse that largely disguises its authoritarian nature (see for example Lu and Shi 2014). At the same time, when government performance stands alone as the sole source of legitimacy, the government may confront difficult situations and serious challenges, not only in domestic politics but also in its foreign policy making, if it is unable to live up to popular expectations. The double-edged sword effect of nationalism provides such an example. Zhao claims, "the return of the several-thousand-year-long tradition of performance legitimacy has been so far a blessing for the Chinese people, but it may not be so for the current regime in the long run" (2009, 429).

3.2.4 Situating Japan in China's national mythmaking

The Century of National Humiliation (百年国耻, *bainian guochi*), as addressed

previously, stands a pivotal part in the construction of Chinese national identity. Noticeably, although the Century of National Humiliation involves other foreign invaders, contemporary Chinese nationalism is targeted significantly more frequently at Japan. Many studies have highlighted the importance of Sino-Japanese relations in China's memory and identity politics (Gustafsson 2014; Mitter 2003). This section briefly looks into the history between China and Japan to situate this research in the historical background and address the question of why Japan is the significant other in China's national mythmaking.

China and Japan share a history that goes back beyond the fifty years of conflict to a two-thousand-year period of friendship and cultural exchange (Rose 1998, 4-6). During this period, the pattern was a hierarchy, in which "Japan was perhaps little more to China than an insignificant, recalcitrant former vassal; to Japan, China was a vast source of advanced practical technology as well as being a symbol of wisdom and of universal centrality" (Howe 1996, 511). By the 19th century, the pattern of hierarchy was disrupted when China's military weakness and internal disorder were becoming apparent (Rose 1998, 8). Toby (1991) points out that in the Japanese world order of the time, China had been demoted to the lowest rung of its hierarchy of partners. At the end of the 19th century, China, unable to withstand foreign pressure, had not only become the victim of the Western powers in their "scramble for concessions" but was also suffering at the hands of newly-transformed, expansionist Japan (Rose 1998, 9). In 1894, after more than two decades of growing friction, China and Japan came into military and naval conflict over Korea. This First Sino-Japanese War (also known as the Sino-Japanese Jiawu War, 1894-1895) was a turning point in the history of Sino-Japanese relations (Rose 1998, 10). For China, defeat at the hands of the "eastern barbarians" was a huge shock and humiliation. The earlier losses to the Western imperialists is one thing, but China's loss to its long-assumed inferior neighbour fundamentally challenged China's supremacy.

The second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), which constitutes the Asia-Pacific battle front of World War II, added to the Chinese collective memories of trauma significantly. The war has given rise to one of the single most traumatic and destructive experiences to Chinese people (Mitter 2013). The long, brutal war started (partially) with the Japanese occupation of Manchuria on September 18, 1931 (known as 9/18 Incident or Mukden Incident), later escalated into a full-scale war on July 7,

1937 (known as 7/7 Incident, or Marco Polo Bridge Incident). It ended with Japan's official surrender in September 1945. In this war, according to the recent Chinese state statistics, China suffered arguably an estimated 35 million casualties during the 14 years of war (China Daily, 2015). This war against Japan has significantly shaped today's modern China. It has been taken as the important sources for national myths which ultimately shapes and at the same time reflects the construct of Chinese national identity. It has repeatedly been used among Chinese nationalists to present Japan as *guizi* 鬼子 (devils) and accuse of Japan's militarism. The war has cast a long shadow over Sino-Japanese relations.

Chinese narratives about Sino-Japanese relations tend to use some typical phrases such as "*liangqiannian zhongri youyi*" 两千年中日友谊 (two thousand years of Sino-Japanese relations) and "*yiyi daishui*" 一衣带水 (neighbours separated by a mere belt of water) to highlight friendship and link between the two countries. They look into both time and space to reinforce the necessity and possibility of enhancing bilateral relations. However, these narratives very often tend to have the connotation that Japan is culturally indebted to China and the older-brother-younger brother metaphor become prevalent in these narratives. In the historical "2000 years of friendship", China was the elder brother and Japan was the younger brother, and from the traditional Confucian stand point, the younger brother should give face to the elder brother and pay respect. However, the successful modernization of Japan after Meiji Restoration (1860s-1880s) and the subsequent invasion made China completely lose face, in a traumatic way that forms an important part of Chinese national humiliation narratives.

As a consequence, compared to the shock and humiliation brought to China by the Western powers, during the Century of Humiliation, the assault from Japan shattered China more profoundly. As Greenfeld puts it,

> [While] China was already accustomed to rapacious Western squabbling over its riches, but that remained self-confident in the knowledge of these powers' irrelevance. However, the assault from Japan, a speck of dust in its own backyard, shattered this self-assurance and was experienced as a shocking and intolerable humiliation (2012).

In China's historical *Tianxia* system, Japan was simply regarded as a barbaric small state paying tribute to China while the West was even not included in this traditional hierarchical system. Therefore, when Japan upturned the system, Chinese felt shockingly humiliated by this "younger brother".

The historical memories of Sino-Japanese relations in Chinese narratives are largely narrated through two myths – one focuses on how the Chinese nation was Japan's older and wiser brother and impacted upon core Japanese culture and values, and the other emphasises how Japan as the little brother humiliated China during the Century of Humiliation. The little brother's defiance against the older brother is largely perceived as the unforgotten historical humiliation that plays a central role in Chinese national identity formation. The Chinese war experience, in particular in the second Sino-Japanese war, generates a set of national myths that provides a national framework for explaining events and evaluating self-positioning in the world (Hutchinson 2009, 401-2). It has become the essential sources for narrating Chinese stories and shaping Chinese national identity. Suzuki (2007) argues that Japan plays an important role as a significant other which enhances China's self-image as a victim and Chinese national identity is characterised by an acute sense of victimhood in the international society. Meanwhile, Joshua Fogel (2009) argues that contemporary China can only be fully understood by bringing Japan into account. This thesis acknowledges the importance of Japan and the war myths in the (re)construction of Chinese national identity. Accordingly, it focuses on anti-Japanese nationalism and probes into Chinese war commemoration in the empirical research.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has built a conceptual framework that can accommodate the different angles in understanding Chinese online nationalism and contextualised the research in the historical and cultural settings. The major effort was first made in elaborating the framework and setting up the theoretical link between memory, culture, discourse, power and technology in the realm of the discursive (re)construction of Chinese nationalism online. The first dimension of the framework clarifies the role of collective memory in the discursive construction of nationalism and raises attention to the competing and changing nature of mythscape which involves multiple narratives of the national past. The second dimension examines the relationship

between discourse and power in the social construct of nationalism and advocates for the necessity of investigating the interactions among different discourses of nationalism. The third dimension illustrates the multiplicity of digital construction of the national past and highlights the necessity of shifting attention away from the state-centred view to the state-society power dynamics in negotiating the national past through digital-mediated communication. Finally, the conceptual framework was visualised in a nationalist-drum framework under which my empirical research will be conducted.

The second section contextualised Chinese nationalism in the Chinese cultural terms and raised awareness to the significance of sensitivity to different political and cultural contexts. It first clarified the concept of humiliation and pointed to the important of the notion of face (*mianzi*), which is an important element in understanding the multi-dimensionality of Chinese social and political culture. It highlighted the Chinese concept of face as primarily a group value deeply rooted in relationships rather than an individual thing. It then probed into the traditional Chinese mentality of *Jia-guo-tianxia* 家-国-天下 (family-country-*tianxia*), in which the individual identity is significant to the collective identity, and individuals are expected to be conscious of their responsibility to contribute to unity and harmony. After that, it traced the understanding of legitimacy back to the Mandate of Heaven and the *minben* doctrine in ancient China and examined the role of the CCP in setting up the new China and its legitimacy. The traditional notion focuses on the humanistic aspect of governance and bases government's legitimacy on the contents and outcomes of its policies. It finally assessed the historical relationship between China and Japan and briefly explained why Japan plays a critical role in the contemporary Chinese national mythmaking. These serve as essential contextualization for this thesis. The following chapter will proceed to research methodology and its operationalisation.

Chapter 4 Research Methodology

This chapter elaborates on research methodology and clarifies the approach applied to the empirical study of my research. As illustrated in the conceptual framework, this study aims to examine representations of nationalism both from above and from below and investigate the power dynamics in the discursive construction of the national past in Chinese cyberspaces. Therefore, the methodological approach needs to probe into discursive practices online in order to examine communicative patterns and their underlying power relations in Chinese cyberspaces. It ultimately concerns the use of language. To make methodological choice, it is important to address two key questions – 1) *which* methodology do I choose and *why*; 2) *how* will I operationalize it in my research? As the discursive dimension of nationalism is closely related to identities, experiences, and interpretations that are articulated and negotiated in multimodal forms of discourse, it highlights the necessity to investigate the construction of meanings and relationships in social interactions. The complexity of the issue cannot be captured simply by using numerical indicators in quantitative methodology. Quantitative methods can help illustrate the word frequency and event tendency that tend to draw a larger picture, but they may fail to show us the diversity and nuances as well as the contextualised analysis that set the core of this thesis. Therefore, essentially this study adopts qualitative methodology, and more specifically, a discourse studies approach to examine the use of language in the Internet-mediated space. This chapter explains this methodological choice and my toolkits for operationalization.

The first section introduces discourse analysis as the methodology for this thesis. The second section addresses the questions of *which approach* and *why*. It traces the development of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) before it specifies the approaches adopted to examining online discourse. Furthermore, the challenges in applying CDA to the Chinese context are addressed, and the plausible adjustment of the approach is made to make it more useful for my research. The third section addresses the *how* question - it specifies the methods and toolbox in operationalizing the methodological approach in my case studies. It also addresses the issues of sampling

as well as data collection and analysis. After that, the limitations of my approach are discussed.

4.1 Discourse Analysis

Contemporary discourse studies evolved in parallel intellectual developments in the humanities and social sciences primarily since the 1970s. These developments included an increased focus on the strategies and structures of language use in disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, semiotics, sociolinguistics, psychology, and communication studies (van Dijk 2011, 1-2). While other approaches to the study of language tend to focus on description, discourse analysis focuses on the understanding of language use in texts, conversations, and interactions that shape the social world (Burnham et al. 2008, 248). In comparison to content analysis, discourse analysis allows for better accounting of meanings that are not explicit in lexical and semiotic patterns. Discourse analysis is endowed with a methodological apparatus that can associate theoretical construction closely with the empirical operation and relate the complexity of discourse to "the objective and subjective conditions of the production, circulation and consumption of messages" (Sayago 2015, 727-9). It is concerned with the way in which texts have been constructed in certain social and historical contexts.

There are various types of discourse analysis and different ways of doing it (using quantitative, qualitative or combined research methods). The principal perspective shared across them is that language is not simply a neutral means of describing, reflecting or revealing the world, but a significant way of constructing social life (Gill 2000, 172). Today, discourse analysis has established itself as a cross-discipline that can be used to study the structures, dimensions and properties of text and talk in different disciplines. Van Dijk highlights the objective of today's cross-disciplinary discourse studies as follows,

> ...the study of language use is no longer limited to an analysis of abstract structures of words, clauses, sentences or propositions, but is part of an integrated account of a socially and culturally situated and cognitively based multimodal discourse as interaction and human communication (2011, 3).

The study of discourse usually adopts discourse analytical research approaches, for example, discourse semantics, narrative analysis, conversation analysis, discourse pragmatics, and critical discourse analysis, to examine the inter-relationship between language and different aspects of social life such as identity, gender, politics, ideology and ethnicity. Discourse analytical research is as varied as the structures and properties of discourse and their functions, and thus which approach to take is dependent on which dimension of social life and what details of its discourse structure researchers attempt to unfold. Researchers can do so "with a more or less formal, qualitative vs. quantitative, descriptive, experimental, ethnographic and/or critical research method" (van Dijk 2011, 6). The objective of this thesis is to examine the discursive construction of Chinese online nationalism as well as state-society power dynamics in it. A qualitative and critical analytical approach, which offers the perspective to examine the use of language and power relationship, therefore, is selected, and it will be elaborated upon in the following section.

4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis emerged in the late 1980s as a methodological development in discourse analysis spearheaded by European scholars in discourse studies such as Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak and Teun van Dijk. It is "a problem-oriented interdisciplinary research movement" in discourse studies (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011, 357). CDA is widely used to critically examine the use of language in social interactions and uncover the power relations hidden in a specific context. Specifically, the purpose of CDA is to study "real, and often extended instances of social interaction which take a linguistic form, or partially linguistic form" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, 258). According to Wodak and Meyer (2009, 2), the significance of CDA, which makes it different from other discourse analysis approaches, lies in its constitutive problem-oriented, interdisciplinary perspective.

CDA is primarily interested in examining the "technologization of discourse", which constitutes both the top-down institutionalisation of discourse and bottom-up dimension of everyday practices (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011, 360). That is to say, the discursive dimension of power involves dynamics between top-down relations of dominance and bottom-up relations of acceptance, compliance or resistance (van Dijk 1993, 250). For this thesis, it is important to investigate how new forms of discourse are facilitated by the Internet and contribute to the representation

and construction of the national past. It is this discursive dimension of power in the digital age that this research project attempts to reveal. Therefore, CDA is compatible with my research objective of examining the relationship between discourse and power in the online discursive construction of Chinese nationalism. More specifically, it can provide the methodological means for me to investigate how discourse on the Internet produces and negotiates the national past and how it shapes the negotiation of power in cyberspaces.

CDA approaches to language, having primary roots in Critical Linguistics (CL), try to bring linguistics and social sciences together "within a single theoretical and analytical framework, setting up a dialogue between them" (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, 6). CDA evolved into a school or paradigm which shares the common interests in de-mystifying power and ideology through investigation of the use of language (for example Fairclough 2001; Wodak 2009; van Dijk 2007; van Leeuwen 2008). It moves beyond linguistics and tries to understand the social processes and structures within which meanings are created in discourse.

In CDA approaches, *discourse* is perceived as "a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action" (Reisigl and Wodak 2009, 89). Discourse is *socially constitutive* and *socially constituted*. It is socially constitutive, "both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, 258). At the same time, discourse, as social practice, is conditioned by the wider structure; therefore, the contexts of language use are important. Texts are regarded as sites of struggle in that we can trace "differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance" in social interaction (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 10). The focus of CDA is not to simply draw on the use of language in and for itself, but to contextualise language within "social and cultural processes and structures" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, 271). It tries to identify the relationship between texts and their social contexts, which refer both to the immediate contexts of the communicative event and the remote conditions of institutional and social structures (Fairclough 2001, 21).

Two important concepts in CDA are intertextuality and interdiscursivity. Intertextuality means that texts are linked to other texts (both in the past and the

present). Elements of one text can be transferred to another text in a new context, which involves de-contextualization and re-contextualization. Interdiscursivity means that discourses have links in various ways. A discourse may refer to topics of other discourses. For example, in a speech on economic growth, discourse about economy may make reference to discourse about employment or discourse about welfare. From the analysis of the relations of texts, contexts, and discourses, CDA focuses on the role of discourse in the (re)production and the challenge of dominance and aims to draw effective implications and conclusions (van Dijk 1993).

The term, *critical*, does not mean "negative" in our commonsense usage, but points to the necessity for critical investigation of the social phenomenon that has been taken for granted (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 2). The meaning of *critical* can be traced to the influence of Critical Theory which advocates an orientation in social theory towards critiquing and changing society. The c*ritical* stance of researchers helps "show up connections which may be hidden from people – such as the connections between language, power, and ideology" (Fairclough 2001, 4). Critical discourse analysts acknowledge the asymmetry of power relations in discourse (Fairclough 1992, 17), and focus on language/power relationship and attempt to challenge the surface meaning of language in use. It can make the implicit explicit (Chilton et al. 2012, 3).

By adopting such a critical stance to discourse studies, this thesis is expected to gain a detailed and in-depth understanding of the different strategic use of Chinese language, as well as that of new Internet language, in constructing the national past. It also helps examine the role of the Internet in the discursive (re)construction and the negotiations of power relations in online interactions. Critical discourse approaches have mainly been used to analyse texts in Western European languages. In this field, there is a need for studies on other empirical contexts and texts (Wodak and Meyer 2009; Tian and Chilton 2014). Since CDA is an essentially Western methodology, its application to a non-Western context is liable to confront certain issues, which deserve further discussion in the following section.

4.2.1 Applying CDA to Non-Western Contexts

CDA, as a discourse analytical paradigm evolved from European intellectual development, has now been widely adopted in the international domain for analysing social events and structures in addressing social problems. While CDA has been

subjected to criticisms[35] in its ideological position and commitments that may affect the notion of criticality (see for example Widdowson 1995; Billig 2003), the approach needs to be adjusted to make it more applicable to non-Western contexts.

When using it in non-Western socio-political and cultural contexts, it is important to shed light on the intellectual encounters between the Western and the non-Western, as the objective of doing discourse analysis is not only to describe linguistic and discursive features of discourse but to explain and interpret them. Researcher's explanation and interpretation, according to van Dijk (2007, 62), can be facilitated by relating linguistic and discursive features to representations such as attitudes, norms, values and ideologies. These socio-cognitive dimensions of discourse are closely tied to the cultural traditions that are embedded in our social practices. The importance of cultural codes in discourse studies is highlighted by Gavriely-Nuri as follows,

- They operate like an undeclared social compass, directing the community's members as to how to rationalise and legitimise decision-making;
- They operate like the skeleton of the human body. Though they are not manifest, they provide the foundations for the entire cultural structure;
- They are "transparent" not only to the non-members of the community, but also the members of the community who frequently perceive these codes as "natural", or as a kind of "common sense" (2015, 16).

Cultural traditions, as introduced in Chapter 3, are the essential context in which our understanding of the nationalist practices in China can be built upon.

Additionally, this thesis involves China's Internet, which has led to a new cultural phenomenon, primarily *egao* (恶搞）Internet culture, as addressed in Chapter 2, and thus the particular emerging Interne culture and its special language features constitute important parts of the analysis as well. In this light, when applying CDA to non-Western contexts, researchers should attach great importance to cultural sensitivity. Without acknowledging the role of culture in the study of a particular

[35] Main criticisms of CDA are concerned with its "fuzzy" concept of discourse and its representativeness due to the limited number of texts for analysis (for example Widdowson 1995). For the former criticism, I think despite lack of a unified definition of discourse, CDA offers the flexible frame under which different levels for analysis can be chosen on the basis of the research problem and objective. For the latter criticism, I regard it an issue in the epistemological debate over quantity or quality. What I can do in my research to minimize the problems is to make transparent my decisions in selecting data and conducting analysis and to take a reflexive stance. A section in this chapter will be dedicated to the issues that I have confronted in applying CDA to my research.

social problem, researchers are unlikely to capture a fuller picture; even worse, failure to address culture may cause misconception and replicate stereotypes of the social practice and social structure under study.

In recent years, a growing number of scholars, particularly those from non-Western regions, started to pay attention to the role of culture in doing discourse analysis. Some advocate for taking a cultural turn in CDA or set up a new paradigm (for example, Shi-xu 2009; Miike 2009; Pardo 2010; Gavriely-Nuri 2012). The Journal of Multicultural Discourses is such a scholarly effort to enhance multicultural-intellectual discussion for cultural diversity and equality in discourse studies. Arguably, some denounce the Western dominance in communicative, political and cultural dimensions and claim for distinct approaches to studying the East (e.g. Shi-xu 2005, 2012 and Miike 2006, 2009). The key problem with this approach, from my perspective, lies in its East-West camp distinction, which does not contribute to the constructive "cultural dialogue with CDA"[36], not to mention the inaccurate picture the work often draws of Western approaches and the lack of concrete examples and analytical procedures.

Others try to integrate cultural analysis into critical discourse studies. It is suggested that cultural studies and CDA be brought together and proper attention paid to new and different global and local contexts (Threadgold 2003). Gavriely-Nuri (2010; 2012; 2015) analysed discourse of peace in Israel and proposed a cultural approach to critical discourse analysis (CCDA). She refers culture to a "database", which "opens selectively to the members of a specific community, enabling them to navigate and find links to specific issues" (2012, 78). The content of these links consists of cultural codes, which set up relations between discursive practices and culture (Gavriely-Nuri 2015, 15). In her analysis, she used three analytical dimensions – probing one or more discursive strategies, decoding of cultural codes, and examining how strategies and codes work together to (re)producing power. Sensitivity to the link between discourse and culture in the cultural approach to CDA contributes an alternative perspective in

[36] This term is used in the title in Shi-xu (2014). But in this article he was not trying to have a dialogue with CDA, but again promote his cultural discourse studies, which he argues as "characterized by a holistic philosophy, equilibrium and discrepancy theory, all-encompassing methodology and development-minded research agenda" (2014, 360). I think the cultural dialogue is necessary by integrating cultural elements to the application of CDA.

examining the role of discourse and unpacking the rhetoric of power dependent on its cultural contexts.

CDA has been adopted by many researchers in the discourse studies in the Chinese context (see for example, Li 2009; Sandby-Thomas 2011; Yang and Wu 2012). Notably, the application of CDA is largely focused on studies on education (e.g. Dan 2008; Shi 2016), English teaching (e.g. Xiong & Qian 2012) and movie analysis (e.g. Wu 2014). When politics is involved, it tends to examine the English coverage of China (e.g. Li 2009; Yang and Wu 2012) and foreign political leaders' speech (e.g. Zeng Y. 2009). Among the work investigating the ways that language is employed in political issues, Qian Yufang's research takes a corpus-based approach to critical discourse studies, analysing the terrorism discourse in the media reporting (in China and in the UK) (Qian 2010). The CCP's use of stability discourse in Chinese newspapers is also investigated with CDA approach, illuminating the CCP's discursive strategies in legitimising its rule in the post-Tiananmen period (Sandby-Thomas 2011). These scholarly works demonstrate the applicability of CDA in the Chinese context. Notably, in applying CDA to political phenomena in China, it should be acknowledged that China's tradition of criticism and self-criticism is different from Western tradition (Chilton, Tian and Wodak 2012). CDA research requires examination of the cultural traditions and worldviews of the particular context under study.

In the Chinese language, Critical Discourse Analysis can be literally translated as 批判话语分析 (*pipan huayu fenxi*). When mentioning 批评 (*piping*) or 批判 (*pipan*), Chinese people tend to relate it to negative meanings, as critique usually imply direct target and criticism with action in China. If we look into Chinese traditional Confucian thinking, criticism is more inward-directed, and the key is self-criticism. Confucius uses the word, 省 (*xing*), which is to reflect upon oneself. In the Chinese language, some words with the character 省 such as 反省 (*fanxing*) and 自省 (*zixing*) concern the need for self-criticism. Another aspect of criticism usually involves higher authority and face. It is reinforced by the Cultural Revolution[37], during which

[37] The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was a mass social-political movement mobilized by then Chairman Mao Zedong to preserve Communism as the dominant ideology within the Party by cleaning up both capitalist and traditional thoughts in Chinese society. There were widespread factional struggles across the country and Read Guards (红卫兵), primarily youths, strongly supported Mao's appeal for rooting out capitalism and destructing the "Four Olds" (referring to old customs, culture,

criticism was associated with trouble, physical abuse, and painful reflection. Those who were under public criticism in "struggle sessions" (批斗会, *pidou*) had to suffer from verbal and physical humiliation in front of a big crowd. Therefore, the different connotation of criticism, in addition to the CDA's general aspiration for social change, makes CDA difficult to be appropriately adopted by Chinese scholars for political discourse analysis.

Recent years have seen a rise of scholarly interest among Chinese scholars in highlighting the differences in history, culture and philosophy between the East and West and examining the hierarchical relationship between the Western discourse and Easter discourse (Shi-xu 2009; Wu 2006). Their work proposes to break through the dominant power of Western discourse and have Chinese approaches to Chinese discourse. It is true that their effort can contribute to developing a culturally conscious framework and promoting the status of Chinese discourse in the international arena. However, arguably it seems to suggest a unique discourse analytical approach "with Chinese characteristics", which does not help bridge perception gap and facilitate understanding.

Rather than working on an approach "with Chinese characteristics", a few Chinese and Western scholars started to develop the use of CDA in the Chinese context. Tian Hailong worked together with Chilton and Wodak on a volume on discourse in social-political transformations in contemporary China and made a united effort in making conceptual reflections on discourse and critique in different cultures, which offer new considerations for conducting CDA in the Chinese context (Chilton, Tian and Wodak 2010). When applying it to non-Western cases, CDA needs some "tailoring and appropriating" (Tian and Chilton 2014, 197). A "wider angle" of critical perspective is proposed (Tian 2008; Tian and Chilton 2014). It aims to expand the focus of CDA and highlights the role of discourse in construction and representation of social realities in China's social transformation. Tian and Chilton (2014, 199) argue that doing CDA in China is "an outcome of the dialogue between reflections on discourse and critique in China and the West, and also a re-contextualization of Western originated CDA in the Chinese context". Chilton et al. (2012, 1) advocate that Chinese discourse analysis should have its focus on the role of Chinese language. Taking into account China's

habits and ideas). This socio-political movement thrust China into a decade of disorder, turmoil and stagnation. It has been one of the events in Chinese collective amnesia.

social transformation, I would argue that when conducting CDA in China studies, it is necessary to recognise not only the importance of language proficiency and cultural sensitivity but also its change and emergent culture in China today.

4.2.2 Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

In CDA, there are different approaches emphasising different dimensions in the study of discourse, including Dialectical-Relational Approach, Dispositive Analysis, Socio-cognitive Approach, Discourse-Historical Approach, Corpus-Linguistic Approach and Social Actors Approach. The heterogeneity of approaches under the CDA school may seem confusing, but it allows for methodological choices and provides space for change and adaption according to the research problem and the research process. Which approach to take and which tools to select depends on the appropriateness in realising the research objective.

The major approach adopted for this thesis is the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to CDA. The reasons for my selection are threefold. First, in comparison to other approaches, DHA is more relevant to this research as it enjoys strengths in integrating knowledge about history and the socio-political context in which discursive events of national identity are embedded (Wodak 2009, 38). Second, it offers clearly specified categories to conduct the analysis and allows the possibility for in-depth analysis of argumentation strategies in self and other representation, which is an important element in analysing national identity construction in this thesis. Third, this analytical approach highlights the necessity for triangulation by using multiple methods to enhance research validity. Triangulation in DHA means that discursive phenomena are approached from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives taken from various disciplines. For example, to explore the discursive construction of nationalism, an interdisciplinary approach can combine theoretical perspectives in nationalism studies, social movement, discourse studies and media studies etc.. In my study, the principle of triangulation implies adopting an interdisciplinary conceptual framework, combining useful tools from different discourse methods and analysing various sets of data (e.g. political speeches, newspaper articles, and online comments). I also move between the data and the framework as well as the methodology so as to make necessary adjustments along the way.

DHA has its traditional research interest in particular discourses such as discourses of language policies, social exclusion and discrimination (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Krzyanowski and Wodak 2008) and discourses of dealing with the problematic past, the rewriting of history, and different modes of commemoration, and constructions of national identities (de Cillia et al.1999; Wodak et al. 2009). Wodak and Meyer contend,

> Identity politics on all levels always entails the integration of past experiences, present events and future visions in many domains of our lives. The concepts of inter-textuality and recontextualization are inherently tied to interdisciplinary discourse-historical approaches (2009, 11).

The strength of DHA in analysing identity politics is compatible with this research which investigates the discursive construction of Chinese nationalism with particular attention paid to how the national past is constructed, articulated and (re)constructed in the domain of cyberspaces.

DHA is often referred to as the Vienna school, pioneered by Ruth Wodak (see Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Wodak and Meyer 2009). Arguably, it is the most linguistically orientated and concentrates its effort in the field of politics (Wodak and Meyer 2009). Its main distinctive virtue lies in its allegiance to "the analysis of historical and political topics and texts" (Wodak et al. 1999, 7). In DHA, discourse is *historical* in the sense that discourses are "always connected to other discourses which were produced earlier, as well as those which are produced synchronically or subsequently" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, 276). Therefore, inter-textuality and re-contextualisation of certain discourse link the past with the present as well as the future. Re-contextualisation can be achieved by addition, deletion, substitution, and evaluation. DHA argues for the importance of considering discourse in relation to two types of contexts – sites of production and reception of discourses. How discourse is produced and how it is received are both significant issues. The analysis of production and reception will be done through analysing official reports and statements and also netizens' comments and discussion in this thesis.

The analytical part of DHA study primarily involves a two-step procedure (Krzyzanowski 2010). The first step is thematic analysis, which aims to map out the contents of analysed texts and identify discourse topics. Topics summarise the texts and can be described as semantic macro-propositions which form the thematic structure of the text (van Dijk 1991, 113). The second step is an in-depth analysis which draws out the map of major arguments made by discursive strategies, largely argumentation strategies in self/other representations, as well as linguistic features.

Discursive strategies are the intentional plan of practices adopted by social actors that can achieve a particular linguistic, social, or political aim. Positive self-representation and negative other-representation are realised through these discursive strategies (Reisigl and Wodak 2001), and social actors are represented differently by techniques such as foregrounding/backgrounding, role allocation, aggregation, and assimilation. By mapping out the topics and the strategies and looking into the interrelated linguistic acts, DHA attempts to identify the meaning-related links in and between texts, establish the relationship among discourses, and ultimately discover the hidden mechanism between the use of language and the exercise/resistance of power.

The key category in the in-depth analysis is argumentation strategies, which focus on the use of *topos* in constructing positive self- and negative other-representation. Argumentation justifies claims of reality and often relies on topoi that connect the premise of an argument to its conclusion. Topos (plural topoi) originally derives from Aristotelian work on Rhetoric and Topics and has been reapplied in modern argumentation theories. Topos can be described as parts of argumentation scheme which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion. It is usually viewed as "certain headings of arguments" (Krzyzanowski 2010, 85). The analysis of topoi aims to discover the links between topics and establish argumentation strategies and related linguistic means (ibid). It will be taken as a key step in my research to find the strategies and means by which nationalist claims are justified/legitimised.

To make the DHA approach more applicable to the Chinese context, I firstly take Tian's "wider angle" (Tian 2008) in my research. Having a wider angle means this thesis focuses on the role of Chinese discourse in the construction and representation of "social realities" in China's social transformation and examines the state-society relationships in digitalized China. This thesis tries to minimise certain ideological

influences of CDA approaches by attaching importance to the Chinese historical and cultural dimensions of the discursive practices under study. In addition, the emergence of Internet culture in China is considered an important part of the context in which online discourse is embedded. Given that online discourse is featured in diverse modes of language use, very often in non-textual forms such as pictures and videos, it is necessary to examine the multimodality of discourse as another dimension for analysis.

4.2.3 The Multi-modal Approach

A prominent feature of online discourse is the multimodality of language use. The Internet, as a medium for communication, has driven a shift in discursive practices. With the advancement in ICTs, online communication is becoming increasingly multi-modal, including not only texts but also visuals such as pictures, videos, 3D games, and interactive sites. Very often, meanings and practices in one modality are recontextualised in other semiotic modalities (Baldry and Thibault 2006, 3). The juxtaposition of linguistic texts and visuals together contribute to making inferences and guiding interpretation. The transformative dynamics of socially situated meaning-making processes, in particular in the digital age, require an additional analytical approach to the study of discourse (Iedema 2003). The analytical approach to online data calls for new perspectives that are different from those adopted for print-based texts of the traditional media (for example Weir 2005).

The online discourse that this study focuses on largely constitutes not only textual forms of language but also visual ones ranging from website and video to picture, music and emoji. The dataset consists of a cluster of both textual data (i.e. news reports and speeches) and visual data (i.e. videos, images and website layout). Regarding digital-mediated memory practices, as outlined in Chapter 3, different actors insert their interpretation of the past into the discursive realm in which memories are constructed not only through written texts but also other modalities. Therefore, the notion of multimodality is significant for analysing online discursive practices, which allows the angle for examining the interplay between different modes of communication and the complex layers of meaning making.

Multimodality, as a notion, entered discourse studies primarily through the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2001; 2003). Van Leeuwen has advocated the necessity to merge the notion of multimodality into critical discourse analysis and cast a critical eye on the overwhelmingly multimodal and digitally mediated discourses. A multimodal approach to discourse studies highlights that texts create meanings through multiple modes - not only language but also visual elements and that communication, largely facilitated by development in ICTs, shifts away from mono-modality to multimodality. Multimodal discourses are discourses that involve more than one mode of semiosis. Meanings are created not only through textual modes but also through visual elements and features such as images, colour and layouts (Machin 2013, 347). Greatly facilitated by new technologies, communication has moved away "from monomodality (where modes operated more often in isolation) to multimodality" (ibid, 348). Multi-modal discourse analysis signals a "visual turn" within critical discourse analysis. It looks into the multimodality of discourse, which stresses how discourses are constructed via visual modes. For example, the identity of social actors can be represented, both verbally and visually, as individuals or as "types", and their identity categories can be expressed in different modes that add further meanings and values (van Leeuwen 2013). This is an important aspect of online discourse analysis. In the age of multi-media as different modes have become more integrated with the advancement of ICTs, we need to understand the way that different semiotic resources are used to communicate ideas, values and identities and how communication is facilitated and/or constrained in certain ways (Kress and van Leeuwen 2003).

Cultural issues - such as values, norms and opinions, as Pauwels (2005, 609) argues, can be intentionally or unintentionally expressed and materialised in both textual and non-textual patterns on websites. Memorial websites, for instance, provide the space for multi-modal memory practices. Foot et al. (2006) investigate the memorial websites after September 11, regarding the web as an environment for expressing personal and public grief and loss using multimedia as well as other web applications displaying remembrance virtually. They argue that web technologies allow users variability, modularity and flexibility to interact despite certain limitations such as system backups and server problems. Following this logic, I would argue that web technologies create the discursive realm for social actors, including state and non-state ones, to memorialise and communicate the past using multi-modal forms of

language. The mythscape is not only represented and constructed in the textual forms such as presidential speeches and media reports but also increasingly in visual patterns (for example videos displaying the unity and solidarity in the military parade in Chapter 6). Therefore, the multimodal approach to discourse studies will be taken as the additional perspective when websites are examined in this thesis.

4.3 Methods and data

4.3.1 Operationalisation

As outlined previously, this thesis uses tools from both the DHA approach and multimodal approach to discourse studies. My analytical frame can be elaborated as follows,

1) start with a historical analysis to situate the discourse in its historical background;

2) conduct a thematic analysis of the data;

3) focus on the analysis of social actors and argumentation strategies in self/other representation and/or analyse the multimodal pattern of representation (bring in the analysis of Chinese linguistic features and cultural codes including *egao* Internet culture where necessary);

4) interpret it in the broader context.

Regarding this analytical framework, three issues need to be clarified. First, the analytical process is not a one-way process; rather, the analysis is carried back and forth to check the validity of selected categories (i.e. discourse topics and topoi, roles of social actors, and multimodalities) and the appropriateness of tools selected for the analytical framework[38]. Second, social contextualization constitutes an essential part of this thesis. Having introduced relevant cultural elements in Chapter 3, the study will benefit from the historical analysis of the topics under examination, and the analysis of cultural representations as well as the new Internet culture in online language use. Third, the operationalization of the DHA approach and/or the multimodal approach depends on the different features of the data under study (i.e. more textual or visual). The tools from these two approaches are used in supplementary ways. Specifically, in Chapter 5, the discourse about national humiliation largely involves textual data collected from online news reports and

[38] Initially I just selected DHA approach as my research method. After a review of the research data, I decided to include the multimodal approach into my toolkit and readjust my methods accordingly.

speeches, and therefore, the DHA approach is used as a primary method while the multimodal approach a secondary. Regarding Chapter 6, the discourse under study takes on more multi-modal forms of representations on websites concerning layout, colour, videos, etc., and thus is studied with a more multi-modal approach. The flexibility of selecting tools from discourse approaches as such is allowed to maximise the research findings from the data.

To test the applicability of my analytical approach, a pilot study was conducted on a small sample of data of the Nanjing Massacre commemoration. The data is consisted of three news articles and fifty threads of comments from Sina (新浪) right after UNESCO accepted and added the Nanjing Massacre documents into the Memory of the World Register in October 2015. I applied my approach to analysing the sample. From conducting the pilot study, I tested the analytical dimensions and made certain reflections as follows. First, the analytical process should not be rigid, and the tools adopted for the research need to be usable. That means, researchers need to select the tools that work better for the empirical data and clarify the selection. Otherwise, the rigid application of approaches may result in narrow findings and even misinterpretation. Second, taking a wider angle in the study of Chinese discourse does not mean it includes everything for nothing. Rather, it focuses on the role of Chinese language on the Internet, which requires alertness to new phrases and hidden meanings. Therefore, the Chinese linguistic features and related cultural elements, as well as the Internet language features, should be further investigated. Third, the special communication features of websites under study should be addressed that can contribute to better understanding of digital-mediated communication patterns, and therefore it appeals for an additional angle when doing discourse analysis. Fourth, when reporting analysis, efforts need to be made to English translation that grammatically and visually matches the Chinese texts so as to facilitate readers' understanding. If there is the potential for meaning to be lost in translation, footnotes should be added to provide the social-cultural context wherever necessary. These reflections from the pilot study are helpful in the further operationalization of the methods.

The pilot study also gives me to the opportunity to reflect upon the problem of representativeness of discourse under study. It is claimed that CDA work lacks representativeness due to its limited data for analysis and thus other methods can be

used to triangulate and supplement CDA analysis. According to Wodak (2001, 65), a triangulation approach can be achieved through adopting different approaches and using a variety of empirical data as well as background information. It is a part of the DHA research tradition that appeals to the necessity to multi-methodical approaches (Krzyzanowski 2010; Wodak and Meyer 2009). The methods for triangulation can be either quantitative or qualitative. For example, Corpus Linguistics (CL) tools can be used with the help of lexical analysis software, i.e. WordSmith or AntConc to enhance representativeness of detailed discourse analysis (see for example Baker et. al 2008). The advantages of using CL methods lie in that they provide a quantitative dimension of discourse analysis and can avoid the possible cherry-picking problem of CDA. Therefore CL methods deserve careful consideration as an option for this research. Nonetheless, due to lack of an appropriate Chinese reference corpus[39] that reflects the current Internet language, my use of CL tools in this thesis will be limited to word frequency and cluster analysis. Additionally, the creativity of language use on the Internet makes CL tools not helpful. For example, in cyberspaces, Chinese characters and even *pinyin* systems are used creatively, and thus there are many catchphrases such as *duomaomao* (躲猫猫) and *xixishui* (洗洗睡)[40] that cannot be captured efficiently by CL tools. Additionally, the *egao* dimension of online discourse (as addressed in Chapter 2) makes it difficult to identify in software. This *egao* dimension of the online discourse plays a key role in the online discursive realm and an important aspect of investigation in this research. As such, it requires sensitivity to the new language use in cyberspaces, which cannot be achieved by software and quantitative methods.

Another issue concerns censorship. Censorship is an unavoidable issue for online data analysis. It should be clarified that rather than an intervening factor, such censorship measures constitute a part of the online discursive realm under study. On the one hand, government censorship, both by coercive and "soft" means, draws the bottom line for public expression and limits or directs the ways in which netizens articulate

[39] The most commonly used Chinese corpus is the Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese (LCMC), which sampled 15 written text categories including news, official documents and literary texts etc. published in China in the early 1990s for a total of approximately one million words. However, given the rapid change of language used on the Internet nowadays, the LCMC may not be able to capture the Internet catchphrases and reflect the current reality of language use in Chinese cyberspaces.

[40] Due to the censorship and new Internet culture, there are many new catchphrases created and widely disseminated in online networks in recent years. Chinese netizens use unique Chinese linguistic features creatively and target at hotspot social incidents. The emergence of these widespread phrases, to some extent, reflects the influence and rise of public opinion in Chinese society.

their opinions. On the other hand, within the confines of censorship, netizens may respond to it by compliance such as self-censorship and/or resistance such as creative use of language.

Regarding censorship as part of the power mechanism in the Internet-mediated space, I have tried to stay alert to coercive censorship and also "soft" measures such as the posts written by the "fifty-cent army" (五毛党, government-hired Internet commentators). According to my online experience, these posts use quite similar wording patterns and tones. For example, it is noticeable that most comments on the report about Xi Jinping's statement use wording such as "Xi is a great leader", or "Under Xi's leadership, China will realize our great goal" etc.. These posts have the distinct features of being "mainstream" (主旋律 *zhu xuanlv*) and having "positive energy" (正能量 *zheng nengliang*). On top of my own awareness, I took into account the categorization schemes proposed by King et al. (2016). Among the six categories identified by King et al.[41], I find three of particular relevance: taunting of foreign countries, cheerleading for China (or party leadership), and argumentative praise or criticism. Close attention should be paid to these types of posts when conducting the analysis. Admittedly, there is great difficulty in bringing censorship into the analysis, particularly when the Internet control is increasingly replaced by Internet governance, and the "fifty-cent army" become voluntary (see further discussion in the concluding chapter).

4.3.2 Data collection

Having elaborated on the operationalization of my approach as well as my reflection upon a pilot study, I now proceed to address issues about my data collection and analysis. On the basis of the review of the literature and my preliminary research, this study categorises the discourse about Chinese nationalism into two broad themes - national pride and national humiliation. The selection of cases was specified for the period of Xi Jinping's first term (2012 -2017) (as stated in Chapter 2), and initially went through purposive sampling that tends to identify relevant data concerning the two themes. Purposive sampling constitutes an appropriate judgement sampling process

[41] They categorize a sample of "accused fifty-cent army posts" into six categories: taunting of foreign countries, argumentative praise or criticism, non-argumentative praise or suggestions, factual reporting, cheerleading for China, and others. From their research, they suggest that Chinese government strategy is to regularly distract the public attention and change the subject.

carried out "on the basis of knowledge of a population, its elements, and the purpose of the study" (Babbie 2010, 207). As addressed previously, the past between China and Japan plays a significant role in constructing and reconstructing the present Chinese national identity and central to Chinese nationalism construction is the war myths. Therefore, the cases selected for this study focus on those in relation to the Sino-Japanese relations, specifically the Second Sino-Japanese War and its national commemoration events in China.

The mapping of Sino-Japanese historical issues in the existing literature, as well as the current Sino-Japanese affairs, direct me to two cases for detailed study: 1) the commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre (南京大屠杀) and 2) the Victory Day of Chinese people's War against Japanese Aggression (中国人民抗日战争纪念日). The Nanjing Massacre is a critical historical case between China and Japan and the long-remembered pain, trauma and humiliation that substantively contribute to the construction of contemporary Chinese nationalism. The new V-day today serves as a national day to strengthen the sense of national belonging by linking the past of victory to the meaning of being Chinese today. These two events are critical cases for the study of war myths and provide the opportunity to examine how the mythscape of past humiliation and pride is discursively constructed on the Internet today. The case studies reveal what discursive strategies are adopted to set the boundary between in-group and out-group, and how official nationalism shapes the narratives about a particular historical issue and how popular nationalism receive and respond to it.

Data was collected primarily from three sources: relevant issue-specific websites, online portal sites, and online discussion groups. The rationale for selecting these platforms lies in the access to rich information on the coverage of and debate on the events. The specific sites are listed as follows.

1) Issue-specific websites: www.cngongji.cn (国家公祭网 The National Memorial Online) (the Memorial or the NMO thereafter) and www.1937china.com (中国人民抗日战争纪念馆网站 Museum of Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression) (as shown in Figure 4.1). The former website was jointly set up by the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall and Xinhuanet (the website of the state mouthpiece Xinhua News Agency), and the latter is the official website of the museum. The websites are dedicated to reporting and organising commemoration events in relation to

Sino-Japanese history. News reports on these websites are mainly taken from the official newspapers such as Xinhua and People's Daily, which largely constitute the official discourse data for this research.

Figure 4.1 A screenshot of The National Memorial online (www.cngongji.cn)[42]



2) State Television website: www.cctv.com (央视网 China Central Television website). CCTV is the Chinese state television broadcaster that has 42 channels (29 public channels and 13 pay TV channels) (CCTV 2017). The CCTV website (as shown in Figure 4.2) claims for "one click one world", offering the venue for "视听中国 互动世界" (viewing China and interacting with the world). It has extensive coverage of special national media events, including Olympic Games and national commemoration events, and the CCTV media materials, as influential sources, are used widely among other Chinese media channels for reporting on important events. Therefore, the special webpage on CCTV is analysed to examine the official representation and construction of the national war commemoration.

Figure 4.2 A screenshot of CCTV website (www.cctv.com)

[42] All screenshots of the websites were taken as seen in 2016.



3) Commercial sites[43]: mainly www.sina.com.cn (新浪) (shown in Figure 4.3) and www.qq.com (腾讯). While state-run websites (such as Xinhuanet.com and people.cn) are far less popular among the public, commercial sites such as Sina and Tencent enjoy dominant popularity among netizens. According to Alexa statistics[44], they are two most popular commercial portal sites among Chinese (Sina owns the most popular microblogging platform Sina Weibo, and Tencent owns instant messaging platforms QQ and Weixin). The reports in the news section on these portal sites largely come from the state news channels and often invite a large number of netizens commenting on the issues, sometimes directly or creatively. Additionally, the data is supplemented by including online discussion of the events under study in ifeng.com and Baidu Tieba. Ultimately the data collection of popular discourse is targeted at rich discussion of the events in these sites.

Figure 4.3 A screenshot of the portal site Sina (www.sina.com)

43 Sina Weibo (新浪微博) (Chinese equivalent of Twitter) is not selected as a site for data collection primarily for two reasons. First, Sina Weibo tends to focus more on entertainment and hot social events (for example, *chengguan* violence and celebrity gossips etc.) which may be of less relevance to this research. Second, the recent years have seen a decline of netizens' attention largely due to the crackdown of government over some opinion leaders in Weibo as well as the emergence of newer social media platforms such as Weixin (微信), whereas online portal sites and BBS forums remain as stable channels for communication and discussion about social events and political issues. In comparison to Weibo, which described as "a highly unusual micro-blogging environment" by Sullivan (2012, 779), popular portal sites and online discussion forums can generate richer data for this research.

44 See Alexa ranking of top sites in China at http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/CN



The data for the study on the Nanjing Massacre commemoration (Chapter 5) was collected from a series of commemorative events: the Memorial Day ratification, the first National Memorial Day, and the UNESCO inscription event; for the study on the Victory Day parade event (Chapter 6), data collection was focused on the parade. The data collection was event-based, and major data was collected between September and November in 2015[45]. For data analysis, special attention was paid to the analysis of social actor representations and positive-self and negative-other representations, as well as the multimodality of discourse in making meaning. AntConc, a corpus analysis tool developed by Laurence Anthony (2014), was used to produce keyword frequencies and concordance lines. I followed the analytical steps clarified previously and focused primarily on the discursive strategies of self/other presentation and the multimodal analysis. The combination of the tools from both approaches can to a large extent maximise the research findings from the data[46].

In examining the dynamics in constructing the national myths in remembrance of the past, it looks into two dimensions – top-down official discourse and bottom-up popular discourse. In each theme, I first examine how the mythscape is discursively constructed in official discourse, and then proceed to the analysis of popular

[45] Major data was collected during this period, because it covers the time when the key events (i.e. the Victory Day parade in September and the UNESCO inscription event in October 2015). The online reporting of and discussion about the events could be captured while they took place, providing rich data for the study.

[46] I have coded the official reports as GJ1 and GJ2 etc. (GJ refers to the *gongji* (the NMO) website, and used some initials for the quoted comments. The comments quoted in the research are purposefully anonymised as an attempt to make their identities untraceable. Translation was done by myself.

discourse before making a comparison. The findings from the analysis of two themes are compared to see what similar or different discursive strategies are used between the discursive construction of national pride and that of national humiliation. The comparison can also reveal the inter-discursive relationship between the two themes.

Overall, three issues are particularly important to the data analysis process. First, the analytical analysis requires great attention to Chinese linguistic features and the role of history and culture as well as emergent Internet culture in discursive practices. Second, the steps in data analysis are not absolutely separate from one another and should be adjusted when necessary. Third, the issues of censorship are important for the analysis. Censorship should be considered as a constituting factor of the online discursive realm. Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher needs to be self-reflexive about the methodological approach and the role of researcher. Some limitations and reflections will be further addressed in the following section.

4.4 Limitations and reflection

This section reflects upon the limitations of the methodological approach, which mainly concern representativeness, the researcher's role and Internet research ethics. First of all, there may be a methodological challenge involved in the discourse analysis of the Internet data, as it may involve the issue of censorship (and self-censorship). Studies on Chinese censorship, as addressed in literature review, have found that the target of government censorship is not to suppress criticism of the state but to curtail collective action (King et. al 2013; MacKinnon 2008). That means netizens can raise their competing views or criticism of the state within the confines of censorship. Rather than an intervening variable, this research regards censorship as part of the ecological environment of the Internet politics under examination. This study aims to take into account censorship issues wherever possible. However, practical issues of identifying and categorising censorship may arise and potentially impact on the research. Additional methods such as interview may provide supplementary data to the study and help triangulate the findings.

As regards Internet studies, the representativeness of the data also concerns the issue of the digital divide. Despite the rapid development of information and communications infrastructure, there is still a large digital divide between the rural and urban areas in China. The 39th CNNIC (2017) report shows the rural Internet

users only account for 27.4% of the total Internet users, and the Internet penetration rate was relatively high in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang (higher than 65%), and relatively low in Yunnan, Gansu, Guizhou, and Henan (lower than 43.5%). The report acknowledges the regional differences of Internet development in China. However, taking a closer look at the statistics, we can see that it does not necessarily mean that the opinions and sentiments captured from the Internet tend to be largely urban, young and educated because the statistics can only tell us 72.6% of the Internet users are from the urban areas. Therefore, it is important to take the following social factors into consideration.

First, the recent decade has seen an overwhelming phenomenon that rural population is migrating to big cities to work and comprise a large community of migrant workers. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, there were more than 277 million migrant workers in China in 2015 (NBS 2016). These migrant workers are living in big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Particularly the new generation is more tech-savvy and has access to the Internet, increasingly with their mobile devices. Nonetheless, in the CNNIC report, they are counted as urban Internet users[47], despite the fact that they come from rural areas. Second, with the rapid development of information and communication technologies, mobile phones are becoming increasingly popular for social communication. Today the total size of mobile Internet users (695 million) takes up to 95% of Chinese Internet population by the end of 2016. Migrant workers are increasingly using mobile devices to communicate with their friends, express their opinions, and even organise strikes via social media. In Mason's words, they are turning from "analogue slaves" into "digital rebels" (Mason, 2014). Therefore, the comments and opinions captured from various online communities do not simply represent the voice of the urban people, but also potentially the incoming rural. It is true that this study cannot deny digital divide, but a deeper probe into the social context reveals that the divide lies more in the infrastructure rather than the accessibility of the Internet.

[47] In the report, it categories rural Internet users as "Internet users who have been living in rural areas of China in the past 6 months" and urban Internet users as "Internet users who have been living in urban areas of China in the past 6 months". See the full report at https://cnnic.com.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/.

Another potential problem may lie in the issue of the researcher's subjectivity in conducting critical discourse analysis (for example Billig 2003). When conducting CDA, researchers, with different interests and perspectives, may interpret the same discourse in different ways and the interpretations can be politically motivated. Therefore, researchers should take a reflexive stance about her/his positionality and emphasise "the centrality of the context of the production and the reception of texts" (Hyatt 2005, 520). The awareness of reflexivity involves reflection upon self, process, and power relations as well as the intersubjective dynamics between the researcher, the researched and the whole research environment (Davies 2008, 7; Marshall and Rossman 2006, 100). I need to be reflexive about my own role as the analyst of the discourse. On the one hand, being a Chinese national implies that I could be more sensitive to Chinese language and culture in which the discourse is embedded; on the other hand, I may have in myself certain taken-for-granted assumptions about China. My own positionality does have an impact on the way in interpreting the data. Admittedly, discourse analysts are "not only readers but also producers of discourse" (Parker and Burman 1993, 159). The research constructs knowledge through our stance in relation to the researched and through the ways in which it is transmitted in a text. As a researcher, I am part of the meaning-making process, within which I hope my work can contribute to a better understanding of China. Such awareness of how research interacts with practice constitutes an important element of reflexivity.

Last but not least, since this is an Internet-related research, it is also important to take into consideration ethical issues about using the information on the Internet and problems concerning protecting research participants' anonymity (for example Mann and Stewart 2000; Dawson 2014). When compiling a set of online texts, researchers need to consider ethical issues about the use of data and privacy, which have to be observed in the same way as dealing with "traditional" discourse data (Gruber 2008, 72). Therefore, in this present study, some identifiable information (including their pseudonyms and online IDs as well as the websites) is not directly used to ensure that netizens' personal information remains confidential, and they will not be identifiable.

4.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to introduce the methodological approaches and specify the analytical methods for empirical research. The analytical approach to

discourse analysis – combining the tools from both the DHA approach and the multimodal approach - is used to examine the discursive construction of national humiliation and that of national pride in the official production and the public reception. In order to make CDA more applicable to Chinese discourse studies, it is important to consider the different meanings of being "critical" in Chinese tradition and pay special attention to the role of Chinese language and culture in articulating and negotiating the national past. Accordingly, adaption is made to make the approaches more applicable. Furthermore, due to the different features and modalities of data collected for the study, it is necessary to have a different focus when analysing the data. Two media events are chosen as case studies, the commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre and the 2015 Victory Day Parade. These two events are expected to yield meaningful and comparable findings of the discursive strategies and practices that different social actors adopt in discursively constructing the mythscape of the national past. The data is collected from a variety of sites including issue-specific commemoration websites, online portal websites and online discussion. This research also highlights the importance of being sensitive to the Chinese historical and cultural contexts as well as the emergent Internet environment. The following chapter will examine the discursive construction of national humiliation in the series of events on the Nanjing Massacre commemoration.

Chapter 5 The Discursive (Re)Construction of National Humiliation

In February 2014, the 7th Session of the 12th Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) ratified a decision to designate 13 December as a new national holiday in commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre victims. The ratification officially recognised the importance of the historical memories about Nanjing as the national past that "must be commemorated by the whole nation". Four months later, the Chinese government submitted to UNESCO a set of the Nanjing Massacre documents, primarily the historical records of the Massacre in the Second Historical Archives of China (SHAC). These documents were accepted and added to the Memory of the World Register[48] on 9 October 2015, marking the Nanjing Massacre as a documentary heritage of "world significance and outstanding universal value" (UNESCO n.d.). It was recognised by the international institution as a world heritage. This event made the Nanjing Massacre a memory that "should be remembered by the world". The series of events underline the Chinese government's effort in making the memory about Nanjing a national heritage as well as a global one. Very often, heritage is politically used as "a form of collective memory" (Graham and Howard 2008, 2). It provides an essential tool for nation building projects to bring people together through a sense of shared experience and identity. It consolidates national identification. Essentially, remembrance of the past as national or world heritage, as will be unfolded in the case of the Nanjing Massacre commemoration, concerns recognition of selected historical events. It constitutes a process of (re)interpreting history and negotiating identity.

This chapter will focus on the national commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre to investigate how the national past of tragedy, death and trauma is (re)constructed and (re)interpreted in China today. Specifically, it examines how, in cyberspaces, the official top-down discourse constructs the Nanjing Massacre as a national heritage, and also how Internet users receive the top-down project and add their multi-perspective narratives to the construction of the national past. It sheds light on the

[48] According to UNESCO, the Memory of the World programme was initiated in 1992 due to "a growing awareness of the parlous state of preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage in various parts of the world".

negotiation of memory and identity in the digital practices. To situate the series of events in the historical background, the first section conducts a historical overview of the changing status of the Nanjing Massacre in Chinese historiography and addresses the socially constructed significance in the Chinese national humiliation narrative. The second section probes into the data collected from online news reports and netizens' comments, and illuminates how the Chinese government discursively constructs the mythscape of the Nanjing Massacre on the Internet and how netizens respond to the official narrative and reconstruct it. In the analysis, special attention is paid to the argumentative strategies adopted to construct self and other representation and the contexts in which the discourse is embedded in. After that, a comparison between the official discourse and the popular discourse is made.

5.1 Historical Overview of the Nanjing Massacre Commemoration

5.1.1 National Humiliation and the Nanjing Massacre

Collective awareness of the past is constructed in the process of selective remembering and forgetting (Lowenthal 1985, 213). In other words, collective memories constitute collective remembrance as well as collective amnesia[49]. As addressed in Chapter 2, national humiliation (*guochi,* 国耻) has been used as a significant ingredient in the social construct of Chinese nationalism (e.g. Callahan 2010; Gries 2005; Wang Z. 2012). The "100 years of national humiliation" (*bainian guochi*, 百年国耻) has been constructed as a master narrative, while other memories are suppressed, erased, and forgotten. Under the CCP's patriotic education campaign (*aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu* 爱国主义教育), memories about national humiliation have been largely utilised and constructed as an essential substance of Chinese national identity through social processes of collective remembrance.

The long taught and remembered *guochi* largely focus on the foreign invasions, the unequal treaties, the lost lands and, at large, the unforgettable trauma. Words such as inequality, failure, weakness, pain, fire and tears frequently appear in the official national humiliation narrative, which attempts to tie the fate of the nation with that of the people. It calls on the Chinese people to remember what has happened and to

[49] Some scholars examine the issue of selective remembering/forgetting in Chinese politics. For example, on collective amnesia, Louisa Lim (2014) studies the Chinese amnesia about Tiananmen and terms it as "great forgetting". Orville Schell (2016) examines China's struggle with its past and looks into the problem with its deep historical woundedness. My thesis will later empirically provide insight into the gap in remembering between political memory and social memory.

stay united for a stronger and better nation, which profoundly serves the CCP's interest for political legitimacy. The historical issues used in the CCP's mythmaking include the Nanjing Massacre (also spelt as Nanking), Comfort Women (*weian fu,* 慰安妇), Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, and Yasukuni Shrine, which have been "haunting memories" in today's China-Japan relations. Nationalist claims about the haunting memories in both countries have come to shape their national identities, and thus they may be the wounds that cannot, and should not, be bandaged (Leibold 2008). The one that has been widely mythicized is what happened from December 1937 to January 1938, known as the Nanjing Massacre, during the Second Sino-Japanese War (as addressed in Chapter 3). It constitutes an essential part in China's "historical woundedness" (Schell 2016, 154). The event ensued over six weeks and the death toll, according to the Chinese official estimate, is arguably 300,000[50]. As one site of trauma and suffering during the war, Nanjing has been marked as the monumental space that emblematizes the inhumanity of the Japanese aggression and the sorrow of Chinese victimisation.

Over time, the history about Nanjing has altered in terms of its content and status due to changing social-political contexts and subsequent political subjectivity (Seo 2010). In Yinan He's words, remembering the past is a process of constant reconstruction of historical events in light of present social and political changes rather than a simple act of recording (He 2007, 65). Little was said or written about the Nanjing Massacre for several decades after the event when the biggest enemies of the CCP regime were the Chinese Nationalist Party (also known as KMT) and the United States. Domestically the immediate post-revolutionary political priority was to enhance the CCP regime and promote self-reliance and a sense of national pride; internationally, against the background of the Cold War, the ideological struggle was targeted at class politics and American imperialism instead of the Japanese wartime aggression (Yoshida 2006; Seo 2008). Therefore, the War was only constructed as part of the Chinese struggle against foreign imperialism and domestic chaos, which ended with the CCP-led liberation that rescued the dying nation and changed China's fate.

[50] The "number game" is often manifest in the coverage of Japanese atrocities of the war. There has been endless dispute between China and Japan regarding the figures of the causalities and deaths. While Chinese suffering was de-emphasized and victim-speak was suppressed in Mao's era, it was particularly since Jiang Zemin's administration when all of the figures were raised to maximize the sheer number of victims and highlight Chinese victimhood (see Coble 2007, 2011, 2015; Gao 2015).

Under this official historiography, China was positioned as a victor, and revolutionary heroism was the main theme. Instead of collectivising and commemorating Nanjing, the official trauma narratives were largely constructed under the binary logic of capitalists and proletariats and the CCP's framework of the Communist revolution. This construction represented the Party and the Chinese people as victims and the KMT as perpetrator, and also communicated the Chinese collective trauma through the authorised history of China's encounter with Western modernity (Gao and Alexdander 2012, 593-6). The heroic resistance narratives and victor narratives of the CCP merged in the state constructed myths about the War. Therefore, the Nanjing Massacre was not included, as the domestic struggle for power at that time shaped what was deemed significant and what was not (Friedman 2008, 723). The official narrative made a clear distinction between "a small number of Japanese militarists" and ordinary Japanese people, which supported the CCP's class-based ideology. A public focus on Chinese wartime weakness and Japanese war aggression was not welcomed. Lived memories of the Massacre were largely suppressed and masked so that they were unable to enter the public discourse, resulting in a "virtual absence of public commemoration" (Yang 1999, 858). For example, the research on the Nanking Massacre conducted by historians at Nanjing University in the 1960s was kept classified until 1979 for internal circulation only, because it focused "on a time of weakness and invasion, thereby drawing away from China's revolutionary progress" (Eykholt 2000, 25-6). In addition to suppression, official renouncement of war reparations for Sino-Japanese normalisation in 1972 did not take into account public emotions and concerns about the war and thus sowed seeds for public dissatisfaction and anti-Japanese sentiments.

Only in the mid-1980s were the historical memories put into the limelight due to the change of both international and domestic political atmosphere, including Sino-American normalisation in 1979, Japanese textbook controversy in 1982, together with the redefinition of the CCP itself under Deng Xiaoping's reform and open-up policy (Yoshida 2006, 113; Seo 2010). The politics of memory and history changes along with the change of political subjectivity of self and other. As a response to the Japanese revisionist attempts in whitewashing historical textbooks as well as to the mounting domestic pressure for commemorating the war, the Deng-led Chinese government started to allow war trauma to be crystallised in different representations and adopt a hardline on the history issue. 1985 marked the fortieth anniversary of China's victory

in the Anti-Japanese War, and the Nanjing Massacre Memorial was opened to the public. The name of the memorial building was inscribed in Deng Xiaoping's handwriting. Furthermore, a number of anti-Japanese war museums were opened in different places, including the Memorial Hall of the Victory of the Anti-Japanese War and the Acceptance of the Japanese Surrender in Hunan (1985), the Museum of War Crime Evidence by Japanese Army Unite 731 in Haerbin (1985), the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese War Museum in Beijing (1987), and the 9.18 Historical Museum in Shenyang (1991). These memorials and museums have all been designated as "sites of patriotic education" (爱国主义教育基地)[51] that brought Japanese war atrocities to the centre of national mythmaking and played an important role in the CCP's endeavour in constructing a unified collective memory. Meanwhile, historical publications and productions sprang up, and collective memories became commodified in the Chinese cultural market in forms of monographs, novels, TV productions and movies as alternative institutional carriers of memory.

While the end of the Cold War transformed the fundamental struggle away from ideology ground, the post-Tiananmen era witnessed a massive re-evaluation of war history in China[52]. The nationwide patriotic education campaign was officially started in 1991 and carried out in full scale in 1994. It aimed to highlight the Chinese people's suffering and rally public support for the CCP regime (as addressed in Chapter 2). Memory was symbolically represented in memory sites. In March 1995, the Ministry of Civil Affairs announced 100 memory sites as the national bases for patriotic education. Among them, 40 sites concern external wars and conflicts, half of which are in memory of the War. The Nanjing Massacre Memorial became one such memory site for the purpose of ideological re-education. In Chinese official historiography, there is a detailed description of the Nanjing Massacre, which largely underlines the horrific genocidal crime that Japanese soldiers committed in Nanjing including killing, raping and looting. It is described as "one of the greatest acts of

[51] After the announcement of patriotic education guideline in 1994, the Publicity Department designated a list of the first 100 sites of patriotic education in 1997. These sites primarily constitute three historical education sources – Chinese long history and culture, anti-imperialism and anti-aggression war histories, and Chinese revolution and socialist construction history. Now the number of sites has reached up to 353 after additions in 2001, 2005 and 2009.

[52] In Japan, after the end of cold war and the death of Emperor Hirohito, the 1990s witnessed a rise in interest in and awareness of Japanese wartime atrocities demonstrated in public discussions, intellectual debate, museums and court cases (Yoshida 2006). During that time, history textbooks became more inclusive of Japan's wartime atrocities before a nationwide campaign took place and challenged the negative characterization of Imperial Japan.

violence perpetrated by the Japanese aggressors on the Chinese people". The Chinese official narrative mythicizes the Chinese war experiences and discursively nationalises the memory about one city as the memory about the whole nation. At the same time, in contrast to Germany's treatment of the Holocaust and the awareness of the international community of the Holocaust, the Nanjing Massacre has become minimised (or even denied) by the Japanese side[53] and has rarely been known to an international audience.

After decades of suppression of individual memories and concerns about war trauma, for some people, particularly those having individual and community memories, the official campaign of patriotic education switched to expressing anti-Japanese sentiments. For others, it taught history lessons setting Japan as the significant other to reinforce collective identity and national loyalty. The trauma of the past became an internalised collective consciousness built on shared experience through social processes of institutionalising commemoration both from top-down and bottom-up dimensions. Furthermore, the Chinese diaspora has contributed to bringing global attention to the Massacre on the international front. They made a great effort in finding evidence and doing research on the Chinese history. Among them, Iris Chang is the most well-known - she published *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* in 1997, which was the first major book in English revealing the Nanjing atrocities to an international audience. The memory about the war suffering was brought back to public attention.

Noticeably, in the meantime of the re-emergence of historical remembrance, the media in China has shifted from being the central Party mouthpiece to an institution under both political constraints and commercial incentives (Schneider 2012). The transformation in media contributed to carrying out patriotic education in a more practical and indirect way penetrating people's daily lives (i.e. Red Tourism[54], war movies and TV dramas[55]). For instance, in 2012 alone, Hengdian World Studio (横店

[53] For example, according to Mariko Oi (2013), Japanese barely learn the 20th century history: in Japanese history textbook, there are only 19 pages covering the events between 1931 and 1945 out of the 357 pages, among which only one line about the Nanjing Massacre placed in a footnote. The case of the APA hotel chain, offering books that deny the Nanjing Massacre, in early 2017 also offers a glimpse of the Japanese right-wing denial of the history about Nanjing.

[54] Red Tourism refers to people visiting former revolutionary bases and scenic spots. It is a type of cultural tourism based on heritage sites that glorify and celebrate the nation's communist legacy.

[55] For instance, according to Southern Weekly, more than 20 anti-Japanese war dramas passed the proposal review of the Sate Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) in 2005, the year that

影视城, *hengdian yingshi cheng*), the largest studio for film and TV drama in China (known as Chinese Hollywood), received 150 crews, among whom 48 came to produce material with an anti-Japanese theme, and up to 60 percent of the 300,000 extras employed that year had played the role of "Japanese devils" (Hao 2013). With the ideological space allowed, media production becomes increasingly driven by consumerism in producing sensationalism and pursuing profit. Against this setting, national myths become wrapped up in the garment of patriotic rhetoric (He 2007, 51-64). As a consequence, the last decade has seen a burgeoning cultural market for anti-Japanese themed productions[56]. In this scenario, technology facilitates the dissemination of these products and diffusion of sensationalism, reshaping the mythscape about Nanjing. The next section will address the impact of the Internet on the remembrance of national humiliation.

5.1.2 The Nanjing Massacre Commemoration Goes Online

While traditional media contributes to the portrayal of Chinese war trauma primarily for official propaganda and market consumerism, new media expand the channel to include digital devices and formats to reach a wider audience, a majority of whom are essentially young and middle-aged people that have no individual war memories. On the official front, the museums and memorials mentioned previously have all set up their websites and launched online events to appeal to Internet users. For example,

- In July 2014, the Nanjing Massacre Memorial together with Xinhua set up a specific website dedicated to the online memorial, named *guojia gongji wang*[57] (国家公祭网 The National Memorial Online). It publicises commemoration events and activities in addition to news reports produced by state news agencies. Visitors can take part in commemoration activities

saw massive anti-Japanese demonstrations across China over the textbook controversy and the proposal for Japan's membership in the UN Security Council. The number reached up to 70 in 2012 when another series of nationwide anti-Japanese demonstration emerged due to Diaoyu/Senkaku Island dispute.

[56] It can be argued that the prosperity of anti-Japanese movies and drama to some extent reflects the limits the central censorship placed on the creation of other genres. Yet, it is also true that those popular productions have worked under the State's publicity agenda and contributed to arousing Chinese victim consciousness and highlighting Japanese war brutality through the act of production and consumption.

57 The National Memorial Online is dedicated to "the national commemoration of compatriots and war victims, remembrance of the Chinese history of humiliation and resistance, and demonstration of people's will for revival and peace". It was set up by the Memorial Hall of Nanjing Massacre together with *Xinhua* in July 2014. Up to 12 November 2015, 9,253,870 visitors have expressed their deep condolences to the victims via the website. It has seven main columns – memorial news reports, oversea memorial activities, online memorial, memorial forum, historical knowledge, online historical documents.

virtually (i.e. to light candles, present flowers, plant trees and ring bells).

- In August 2015, Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Museum launched applications on Apple and Android allowing users to access the museum's website via their smart phones.
- In January 2016, an online exhibition of patriotic education sites (爱国主义教育基地网上展馆), shown in Figure 5.1, was launched jointly by the Publicity Department and China Network Television (CNTV) showing panoramic information about the sites across the country.

With the help of audio and video effect, these digitised historical memories tell the myth of national humiliation to the public more strikingly and extend the official propaganda antenna to Chinese people via a variety of digital platforms.

Figure 5.1 Screenshot of the webpage of online exhibition of patriotic education sites at zuguo.cntv.cn



On the market sphere, the Internet is also used as the new channel for broadcasting and framing perspectives to understanding war history. It is consumed in digital forms of novels, movies, video games and TV dramas. For instance, the 32-episode documentary series named My Anti-Japanese War (我的抗战, *wode kangzhan*) produced by Cui Yongyuan (a famous former CCTV host) was the first broadcast exclusively on sohu.com in August 2010, three months before its broadcasting on television. The anti-Japanese products find alternative channels on the Internet and often enjoy great publicity and influence among the audience. In Youku video hosting website, the 2007 award-winning TV drama *Drawing Sword* (亮剑 *liangjian*) had up to

530 million hits since its release on Youku in September 2014. Along with the China-Japan tension in the recent decade, there has been a dramatic increase in the supply of anti-Japanese productions in the media market, in particular, TV dramas, many of which are termed by netizens as 抗日雷剧 (*kangri leiju*) or 抗日神剧 (*kangri shenju*)[58]. The selling point of these productions always lies in the binary of heroic Chinese and evil Japanese. Anti-Japanese war theme becomes a huge market for attention and profit.

Similarly, the online game industry also reveals the interaction between political instrumentalism and market consumerism with technological advancement. It can be exemplified in the Chinese-developed Resistance War online games that highlighted "the interplay of the state's political agenda, business interests, and nationalistic sentiments" (Nie 2013, 499). As such, daily entertainment channels, such as online shows and games, become practical space for attention, profit as well as patriotic education. The realm of China-Japan historical issues became heavily commercialised and over-consumed under the banner of patriotism.

In addition to promoting official propaganda and market consumerism through daily entertainment, more importantly, new media offers opportunities for the public to make a response and generate their own contents with their digital practices. Put it in another way, not only is the public the state propaganda audience and consumers but also participants in the process of history discussion and construction through online activities. They can pay tribute in the online memorial, post comments under news reports, form groups on a particular historical issue, express opinions in blogs, and Twitter in Weibo. While people used to be limited to physical attendance in commemorative events, they now can participate virtually. There have been more than 15 million participants paying tributes to the victims in the online memorial of the Nanjing Massacre since its opening in July 2014.

Noticeably, the level of online participation varies in different websites. On the

[58] For the pursuit of sensationalism among audience, some of the serials are simply obsessed with the "killing *guizi*" mentality and saturated with comedic and ludicrous content, termed by netizens as which literally means thunderous anti-Japan serials or super anti-Japan serials. A recent instance of so-called *leiju* or *shenju* under heated online discussion is 抗日奇侠 (The Anti-Japanese Knight), in which plots a violent scene that a Chinese martial arts expert strikes a Japanese soldier with his fist and then tears the soldier in half with his supernatural power.

official museum and memorial websites, netizen participation can only be traced from the number of visitors and short messages such as "never forget humiliation" that echo with the official propaganda. Nonetheless, a different picture unfolds on commercial websites. A considerable number of thematic discussion on the Nanjing Massacre and historical issues can be found in the comments section in news portal sites (e.g. Sina and NetEase), discussion columns on history and China-Japan relations in BBS (e.g. strong state forum and Tianya Forum), and social networks (e.g. Renren, Zhihu, Weibo). For instance, one Sina news report on the UNESCO enlisting event alone invited 1,284 comments with 37,786 participants in the commentary. One commentary in Tencent history column (Volume 283 in Tencent History Review 2014) introduces the varying official stances in treating the Nanjing Massacre in historical memory. It invites 54,474 people participating in the online survey which asks whether they know about the change in the official treatment of the history[59] (in which 59% state they do not know). Such online discussions and interactions produce alternative paths of constructing historical memories as a response to official mythmaking and market production. With their digital forms of participation, Internet users become another force in commemorating the Nanjing Massacre and contributing to national humiliation mythmaking.

The preceding historical overview reveals that the significance of the Nanjing Massacre has been constructed in the changing social-political contexts, largely dominated by the official narratives, and today technology enables the public to be a participatory force in negotiating the memories about the past suffering. Notably, mythmaking involves political motivation and memory contestation in the changing contexts. The following section will explore the case study of the Nanjing Massacre commemoration in a series of commemoration events to gain an insight into the discursive construction of national humiliation. As shown in Figure 5.2, the events include 1) the Memorial Day ratification, 2) the first National Memorial Day, and 3) the UNESCO inscription event.

Figure 5.2 Timeline of the events under study[60]

[59] See Tencent History (2014) How Japanese historians view the Nanjing Massacre. 15 December 2014. Available at http://view.news.qq.com/original/legacyintouch/d283.html

[60] It should be acknowledged that the series of events do not include the subsequent two memorial days (i.e. 2015 and 2016), as the sequence of the events selected for the case study is particularly based on its significance for national commemoration of the war as well as the timeline.



My preliminary research discovers that the first two events essentially concern the top-down construction of the mythscape about Nanjing, whereas the third event is of an international nature and largely incites self and other identification. Accordingly, my analysis the first two events focus on the official discursive construction and performance of online commemoration, which also serves as the essential context for the third event. Regarding the third one, I focus on the discursive strategies and linguistic patterns employed in both the official discourse and the popular discourse in setting the boundaries between ingroup and outgroup.

5.2 Online Commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre

5.2.1 The Official Ratification of the National Memorial Day: Remembrance in the Name of the Nation

In February 2014, two new anti-Japanese national days – 13 December as the National Memorial Day for the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre and 3 September as the Victory Day of the Chinese people's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression - were officially ratified and added to the Chinese calendar, which is already dotted with days of commemoration of Chinese history and culture. These two national days were ratified for national remembrance of the history 69 years after the end of WWII. The official announcement followed the notably growing Beijing-Tokyo political strain largely due to the territorial dispute over Diaoyu/Senkaku Island and Japan's Prime Minister Abe's visit to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine.

While the world is largely suspicious of the purpose of the national remembrance 69 years after the end of WWII, the Chinese state mouthpiece Xinhua makes the claim that the purpose lies not only in "domestic reflection" (国内启示 *guonei qishi*) but also in "international significance" (世界意义, *shijie yiyi)* (Xinhuanet 2014b). Some put it clearly that the domestic meaning of the decision is to re-educate Chinese people, especially the young generation (see for example Hou 2014). A CCTV online report shows that most of the random interviewees, when asked for the dates of the start of the Nanjing Massacre and of the Victory Day, seem to be rather unsure. It suggests to the audience the necessity of setting up national memorial events to

"bring history back to people's memory". Luo Yuan, the former deputy head of the Academy of Military Science of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), remarked that to remember history is to stimulate people to be more patriotic and arouse their consciousness of worrying about the nation (忧患意识, *youhuan yishi*) (Ifeng 2014). Given the domestic need for patriotic re-education, the Nanjing Massacre is conveniently used as a poignant symbol of the traumatic war experience of Chinese people. According to He Jianmin, the deputy director of Chinese Writers Association and author of *A Record of the Nanjing Massacre*, the national Memorial Day is a new symbol to "nourish national consciousness and strengthen national belief" through subliminal (潜移默化, *qianyimohua*) socialisation of national commemoration of the war trauma (NMO 2014).

Notably, the official ratification is part of the ongoing patriotic education, as announced in the official report it aims to "promote Chinese national spirit centred on *patriotism* and stimulate all ethnic groups to strive for the *Chinese Dream* of national rejuvenation". People's Daily commentary also makes it clear that to set up a national memorial day is to reinforce national memory, strengthen Chinese shared belief in the never-forget-national-humiliation and rejuvenate the Chinese nation (People's Daily 2014). In the official discourse, the Memorial Day is expected to contribute to setting the link between the national past and the vision for national rejuvenation, which concerns the concept of Chinese Dream, the most frequently mentioned term since Xi Jinping came into office.

In addition to domestic patriotic education, international influence is another important consideration in the official ratification. The official report claims that the Two Days are significant on the international stage because it will "keep awake the historical memory of the humanity and avoid it being numb or blank, even if it is just for a single second". The numbness and blankness of historical memory here literally points to the ongoing attempts of Japan's right wing's denial of the Nanjing Massacre and whitewash of war crimes. Arguably, the official ratification of the Two Days is taken by the government as a counterweight move against the Japanese in the battle over history.

Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, claims that it is

meaningful to remember the significance of the war against Japanese aggression and its contribution to the World Anti-Fascist War. Reference is often made to internationally recognised memorial days, for instance, 27 January in remembrance of Auschwitz Holocaust in Poland (set by UNESCO as International Holocaust Remembrance Day in November 2005), and 7 December memorising the Pearl Harbour incident in the United States. The reference suggests that Chinese traumatic war experience deserves international recognition too. By remembering it in a similar way that the Holocaust is memorialised in the West highlights the Chinese war experience as an indispensable part of the shared experience of resistance against fascism. This can arouse shared memories of WWII among the international community and help position China as "a cooperative rather than confrontational actor in world politics" (Ritter 2013, 384). It is claimed that in comparison to other international commemoration activities, China's national commemoration has come "a bit late" (even though reasons for being late were not mentioned). It can be argued that making Nanjing a heritage to remember at the national level is the necessary step toward making it a global one for recognition and influence.

To come up with an appropriate name, it even took the committee quite a few days. The official name of the memorial hall in Nanjing is "the Memorial Hall of the Compatriot Victims (遇难同胞, *yunan tongbao*) in the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders". However, it is regarded as inappropriate to name the Memorial Day as that of the Compatriot Victims. For one, the word, 同胞 (compatriot) is regarded as not appropriate for the *international* commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre. For another, linguistic varieties in the Chinese language need to be considered. In this case, 死难者 (*sinan zhe*), 遇难者 (*yunan zhe*), 受难者 (*shounan zhe*), and 殉难者 (*xunnan zhe*) can all be translated as victims in English; yet they have different connotations in the Chinese language. The committee finally reached agreement on naming the day as 南京大屠杀死难者公祭日 (the Memorial Day for the Nanjing Massacre Victims). The word "死难者", according to the curator of the museum Zhu Chengshan, was chosen because the meaning it conveys is "more accurate historically and legally". The effort made into naming the Memorial Day displays the level of attention the Chinese government pays to the commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre in the name of a nation.

The official rhetoric has repeatedly highlighted that the ratification is "not to cling to hatred, but to uphold *peace and justice* and to avoid the repetition of wartime miseries" (italics for emphasis). Nonetheless, some moves along with the official ratification make its claim questionable. For example, to resonate with the official upgrading of war commemoration, people.com.cn, the news website of the state mouthpiece People's Daily, launched an online game called Shoot the Devils (打鬼子, *daguizi*) in the same month (one month after its first online game Beat Corrupt Officials promoted for the Party's anti-corruption campaign). In this online game, players can choose to shoot one of the 14 convicted Class A war criminals who are honoured at the Yasukuni Shrine (see Figure 5.3). An advertisement goes with the game, "Someone *visits* the devils; let me *shoot* the devils" (有人拜鬼, 我来打鬼). It makes a clear discursive reference to Prime Minister Abe's visits to Yasukuni in reality and encourages Chinese people to shoot those "devils" in a virtual game. Anyone visiting the page can play the shooting game and then share their scores via social networks such as *Renmin weibo* and *Sina weibo*. This online game demonstrates the interactions between new technologies and nationalism in the age of digital communication. Nie (2013) has rightly argued that online game technology has been integrated into the government propaganda domain within the framework of a commercialised cultural industry. Such online games can be part of the "indoctritainment" – indoctrination and entertainment packaged together in online games (Sun 2002) – that may instil in people anti-Japanese sentiment with the help of gaming technology.

Figure 5.3 Screenshot of Shoot the Devils Game



Meanwhile, relevant government agencies started to carry out concrete steps to follow the government decision to make the historical memory national and publicise commemoration with the help of new information and communications technology. A variety of discursive activities have been carried out by different state agencies to support the official discourse of national commemoration. Chinese state media Xinhuanet and the Memorial Hall of the Nanjing Massacre Victims jointly built the National Memorial website, which was officially launched on 6 July 2014, one day before the 77th anniversary of July 7th Incident[61] (known as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in English). The opening of the website was claimed to signal the start of related commemoration activities. It is available in seven languages - Chinese, English, Japanese, Russian, French, German, and Korean - and it works interactively with other links, including Weibo, Weixin, and QQ. In the online memorial, Internet users can participate in commemoration activities, pay tribute to the victims and interact without personally visiting the Memorial Hall. It is notable that the virtual presence in the commemoration activities has the imaginative element that strengths Chinese identification and positions Japanese as the significant other.

Furthermore, confessions and testimonies are officially published online for the first time. Starting from 3 July 2014, the State Archives Administration (SAA) made public on its official website the scanned confessions of 45 Japanese war criminals (one posted online per day), which are used as the evidence of the war crimes Japanese militarists have conducted during the war (SAA 2014)[62]. It is claimed that these confessions are published in scanned versions so as to show them in their original state, written and signed by the criminals (Xinhuanet 2014c). The Memorial Hall website and the National Memorial website also published oral testimonies of 100 survivors of the Nanjing Massacre, starting from 17 September 2014, one day prior to the 83rd anniversary of September 18th Incident[63] (known as Mukden Incident in English). By making relevant information accessible on the Internet and in different

[61] July 7th Incident was the conflict between Chinese troops and Japanese troops on the Lugouqiao Bridge near Beijing (then Beiping) in 1937. It developed into the all-out war of Chinese against Japanese aggression, forming the Pacific front of the Second World War.

[62] The 45 published written confessions can be found at http://www.saac.gov.cn/zt/zfbg/index.htm . Each provides the photo of the war criminal and the original text of the written confession together with English translation.

[63] September 18th Incident was the pretext of Japanese staged invasion of northeastern China, known as Manchuria, in 1931. The Kuomingdang government adopted a non-resistance policy. The incident marked the beginning of Chinese people's suffering under Japanese aggression.

languages, the government shapes the mythscape of the Nanjing Massacre commemoration under its own framework and makes claims to the public for the necessity and integrity to commemorate the war suffering at the national level.

A review of these websites shows that the state commemoration project has been received favourably among Internet users, manifest in the large number of visitors paying tribute online and their supportive comments. It can be inferred that the major reason is that the issue is largely of a domestic nature and involves collective memory and *holiday*[64] (no matter what it is for, it is a holiday in the calendar). Meanwhile, when people are supportive of the government ratification, different rhetoric can be found. One noticeable strand is that the holiday is regarded as too late, as "it means more than 1000 anti-Japanese TV dramas". One netizen asked, "On the memorial day, how would you feel looking at the gravestone without names"? Questions as such highlight the lack of respect for individual lives lost in the war and lack of understanding of humanity. According to Sun Yunlong, the director of Shenzhen Longyue Charity Fund, the national memorial day was proposed a long time ago, but it was due to the official unwillingness to face up to "historical truth" that the proposal was not accepted earlier. The "lateness" of such a decision points to the previous deficiency of government attention on the war memories.

It can be seen from the ratification case that the Chinese government utilises online technology in facilitating its memorial nation-building project and building the virtual space for national imagination and identification. On the one hand, the consensus on the Two Days ratification displays netizens' support, and on the other netizens indirectly criticises the government by pointing to the necessity of putting aside Party politics and respecting humanity in remembering national humiliation (which is also echoed in the case of commemorating victory in the next chapter). It highlights the gap between political memory and social memory in the commemoration of the past. The following section will investigate the event of the first National Memorial Day.

[64] An idea, proposed by congress representative, Zou Jianping, concerns whether one of the Two Days, 3 September, should be set as a public holiday so as to make people more aware of the victory day. Netizens expressed their support. When Year 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of the victory day against Japanese aggression, 3 September was officially announced as a public holiday that people can have one day off. The idea of having an extra holiday can be appealing to citizens.

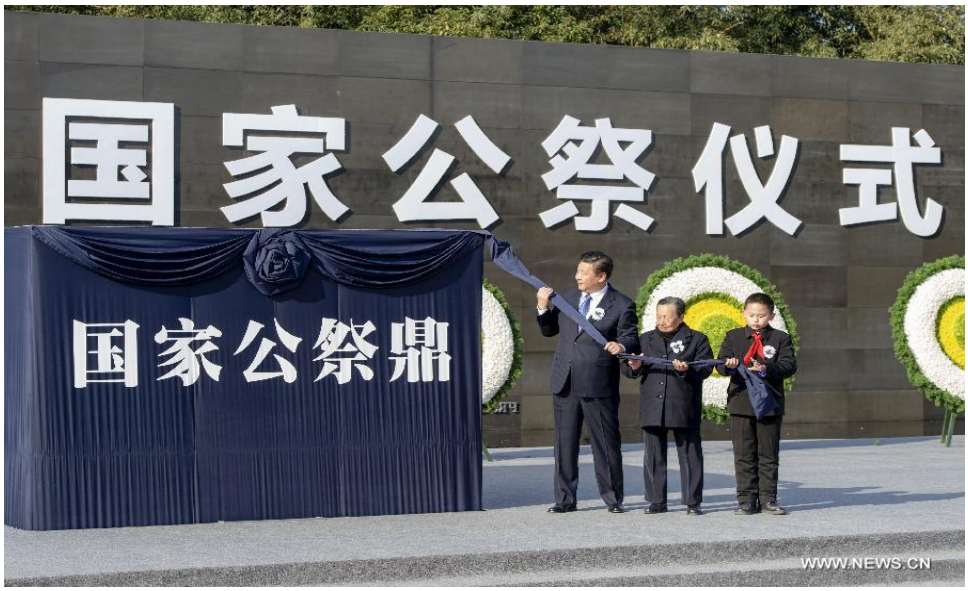
5.2.2 The First National Memorial Day: A Discursive Performance of National Commemoration

When December 13, 2014, marked the first national Memorial Day, a high-profile memorial ritual was held and performed at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall in Nanjing, while commemoration also took place across China and other parts of the world including Hong Kong, Macau, the Philippines, Osaka and Southern California. In the commemoration ritual in Nanjing, a total of 10,000 representatives, including soldiers, students and survivors of the massacre attended the ceremony, alongside President Xi Jinping, singing the Chinese national anthem and paying tribute to the massacre victims. All these performative activities in the ceremony were reported live by CCTV, radios and several key official news websites. A special publicity campaign was targeted at audience online, with the event broadcasted live in words, pictures and videos on major online official news sites including people.cn, china.com.cn, xinhuanet.com and chinadaily.com.cn. Online broadcasting of the event constructs the national commemoration in multi-modal patterns and also enables Internet users to participate in the commemoration ceremony virtually. It extends official propaganda antenna from the traditional broadcasting means to include new media platform. The new information and communications technologies facilitate the CCP's campaign in making it a national commemoration event by extending the event from the physical location of Nanjing to the places nationwide (and even worldwide) and producing a *national* commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre.

For this high-profile commemoration event, it was officially required that all attendees wear appropriate formal clothes, wear neither scarf nor hat, and should not carry mobile phones, bags, and cameras, etc. (The Beijing News, 2014). Such formality and uniformity form an indispensable part of the discursive performance of a national commemoration that appeals to a united nation in remembrance of the past in the mainstream narrative. The selection of the representatives also had symbolic meanings. While the year 2014 marked the 77th anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre, at the ceremony, 77 middle school students read the declaration of peace that calls on "all the peace-loving people to be united in building a peaceful, harmonious and reconciliatory new world". The declaration again expresses the official message that remembering the past is not to incite hatred but to work together toward peace. Massacre survivor Xia Shuqin and a school child (many of whose family members died during the Massacre) joined Xi Jinping on the stage

unveiling a public memorial tripod (see Figure 5.4), which symbolises state power and prosperity and will be kept in front of the Memorial Hall. The representation of survivor and school child standing beside Xi seems to suggest that the past should be remembered especially by young generation and people should stand by the Party striving for China's power and prosperity.

Figure 5.4 Chinese President Xi Jinping, along with Xia Shuqin, an 85-year-old massacre survivor, and a 13-year-old school child, unveiled the "ding", a type of ancient Chinese cauldron symbolising state power and prosperity (Xinhua)



Xi Jinping's presence on the occasion set an unprecedented importance to the first national Memorial Day. In his speech, he mentioned *Chinese people* in collectivity eighteen times appealing to "great patriotism" and historical consciousness of the humiliating national past. Looking back upon the trauma of the Nanjing Massacre, Xi pointed to the contribution of the Chinese people's struggle against Japanese militarism to the world anti-Fascist war and Chinese people's desire for peace (*peace* is mentioned 23 times). Notably, clear boundaries are set between *us-Chinese* and *them-Japanese* militarists, and also between people who love peace and justice and those who deny the Nanjing Massacre. Such discursive lines are clear in the statement, "Anyone who tries to deny the massacre will not be allowed by history, the souls of the 300,000 deceased victims, the 1.3 billion Chinese people, and all the peace-loving people in the world". This conveys a message that you are either with us loving peace or with them denying the massacre and thus being against peace. By the end of the speech, Xi pointed to the "correct path" (正确道路, *zhengque daolu*) to

Chinese national rejuvenation led by the CCP. In conclusion importance is focused on today's China,

> Today, China has become *a great country* with the strong capacity to defend people living in peace. The humiliating past of Chinese race (中华民族, *zhonghua minzu*) being slaughtered and bullied is long gone. Chinese people are striding along the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics and striving for the Two Centenary Goals[65] and *Chinese Dream* of national rejuvenation. The prospects of development for Chinese are very bright.

It discursively links China's past with its future and appeals to the CCP's political legitimacy in developing into a great country and in leading the way to national rejuvenation. The speech pictures a stark contrast between the darkness of old China and the brightness of today's China, which purposefully suggests to the audience the significance of being patriotic and staying loyal to the CCP leadership.

This memorial ceremony was only one of the commemoration practices that were widely disseminated through online platforms. Zhang Lianhong, the director of the Nanjing Massacre research centre of Nanjing University, advocates that the National Memorial Day should not be a vague concept but a remembrance day of united value and strength of individuals, society and the government (The Beijing News 2014). Reinforced patriotic education in the name of national commemoration is manifest in a set of textbooks adopted as required texts by primary and middle schools in Nanjing. It was the first time that particular textbooks on the Nanjing Massacre were included in school education. The textbooks have three editions: the primary school edition - Memory of Blood and Fire, the junior middle school edition - Historical Truth, and the senior middle school edition - Warning and Thinking. The content of these three editions were made available to the general public on the Chinese National Memorial website (cngongji.cn) and the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall's

[65] Two Centenary Goals refer to a set of goals initiated by Xi Jinping following the 18th National Congress in 2012. These two goals have been specified as 1) doubling the 2010 GDP and per capita income of urban and rural residents and finishing the building of a society of initial prosperity in all respects when the CCP celebrates its centenary in 2021 and 2) turning China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious when the PRC marks it centenary in 2049. It is said to be concrete steps toward the realization of Chinese Dream.

official website (nj1937.org). The top-down school education on the War suffering clearly constitutes an important part of the national commemoration, just as symbolised in the presence of a school child representative alongside the President on the stage of the ceremony shown previously.

Among all the high-profile online presence of the event, a special webpage on the Ministry of National Defense (MND) website can also be found as dedicated to the national commemoration. The special page includes news reports, tribute button, and links to relevant websites[66] (MND 2014). It calls on readers to remember history, never forget national humiliation, unit strengths, and strive hard. All these information accessible on the MND webpage tend to attach national commemoration closely to the concept of national security. It is claimed that national commemoration should be regarded as an important part of national security education[67] (see for example Xu 2014). Such websites are claimed to be platforms for public opinions (舆论平台) that help identify "the correct location of history" (Beijing Times 2014). Nonetheless, it is evident that they tend to represent national commemoration from a rather top-down approach which does not afford much space for interaction with the Internet users apart from that demonstrated mainly in the growing number of visitors to those memorial websites.

In contrast, news reports on the event on commercial websites received a wide participation among netizens. The report on Xi's speech in the memorial ritual, in multi-modal discursive patterns including texts, pictures and videos, on Ifeng.com attracted 89,559 participants with 3,247 comments, among which the top five messages enjoyed a total of 45,734 supports among participants (see Table 5.1). A majority of messages are generally supportive of Xi's assertiveness in strengthening national consciousness by reinforcing national commemoration of the past, as demonstrated in the top five comments. The convergence on the issue seems to display a similar discourse pattern in the previous event of official ratification.

[66] The websites include the memorial hall website, the confessions of the Japanese war criminals, the national memorial website, the CNTV documentary on the Nanjing Massacre documents, and the 100 oral testimonies of the Nanjing Massacre survivors. The special page on the National Memorial Day on the website of Ministry of National Defense. Available at http://www.mod.gov.cn/reports/2014012/gongjiri/node_46661.htm

[67] On 1 July 2015, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress passed the National Security Law, declaring April 15 a special day for raising awareness of national security. It is named National Security Education Day.

Table 5.1 The top five comments on the report on Xi's speech on the National Memorial day ceremony at ifeng.com

Content of the messages	IP address	Supports
Man Jiang Hong – Written on the first national Memorial Day	Taiyuan, China	12,930
It is the attitude toward history that influences the Sino-Japanese relations, not the history itself.	China	10,860
Never forget national humiliation, rejuvenate our *zhonghua* (Chinese race)	Beijing	9,341
The government has made a good decision in ratifying the national memorial day. Reflect upon history, fight back Japanese, strength our national defence, and rejuvenate the Chinese nation.	America	7,281
Support President Xi and the CCP! Only Chinese people unite together can we rejuvenate our nation and stop the tragedy happening again.	China	5,322

Undeniably, the comments and support rate can be questionable as it concerns censorship measures, including the Fifty-cent army lurking in all news rooms. Despite that, observations on those comments yield interesting information. For example, one of the top comments originating from America, suggesting long-distance nationalism the netizen holds as a Chinese diaspora. Notably, the message (with 12,930 likes) re-contextualizes the classical poem *Man Jiang Hong* (满江红, The River All Red)[68], which was written by the Song Dynasty Han Chinese military general Yue Fei (1103-1141). It goes,

> 钟山花雨，佳丽地，虎踞龙蟠。多少事，发指堪数，倭寇涂炭。血流古城任横行，狂戮无辜三十万。念同胞，怒气冲霄汉，齐抗战。
>
> 史之痛，从未断；国之殇，永无谖。铁证仍如山，硝烟尽散。举国公祭为和平，浩然正气满人间。复兴路，九州心相连，共向前。
>
> Translation: Zhongshan and Huayu used to be beautiful places, where live lions and tigers. Yet, many things took place, and Japanese came. The old city was bloodshed; 300,000 people slaughtered. For our compatriots, furious Chinese united and fought back as one. The pain of history has

[68] Man Jiang Hong (满江红, The Whole River Red) is the title of a set of Chinese lyrical poems termed as Song Poem. It was written by Yue Fei, a Han Chinese military general of Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). He has been famously regarded as a patriot in Chinese history. He had four Chinese characters 精忠报国 (*jingzhong baoguo*), meaning "serve the country with one's utmost loyalty", tattooed across his back. In face of the invasion of Xiongnu (匈奴), he essentially expressed his patriotic sentiments and inspirations for getting the state back in his poem.

never faded away; the trauma of the nation is never forgotten. Still as solid as a mountain is our evidence, although the war is bygones. For peace our whole nation commemorates; with justice and integrity will the whole world be filled. The entire world shall unite and walk forward hand in hand.

The key idea of this copycat of Yue Fei's poem, in the same line of the government, calls on the Chinese people to keep the war trauma in mind. Netizens who support this message are liable to be impressed by the strong patriotism, similar to the feeling expressed by Yue Fei in his original poem, despite the fact that the historical context of Yue Fei may have made the re-contextualization of *Man Jiang Hong* here problematic[69].

The analysis of the event reveals that collective remembrance is selectively performed and dominantly shaped by the Chinese government. It is largely strengthened by the Internet, and, to a large extent, welcomed and supported by netizens. Following these two events in making the memory national, the Nanjing Massacre documents were submitted to UNESCO in June 2015 and were accepted and inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in October. The next section will examine the UNESCO inscription event, which concerns recognition of the war heritage not only among domestic audience but also in the international community.

5.2.3 The UNESCO Inscription of the Documents: A discursive representation of self and other

5.2.3.1 The official discourse: the righteous vs. the evil

The news that UNESCO inscribed the Nanjing Massacre documents into the World Memory Register, in October 2015, hit the headlines in China and was widely publicised as top news in official websites and commercial websites. The twenty-one articles under analysis published on the National Memorial and the nj1937 website are

[69] The original context of Man Jiang Hong concerns the history about the struggle between Han Chinese and Xiongnu, the so-called barbarians that have later become part of the multi-ethnic state of China. It became debatable whether or not Yue Fei is a national hero as defined by the PRC government. Nationalism expressed in such a Man Jiang Hong-style poem still expresses largely Han nationalism when the poem calls for national unity.

news reports taken from eight sources - primarily state-owned media representing the official line of the social event. They are mainly reportage genre, mixed with other genres such as official statement, press release, television broadcasting, interviews, and discussion. In particular, the recurrent genre of official statements and so-called experts' views clearly dominate the discursive production of the event in these news reports. Also, the mixture of genres is necessarily involved with the process of decontextualization and recontextualization. That is to say, certain discursive elements are taken out of their original contexts and then situated in other contexts. In this process, the original elements can be transformed by addition, deletion or a different sequence of texts. The news reports adopted by the memorial websites were taken out of their media channels and recontextualised with multi-modal discursive types added to the news. By mixing different genres through the process of decontextualization and recontextualization, the online reportage of the event combines various forms of social action and consists of interactions between different discourses and different genres.

Under the macro-topic of the history of the Nanjing Massacre, topics such as memory, justice, humanity, and peace can be extracted from those media texts. Apart from the topic words - the Nanjing Massacre and the Nanjing Massacre documents - some keywords appear frequently in the articles, as shown in Table 5.2[70]. It demonstrates the construction of two important groups of us and them – China and Japan. A clear line is drawn between *us* (China, Chinese, we, Chinese people, all walks of life, experts, victims) and *them* (Japan, the Japanese government, Japan army). The distinction can be clearly exemplified in one report, which says, "As to our human memories, if *the righteous* does not take its proper place, *the evil* will watch for its chance" (人类的记忆, 正义不去占领, 邪恶就会伺机而动). Clearly, *we* are defined as the righteous, and *they* are the evil.

Table 5.2 Frequency of the top five keywords in the news texts

Keywords	**Frequency**
中国/ 中方 (China/Chinese side)	212
日本/日方 (Japan/Japanese side)	135
历史 (history)	128
世界 (the world)	73
记忆 (memory)	60

[70] In order to avoid the intervening effect, the counts of 世界 (world) and 记忆 (memory) do not include its usage in 世界记忆 (world memory) which certainly was of high frequency in the news.

A word list of frequently mentioned social actors in the news reports, shown in Figure 5.5, demonstrates the primary social actors represented in the news are China (China, Chinese side, we, state), Japan, UNESCO, and also (Chinese) experts. To find out who and how certain social actors are represented in the news reports, I paid special attention to quotation patterns, because when direct or indirect quotations make reference to certain actors, the intertextuality of discourse reproduces the event and can reflect power relations involved in the communicative event.

Figure 5.5 The word list of the news reports[71]

Rank	Freq	Word	
1	157	中国	China
2	104	历史	History
3	101	日本	Japan
4	82	联合国教科文组织	UNESCO
5	46	成功	Success
6	45	人类	Humanity
7	33	我们	We/us
8	31	中方	China side
9	27	和平	Peace
10	26	国家	Country/state
11	24	专家	Experts

Table 5.3 summarises the quotation patterns in the news reports under study. It can be seen that extensive referencing is made directly or indirectly to Chinese government officials and experts. Often the MFA spokespersons and government officials and experts are foregrounded (the experts are literally officials too, working for the National Archive or other state institutions). A university professor is once foregrounded, notably as a "group expert and observer" who assists government officials and experts. As the intellectuals now increasingly become the thinktank for the government in China, the foregrounding of these experts sends the official message and shows a top-down approach to producing the event and presenting the issue.

Table 5.3 Quotation patterns of the news reports

[71] It purposefully excludes certain irrelevant words for this category, i.e. the Nanking Massacre documents, date, and "formally" (正式, *zhengshi*).

Actors quoted	Participants quoted in the news on the National Memorial Website	Participants quoted in Sina and qq news
Chinese government officials and experts	- MFA spokesperson Huang Chunying (13); - Nanjing Massacre Institute Curator Zhu Chengshan (11); - The Second Historical Archives of China Deputy director Ma Zhendu (4); - Nanjing History Archive Deputy director Wang Han, - World Memory Project Asia Region Committee Director, China National Archive Deputy Director, Li Minghua (2)	- Xinhua News - CCTV (3)
The UNESCO	- The UNESCO (7) - The UNESCO Chief Officer - The UNESCO China Office Chief Secretary Yue Du - World Memory Project Asia Region Committee Director, Ray Diamond	- The UNESCO (3)
Japanese side	- Japanese MFA (4) - Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yoshihide Suga (2) - Japanese official - Japanese Jiji Press - Japanese government (14) - Japanese media (3) - Japanese government official	- Japanese MFA (6); - Sankei Shimbun (Industrial and Economic Newspaper) (2); - Japanese Jiji Press (2)
International community	- Singapore Lianhe Zaobao (United Morning Newspaper) - English poet	
Chinese people	- Survivor Xia Shuqin (2) - Survivor Yu Changxiang - Correspondent - China Youth News correspondent - Prof. Su Zhiliang from Shanghai Normal University (as expert and observer) (2)	

It is also notable that two massacre survivors are mentioned with the specification of their names in two reports, one of which unfolded the event from the perspective of Xia Shuqin, the first survivor that successfully sued the Japanese government. Here in these two reports, survivors are represented as active and dynamic agents who were "full of emotion" and "dropped tears at hearing the news". Such activation and personification relate the event to lived experience which contributes to adding emotional elements and arousing national sentiments about the national past. In

representing social actors, there are both specific reference and generic reference. On the one hand, these survivors are presented as specific, identifiable individuals, standing for the aggregate of "all walks of life". On the other, the number - "300,000", used in seven of the texts and visualised in four of the photos (see for example Figure 5.6), tends to present victims as generic, collective entities. Both the specific and general reference contribute to visualising the traumatic suffering of the Chinese people during the war.

Figure 5.6 Photo used in news reports on the National Memorial Website



The following analysis looks into the discursive strategies adopted in the categorization of positive-self and negative-other. Essentially, a topoi analysis (as addressed in Chapter 4) is conducted. It is notable that a majority of the reports tend to present the Nanjing Massacre in the form of numbers (shown in Extract 1), black-and-white photos and factual information that draw for the audience a picture in stark detail that personify and intensify the traumatic memories. The texts use words and phrases such as "血腥屠杀" (bloody massacre), "血肉狼藉" (lacerated flesh), and "尸体纵横" (scattered dead bodies) in providing factual information, and in addition, some reports use photos of the present-day Memorial Hall of the Nanjing Massacre, a victim photo wall in particular, and the old photo of the scene of Chinese civilians being beheaded by Japanese soldiers. It is also worth noting that "黑暗", literally meaning black or dark, is frequently used in describing the traumatic history. The colour of black here symbolises a miserable time that no one wants to return to.

Extract 1 in GJ14: “南京审判战犯军事法庭经调查判定，日军集体屠杀有 28 案，屠杀人数有 19 万;零散屠杀有 858 案，死亡人数有 15 万，死亡人数达 30 多万，制造了惨绝人寰的特大惨案。”

Translation: “After an investigation, the Nanjing Military Tribunal concluded the Japanese had committed 28 cases of mass killing of 190,000 people, 858 cases of scattered killing of 150,000 people, and the death toll reaches more than 300,000, which is an extremely brutal massacre.”

It can be seen that *topos of number* and *topos of history* are combined in these texts and photos, focusing on the death toll and horrific killing to present the Massacre to the readers and argue that that is an undeniable part of the history that China should remember and Japan should not deny. The logic is that because it is a concrete historical fact, a specific action – to learn from and remember history - should be performed.

In addition to providing historical information, the texts use *topoi of reference* and *reality* to convey an authoritative, factual voice and to suggest that this brutal massacre has been recognised by both China and the world. Through using words such as 事实(reality), 完整性(completeness), 真实性(trueness), 证据(evidence), 权威性(authenticity), the Nanjing Massacre documents are stamped as the true record of the history. For instance,

Extract 2 in GJ16: “南京大屠杀是第二次世界大战期间日本军国主义犯下的严重罪行，是国际社会公认的历史事实。中方申报材料完全符合世界记忆名录的评审标准、特别是真实性和完整性的标准，申报程序符合教科文组织有关规定，应成为全人类的共同记忆。”

Translation: “The Nanjing Massacre was a horrendous crime committed by Japanese militarism during the Second World War, and it is a historical fact recognised by the international community. The documents submitted to UNESCO were in full compliance with the criteria of the Register of World Memory, their authenticity and integrity in particular, and the application process was in accordance with the relevant provisions of UNESCO. Therefore, the documents should become the collective memory of all mankind.”

Extract 3 in GJ11: “南京大屠杀，已不仅仅是南京人、中国人的悲痛记忆，它更是人类的浩劫、世界的记忆，该历史事件对人类具有普遍警示意义。”

Translation: “The Nanjing Massacre is not only a sad memory for Nanjing and the Chinese people but also a human disaster, a world memory, which is of general warning significance”.

As can be seen from the extracts above, the documents are described as “真实” (true) and “完整” (complete). The discourse implies that the Nanjing Massacre is not only a history that is remembered by the Chinese but also one that is recognized by the international community as a collective memory of all mankind. In addition to the international community, the texts also refer to other countries (such as South Korea, the UK) in order to make Chinese history of the Nanjing Massacre relevant to the world and make “the Chinese memory” a world memory. Reference is also made to Auschwitz Concentration Camp and the Hiroshima Atom Bomb[72] as specific aspects of the Second World War history that the world remembers, thus claiming that the Nanjing Massacre should not be denied and forgotten. When the reference extends from the domestic experts to the international community, the meaning of the documents is thus supposed to hold international significance and deserve international recognition as part of the global heritage.

Topos of responsibility is also clearly deployed in the reports. The claim is that Japan has conducted such a “factual crime” in the history as argued with the topos of reality, and therefore Japan should not deny it. As regards Japan’s attitudes toward the war history and the documents application, collocates such as 强力阻挠 (obstruct), 干预 (interfere), 纠缠 (persecute), 掩盖 (conceal), and 扭曲 (distort) are used to attach a negative image to Japan’s response. These words suggest that Japan is not doing what should be done, and Japan needs to face up to its responsibility.

Furthermore, *topoi of justice, peace, and humanity* are tied together in depicting China as an active defender whereas Japan an offender. For instance, in extract 4 and

[72] According to the UNESCO website, Hiroshima is on the World Heritage list for its Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome).

5, readers receive the message that the successful documents application is a step that China has taken for the sake of history, dignity, peace, future and humanity.

> Extract 4 in GJ6: "据南京市档案局副局长王涵……, 这次申报成功，既是维护史实之举，也是捍卫尊严之举，更是维护和平之举。"
> Translation: "According to Wang Han, the deputy director of the Nanjing Municipal Archive Bureau……, the ultimate goal is to remember history and cherish peace. So the success of its application is a move not only in preserving historical facts and defending dignity but also in maintaining peace."

> Extract 5 in GJ1: "…充分发挥这些文献铭记历史、珍惜和平、共创未来、捍卫人类尊严的积极作用".
> Translation: "…to make full use of these documents to remember history, cherish peace, create the future and to defend the dignity of the humanity".

As demonstrated in the extracts from the reports, topoi of history, reality, reference, responsibility, justice and peace are adopted in official discourse in making the positive-self and negative-other distinction. It is manifest in the categorization between justice and injustice, peace and atrocity, and humanity and brutality. They contribute to constructing the positive identity of China as an active member of the international community, cherishing peace and defending the dignity of the humanity, and meanwhile portraying the negative image of Japan as an irresponsible member, denying history and distorting the truth. With the emphasis drawn on peace, the official discourse highlights its stance of justice and humanity. The next section will look into the online comments and discussion about the event to examine the popular discourse as a response to the top-down construction.

5.2.3.2 The popular discourse: Japanese devils vs. Chinese and traitors vs. patriots

The top news report at Sina under analysis received 37,786 responses, among which 1,284 people expressed their opinions in the commentary. In comparison to the official reports analysed above, lexis used by netizens in the commentary is usually short and informal, and topics are much more diverse, including boycotting Japanese

products, travelling to Japan, the United Nation, the Great Leap Forward, and the Golden Week[73] (黄金周, *huangjin zhou*). Notably, some comments received a considerable amount of attention among other news readers who interacted by either liking or directly responding to the comment. My analysis focuses on two types of interactive comment threads - the threads with most likes, and the ones with most commentary responses.

The top interactive comment threads broadly focus on history/justice, buying Japanese products, travelling to Japan, reflection on national strength, and patriotism. Japan is mentioned in 1716 comment threads (Japanese goods in 278 threads, and travelling to Japan in 211 threads), and 206 threads discuss the meaning of being patriotic (including 91 debating about who traitors are). The topics of higher frequency are those enjoying more discussion among netizens. A review of the word list produced in AntConc (2014)[74] shows that these topics under discussion can be categorised into four target subjects – China, Japan, the UN/the world, and me, and the topics are summarised in Table 5.4. In comparison to the official reports, audience commentary is more agent-based and context-related. As this news event came up immediately after the Golden Week, the national holiday that lasts up to seven days to celebrate the National Day (1 October), a considerable number of comments targeted the issue of people, celebrities, in particular, travelling to Japan or buying Japanese goods.

Table 5.4 Target subjects and topics in the top interactive comment threads

China	Japan	The UN/the World	"Me"
•Never-forget-humiliation/history •Reflection upon history •Buying Japanese products •(Celebrities) Travelling to Japan •The Golden Week	•Condemnation of Japan (history, Yasukuni Shrine, history textbook) •The Japanese government/ Prime Minister	•World recognition •Comfort Women case •The UN's role •Contribution of other actors (oversea Chinese)	•Sentiments (happy, patriotic) •Hatred toward Japan •Family experience (grandparents, son etc.)

[73] The Golden Week is literally translated from Chinese term, *huangjin zhou*, which refers to the national holiday that lasts up to seven days to celebrate the National Day (1 October).
[74] AntConc is a corpus software for concordance and text analysis, developed by Laurence Anthony. Anthony, L. (2014). AntConc (Version 3.4.3) [Computer Software]. Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University. Available from http://www.laurenceanthony.net/

The most frequently mentioned subjects (both in the form of nouns and pronouns) are Japan, you, China, I, we, the world, state and South Korea, as shown in Figure 5.7. Different from the official narrative of exerting an authoritative discourse over the construction of the Nanjing Massacre, netizens tend to engage more with the event expressing their own experience and feelings, and accordingly, they form groups, patriotic ones or traitors in particular, among themselves. It is interesting to note that "I" is represented as the person expressing opinion or giving advice, for instance, I think, I doubt, and I agree, whereas "you" is often used in a debate conversation, with rude manners sometimes, to question others and challenge their opinions with activation and personification. As can be seen in Figure 5.7, apart from China and Japan are the two identified groups, you and I form another group distinctions among netizens. That shows the personal engagement among netizens.

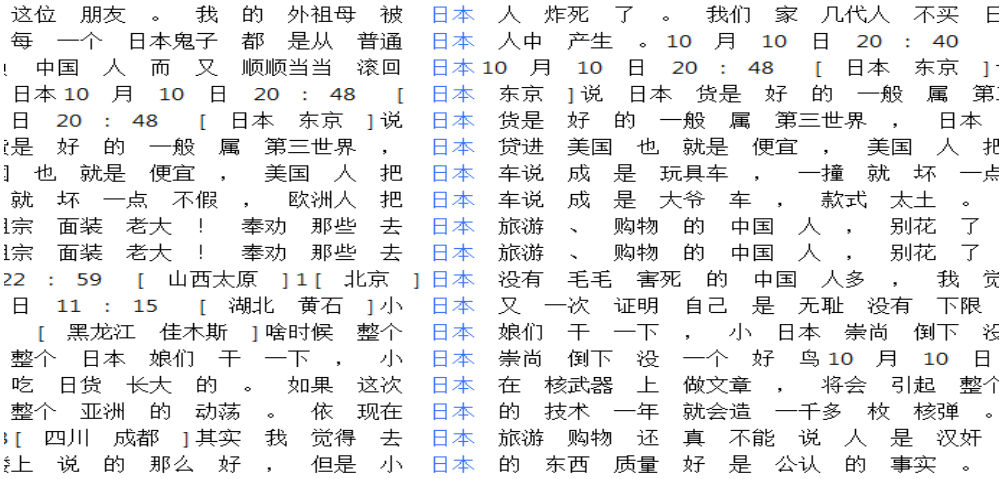
Figure 5.7 Word list of key social actors in the comments



Rank	Freq	Word	
1	1716	日本	Japan
2	1701	你	You
3	653	中国	China
4	536	我	I/me
5	212	世界	World
6	194	国家	Country
7	103	韩国	South Korea

They talk about Japan in rather passive pattern, the concordance results showing Japan is often mentioned in relation to its products, car, travelling, technology, shopping, and economy (see a concordance example in Figure 5.8). When China is mentioned, it refers to the country or the Chinese people with activation, and many comments appeal to the people taking action, not to forget history or not to buy Japanese goods, etc.. It is also notable that the Chinese people (or persons) foregrounded in these comments are those who travel to Japan during the Golden Week, celebrities in particular.

Figure 5.8 Concordance of 日本 (Japan highlighted in the middle) in the comments



In the netizen's comments, the in-group and out-group categorization is made between China and Japan, but at the same time, the identification of self and other seems to be more diverse, including *self*-identity of being patriot and *other*-identity of being traitor. Such identification highlights the context that Chinese nationalists have long appealed to boycotting Japanese products and tourism, and therefore, accusations are very often made toward those, celebrities in particular, who only "pay lip service to patriotism". It should be acknowledged that a particular context is that the UNESCO enlisting took place only a couple of days after the Golden Week (the seven-day national holiday usually between 1 October and 7 October), and therefore many accusations concern people's holiday activities. It can be seen that when discussing the national past, netizens not only accuse Japan of the war crimes in the past but also their fellows of the unpatriotic deeds.

When labelling Japan, some netizens use not only negative predicates but also depersonalising metaphors, which can be mapped out in Table 5.5. Words such as little and contemptible suggest that they hold Japan in contempt. For a culture which highly regards the importance of "face", *buyaolian* (literally meaning faceless) is the most undesirable word describing others. Other words such as sordid, imprudent, dirty and abnormal all refer to the qualities of Japanese due to the war crime which is also inferred to those of today. In addition, metaphors are used in depersonalising their construction of Japan. 日本鬼子 (riben guizi) is a common collocation that people use when referring to Japan, and in this collocation, Japan is the horrific devil. Another expression is beast or birds and beast, which is related to Chinese phrases 禽兽不如 (worse than a beast), and 衣冠禽兽 (a beast in human clothing), describing

awful, horrible, disgraceful manners or deeds. Such animals as dog, pig, and wolf all have negative connotations. By using these predicates and metaphors, netizens define Japan as an out-group that has negative qualities and thus does not deserve respect. In one message, it wrote, "We are humans, and Japanese are animals". In such distinction, topos of definition is used claiming that Japanese carry the negative qualities of the devil, animal, or beast.

Table 5.5 Predicates and metaphors in labelling Japan negatively

Predicates	Metaphors
小(little)/残忍(cruel)/卑鄙(sordid)/无耻(imprudent)/丑恶(ugly)/他妈的(f***ing)/不要脸(shameless)/阴险(insidious)/下贱(contemptible)/龌龊(dirty)/变态(abnormal)	鬼（子）(devil)/野兽(beast)/禽兽(birds and beast)/畜牲(animal)/狗(dog)/猪(pig)/狼(wolf)

In addition to negative attributes, netizens focus on buying Japanese goods and travelling to Japan. It can be found that *topoi of material and economy* refer to the argumentation logic that since Japan is the negative other, we Chinese should not associate with the out-group, thus boycotting Japanese goods and prohibiting travelling to Japan, as demonstrated in Extract 6. Another message with significant support among netizens argues for boycotting Japanese goods by sharing the story of his/her grandma who was killed by Japanese. It says it should be a "living principle" (做人的原则). This lived experience intensifies the sentiment and the interactions among netizens. There is also the argument that Chinese domestic goods are not good enough, and therefore people should not be hijacked in ethical terms. However, compared to those comments for boycotting Japanese goods, the one against it has much lower support – the former has 532 likes while the latter only has 11 likes in the same block of interactive comments.

> Extract 6 in S15: "我是标准的愤青，不管是车子还是家用电器我都不买日本货！上网看网友们说的都是远离日本货，不到日本游，可为什么还有那么多中国人买日本车？难道都是说一套做一套？希望我们中国人团结起来，不买日本货！只要我们不买日本货，日本经济就飞速倒退！勿忘国耻，从我做起！"
>
> Translation: "I am indeed a *fenqing*. Neither Japanese household appliances nor Japanese cars do I buy. On the Internet, I often see friends

talking about boycotting Japanese goods and not travelling to Japan. However, why are there still so many Chinese buying Japanese cars? Are they practising what they preach? I hope Chinese people can unite in boycotting Japanese goods. As long as we do not buy Japanese goods, the Japanese economy will suffer from rapid recession! Do not forget national humiliation. It starts from every one".

Notably, many comments refer to national sentiments and use *topos of patriotism* to make a distinction between patriots and traitors. A message (ID: Sjing) wrote equates the deeds of buying and travelling as unpatriotic,

"他妈的小日本到现在也不承认，那些所谓的球星明星们任然趋之若鹜去日本旅游，口口声声爱国，他们就是这样爱国的吗"
Translation: "F***ing little Japanese do not admit up until now. Those so-called stars still flock to Japan, even though they always say they love China. Is this how they love China in practice?"

The logic is if you love China, you should not buy Japanese goods and travel to Japan. This message has aroused a large number of interactive responses, as this is the phenomenon during the Golden Week. Other messages directly refer those people as 汉奸 (traitors). One says,

"看了一些评论，汉奸还是多，估计他爷爷就是鬼子"
Translation: "After reading some comments, I feel there are many traitors. Maybe their grandpas are Japanese devils".

"汉奸" can be literally translated as Han traitor, which originally means the traitor of Han ethnicity, but now has been used referring to the traitor of Chinese. Through grouping the traitors with the Japanese devils, the netizen expresses his/her nationalism against Japanese and at the same time categorises within Chinese people two groups – the in-group of "有良知的中国人" (Chinese who have a conscience) or patriots and the out-group of traitors. In making such argument, celebrities such as Fan Bingbing and Li Chen are specified as the target of criticism. It demonstrates the multi-layered identification in the popular nationalist discourse.

When addressing history, netizens express the need to remember humiliation and history, which converges with the official discourse, but there is a clear divergence in viewing humiliation and history. *Topoi of humiliation and history* in the commentary seem to suggest that Chinese should reflect upon what had happened and what should be done. One thread (with 572 likes) writes,

> "国人一边说记住耻辱，记住历史。另一边又在买日本车，日本电器，去日本旅游，去日本抢购。我看这才是中国人最大的耻辱。"
> Translation: While saying we will remember history and never forget humiliation, we Chinese buy Japanese cars, Japanese electronic products, travel to Japan, go shopping in Japan, which I think is the real humiliation.

Topos of history is not only used to argue for what crimes Japanese has committed in history and what Chinese people should do now but very notably, it is used to claim for the necessity to reflect upon what our leaders have done wrong in history.

One of such messages aroused the most interactive conversation. It goes,

> "日本没有毛毛害死的中国人多，我觉得三年大饥荒死了几千万人，更应该申请吉尼斯。"
> Translation: "Japanese did not kill more Chinese than Maomao did. I think millions upon millions of people died from the three-year famine. It should apply for the Guinness World Record".

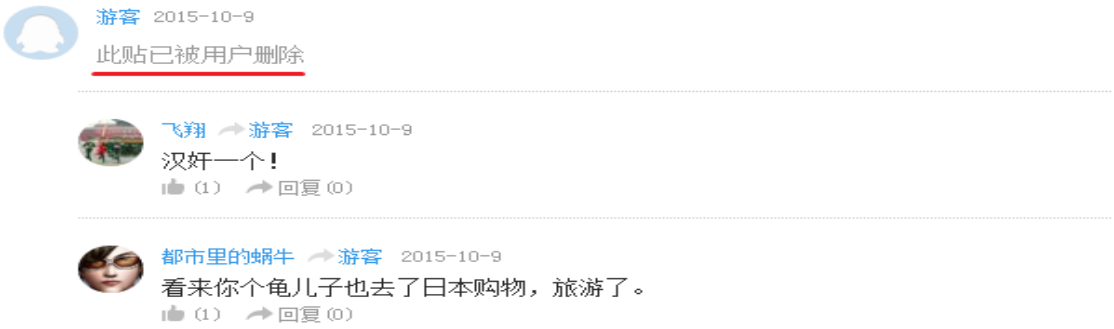
This message has aroused discussion around another national past, the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961). Maomao here refers to Mao Zedong. The word, mao (the surname of Mao Zedong), is duplicated. Usually, the reduplication in the Chinese language, when naming someone, shows a close relationship, for example, one can call his/her friend by doubling the last word of the name. However, clearly the duplication of mao here is not used because of close relationship but to use language creatively to get around censorship. When maomao, a type of naming that is supposed to be about intimacy, is used in the context of famine and death, it has an

element of satire and parody. In this message, an inter-discursive relationship between discourse about the Nanking Massacre and discourse about the Great Leap Forward is set up. It may be assumed that such messages of sensitive nature should have been deleted due to the strict online censorship in China, but instead, it is still visible in a heated discussion, which provides a glimpse of the impossibility of absolute censorship.

Some respondents make the differences between domestic affairs and external ones, which evidently relate to Chinese cultural elements of family and authority. Sgan asked, "Do you understand what domestic affair is? The nature is different from invasion by others!". The distinction between the in-group of Chinese as in one big family and the out-group of Japanese as others is clearly made in this message. Further, Slan made an analogy to in-group and out-group identities, asking "Does it feel the same when your Dad and I slam you on the face?" Slan here uses "I" as the outgroup while "your Dad" as the in-group member, which indicates that Mao should be regarded differently from the other. Apparently, he made reference to father and positions Mao to the position of authority and power. It suggests that it is fine for a father to "slam" on the face, as is regarded as acceptable in Chinese traditional culture, and therefore, people should be more tolerant of Mao's deeds. It can be seen that traditional culture (as addressed in Chapter 5) sets the framework for people's understanding of power and authority.

For some critical posts, censorship may be implied, demonstrated in the example shown in Figure 5.10. Censorship involves both self-censorship and government censorship. The sentence underlined in red in Figure 5.9 says, "This post has been deleted *by the author*" (italics for emphasis). Its following comments read, "You are a traitor", and "You son of b**** must have travelled and shopped in Japan". It can be inferred that this post must be claiming something in favour of Japan, and thus becomes the target of cyberbullying. The tension among netizens over the China-Japan issues provides a glimpse of the cyberbullying phenomenon, which becomes increasingly rampant in recent years. This showcases the abusive use of discourse power among netizens themselves.

Figure 5.9 Example demonstrating deletion of posts



At the same time, there are many other delated posts as such. It is certainly true that there are real cases of self-censorship by deleting their own posts, but more evidently, from the same rhetoric for the deleted posts, it displays the structural dominance in discourse imposed by the government censorship. The discursive format of censorship is purposefully constructed in the same way as self-censorship. This is a discrete way of imposing coercive censorship measures over cyber discourse, which constitutes the imbalanced power relations in cyberspaces between state and society and also among netizens.

While it is claimed that the Internet empowers ordinary netizens, a sense of pointlessness or uselessness is prevalent among them due to the existing imbalance in the wider social structure. For instance, some wrote about the pointlessness in advocating national humiliation on the international stage, claiming that there are unpatriotic Chinese at home such as 汉奸 (traitor) and 贪官 (corrupt officials). Very often, *topos of uselessness* is adopted in making such claims. Extract 7 demonstrates some of the social problems that need to be addressed more urgently than the Nanjing Massacre commemoration – legal system, business competitiveness, and quality of officials and the whole nation. Clearly, discourse about national humiliation is associated with other discourses. The interdiscursivity between discourses here reflect people's concern over the wider social structure.

> Extract 7: "然并卵，只有徒增耻辱。我们更要做好的是当下，怎样提高法制建设，怎样提高民族企业竞争力，怎样提高国民官员素质……没有行动只有口号, 呵呵了。"
>
> Translation: It is nonetheless useless; it only adds to our humiliation. What we need to better now is how to enhance our legal system, how to strengthen the competitiveness of our national enterprises, and how to improve

> qualities of our people and officials…. When there is the only slogan with no action, I can only grin.

"然并卵" (*ranbingluan*) in this comment is one of the hot catchphrases in Chinese cyberspaces. It is part of the evolving Internet culture. The term is literally a condensed version of "然而并没有什么卵用", meaning "it is nonetheless useless".

Other Internet catchphrases include 自干五 (*ziganwu*, 自带干粮的五毛, voluntary fifty-cent army), 草泥马 (*caonima*, grass mud horse), 大麻时代 (*dama shidai*, the era of Daddy Xi and Mama Peng). These new Internet languages emerge out of China's *egao* Internet culture (as addressed in Chapter 2), which enables netizens to resist state censorship. 然并卵 (it is nonetheless useless) here is used to express netizen's dissatisfaction. This comment, 呵呵, meaning grin, also expresses the uselessness. It is very similar to another Internet catchphrase "洗洗睡" (*xixi shui*), meaning "wash up and go to sleep". This widely used phrase implies that we had better not waste our time and energy discussing anymore because our opinions will not make any difference. 呵呵 and 洗洗睡 suggest consequential silence, which also constitutes self-censorship of the Internet users. The uselessness as reflected in such Internet language, to some extent, may reflect the powerlessness of netizens in making effective digital communication and bringing about change. Nonetheless, such creative use of language embodies Internet users' innovative, discursive, digital practices, which are the sources for potential discursive power to challenge the state dominance.

My analysis of the popular discourse has shown that topoi of definition, material and economy, patriotism, history, and uselessness are adopted by netizens in making the distinction not only between China and Japan but also between Chinese patriots and traitors. That is to say, the discourse constitutes both inter-group and intra-group categorization. In reflecting upon historical issues, netizens make reference (often in understatement or pun) to the forgotten history and provide an alternative angle in looking back upon the history, which suggests resistance against the official narrative about remembering (and forgetting). Notably, in the overarching environment of censorship and surveillance, resistance is expressed in the creative use of language including Internet catchphrases and political pun or satire. In addition, expression of

"uselessness" of their opinions reveals their discontent and the issue of deficiency of discursive power in the political environment of China. My analysis of these events will be discussed in the next section.

5.2.4 Comparison and Discussion

This section summarises my analysis and compares the official discourse and the popular one before placing it into the wider social-political context. My research has found that the first two events – the ratification and the first Memorial Day – have received general support among netizens and the official discourse evidently dominates the domain of national commemoration. Both events are of domestic affairs and relate to ingroup commemoration and national identification. Commemoration involves a process of social memory of trauma and humiliation feeding back to the national framework of remembrance. Nonetheless, the third event – the UNESCO enlisting - aroused heated discussion and many divergent discourses emerged in the event. It should be acknowledged that the context – the Golden Week – does impact on the thematic discussion among netizens.

To make a comparison between the official discourse and the popular discourse, Table 5.6 summarises the key topics, social actors, topoi and linguistic realisations in both discourses. It can be seen that they have the same macro-topic of the event, but vary in micro-topics, linguistic means and discursive strategies in the social action and interaction of the event. While the official discourse discursively constructs China as an active member of the international community defending *abstract* concepts such as peace and humanity, the popular discourse tends to cover more diverse topics which are more directed at *concrete* aspects and social problems of the present. The temporal dimension of the discourse is also reflected differently when the past is linked to the present. When referring to the present, the official discourse mainly concerns the attitude of Japanese government toward the history of today. However, time in the popular discourse is presented in diverse forms (e.g. grandparents' time, the Great Leap Forward, and the Golden Week), and the most immediate temporal context, the Golden Week, sets the scene for micro-topics on travelling to and shopping in Japan. Noticeably, the discourse about nationalism is linked with the discourse about consumption in the online discussion among netizens.

Table 5.6 A comparison between official discourse and public discourse

	Official discourse	**Popular discourse**
Topics	The Nanjing Massacre Memory/history Justice/peace Humanity	The Nanjing Massacre Memory/history Patriotism Boycotting Japanese goods Travelling to Japan Social problems
Social actor representation	Chinese officials and experts Massacre victims UNESCO Japanese side International community	Chinese people, celebrities, officials Japanese (devils) The UN Netizens
Topoi	number history and reality reference responsibility justice and peace	definition materials and economy patriotism history and humiliation uselessness
Linguistic realizations	numerical words grammar patterns active verbs formal lexis	metaphors, swearing words questions and exclamations Internet catchphrases understatement, pun

In constructing the mythscape of the Nanjing Massacre in the reportage genre, the official discourse puts Chinese officials and experts at the foreground and uses formal language to report the news, whereas the popular discourse excludes those actors and focuses on Chinese people, particularly celebrities. The purpose of official discourse is not only to inform the public of the event but also to arouse public awareness of history and nationalist sentiment. This is echoed by the public in that some netizens recall grandparents' lived experience. The interaction between discourses of the event is the discursive practice of negotiating the national past and reconstructing group identities. History and memory are used in both discourses in constructing self and other identities, but while the official discourse only looks into the brutal war crime committed by Japanese during the war, netizens use history to touch upon the forgotten parts of collective memories and provide alternative visions of the past. They use informal creative language, sometimes in understatement or pun, to express their opinions on the forgotten history such as the Great Leap Forward.

Topoi analysis shows that the strategies adopted in the official discourse rely heavily on argumentation for peace, justice, reality and humanity, whereas the popular

discourse highlights the materialistic and economic dimensions of the society. In the official discourse, reference is made to other countries or other historical remembrance for legitimising the appeal for international recognition of the Nanjing Massacre; however, when the popular discourse addresses other histories, it questions those having been erased or forgotten. There is clearly an issue concerning selective remembering and forgetting. Also, while the official discourse constructs the discursive environment of blaming Japan and appealing to justice and humanity, it can be found in the popular discourse the dialectical relationship with the official line in making the similar claim, but notably with more intensification of personal opinions and sentiments (for example Extract 6). Such personal attachment and nationalist sentiments are largely the consequences of dual phenomena of political context - the void of war reparation and remembrance prior to 1980s on the one hand and the massive patriotic education campaign since 1990s on the other.

Situated in the wider political environment, nationalist appeal in China is a realm of both compliance and divergence. Netizens not only target at Japan as the negative other but also look at present social problems within China and blame their Chinese fellows for their traitor-like deeds. The interactivity among netizens forms the discursive power in adding perspectives to the official version of framing the event and constructing the national past. While new technology extends government propaganda antenna and censorship become tools for the government to exert discursive power in cyberspace, netizens use creative language to express their divergent opinions in new discourse formats. In the face of the dominance of the official discourse, netizens make use of linguistic innovation and historical reference in gaining the discursive power to produce new political discourse in the age of social transformation. The tightened Internet control in recent years may spur more creativity in language use among Internet users in the discursive reproduction of the social reality.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has examined a series of events of the Nanjing Massacre commemoration on the Internet as a case study of the discursive construction of national humiliation. It shows that remembrance of the past concerns recognition of selected historical events, both domestically and internationally. Starting with a historical analysis of its changing importance in Chinese official historiography and

commemoration in the digital age, it illustrates that remembrance about the national past is not static but socially constructed in the changing of social-political environment. After that, the discursive construction of a national memorial day in the name of the nation is examined in the official ratification event, and the discursive performance of the ceremony is decoded in the analysis of the first national Memorial Day. While the official ratification was the first step toward making the Nanjing Massacre commemoration national by claiming for its domestic reflection and international significance, the first Memorial Day performed to the nation the unprecedented high profile of the commemoration activities. The commemoration was largely set under the framework of the state narratives. It was achieved by wide coverage of the discursive performance of the ceremony, which was presented online in multimodal discursive patterns – combination of language (written and verbal), photos, videos, and interactive features. It illuminates that technology facilitates the government's dissemination of its official discourse about national humiliation.

Following that, a detailed analysis was conducted for the event of the UNESCO inscription of the Nanjing Massacre documents. Analysis of the data was focused on the discursive construction of positive-self and negative-other representation through topoi analysis. My research finds that while the official discourse discursively constructs China as an active member of the international community defending abstract concepts such as peace and humanity, the popular discourse tends to cover a range of diverse topics, which are more directed at concrete economic issues and social problems of the present. In addition to inter-group distinction, intra-group categorization is found in popular discourse. Furthermore, alternative versions of the national past are raised in popular discourse that questions the official discursive construction of national humiliation. By shedding light on the alternative visioning of the past and arguing for the problems of the present, netizens reproduce collective memories and interpret the present with reference to the past. Due to the dominance of the official discourse, language is used in new ways for public expression and discursive resistance in the meaning-making process of being Chinese today. The mythscape is (re)constructed in the changing state-society dynamics and constitutes a process of (re)interpreting history and negotiating identity in the digital age. The following chapter will examine the case of the Victory Day events to examine discourse about national pride and to make a comparison.

Chapter 6 The Discursive (Re)Construction of National Pride

As the state is usually invisible, it needs symbolic resources for representation and identification. As Walzer (1967, 194) puts it, the state must "be personified before it can be seen, symbolised before it can be loved, imagined before it can be conceived." Symbols such as national flags and national anthems become essential in producing banal nationalism and constructing national identities as "a form of life which is daily lived in a world of nation-states" (Billig 1995, 78). National symbols and ceremonies can visualise the nation and set up the essential frame for the "imagined community" (Anderson 1991), reminding people of why they belong together. Importantly, just as Smith (1991, 78) claims, they can assure the continuity of an abstract community of history, destiny and identity. While national identity is flagged daily through national symbols and linguistic habits as Billig (1995) has argued, national day rituals provide a profound stage on which symbolism is intensively activated in more effective ways. They afford the opportunities for visually realising symbolic attachment to the nation and thus strengthening emotional attachment to the nation-state. National military parades, among other national day celebrations, constitute useful symbolic resources for nation-building projects.

When September 3, 2015, marked the first national Victory Day in China, the world saw an unprecedented military parade celebrating the 70th anniversary of Victory of Chinese People's Resistance against Japanese Aggression and World Anti-Fascist War. It was the first time in China that a spectacular military parade was held for celebration and commemoration on a day that is not the National Day (1st October) after the Victory Day was officially ratified in early 2014. The national celebration of identity and pride represented in the grand military parade marked the defeat of Japan in World War II and commemorated the Chinese contribution to the Asia-Pacific war front. The national past of victory over Japanese aggression was staged in the military parade to highlight the contribution China has made toward the defeat of the World Anti-Fascist War and meanwhile display the military might of today's China in striding toward "the rejuvenation of Chinese nation".

War commemoration by means of military parade is an effective means by which nationalist sentiments can be aroused and national mythscape constructed. The study of a specific event of war commemoration can help us understand national pride narratives as well as the discursive power in the myth production and reception process. This chapter takes the event of the Victory Day parade as a case study and looks into how the national past of victory and pride is discursively performed by the Chinese government and how this is received and interpreted by netizens. The first section offers a historical analysis of military parades and addresses the constructed national mythscape of Chinese victory over Japanese aggression. It then investigates the use of media, from traditional media to new media, in campaigning national day celebrations, and how national myths of pride and victory are orchestrated and performed on the stage of national day parades. The second section focuses on the case study of the 2015 Victory Day parade. It analyses the discursive performance and strategies that Xi's government adopted in setting the discursive link between pride and victory with the CCP's leadership, from which the concept of the officially constructed nation-state is closely examined. After that, it probes into online discussions about the victory parade and investigates nationalist expressions to examine the digital, discursive practices through which netizens receive the state mythscape-framing project and reconstruct it. The third section brings the discourse about national humiliation and that of national pride together and makes a comparison between the two. It finally concludes with the findings.

6.1 Historical Overview of National Day Parades

6.1.1 National days and national pride – Parading China at Tiananmen Square

Very often, National Day, the symbolic birthday of a nation, represents the most important manifestation of national identity building moments that a nation holds celebrating its past events and achievements. Ultimately, it provides the cognitive and emotional foundation upon which national pride is built, and state legitimacy rests. National day celebrations bring together symbolic resources, such as flags, military landscapes and slogans, and commemorative meanings, such as the celebration of independence, and commemoration of national heroes, that fuse various temporal and spatial scales (Passi 2016). National day rituals visually represent the nation-state and the relationships underlying it, making visible the imagined unity of the nation in the procession of the military and civilian parade

(Kuever 2012, 7).

The spectacular display of troops and armoury in military parades sets up a special setting for the deliberate construction of the nation-state (Rajah 1999). By representing the nation-state in the form of strength and unity, military parades become important political rituals for the ruling party to reach multiple political objectives, both within the domestic sphere and beyond. For Michael Dutton (2010), the parade is not only the site for the spectacular display of collective action, but is also a realm of national enchantment. Nothing is more effective than the military parade in renewing the army's image as the embodiment of national authenticity. It is represented in being a unified entity - orderly, imposing and invincible. By demonstrating to those present how the past has evolved, national day rituals can effectively manage the content of collective memory (Liao and Zhang 2015). A national statement is made about the present status and future visions of the nation to both domestic and international audiences. The parades pertain to symbolic meanings in bringing back the memory of the past, arousing nationalist feelings, and envisioning the future. National commemorative events such as national day and victory day celebrations visualise the nation-state in visible unity and formality, providing important discursive venues for constructing national pride and belonging.

As commemorative devices in *time* and *place* for reinforcing national identity, the national day rituals in China has been staged in a monumental place – Tiananmen Square, since the founding of the People's Republic on 1st October 1949. As Pred (1985) claims, place always involves creation and recreation of space and nature, which is embedded in the reproduction and transformation of society. The place where national day rituals are held has geographical, social and political significance. Lefebvre emphasised the importance of monumental space in particular (1991, 220). He regarded monumental space as a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one, as it offers each member of a society an image of that membership. Also, the place witnesses social transitions and cultural continuity and change. It is a political product (Hershkovitz 1993, 397).

Tiananmen Square (天安门)[75] is a monumental space in China. The name refers to the Gate of Heavenly Peace. With a massive portrait of Mao Zedong hanging on the Tiananmen Gate, it is seen as an iconographic representation of the hegemonic power of the Chinese state. It is a recognised monument that overshadows all other places in signifying political power and social transitions. When Beijing was transformed from an ancient imperial city to a new socialist city, Tiananmen Square was taken as the architectural void at the core of its transformation (Hornsby 2015). The spatial tradition of the sacredness of concentrated power was retained, and meanwhile, space was opened up to the public, and the Forbidden City was relegated to "backyard" status (Hershkovitz 1993, 407). Elites incorporate the symbols of public participation and resistance into the iconography in the spatial layouts of the Square. The Great Hall of the People and the Museum of the Chinese Revolution along its western and eastern perimeters, as well as a memorial to the martyrs of the Chinese revolution, were built to reinforce in spatial terms the regime's socialist cosmology (Lee H. 2011, 400). The Square has become the sacred heart of Beijing and the monumental space for public political life in post-revolutionary China. The particular meaning of this place, on the one hand, lies in the representation of the hegemony of the Chinese state. On the other, it is reflected in the involvement, struggle and dissidence that is highlighted in the 1989 student movement (see for example Hershkovitz 1993).

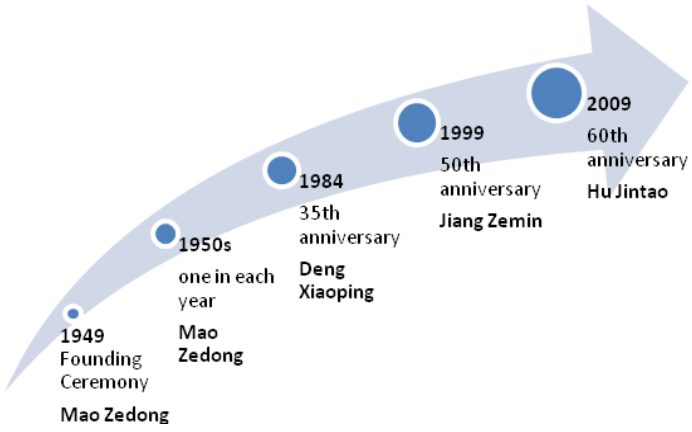
At Tiananmen Square, China has staged 14 major military parades marking its national day, the first one on 1 October 1949 as the grand founding ceremony, followed by ten held in the 1950s, one in 1984 (the 35th anniversary), one in 1999 (the 50th anniversary) and one in 2009 (the 60th anniversary) (as shown in Figure 6.1). The national day parade has been recognised as an important symbolic resource, an increasingly institutionalised outlet for the Chinese government for patriotic education and a grand display of the national image (Xu 2004, 72). According to Hung, the parades, particularly the early ones in Mao's era, have the following major functions:

[75] Tiananmen has been known worldwide primarily because of the student demonstration in June 1989. Nonetheless, it should be noted that many significant events took place in that place before that, for example the May 4 demonstration in 1919 against the Treaty of Versailles, the demonstration on 9 December 1935 which sparked the national resistance against the Japanese invasion. After the founding of the PRC, the square also saw the mass memorial parade for Zhou Enlai on 5 April 1947, the Red Guards mass gathering in August 1966 and the student movement on 4 June 1989.

> they were festivals to highlight the demolition of the old order and to embrace the new socialism; a legitimation of the CCP's authority; a display of myriad achievements under communism; an affirmation of the centrality of the role of Mao Zedong (1893-1976) in modern Chinese revolutionary history; and an announcement of China's presence in the international socialist camp (2007, 413).

In reaching these political objectives, a blueprint for the succeeding CCP's military parades is the Founding Ceremony of the People's Republic of China (开国大典). Since then, the national day celebration and parades have developed into a heritage, symbolically providing a vehicle for ideological promotion and national identification (Gong 2013). For the citizens, the National Day also signals the beginning of a week-long holiday, normally called 黄金周 (the Golden Week), which marks the public celebration of the National Day.

Figure 6.1 National Day parades held since the founding of PRC



On 1 October 1949, atop the Tiananmen Gate proclaimed Chairman Mao Zedong the founding of the People's Republic of China and the instalment of the new Central People's Government, the ceremony being widely known as the Founding Ceremony[76]. March of the Volunteers[77] (义勇军进行曲) was then adopted as the

[76] In many recounting versions of the ceremony, Chairman Mao announced "Chinese people have stood up". However, this famously known sentence was actually uttered in the opening address at the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on 21 September 1949. The recontextualisation of the sentence seems to suggest the political purpose in linking the fate of the people and that of the country more closely and in arousing the people's nationalist sentiments.

interim national anthem (which was recognised as the official national anthem decades later). The founding ceremony marked the beginning of a new China and sent a clear message to the world that China has defeated foreign imperialist aggression and Chinese people have stood up on their own feet. Following the ceremony was a large-scale parade of both soldiers and civilians marching along Chang'an Avenue to the Tiananmen Square, which is the landmark for political expression, collective memory and history. When preparing for the very first military parade of the PRC, Marshal Chen Yi said, "We will display our military prestige to the Chinese people through marching and will let them know that this is the army of the *New* China" (italics for emphasis) (China.org.cn, August 13, 2009). The parade was regarded as a significant symbol representing military prestige and national pride, which thrive from the experience that "the Chinese people finally toppled the three mountains (i.e. imperialism, feudalism and capitalism) and achieved complete liberation under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party". It established a basic framework for Chinese military parades in its procedures and contents in the following decades, during which China has witnessed radical transformation and ideological shift - most profoundly, a transition from revolutionary socialism to market socialism (see appendix for a review of the key statistics and political slogans of the parades).

In the 1950s, annual National Day parades were held at Tiananmen Square, mainly highlighting a nation at arms and with revolutionary spirits to vanguard the working class against capitalists and to pursue an independent and self-reliant development path. The military parades, as well as the civilian parades, were heavily loaded with the ideology of class struggle and revolution, with slogans such as "Oppose the crimes of aggression of the American imperialists", "Liberate Taiwan" and "Support Korea and defend motherland". The 1956 parade in rain and wind was portrayed as

[77] The lyrics were written by Tian Han, and the music composed by Nie Er in 1935, originally for a movie called Children of Troubled Times (风雨儿女). It was adopted as the temporary national anthem in 1949, recognized as the official national anthem in 1982 (after having been forbidden during the Cultural Revolution during which The East is Red was used). It was finally written into the Constitution in 2004. The lyrics were restored in 1982 in the 5th Plenary Session of the 5th National People's Congress, which stated "it reflects the glorious revolutionary tradition of our people, symbolizes the mental preparation for danger in times of peace and the maintenance of constant vigilance, and galvanizes the patriotic passions of our people". The lyrics go, "Arise, ye who refuse to be slaves; With our very flesh and blood, Let us build our new Great Wall! The peoples of China are in the most critical time, Everybody must roar his defiance. Arise! Arise! Arise! Millions of hearts with one mind, Brave the enemy's gunfire, March on! Brave the enemy's gunfire, March on! March on! March on, on". The lyrics clearly bear imprints of China's national past of being bullied and hold national aspirations for the future.

showing the "indomitable and invincible spirit of the People's army". When it came to September 1960, in view of the disastrous Great Leap Forward[78] (1958-1961), the Central Party and the State Council made the decision to celebrate the National Day "with frugality", announcing "there will be small-scale celebration every five years, and large-scale celebrations, including a military parade, only every ten years". This decision has set the timetable for the national day celebrations and military parades in general. However, the ten years spanning from 1966 to 1976 saw a massive socio-political movement in China, widely known as Cultural Revolution. It was an era when China was plunged into a period of the experiment of revolutionary socialism and consequential political and economic setbacks, which have a fundamental impact on Chinese political and social lives. Against the backdrop of the Cultural Revolution, in addition to the Sino-Soviet border conflict, in 1969 (supposedly the 20th anniversary), the military parade was cancelled.

In 1976, following Mao's death and the downfall of the Gang of Four[79] (四人帮), Deng Xiaoping repudiated the Cultural Revolution and came into power. He opened up a new era of reform and market socialism. For the 30th national day anniversary, no major national day celebration was held (except mass entertainments in public parks in Beijing), as the country was still recovering from the Cultural Revolution and the Party was embroiled in an intense political struggle. Having consolidated his position in the Party as the Chairman of the Central Military Commission in 1981, Deng Xiaoping proposed resuming the National Day celebration and put the military parade back on the agenda[80]. Consequently, when 1984 marked the 35th anniversary, a large-scale National Day military parade, which had been suspended since 1960, was staged at Tiananmen. The objective was to demonstrate Deng's commitment to economic reform and to boost national prestige against the backdrop of Sino-British negotiations over Hong Kong. The slogans on display

[78] The Great Leap Forward was a social and economic campaign led by the CCP from 1958 to 1961. The initial purpose of the movement was to transform the country from an agrarian economy into a socialist society through mandatory agricultural collectivization and state planned industrialization. It has led into economic regression and the disastrous Great Famine that resulted in tens of millions of deaths.

[79] The Gang of Four was a powerful political fraction within the Chinese Communist Party that dominated the Party in the later years of the Cultural Revolution. The members are Jiang Qing (Mao's wife), Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen. They had a huge impact on the CR events and aftermaths.

[80] Right after Deng became the Chairman of the Central Military Commission, a military parade was staged in Zhangjiakou (a northern city close to Beijing) in September 1981. This parade was regarded as a prelude to the national day parade three years after.

included “Thanks for your hard work” and political slogans, for example, “Salute comrades” and “Science and technology are productive forces”, reflecting a shift in political ideology away from Mao’s revolutionary socialism.

While China experienced its rapid political and economic changes in the 1980s, grievances accumulated, particularly among students, over issues such as political corruption, government accountability, and democracy, which led up to the massive student movement at Tiananmen Square in June 1989. Therefore, when the 40th anniversary fell on 1 October 1989, only a few months after the Tiananmen protests, the parade plan was suspended. No military or civilian parade was held until the 50th National Day in 1999.

Since the national day celebration in 1999 fell at the turn of the 21st century, the parade was regarded as China’s trans-century parade. That was the era when China experienced substantial economic growth and witnessed the return of Hong Kong and Macau. These events were used to celebrate China’s national pride and national sovereignty. The parade was a demonstration to the world of what China has achieved in the last half century: military strength, social stability, racial harmony, determination to reunify the country, and, most importantly, “face engineering”. Zhu Rongji, then Premier, spoke at a reception on the eve of the 50th anniversary, stating that the enormous achievements over the past 50 years derive from “the great, glorious, and correct Chinese Communist Party”, and “the hard-working, brave, and talented people of China” and “the superior socialist system” (Xinhua 1999). In the Party’s rhetoric, the CCP’s leadership was legitimised by the rapid economic developments that China has achieved over the past 50 years. Slogans at the display included “Raise high the great banner of Deng Xiaoping Theory and advance in the new century”, and “Open door and reform, science and education to build the nation, run toward the next century”. These clearly resonate with the former Deng’s open-up and Jiang’s economic development initiatives.

The following decade witnessed rapid economic growth and profound social change that cemented China as a major world power under Hu Jintao’s leadership. Undeniably, 2008 was a landmark year and saw violence in Tibet, the Sichuan earthquake, the Beijing Olympics and the financial Crisis. The year is mixed with disaster, challenges and glory. These events were substantially used by the

government to strengthen national cohesion and solidarity. Notably, only three months after the disastrous Sichuan Earthquake, China dazzled the world with the spectacular Beijing Olympics, which, together with the Gold Medals, contributed to boosting national pride and effective soft power card (for example Ma 2014; Zhao S. 2008). Arguably was an effective attempt in presenting a changed nation to the international community and securing the shift from a regional superpower to a global one.

Against the backdrop of this eventful year, a grand national parade was orchestrated to celebrate the 60th anniversary in which a modern, powerful face of China was on full display. It demonstrated to the world sophisticated "made-in-China" weaponry, as well as a grand civilian parade and performance. The guiding spirit of the 60th National Day celebration was clearly summed up in the "Propaganda and Education Outline for the Military Parade":

> This military parade is a comprehensive display of the Party's *ability to rule* and of the overall might of the nation. It has a profound political significance in that it bolsters confidence in *the Party's leadership* and belief in socialism with Chinese characteristics... This grand parade is the first of its kind in the new century. It is a crucial manifestation of the recent victory of the people who have achieved the construction of an overall moderately prosperous society *under the Party's leadership* and represents the realisation of the great revival of the Chinese nation as a result of tireless struggle (italics for emphasis).

As can be seen from the Party's outline, achievements, prosperity and modernity are regarded as sources of pride, and more importantly, it is highlighted that all these were achieved under the CCP's leadership. Then President Hu highlighted the pivotal role of the CCP in his address at the National Day ceremony,

> *Sixty years* ago on this day, the Chinese people achieved the great victory of the Chinese revolution after more than *100 years* of blooded struggle. It was here that Chairman Mao Zedong solemnly declared to the world the founding of the People's Republic of China. At that moment, the Chinese people stood up and the Chinese nation with

> over *5,000 years* of civilisation began a new page of development and progress in history (Chinanews 2009).

The nation's collective memory about the 100 years of struggle and 5,000 years of civilisation is forged again through the emphasis on the transforming role of the CCP in leading the country toward a modern socialist country of "prosperity, democracy, civilisation and harmony". To closely link to the nation's collective memory, the Party also made use of other symbolic sources in the parade. For instance, accompanied by a 60-gun salute, soldiers marched 169 goosesteps escorting the PRC national flag from the People's Heroes Monument to Tiananmen Square, which honoured the sacrifice of the Chinese people since the Opium War in 1840 - 169 years ago. The memory of national humiliation is symbolically represented in the number 169, and more importantly, it reminds Chinese people of those who sacrificed their life for the nation and their patriotism. The Chinese Communist Party journal Qiushi (求是) explicitly claims that this National Day celebration is "a means of patriotic education of socialism with Chinese characteristics" (Xinhuanet 2009a).

My review of the past 14 military parades highlights three issues. First, the National Day parades, with continuity and change over time, have the specific purpose of unifying the domestic audience and strengthening national identity. Myths and symbols of the CCP's resistance against the Japanese, as well as the Nationalist Party, are instrumentalized to construct the mythscape of the birth of the PRC. Dying on the battleground is no longer a private experience but the rite of passage to martyrdom and national ecstasy, which constitutes the "military sublime" and makes the army a propaganda organ (Lee 2011, 406). Second, the use of military parades is largely dependent on the political context of the time. Chinese national pride is symbolically represented in the national celebration rituals and activities in various forms in different periods, from patriotism with the revolutionary spirit in Mao's era to patriotism, focused on economic development and national achievements in the post-Mao's era. The recent national day celebrations legitimise the CCP's leadership by bridging the Chinese revolutionary past and its contemporary pursuit of development and modernity. Third, China's national strength is largely displayed in its military strength in national day celebrations. It contributes to representing the CCP-led nation-state as a strong one able to defend

itself. In pursuit of military strength, China increasingly emphasises quality over quantity and national achievement over foreign influences. It implies its appeals to both modernity and Chineseness at the same time.

Under social transformation, the mediascape in China changes. It influences the way the mythscape of the past is shaped. Images of soldiers' heroic sacrifice and defence of the country become relocated spatially from Tiananmen Square to the TV, exhibition halls, cinemas, and, most importantly, to the online world. Multi-channel and multi-modal dissemination transcends the psychological aspects of memory and facilitates the representation of victory and pride. It is particularly demonstrated in the 2009 National Day celebrations. The following section will focus on the use of media, the Internet in particular, in shaping collective memory and representing identity. It will show that in the digital age, parades are moved from Tiananmen Square to the Internet.

6.1.2 Media and parades: Parading China online

The 2009 parade is noted for its unprecedented display of advanced weaponry, and the 60th National Day celebration was officially orchestrated and presented to spectators by the use of broad range of dissemination and communication platforms. The spectators of the National day parade and the participants in the National Day celebration, therefore, are not physically in Tiananmen Square but elsewhere. They become connected and linked across the country by digital media. In this sense, commemorative and celebratory rituals in the digital age do not require physical participation. Kuever focuses on the importance of the visual imagery of media events and asserts that it is even "more effective than words in legitimising existing power regimes" (2012, 7). Through the visual imagery, spectators across the country are directed to focus their attention on the unity of the Chinese nation and its unbreakable connection to the Communist leadership.

In comparison to previous National Day celebrations, the 60th anniversary witnessed the CCP's massive media campaign using a broad range of communication platforms. For instance, at the Beijing Exhibition Centre, an exhibition of the achievements in different spheres, including economy, politics, diplomacy, infrastructure, and military, was on display in a variety of digital modes, including photographs, videos, and documents. More than 40 films were produced

as the National Day tribute films (国庆献礼片)[81], including The Founding of a Republic (建国大业), Tiananmen (天安门), and The Message (风声). More notable is the role of the Internet in the government-led media campaign.

While the decade (1999-2009) witnessed a dramatic increase in Internet users in China, surging from 8.9 million in 1999 to 384 million in 2009, the Internet became a widely recognised and important venue for state publicity work. All media platforms are called on to participate in deliberately organising media campaigns for the 60th-anniversary celebration. The Central Publicity Department (中央宣传部), particularly highlights the role of the Internet as follows,

> (Media platforms should) organize online activities such as achievement exhibitions, knowledge contest, writing on the theme of My Motherland and Me, photography competition so as to make the Internet an important platform where people get to know our achievements and transformation, learn the Party history and national condition, and express love to the Party and country.

Following this guiding principle, the celebratory events taking place offline are displayed online for the access of the netizens. For example, the Achievement Exhibition has its online exhibition centre (see Figure 6.2). It displays to netizens the contents at display in Beijing Exhibition Centre, without the temporal and spatial limits. Also, a wide range of organisations joined the National Day celebration campaign, "carrying out public patriotic education activities" (Xinhuanet, 2009a).

Figure 6.2 Online Achievement Exhibition (http://60nian.cctv.com/)

[81] For a detailed list of these films, please see http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2009-08/19/content_11911796.htm. Among these tribute films, The Founding of a Republic (建国大业) has enjoyed the most attention and praise. The film is produced by the state-owned China Film Group Corporation and dedicated to telling the myth of the CCP founding the PRC. The film begins with 1945 the allied Communists and Nationalists and culminates with the 1949 founding ceremony of the People's Republic of China by Mao Zedong at Tiananmen Square. It has broken China's box office recoding by grossing more than RMB 400 million. Netizens widely regarded it as "the best tribute film in history" and "comparable to the CCTV's Chinese New Year Gala": it starred hundreds of celebrities, including Jackie Chan, Jet Li, Feng Xiaogang, Tang Guoqiang and Zhang Guoli, most of whom voluntarily played cameo roles in this star-studded film. Many of them expressed their tribute to the 60th birthday of China as a means of demonstrating their patriotism (although the nationalities of some stars have aroused a heated debate among netizens).



Table 6.1 demonstrates a list of major websites with dedicated National Day celebration exclusives. These websites visually display the continuity and change in Chinese national conditions. Very importantly, it depicts the achievements, in particular in national defence building that China has made over the last six decades through visual representations.

Table 6.1 A list of major websites with National Day exclusives

Websites	**National Day Special Webpages**
CCTV.com 中央电视台	中国盛典 (China's Grand Ceremony) http://guoqing.cctv.com/
Xinhuanet.com 新华网	大国崛起之甲子华诞 (The Rise of Great Nation: the 60th Birthday) http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/60zn/
People.com.cn 人民网	中国坐标 (China's Location) http://60.people.com.cn/
Ifeng.com 凤凰网	六十年家国 (60 Years of A Nation-Family) http://news.ifeng.com/special/60nianjiaguo/
Sina.com 新浪	国.家:百年中国的新生与变革 (Nation and Family: Rebirth and Reform of China over a Century) http://news.sina.com.cn/z/guoqing60/
qq.com 腾讯	中国传奇(China's Legend) http://news.qq.com/zt/2009/jianguo60/

For the first time, the State television broadcaster, the China Central Television (CCTV), provided live multi-language coverage over the Internet to worldwide

audiences and brought the national event to the limelight through online broadcasting. The special website, Guoqing.cctv.com, was set up to report to the online audience every aspect of the event, ranging from the stages in the parade to the interviews with the soldier participants. It tries to link individual memory with collective memory of the founding of a "new China" through several different sections: 中国强 (Chinese Strength), 中国红 (Chinese Red), 中国志 (Chinese Record), 中国人 (Chinese People), 中国印 (Chinese Stamps), 中国结 (Chinese Knots), and 中国心 (Chinese Hearts). It can be seen that these names carry noticeable Chinese elements such as red colour, knots and stamps. Apart from introducing the event to the audience, it engages netizens with online celebration activities such as online writing, mobile video, and photography contests under the theme of "My Motherland and Me" (我和我的祖国) (see example in Figure 6.2). Particularly, an expression of Chineseness is discursively orchestrated in these activities. It also dedicates a special page for the National Day parade that provides the video clips of the 2009 parade, a review of the previous 13 parades, and an introduction of the parade of other countries (e.g. Brazil, North Korea, and France). With the help of visual digital modes, the online propaganda raises attention to the relationship between the past and the present, and between the individual and the country.

Figure 6.2 The screenshot of the CCTV Online Photography Contest page[82]



[82] The photography is requested to follow five topics – Splendid China, Beautiful Hometown, Open Era, People's Lives, and Comparison between the Past and the Present.

It was also widely reported online that for the first time, .中国 domain names[83] are used specifically for the National Day celebration in main websites such as Xinhuanet, QQ, Sohu, and Sina. It puts into perspective the notion of digital sovereignty as the Chinese Internet grows rapidly and enjoys an increasingly dominant position in the existing infrastructure and management of domain name system on the global stage (Arsene 2015). The use of Chinese character domains is claimed to "help Chinese netizens gain access to the news on National Day celebration more conveniently, promote netizens' sense of pride, and strengthen national cohesion" (Xinhuanet 2009b). One CNNIC official also says, .中国 domain names have the mission to inherit and disseminate Chinese culture and connect Chinese netizens with all online applications. The appeal for being Chinese and having sovereignty in the digital realm speaks well to the nationalists in the name of national celebration.

A noticeable feature of these dedicated webpages and online reports is that they go to great lengths to highlight the achievements over the past 60 years and recall collective memories by associating them closely to individual memories. Take for example Ifeng, the website of a popular Hong-Kong based television Phoenix television titles its special webpage as *60 years Jiaguo* (六十年家国), which includes three sections – individual memories, group memories, and China's path. These sections attempt to link individual memories with collective memories and make reflections upon the developments and achievements in the past six decades. The background information of the past national parades is provided as a review of the parade history. It visually displays the continuity and change in the national parade. More importantly, it depicts the achievements, in particular in national defence building that China has made over the last six decades through visual representations. By this means, it links the living standard of people with the development and rise of the country. A modern China under the CCP's leadership, largely legitimised by achievements and nationalist appeal, is constructed as a model for display online. In the digital age, the parade marches onto the Internet. The

[83] Chinese character domains such as .中国, .公司, and .网络 are officially added as the Top-Level Domain Names since 2010. They are overseen by China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) and its registry is maintained by the China Internet Information Centre (CNNIC). Its use for the National Day celebration in 2009 was the first attempt before its approval as non-Latin web addresses by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

Internet provides for the parade an important alternative space, in which netizens spectate. The following section will closely examine the case of 2015 Victory Day Parade.

6.2 The Victory Day Parade

Having examined the spatial shift of the parade from Tiananmen Square to the Internet, this section examines the temporal shift from the National Day to the Victory Day in the official construction of national pride. It examines the discursive performance of victory and pride in the parade event and analyses the CCP's framing of national pride in its online campaign. After that, the popular discourse in online discussion is analysed.

While the previous military parades all took place on the National Day, September 3, 2015, marked China's first national celebration of Victory Day, which was officially ratified in 2014 as a new national day. A grand military parade was held to mark the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the Anti-Fascist War, otherwise referred to as the Second World War. The victory day commemoration is essentially different from the National Day celebration in that the victory over Japanese aggression was mainly led by the KMT rather than the CCP. That means the commemoration of China's victory and China's role in the World War II needs the official inclusion and acknowledgement of the role of the KMT in the national resistance front against Japan.

While May 8 - the day Germany signed the final surrender in 1945 - was widely commemorated as the Victory Day in Europe, September 3 - the following day after the Japanese signing the surrender document on USS Missouri at Tokyo Bay marking the end of WWII in Pacific - was set as the Victory Day by the KMT government in 1945. After Japan's surrender, China, without much time and space for the celebration of its victory, was immediately plunged into the civil war between the KMT regime and the CCP. After the founding of the PRC in 1949, the day to commemorate Chinese victory was reset to August 15, the day Japanese Emperor Hirohito announced surrender, but switched back in 1951. Nonetheless, in Mao's China, the important wartime contribution of the KMT regime was dismissed in the CCP's official rhetoric, and commemoration of the war experience was essentially

put aside, as it was the KMT who did the majority of the fighting against Japanese in the war. To situate it in the wider international political context - the backdrop of the Cold War, few of its western allies remember China as the first country to enter the World War II and a significant member of the Allied victory over fascists in the war. China's role has been unsung. China is a "forgotten ally" (Mitter 2013, 387), as a consequence of both the domestic political situation and the wider international environment.

In China, it was not until the 1980s after Deng's open-up reform that the CCP started to hold a new political attitude in re-evaluating of the war experience and the role of the KMT in the war. The patriotic education campaign since the early 1990s in the post-Tiananmen era also led to an increasingly louder appeal for war commemorations. A growing amount of discussion was initiated among government officials, scholars and civil society. They started to address issues such as which day of Chinese resistance war should be commemorated. The remembrance dates considered included September 18 (Mukden/Manchurian Incident, marking the Japanese invasion of north-eastern China in 1931), July 7 (Marco Polo Bridge Incident, marking the start of Japanese all-out invasion of China in 1937), August 15 and September 3. Such a calendar dotted with these markers for anti-Japanese resistance war, to a large extent, reflects the profound impact of the war experience on Chinese politics and society.

Meanwhile, a substantive question about the nature of commemoration emerged: is the commemoration more about celebration for victory or remembrance of trauma (see for example, China Youth Daily 2004; CPC news 2010; Wang X. 2011)? Wang Xinhua, the former curator of the Memorial Museum of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, was among those who passionately argued for the commemoration of September 3. He advocates the significance of "victory education" (胜利教育). He said, "Our war victory should not be symbolised in the number of casualties and tragedies. Why don't we celebrate our triumph? If we do not remember our great contribution to the world anti-fascist war, nobody will" (China Youth Daily 2004). Wang Xinhua was among the first who intended to propose the ratification of September 3 as a national day for commemoration in 2004. After long "further discussion" by the Chinese government, the day was

officially ratified as the national V-day in 2014. The V-day is to highlight Chinese posture of being a victor in the war.

The 2015 V-day parade was China's first large-scale military parade since 2009. The commemoration of national victory in the World War II has been given unprecedented importance. It has departed from the past rule – holding a military parade every decade for national day celebration, which means the parade should take place in 2019 when it observes the 70th anniversary of the founding of PRC. The military parade in 2015 seems to be out of sequence, four years early. It is also the first in China to mark an anniversary of the war and also the first to include foreign military participation.

The West and Japan are widely suspicious of the CCP's intentions; particularly what the display of military strength is all about and whom it is directed at (for example Cole 2015). Many media articles make remarks about China flexing its muscle (e.g. Hunt et al. 2015; Page and Wong 2015). Cole (2015) claims that China's V-day parade expresses belligerence rather than peace and sends a worrying signal. Given the concern from the Asia region, Tsang (2015) argues, China has made a major error of judgement. Most Western observers feel concerned that China is targeting Japan and the United States in particular therefore worsening the geo-political environment in the region, and that the assertive Chinese President Xi Jinping cannot wait until 2019 to flex China's military muscle.

China's Ministry of National Defence, confronted with suspicions from the West and neighbouring countries, insist that China's celebrations are not muscle show-off, nor do they target at specific countries. The State Council Information Office (SCIO) states that the purpose of the parade is,

- to demonstrate our determination to take the peaceful development path, protect world peace, defend our national sovereignty, security and national interest; to commemorate Chinese national sacrifice for and Chinese significant contribution to the World Anti-Fascist War;
- to display the new achievements of our army in modernization and the image of the strength and civilisation of our army;
- to mobilise and stimulate the Party, the army, and all the people of all ethnicities to work hard toward the rejuvenation of Chinese nation (SCIO

2015).

The government line suggests a focus on the recognition of China's war contribution in the past and the appeal for Chinese national cohesion for the future. If we bring in the aforementioned ongoing domestic debate on the focus of war commemoration in China, it may be safe to argue that Beijing's V-day parade may have more to do with its domestic political environment and its need for nationalist appeals than just flexing muscle.

The V-day parade, like the National Day parade, largely focuses on symbolic recourses to display national strength and stimulate patriotism that is liable to make more domestic implications. Shi Yinhong, interviewed for Wall Street Journal, says, more importantly, the parade can help bolster Xi's prestige as the commander in chief and boost national pride among Chinese people, as the parade is performed in a way that reinforces the notion of China's rise on the global stage (Wall Street Journal 2015). While V-day was not officially celebrated in Mao's era, and furthermore nearly the three decades of the Post-Mao era have seen limited war commemoration in the name of victory, Xi's administration makes an effort in shifting the focus from a victim narrative to a victor narrative in the remembrance of China's national past. In relation to the international community, the parade should be situated in the context of the rise of China in its international status and its growing confidence in dealing with international affairs. It can be reflected from the narrative transition from Deng's strategy of 韬光养晦(*taoguang yanghui*, hiding capabilities and keeping a low profile,) to Xi's strategy of 奋发有为 (*fenfa youwei,* striving for great achievement).

Meanwhile, the V-Day parade contributes to reshaping the meaning of Chineseness, primarily within the China mainland, by the rehabilitation of the KMT in the CCP's discourse and appealing to the united effort for the Chinese rejuvenation, which has been an important political slogan of the Chinese government since Xi Jinping came into office. As such, victory is performed by means of military strength and advancement at Tiananmen Square, and more importantly, the victory performative ritual is heavily used in the media in different forms, including live broadcasting and online interactive activities, discursively converting the military parade into a hegemonic campaign of national enchantment. The following section will adopt

multi-modal analysis and examine the discursive performance of the V-day parade disseminated and facilitated by the Internet.

6.2.1 Performing victory at Tiananmen

The 2015 V-day parade is a thoughtfully choreographed spectacle in performance; Tiananmen is the stage. The grand event is disseminated in various digital forms to spectators. In the spectacle, the parade consecrates a militant body that represents a unified nation being able to defend itself in stark contrast with the traumatic past. Symbolism, an important role in Chinese culture, is evident throughout the event. Every detail, including weather, street decorations, patriotic chorus, and most importantly, troop goosesteps, is considered important in the imagery of victory unfolded to the audience both at home and overseas. The setting against which the parade is held matters. Therefore, Beijing, to guarantee clean air on the day, began to restrict the use of vehicles and closed production industries and construction sites in the vicinity in the two weeks preceding to the V-day. These measures successfully produced the flawless blue sky for the day, which was named by people "Parade Blue" (阅兵蓝)[84]. Chang'a Street and Tiananmen Square were decorated with floral patterns displaying the themes of prosperity, dream and future. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) Chorus prepared eight classic patriotic songs, including March of the Volunteers (the national anthem), Guerrillas' Song, and Defending the Yellow River and added new compositions. Patriotism is played out on a musical note.

Since the PLA is the armed force tasked with carrying out the Party's political tasks (PLA Daily 2013), the parade, being one of the tasks, has transformed soldiers into performers of victory, strength and unity. The image of soldiers and the unity of their goosesteps are also important in the official construction of the national image. For instance, female PLA soldiers attending the parade were reportedly 178cm in height and 20 years old in age on average. The PLA soldiers of the 11 phalanxes have been training for the perfect stride of 75cm and the exact 128 steps. Chen Shiqiang, a senior colonel of the PLA National Defence University, claims, the PLA has strict requirements for the soldiers' goosesteps, because it is regarded as the means by

[84] One day after the parade, the sky turned into the normal "Beijing Grey". This phrase was firstly came from APEC blue during the APEC meetings held in November 2014 when Beijing took measures to improve air quality.

which army discipline is established and military strength represented (people.cn, 8 May 2015). The parade ground is not only the site for the spectacular display of collective action but also a realm of national enchantment (Dutton 2010).

Posturing as the host, President Xi Jinping, wearing a Yat-sen-style suit (中山装), together with First Lady Peng Liyuan, extended their welcome to guests on the red carpet at Forbidden City leading to the Heavenly Peace Gate. Most leaders from China's WWII allies harbour concern over China's intentions, largely due to China's recent maritime disputes in the region, decided not to attend. Russia President Vladimir Putin became the only leader from one of the wartime Allied Powers to attend and was warmly welcomed. President Xi had attended Moscow's 70th V-day parade in May of the same year. While the guest list is often regarded as a revealing window into China's foreign relations, particularly with the West, the Chinese media has underplayed the absence of major leaders by exhausting the list of attendees, trying to portray to its domestic audience an image of national prestige that China is now being supported and respected.

With former Chinese leaders, including Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, Zhu Rongji and Wen Jiabao, present on the reviewing stand, the Chinese government was painting a picture of a harmonious and united CCP, despite the ongoing power struggle within the Party. The Party's mianzi (面子, face), be it in superficial harmony, in front of the cameras and foreign guests, are particularly important in the official construction of China's unity and strength. In addition to the leaders and the soldiers, spectators in the viewing stand at Tiananmen constitute important participants in the performance of victory commemoration. Noticeably, there are people with a chestful of medals and ethnic minorities in their ethnic costumes. The ethnic representation in the spectating crowd has the symbolic meaning in presenting China as a united multi-ethnic nation. The presence of foreign guests, previous leaders, and multi-ethnic spectators all contribute to visually representing China as a harmonious nation-state.

Numbers have been utilised symbolically too. Accompanied by a 70-gun salute with 56 cannons, symbolising the 70th-anniversary celebration by the 56 ethnic groups, a special squad of 200 soldiers marched from the Martyrs Memorial to the flag pole

with their 121 goosesteps. The number of goosesteps represents the years China has struggled against Japanese aggression since 1894 (the starting year of the first Sino-Japanese war) until 1945. The number of soldiers – 200 – is also used to represent the two centennial goals initiated by Xi. The message was loud in these symbolic numbers: China, once being humiliated and bullied by foreign aggression, has now transformed into a superpower.

Xi addressed the event at the Tiananmen Gate. In his speech, China (中国) and people (人民) are the two most frequently mentioned words, fifteen times jointly, suggesting that the state and the people are very often discursively tied together in Chinese political rhetoric. Figure 6.3 demonstrates the key wordlist of his speech. The frequent mentioning of China, people, us, humanity and friends associate Chinese people with the international community in respect of peace and development.

Figure 6.3 Wordlist of Xi's speech



After paying tribute to *all* veterans and patriots who took part in the war and all the Chinese at home and abroad who contributed to the victory, Xi focuses on the remarkable victory that Chinese people have won. Although he does not mention the KMT, the topoi of inclusiveness adopted here convey the credit to its partner of the resistance war. While the KMT is part of *us* - Chinese people, the Japanese is

them. Xi states, “The Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War were a decisive battle between justice and evil, between light and darkness, and between progress and reaction” (Xinhuanet 2015a). With the topoi of justice, the boundary between China and Japan is represented clearly in the distinct camp of justice, light, progress and that of evil, darkness and reaction.

He continues to speak highly of the victory as “the first complete victory” won by China in its resistance against foreign aggression in modern times. To highlight the significance of the victory, Xi uses repetition of a lexical item, “this great triumph”, as repetition can maximise power in language to convey the intended meaning of the message. His speech goes,

> *This great triumph* crushed the plot of the Japanese militarists to colonise and enslave China and put an end to China's national humiliation in the successive defeats at the hands of foreign aggressors in modern times. *This great triumph* re-established China as a major country in the world and won the Chinese people respect of all peace-loving people around the world. *This great triumph* opened up bright prospects for Chinese national rejuvenation and set our ancient country on a new journey after gaining rebirth (ibid.).

Xi stresses that it is through this great triumph that Chinese national humiliation ended, and thus China gained respect and the Chinese nation would be rejuvenated, which suggest that the positioning of China in the international order is very important and national fate is closely tied with the triumph over Japanese militarism.

He also acknowledges the contribution of the people of other countries to the victory. Notably, he used generalised terms such as international community (国际社会) and people from all countries (各国人民), instead of specific countries or the Allied Forces. The only allied country specifically named is Russia. The exclusion and inclusion of country names in his speech suggest its reflection of the absence and presence of leaders at the event, with Putin being the only leader coming from the Allied Force of the WWII. He underlines the causalities that the war has caused:

“Ravaging through Asia, Europe, Africa and Oceania, that war inflicted over 100 million military and civilian casualties. China suffered over 35 million casualties, and the Soviet Union lost more than 27 million lives” (ibid.). Making reference to the Soviet Union helps make a numerical comparison between causalities highlighting the Chinese people’s suffering. Thereby, he highlights the role of the PLA in faithfully fulfilling “the sacred duty of protecting the nation's security and people's well-being” and carrying out “the noble mission of upholding world peace” (ibid.). The topos of comparison and reference is helpful in legitimising military power.

Xi also quotes an ancient Chinese saying, “After making a good start, we should ensure that the cause achieves fruition” (靡不有初, 鲜克有终) from Classic of Poetry (诗经), expressing the need for dedicated efforts of one generation after another for “an even more brighter future”. The 5000 years of civilisation, as discursively symbolised in the re-contextualized old saying, is often used as a source of national pride. He says, “Having created a splendid civilisation of over 5,000 years, the Chinese nation will certainly usher in an even brighter future” (ibid.). After painting the brightness of China’s future, Xi, for the first and only time in this speech, mentions the Chinese Communist Party. He says,

> On the path forward, under *the leadership of the Communist Party of China,* we, people of all ethnicities across the country, should take Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development as our guide to action. We should follow *the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics,* pursue the four-pronged comprehensive strategy, promote *patriotism* and the great spirit of resisting aggression and forge ahead *as one* to reach our goals (ibid.).

Xi’s rhetoric discursively associates the CCP’s legitimacy with China’s ancient past as well as China’s future. By emphasising Chineseness, Xi foregrounds the CCP as the leader of China toward the bright future, thereby discursively consolidating the legitimacy of the CCP regime by promoting patriotism and national unity.

In this performance of victory and pride, the PLA soldiers constitute an essential part. Fifty formations marched through Tiananmen Square. The 12,000 Chinese troops goose-stepped past the Tiananmen in 128 carefully measured paces, each precisely 75 cm. As many as 500 China's latest military equipment and 200 aircraft were on display in the V-day spectacle. The parade is on an unprecedented scale, and the enormous lengths to which Chinese government goes for this parade manifest itself in the advanced weaponry at the display. China's Second Artillery Force showcase their most advanced Dongfeng series, including the land-based DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missile, the DF-26 missile for both nuclear and conventional use, and the DF-31A solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile. The new domestically produced weaponry is mostly shown for the first time.

While the parade is widely regarded as threatening by the international community, Ge Lide, an expert on military equipment of PLA National Defense University, has highlighted that the message of the advanced weaponry is largely focused on demonstrating Chinese military's latest achievements and its modernisation (Xinhuanet 2015b). The implications of Chinese military strength mostly pertain to the discourse that China today is no more a country that can be humiliated and bullied by foreign powers and China now has the military wherewithal to keep its people safe. Military strength is not so much targeted outward as inward – by showing how strong the military is the Chinese government illustrate to the Chinese people that the military has the capability to safeguard the nation. A strong army equates to a strong nation. Through the display of military strength in the parade, the CCP puts national humiliation behind and binds its own political legitimacy to the legacy of World War II and its claim for guiding China's rise in its international status.

In addition to the PLA troops, foreign troops and CCP and KMT veterans, for the first time, participated in the parade. Nearly 1,000 foreign troops from 17 countries participated in the parade. The unprecedented presence of foreign troops in a Chinese military parade demonstrates China's discourse about commemorating the support of the allies in its resistance against Japanese. At the same time, it also signals to the international community that China, being one of the allied force against Fascism, should not be forgotten and that the Chinese contribution deserves international recognition.

Recognisably, a far more significant move was the honour awarded to both the PLA troops of the CCP and the KMT veterans. The presence the KMT veterans in the parade demonstrates the CCP's effort in expanding the commemorative event to include the KMT in the whole narrative about the Chinese victory. Despite the small number of KMT veterans present in the parade, it was significant that the CCP enlarged its discourse about resistance war to include the KMT into its national narrative. This was unlikely in Mao's era when the official line was that the CCP won the war almost single-handedly as the class struggle was the ideological focus and the KMT was then the political enemy. While the CCP's rhetoric on the KMT's role in the war became more permissive in the 1980s and turned more to nationalism for political legitimation and cross-strait reunification, the presence of the KMT veterans in the V-day parade is a small but significant step. It consolidates the increasingly positive tone about the role of the KMT and constructs a new historical narrative, in which joint resistance against Japanese aggression posits a central place. As regards the role of the KMT, the new narrative largely draws upon "collective memories" about the war experience across the strait, the unprecedented national unity among Chinese people, and the united effort between the two parties against Japanese aggression, despite their political divergences (see for example Wang C. 2015).

China is now using WWII to frame a new version of the past and locate the origins of New China in the joint resistance against the aggression of a barbaric invader (Van de Ven 2015). By reconstructing the war myth, the CCP is trying to present itself as a key partner on a united patriotic front (Zhang and Watherley 2013). On the one hand, the party can gain more legitimacy from the war legacy of fighting against Japan. On the other, the new narrative about the war can further facilitate building a sense of solidarity between mainland China and Taiwan[85] and justify the goal of national reunification being an integral part of the official ideology of Chinese nationalism (He 2007, 7).

The predominance of the PLA foot formations in the parade, most graphically,

[85] Across the Taiwan Straits, there is an ongoing debate about their national identity among Taiwanese, particularly after the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election in 2000. A growing emphasis is drawn upon desinicisation and Taiwanese independence. Interesting discussion of the national identity question in Taiwan can be found in Hao (2010), Hughes (2011) and Zhong (2016).

demonstrated its strategies in framing the CCP's leading role in defeating Japan. The ten foot formations (for example Mount Langyashan Five Heroes, Southern China Guerrilla Forces Heroes, and Pingxingguan War Heroes), bear the name of *yingmo* (英模, Heroic and Model Troops) formations in commemoration of the CCP heroic troops. All of these formations were each named after a battle fought by Communist-led troops or war heroes. These parade troops symbolically put forward the CCP's role in the anti-Japanese war. Unprecedentedly, these foot formations were all led by generals, the chief officers of the PLA troops to which the Heroic and Model Troops belong. The foot formation highlights the role of CCP in the war experience; it also promotes the image of the internal unity of the Chinese military following Xi's leadership.

The parade ended in the releasing of 70,000 white doves symbolising peace and 70,000 multi-coloured balloons in the background music of Ode to My Motherland (歌唱祖国). The white doves accentuated President Xi's speech as he announced the massive cut of 300,000 troops in the PLA troops, emphasising that China is committed to peaceful development. The troops cut rhetorically echoes with the message of peace, which is mentioned in Xi's speech for 18 times. The gesture of troops cut matches rhetorically with Xi's narrative of embracing and protecting peace. Nonetheless, it also reflects Beijing's goal of Army modernization and informatization by focusing more on building a strong military, particularly in terms of air, sea and even cyber power. Understandably, it is hard for the Western observers and audience to interpret the military parade as a means by which China sends the message of peace; many regard the parade as threatening (Cole 2015; Tsang 2015). However, as addressed earlier, victory performed in the military parade, to a large extent, highlights China's victor-hood and showcases Chinese military modernisation, which can consolidate Xi's leadership and the CCP's legitimacy at home. Through the victor narratives, the CCP intends to gain more legitimacy from the war legacy of fighting against Japanese aggression. The official rhetoric, claiming for victor-hood and also for peace, heavily draws upon the nationalist narratives for national strength, national unity and ultimately national rejuvenation, which is based on the combined force of 富国 (well-off nation-state) and 强军 (strong military). The following section will examine the role of the Internet in the state portrayal of victory and pride.

6.2.2 Framing victory online

While the last decade has seen several mega-events orchestrated by the Chinese government, including the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2009 National Day parade, and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, the media campaigns contribute to the official construction of a modern, transformed China. These events are "situated, thickened, centering performances of mediated communication" (Hepp and Couldry 2010, 22), primarily focusing on the central value of the CCP's ideology of nationalism and the vision of China's transformation. The 2015 V-day parade can be seen as a high-profile media event as such, in which the CCP uses all the propaganda tools to cultivate Chinese national pride and consolidate legitimacy for the party. In many ways, the CCP attempts to assert sovereignty over digital communication, treating websites as authoritative "info-web" and bringing digital media into the fold of China's traditional mass media paradigm (Schneider 2016).

To reach more people and convert them into spectators and participants of this commemorative event, the Chinese government initiated a massive publicity campaign in a wide range of media channels. For foreign visitors, an online press centre (http://www.kzjn70.cn/) was set up to invite foreign journalists to report on the commemorative activities and to provide services for them. For Chinese citizens, the State Council set Sept. 3, 2016, a public holiday, the purpose of which is for people to widely participate in the commemorative events. The day was "marked off" from everyday life and imbued with cultural significance (Cui 2013, 1223). The subsequent massive media campaign of the event further interrupted people's normal life and routine media programs. From TV to films to the Internet, the Chinese government has fed constant streams of propaganda to the public.

The coverage of the parade has taken a dominant approach. A noticeable feature of the coverage is the extensiveness and dominance of the official political propaganda across different media platforms. CCTV (China Central Television) has played a significant role in publicising the event[86]. The parade is shown by the CCTV live broadcasting using tailored visual angles, through which spectators across the

[86] CCTV, since 9am on the day, has extensively covered the parade live through 14 channels, and also replayed the parade for up to 38 times. Since most of the provincial and city TV stations were required to broadcast the CCTV live coverage of the parade, the total viewing share reached 83.66%.

country are directed to focus their attention on the unity of the Chinese nation and the leadership of the CCP. Also, some black-and-white footage of the war was purposefully used which interrupted the live coverage but recontextualised the images of selected war experience with new meanings attached as reminders of historical memories. It graphically pictures what happened in the past and shapes collective memories about the war experience. The visual link sets an enchanted bond between the soldiers fighting and dying for the nation in the war front more than seven decades ago and the audience watching the commemorative event in front of TV, computer or mobile device screen today.

Internet companies were also required to implement control over the news and posts related and maintain positivity about the event (China Digital Times 2015). Major websites broadcasted the parade live online, with the special webpages set up specifically for the event (see major commemorative webpages in Table 6.2). All these webpages feature in providing multi-form content to recall historical memories and forming a discursive linkage between the past and the present.

Table 6.2 A list of major V-day special webpages

Websites	**2015 Victory Day Exclusives**
CCTV.com 中央电视台	铭记历史 缅怀先烈 珍爱和平 开创未来 (Remember history, commemorate martyrs, cherish peace, create the future) http://news.cntv.cn/special/kzsl70zn/
Xinhuanet.com 新华网	英烈祭 民族魂 中国梦 (Chinese heroes, national soul, Chinese dream) http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/kzsl70/zjjq.htm
People.com.cn 人民网	铭记历史 昭示未来 (Commemorate history, illuminate the future) http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/8198/395920/ *in multiple languages: English, Japanese, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Korean, German, Portuguese, Tibetan, Mongolian, Kazakhstani)
Ifeng.com 凤凰网	胜利歌声多么响亮[87] (What a resounding victory in the songs) http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/kzsl70/
Sina.com 新浪	大国之风 (The demeanour of a great power) http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/nz/kzsl70oznybs/
qq.com 腾讯	致敬历史 同沐荣光 (Pay tribute to the history, enjoy together the glory) http://news.qq.com/zt2015/70parade/

[87] This line is from the lyrics of Ode to the Motherland (歌唱祖国).

The massive coverage of the event has effectively reached the audience both at home and overseas. According to CCTV statistics, up to 1.4 billion viewers watched the parade, among whom 489 million watched it via live TV and one billion via the Internet. According to the survey conducted by a commercial website, more than 73% viewers watched the event via the Internet (Eyan Highlight 2015). They are claimed by the official media as the "audience formation" (观众方阵) – netizens are "reviewing the army at their fingertips" (指尖大阅兵, *zhijian dayuebing*). By 7 pm on 3 September on the major video websites, there were 1,381 themed online videos, more than half of which derived from CCTV, the total viewing amounted to 500 million. Take Youku for example, the viewers of the live parade amounts to a record of 25 million. The unprecedented online coverage, particularly the live broadcasting, played a fundamental role in cementing the hegemonic discursive power of the Chinese government.

The CCTV webpage deserves closer analysis in this study because it is the main channel producing and disseminating the information on commemorative information. It has a wide range of columns, including news, videos, pictures, expert commentary, documentaries, interviews, online group red song singing, parade diaries, and new media links. While victory, national spirit, and heroic deeds are the theme in these columns, noticeably, several sections focus on comfort women in the war, devil 731, Japanese war orphans paint the war in traumatic and humiliating terms. It can be seen that national humiliation and national pride are closely linked. To achieve the dominance of the official discourse on the Internet, the strategies, largely realised in multi-modal form, rely on selectively using history, quoting veterans and so-called experts, foregrounding representative social actors including Xi Jinping and veterans, and utilising recontextualised content of the CCTV and other state mouthpieces. In addition, a distinctive feature of the CCTV page lies in two sections – exclusives (特别报道) and Two WEI formation (两微矩阵). The section on exclusives includes links to 2015 First Lesson (2015 开学第一课), Mount Taihang (an anti-Japanese TV Series) and Public service advertisement (公益广告), which are government-promoted cultural production heavily loaded with an appeal for patriotism.

The First Lesson (开学第一课) is a program jointly produced by Ministry of Education and CCTV targeting at students. It imitates the setting of a typical classroom in the CCTV studio, heavily loaded with patriotic education elements. It is released once a year in autumn at the start of a new academic year and can be viewed online. In August, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Publicity required schools across the country to organise students to watch the program on 2015 commemoration of war heroes and to write reflections, and initiate discussions and spread patriotism on social media like Weibo and Weixin. In the official document of the Ministry of Education (MOE), it highlights the importance of online communication activities, encouraging students to participate in online commemoration, "spreading the positive energy of mainstream patriotism, historical remembrance, and Chinese dream" (MOE 2015). Through the participation of popular celebrities including He Jiong (何炅), Phoneix Legend (凤凰传奇), along with 29 veterans, the program attempts to educate the Chinese children and youth the importance of remembering history in an entertaining and approachable way. Besides, the online link to TV series includes the promotion page of anti-Japanese TV series, dedicated to exhibiting 147 films, 50 TV series, and 43 songs in commemoration of the 70th anniversary[88]. The online "lesson" and TV series clearly are part of the strategy of "indoctritainment", the combination of indoctrination and entertainment (as previously addressed in section 5.2.1 in Chapter 5).

The Two WEI Formations (两微矩阵) is the new feature of online coverage of media events (shown in Figure 6.4). Two WEI refer to Weibo and Weixin platforms, disseminating the official information through popular social networks. As Weibo and Weixin are becoming profoundly important in netizens' commination, particularly among young people, social networks sites have become new political communication site at which the official propaganda targets. A review of the information publicised in Two WEI formation reveals that it only uses the official production accounts such as CCTV News and CCTV Finance, allowing no room for interactive communication for netizens.

Figure 6.4 The screenshot taken from the CCTV webpage (http://news.cntv.cn/special/kzsl70zn/)

[88] The full list can be accessed at http://dianshiju.cntv.cn/special/kzsl70/ .



Similarly, the section on public service advertisement (公益广告) is another part of discursive space delivering the official propaganda. The official document announces that the public service advertisement is an important means to commemorate the 70th anniversary of V-day. Bearing the name 公益, literally referring to public goods or charity, the advertisements[89] are literally the discursive realm that the government promote its propaganda. Browsing through the public service advertisements, viewers can find that, more often than not, a veteran is surrounded by a group of children listening to him telling the story of the war. Social actors representing the two generations – the soldiers from the past and the children of today - are depicted together in the advertisements to closely set up the linkage between the past and the present. One of the advertisements, called "Never forget history – little commentators", depicts a 15-year-old girl volunteering as a commentator at an anti-Japanese martyr cemetery. She is quoted in the ad[90], "War is very terrible, especially for children. Many of them lost their families and became homeless…I hope there is no more war and we can all live happily together", against the background of thousands of children paying tribute to the martyrs. This one-minute long ad presents the concept of war, home, children, martyr, peace, happiness through an activated role - a 15-year-old girl, reminding people of the

[89] There are nine V-day themed adverts: the flower of victory, Song of Great Wall, Never Forget Humiliation, Our victory, River and Mountain of Iron and Blood, Never forget history – little commentators, eternal memory, ordinary hero, and royal veteran.

[90] The full video can be accessed at http://igongyi.cntv.cn/kangzhan70/index.shtml.

terrible war experience and the importance of having a peaceful home, which speaks to the CCP's appeal for stability and national security.

It can be seen that the CCTV productions about the V-day parade represent the official reconstruction of national pride, which dominates the discursive space through using a variety of digital modes. The Chinese government utilises the commemorative event of V-day commemoration, massively dominating China's web across different platforms and discursively constructing the mythscape of national commemoration that stimulates national unity and consolidates the CCP's leadership.

While the official channels largely utilise very few interactive elements and look like "info-web" (Schneider 2016), commercial websites allow more room for public engagement. Take Ifeng webpage for example, one of the sections, named "Returning to the Victory Day, reviewing our ancestors' joy and glory" (Ifeng 2015), tries to recall the historical moment and make people relive the victory. It starts with sensational questions for readers to reflect upon the historical moment of victory,

> How does the victory feel like 70 years ago? Joy? Excitement? Yes, and then what else? Except for these abstract adjectives, you and me, living in the new era, find it difficult to add something more. The victory gained from the national bloodshed struggle deserves more tribute and remembrance…(ibid.).

This lead-in question links the individual and the nation, the present and the past. Another special webpage on qq.com engages with netizens by providing a 3D video, visually showing the story of the 8-year resistance war against Japanese. Such sections of war commemoration literally supplement the government propaganda with a more approachable touch among netizens. The following section will proceed to the online public engagement with and discussion of the state constructed myth of victory and pride.

6.2.3 Discussing victory online

While the 2015 V-day saw a massive official media campaign dominating China's

web, Internet users join in the national event both as online spectators of the parade and, more importantly, as participants in the commemoration events. On Baidu search engine only, the search for 2015 military parade amounts to 1.7 million within 24 hours from 2 pm on 2 September to 2 pm on 3 September 2016 (Xi'an Wanbao, 2015). Overwhelmingly, across different online platforms, including news commentary forums in news portal sites, online discussion forums, and social networks sites, prevail discourse of patriotism and that of national pride. Pictures of the parade, selfies, and texts are used widely to express patriotism. Even further, some name themselves as "cyber soldiers", helping the government spread positive messages and protecting the government from being attacked or criticised. The widespread patriotism expressed among netizens through their digital practices, to some extent, diffuses the notion that nationalism concerns simply the top-down nation-building projects, and it would be wrong to discount the sentiments and response at the grassroots.

In comparison to Weibo where propaganda and censorship play an increasingly effective role and publicity for attention essentially matters, online commentaries and discussion forums seem to allow more space for communication among netizens and thus are taken as the main site for study. After conducting a key word search - the Victory Day, parade, pride (in Chinese), I focus on QQ.com and Baidu Tieba for data collection. In these two sites, I select the commentary threads that enjoy high popularity and/or generate most interactions for close investigation. Mapping out the themes and topics, I find that the popular discourse about national pride is predominantly featured in the use of topoi of sensationalism, and that the discursive focus is largely drawn on patriotism, veteran commemoration and history, in particular, the role of the KMT and the CCP in winning the victory in the war.

Sensationalism, first of all, is manifest in the personal engagement with the national event. There is a frequent use of first-person pronouns - I, we, and us, and lexis of emotions including tears and excitement. One thread in QQ special webpage writes, "看的热泪盈眶，我爱你祖国，祖国万岁！" (I am deeply moved to tears. I love you my motherland. Long live motherland!), having 23,656 likes. Commenting on a news report on QQ Highlight, consisting of 53 photos of the parade moments along with textual illustrations, two most popular comments expressed a feeling of pride being a Chinese when watching the parade. For example,

> “今天观看了阅兵式心里感觉到无比的震撼和骄傲，和平来之不易，作为一个中国人最起码你首先要爱国，同时，我为自己曾经是一名兵感到骄傲和自豪，我为自己是一名中国人感到骄傲和自豪。”
> Translation: Today I watched the parade, feeling stunningly proud. It is hard to have peace. Being a Chinese, first of all, you need to be patriotic. Meanwhile, I am proud of the fact that I was once a solider. Moreover, even more so, I feel proud of being a Chinese.

> “看到着(这)已经不能用任何语言表达了，除了流出激动的眼泪还是流泪，，，我的祖国我爱你.”
> Translation: As I watch, words fail to express how I feel now. It seems I can do nothing but shed tears in excitement....My motherland, I love you.

It can be seen that the military parade has aroused a striking sense of national pride and belonging. The use of the pronoun, I, is used to express their feelings as a means of engaging with the parade. The repeated use of the punctuation comma intensifies the emotion expressed in words. Words such as proud, tears, excitement, and love are the sensational language used to express the emotional bond between them as individuals and their country.

Also, netizens also express their patriotism through associating the uniformity of soldiers’ goosesteps with national unity.

> “解放军战士们整齐的步伐，让我想到了伟大祖国 60 多年的进步与发展，希望我们伟大祖国能如同这整齐、庄重的步伐一样继续前行。”
> Translation: The PLA soldiers’ perfect goosesteps remind me of the achievements and development over the past six decades. I hope our great country will march forward with such uniform and solemn goosesteps.

Thus the visual unity performed by the soldiers in the parade ritual is liable to produce collective imagination of the unity of the nation. With the discursive link

tied between the goosesteps with the future of China, individuals are immersed in the national landscape, thereof claiming for national unity.

Expressing emotions, netizens also look back at the past and reflect upon history. It implies divergent and competing narratives between the state constructed myth and the popular one based on social memory. In addition to textual expression, netizens use a variety of emoji and images of flowers and hearts. The multi-modality of discourse provides netizens with more discursive space for political expression and participation. One post in Baidu Tieba that generates 10,988 comment threads writes, "At the Founding Ceremony, we did not have enough aeroplanes. You said, let the planes fly twice", with a black-and-white photo of Zhou Enlai, the founding Premier of PRC, standing on the Tiananmen Gate in the military parade at the Founding Ceremony. This post is initially tweeted on Weibo, titled 这盛世如你所愿 (This Splendid Age is as You Wished) by @周顾北的周. The re-contextualised post on Baidu Tieba has attracted 10,988 comments. A post says, "I did not cry when I watched the live parade, but when I saw this, I cried hard", along with four crying emoji. The emoji expresses an intensified sentiments through discourse.

Many netizens also picture a contrast between the past when China was poor and the present of a "splendid age", which highlights the transformation of China after six decades. Some of them express their shared feeling by repeating the seven Chinese characters 这盛世如你所愿 (This splendid Age is as You Wished). The message echoed among many netizens as these seven characters are decontextualized and then recontextualized for many times until they are changed into 这盛世如您所愿. The person who made the change from *ni* (你) to *nin* (您) (the latter is the usual way to address people with respect) insists that special respect and tribute should be paid to Premier Zhou. She insists on correcting the way people address Premier Zhou, who has been very often referred to as 敬爱的周总理 (beloved Premier Zhou). To support the use of the respectful address, while several others follow her line, others add to it with some hidden message. A noticeable one says, "Because history will prove - not everyone deserves to be addressed as *nin* with respect, while Premier Zhou certainly does!" (因为历史会证明：并不是什么人都配用"您"的，但周总理是一定配的). While it legitimises respect for Zhou, it delegitimizes respect for other leaders. Without naming those clearly, it in one way

avoid direct censorship and in another leaves room for people to refer to other Chinese leaders.

Exclaiming that sadly Premier Zhou is not able to witness "this splendid age" in person, one says, "Wish they were still here". As a response to it, someone utilises language creatively as follows,

> "那就完了。。。周还罢了，某人再来一次文 ge，我们就呵呵了."
> Translation: In that case, it will be over...Zhou is ok, but what if someone starts another cultural ***? We will be over.

In this message, 文 ge – using both Chinese character and pinyin - clearly refer to 文革 (cultural revolution), which has been a political taboo in China and thus a censored word on the Internet. The creative use of Chinese language here is a means by which the netizen resist against censorship. Meanwhile, 某人, meaning "someone", without naming the person, point at Mao Zedong, but euphemism is used to avoid government surveillance. Reference is also made to former leaders, including former Premier Wen Jiaobao and Premier Zhu Rongjia in some of these posts. In making reference and comparison, netizens discretely make a definition of a "respectful" leader or a disrespectful one.

The thematic discussion on "Splendid Age" and Premier Zhou demonstrates a sense of national pride about China's rapid development compared with the time when China was just founded, but meanwhile, it reflects a strong sense of nostalgia about former leaders, beloved ones who worked hard for the cause of Chinese people. It, to some extent, suggests people's dissatisfaction with the government today. In addition, while some history is remembered so firmly, others are forgotten; the creative use of language among netizens, to some extent, reminds people of the blanket of amnesia. The problem of selective remembering and forgetting is represented in the popular discourse.

Another notable discourse concerns veterans and the history of the role of the KMT and the CCP in the resistance war. A post asks, "Do you know why China holds such a grand event to commemorate the 70th anniversary"? It then says that is because

there may be no more veterans in next decennial anniversary. In addition to these texts, the post uses nine black-and-white photos of veterans in saluting posture. It has triggered heated discussion among the members of the Parade Bar in Baidu Tieba. Many pay special tribute to the veterans, saying the participation of veterans in the parade was the most emotional moment. Expressions like 鼻头一酸 (a lump came into my throat) and 热泪盈眶 (tear well up in one's eyes) are used to express the swelling emotions they felt for the contribution of all veterans in rescuing the country and winning the victory in the war against Japan. One writes,

> "老兵走在阅兵队伍的最前面，就是给中华民族开了一天鲜血铸成的路。后面的年轻人前赴后继，感觉就是像在说，抗日老兵用血肉之躯保卫国之领土，现在换我们来保卫你们，保卫祖国的和平安康。"
> Translation: Veterans parade at the front, leading the path for Chinese race paved by their blood, and young generations (of soldiers) follow. I feel it narrates that anti-Japanese veterans defended the territory of our nation with their flesh and blood, and now it is our turn to protect them and the peace and safety of our country.

Discursively, it links veterans, young generations, and the fate of China together by appealing to following the veterans' patriotic spirit of safeguarding the nation.

Emotional responses read, for example, "不是他们的英勇抗争，哪来今天的大好河山？" (Without their heroic resistance, how come we have today's beautiful rivers and mountains of our country?), and "这才是真正的英雄，希望他们以后不会被遗忘" (They are the real heroes. Hope they will not be forgotten). Such messages contribute to redefining heroism, which is different from the official construct, and suggest that real heroes are those numerous veterans rather than a particular party. The discourse about patriotism in this case largely focuses on the discourse of heroism and the foregrounding of veterans with intentional backgrounding the CCP. In the following comment, liked by many, who the hero is and who is not is clearly portrayed in the grammatical patterns of 不是...是 (not...but).

> "英雄不是演讲台上意气风发的那个人，也不是胸带勋章受人尊重的那个人，英雄是战场上默默无闻倒下的战士，英雄是敬老院孤苦寂寞的老

汉，英雄是繁华街头拄着拐杖前行的瘸子，英雄是夕阳残照黄叶飘飞的陵园里长眠的无名烈士。英雄的名字无人知晓，英雄的功绩与世长存！”

Translation: Neither is hero the person making speech enthusiastically on the stage, nor the one bearing medals and enjoying respect. Hero is the nameless solider fell down on the front; hero is the lonely old fellow in a nursing home; hero is the crippled person holding a crutch walking on the bustling street; hero is the nameless martyr sleeping in the cemetery with fallen yellow leaves against the sunset. Heroes are nameless, but their credits are immortal.

The lexical parallelism highlights the unmatchable status of real heroes in reality. it can be seen that the definition of the hero is made as individualised, which is in stark contrast to the picture of the grand unity of soldiers showing no individual identity. The definition of heroes under the state framework as displayed as veterans with a chestful of medals are clearly problematised and challenged in the public narratives. Even further, such predicates as “nameless”, “lonely” and “crippled” vividly picture the government’s inappropriate treatment of veterans in China. It points at the CCP’s indifference to remembering those who really deserve the national honour. It strikingly contrasts with the performative foregrounding of veterans by the CCP in the military parade.

Direct criticism is also expressed in relation to the government’s inactivity in commemorating the martyrs and honouring the veterans. For example,

“说句不好听的，国家这方面做的太差了。近几年报道过多少抗战老兵，有几个过的好的，尤其是国军的，真是心酸。茫茫多的老兵都无声无息的走了。”

Translation: Let me put it harshly, our country is doing very poorly in this respect. In recent years, how many news reports are about veterans? How many are living decently, especially the KMT veterans. It is indeed sad. Numerous veterans passed away unknown.

The questions are directed at the limited number of veterans that are appropriately honoured in the society, which contrasts with the huge number of nameless

veterans passing away. The official construction of veteran commemoration, which should be the theme for the V-day event, is, therefore, challenged by the popular discourse about veterans.

Further thematic debate carries on among some netizens regarding the role of the KMT and the CCP in the war and historical remembrance. There is a heated discussion over the question: which party played the pivotal role? In many instances, there are direct conversations between two or several netizens, as demonstrated in Figure 6.5. It shows a debate between two netizens, 吻目 (wenmu) and 摆渡摆渡 1122 (baidubaidu1122). The former speaks for the greater contribution of the KMT, while the latter argues for the important role of the CCP. This conversation has hundreds of threads, with occasionally other netizens (for example 天染之缡 shown in Figure 5) joining in to show support or disagreement with either side.

Figure 6.5 Screenshot of conversations about the role of CCP and KMT in the war



Much support for the KMT camp can be found. It argues for the contribution of the KMT and denounces the official version of the "pivotal role" of the CCP. For example,

> "和鬼子抗衡的真正力量是国民党，毛爷爷等先辈当时只是附属军，农民起义的群龙杂烩，根本没能力和鬼子打…"
> Translation: At that time, the real force fighting against Japanese devils

> was the KMT. Those pioneers such as Grandpa Mao were only subsidiary, the mixed stew of peasants revolution. They did not even have the capability to fight with Japanese devils…
>
> "我就是想说别总是把所有功劳都给红军，把恶名扣国军头上，说句不好听的话，假如没有国军，我想我们现在估计用的是日语."
> Translation: I just want to say, don't give all the credit to Red Army and speak badly about the KMT army. Let me put it coarsely, without the KMT army, we might be using the Japanese language now.

They further appeal to those pro-CCP netizens that they should really learn about history rather than simply read the Chinese textbooks as the history is always written by the winner. That is to remind people that history in Chinese education is just constructed in a certain way by the CCP, who defeated the KMT in the civil war and created the current political regime. The debate tends to develop into the discussion about the current political system and a discourse of democracy emerges. It again shows the division between politically constructed collective memory and social memories, which results in divergent expression of historical remembrance and competing views against the Party-state building projects.

It is worth mentioning that there is massive participation among Weibo users expressing their patriotism for the event. According to a statistical report, the parade-related hashtags, such as "Safeguard the Parade with Your Fingertips" and "I Salute to Veterans", generated up to 35.63 million comments and amounted up to 14.6 billion views within three days (Chinanews 2015). These topics are both initiated by official accounts such as CCTV News, People's Daily and Chinese Youth League and also by other organisations and ordinary netizens. Nonetheless, a review of the tweet contents reveals that a large proportion of official accounts. This constitutes the government's effort in instrumentalising Weibo to maintain control and promote "positive energy" on the Internet[91]. Weibo today, as Sullivan (2014) argues,

[91] Take one for example, the hashtag 指尖护卫大阅兵 (Safeguard the Parade with Your Fingertips) was initiated by an individual account named 千钧客 (meaning a person of strength), stating that "Here I solemnly appeal to cyber soldiers: Take your goose-steps, safeguard the parade with your fingertips, and be participants of the cyber parade". It is to call on Chinese netizens to show their patriotism using their fingers. From his personal identification, it can be seen that he is a communist party member, thereof being very likely that he is part of China's 50-cent Army (government-paid Internet

has been utilised by the Chinese government to its own advantage. Regarding the mediascape of the 2015 V-day event, a predominant feature of the interactions among them in Chinese microblogging sphere, from my observation, is that the huge bubble of positive energy of patriotism is largely created by official accounts online. Meanwhile, many organisations and individuals participate in the discussions for publicity in cyberspaces. In comparison to Weibo, online commentary and discussion forums may allow more discursive space for political communication among netizens.

This section has examined popular discourse in online discussions. It finds that patriotism manifest in the expression of strong emotions and love of the country prevails in cyberspaces, which echoes with the official appeal in the media campaign. Nonetheless, in contrast to the abstraction strategies that give credit to the general "Chinese people" and the foregrounding of the CCP leadership in the official discourse, netizens re-interpret historical remembrance by reflecting upon the role of veterans, in particular, the KMT veterans and reconstructing the myth about victory. The competing narratives imply the lack of respect, the appropriate commemoration of veterans and distortion of the history of the state constructed myth about the war. The thematic user-generated digital contents contribute to the reinterpretation of heroism and patriotism and the reconstruction of the mythscape about China's past of glory and victory. Furthermore, confronting the dominant discursive power of the CCP over China's web, netizens can still enjoy a participatory realm through the use of language, even though in a relatively limited way, to express their opinions and participate in the political communication.

6.3 Comparison and Discussion: Between remembrance of trauma and celebration of victory

This section will bring back the theme of the national humiliation of Chapter 5 and make a comparison between constructing the mythscape of humiliation and that of pride. The two cases have both shown that 1) national commemoration rituals, built upon the war myth, set up profound national framework upon which the nation is visualized and imagined, and 2) while the Internet extends the government

commentators), or a BYOG (Bring Your Own Grainers, referring to voluntary pro-government Internet users).

propaganda antenna and facilitates the state patriotic education, it provides the public with discursive space to reshape the landscape of collective memory and to articulate, negotiate and redefine nationalism and patriotism (further discussion in the concluding chapter). The purpose of this section is to bring the two themes together and compare the discursive construction of humiliation and that of pride and between the top-down official discourse and the bottom-up popular discourse to find out convergences and divergences in nationalist discourses.

The top-down construction

First, when the official discourse about national humiliation (Chapter 5) and that about national pride (Chapter 6) are compared, it reveals that the two are similar in drawing the discursive focus upon depicting the darkness of the past and the brightness of the future. The top-down narratives construct the mythscape of the past primarily for internal stability and the Party's legitimacy. The contrast between the past and the present/future highlights today's China as the positive self on the side of justice, peace and strength, and most importantly, points to the leadership of the CCP as pivotal, thereof appealing to patriotism centred on the party-state. Very often, technology facilitates the government's patriotic indoctrination by adding entertainment elements coated with patriotism.

Second, symbolism plays an important role in the official constructed myth. In addition to the numbers employed in the events representing selective remembrance of the war, my analysis has also shown that humiliation is visualized in the colour of black and sadness is represented in the survivor's tears, and the myth about victory and pride is predominantly portrayed in Chinese red and expressed in the uniformity of the PLA goosesteps. The websites and reports under study particularly deploy visual discursive modes in symbolic representation of the nation.

Third, the use of Chinese cultural framework discursively links the fate of the individual and that of the country in the state discourse. The individual-nation relationship is exemplified in the trauma experienced by the individuals and the slaughtered nation in the Nanjing Massacre. That is also present in the happiness expressed by individuals and the military in relation to the strength of the state displayed in the victory parade. From this perspective, humiliation and pride, and

the individual and the nation, are intertwined in the discursive construction of the official mythscape. This implies that sense of insecurity is upon which sense of security is built upon, and the individual fate is tied with the nation's destiny. Both discursively lead to the constructed myth of the "correct path" of following the CCP's leadership and staying loyal to the Party-state, which is the core nationalist appeal in the official discourse of nationalism. In this sense, nationalism is defined by patriotism, which is largely centred on the loyalty to the Party-state.

However, in the two cases, different discursive strategies are employed in constructing the war mythscape. Strikingly, one of the strategies can be seen from the zooming-in and out of focus on individuals in the official discourse. While specification (i.e. numbers, and survivors) is heavily used in constructing memories about humiliation, abstraction (i.e. Chinese people, and Chinese nation) is used in constructing memories about pride. In the Nanjing Massacre commemoration, the Chinese past is represented in the individual survivors, experienced trauma and shedding tears, whereas the parade consecrates the nation's present as a unified, strong military body. The present is represented visually in the military strength as a stark contrast with the trauma, tragedy and death experienced by individuals when China was bullied and humiliated. The role of individuals, either by means of specification or abstraction, serves the purpose of setting the national frame over the individual stories and strengthening the national unity.

In addition, self and other group distinction is made differently in discourse. In discourse about humiliation, the CCP discursively draws the line between the righteous Chinese and the evil Japanese (militants). It is highlighted in detailed number and "historical facts" how traumatic experience Chinese people have suffered at the hands of the Japanese. Nonetheless, rather than making self and other distinction, the official construction of national pride focuses instead on constructing in-group unity and strengthening belonging. It is evident that the role of the KMT is incorporated into the Chinese state framework of war commemoration. The imagery of unity and belonging is portrayed by bringing closer the soldiers (goose-stepping in the parade at the present and/or fought in the battlefields in the past) and the audience at Tiananmen and even more importantly, thousands of millions of Chinese people in front of their digital devices at home and overseas. Collective imaginary of a strong, united nation-state is facilitated by

technology.

The bottom-up reconstruction

From the bottom-up response to the top-down construct, the discourse about patriotism is clearly a theme in both cases. Evidence has shown that the top-down and bottom-up discourse of nationalism is not always conflicting and rather, they have overlaps in nationalist claims. In the case of humiliation, patriotism is redefined by netizens in light of activities involving Japan, for example travelling to Japan and/or buying Japanese products, and anti-Japanese sentiments were expressed in negative predicates and expressions in support of the Chinese government. In the case of pride, a swell of patriotism and pride demonstrates the resonance of popular discourse with the top-down official construction of loving the country. This exemplifies the compliance and acceptance of patriotism in the popular discourse and diffuses the claim that Chinese nationalism is simply state-led. Nationalism does not always concern national interest and rationality but also patriotic sentiments and aspirations[92].

Notably, what patriotism means today is reshaped in popular narratives. While the official discourse uses the contrast between the past and the present to highlight the importance of the CCP's leadership, the popular discourse, to some extent, draws attention to contrast from different perspectives. For example, they contrast how much the soldiers sacrifice to the nation and how little the veterans are nowadays honoured by the nation, thereby suggesting the lack of appropriate war commemoration by the CCP. They also question the deeds of their fellow citizens and redefine the meaning of being patriotic. While the official constructed myth is heavily concerned with patriotism largely centred on the political legitimacy of the CCP by making the positive-self and negative-other differentiation, patriotism expressed among netizens focuses more on the expression of love of the country and the nuanced content of patriotism. While the official nationalist claims are more centred on internal stability and political legitimacy, popular nationalism targets

[92] This is from both dimensions: at the top, there are patriotic CCP leaders who want to rejuvenate the nation; at the bottom, there are patriotic Chinese citizens who genuinely believe that the nation is a family and that the CCP is leading it on its correct path of development and modernization and claiming back its status of a great nation in the international system.

present problems and the ills of the country. Both dimensions contribute to mythmaking the past, making sense of the present, and envisioning of the future of China.

In the popular discussion, thematic debate surrounds forgotten history, including the Great Leap Forward and the role of the KMT in the resistance war. It displays the divergence in collective remembering in the official narratives and the popular ones. The mythscape of those forgotten histories is re-constructed by netizens in cyberspace through their digital-mediated communication and interaction. This dimension has shown the competing nature of collective memories, which are not static and fixed notions but a page upon which remembrance of the past is written and rewritten. The digital page is written and rewritten not only by the state but also by Chinese netizens through digital practices.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the discursive construction of the mythscape of national pride in the 2015 V-day commemoration event. It firstly looked into the historical significance of holding military parade at Tiananmen since the founding of PRC in 1949, which demonstrates that military parades have been important national rituals in constructing national pride and shaping national identity. It then illuminated the spatial shift of the parade from Tiananmen to the Internet, highlighting the increasingly important role of the Internet as a discursive realm where the Chinese government takes advantage of technology in implementing its publicity campaigns to frame public opinions. This section served as important contextualization for the case study on the 2015 V-day parade.

The second section focused on the case study of the 2015 V-day parade. It examined the temporal shift of the military parade from the regular National Day celebration to an unprecedented V-day commemoration. My analysis of the discursive performance of the commemorative event of V-day has shown that symbolism has been instrumentally used in the official construction of Chinese national victory and pride and that the official appeal for patriotism is evident in the performative uniformity of the troops in the parade. The frequent use of the inclusive term “Chinese people” explicates the changed official narratives of war remembrance, which used to be mainly centred on the CCP being the saviour of the nation. By

holding the first national V-day and giving credit to the KMT veterans, the CCP intends to discursively include the KMT into its narrative of commemoration and ultimately strengthen its own political legitimacy built upon the reconstructed war myth. Meanwhile, Chinese people is represented as victor in the V-day which essentially manifest the government move in changing the identity of a vulnerable war victim to a strong war victor, and therefore, China is represented in military parade as a strong nation, which is more evidently symbolised through digital, visual modes of communication. The official discourse, both in textual, image and video forms, have been widely used in and thus dominated the online realm across major websites.

My analysis then proceeded to that of the popular response to the massive official media campaign and focused on analysing online commentary and discussion forums. Empirical research has shown the construction of the national past is not simply one-way from the top-down, but also from the grassroots. First of all, there is a prevalent sense of national pride evidenced in netizen's close personal engagement with the parade on the Internet and in their expression of strong emotions and attachment to the country. Second, in comparison to the official discourse in social actor representation, netizens foreground veterans, including the KMT veterans, as the most honourable group and reflect upon China's historical remembrance by directly discussing the role of the KMT and the CCP in the war. It may potentially undermine the political legitimacy that the CCP has intended to consolidate in its event campaign. Third, creative use of language is a means by which the CCP's dominant power is resisted online. It contributes to the reshaping of the media event and the reconstructing of the mythscape of China's national past. The following chapter will address the research findings and draw conclusions on the dynamics between the Chinese state and society as well as the role of the Internet in China's social transformation.

Chapter 7 Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis has focused on how the mythscape of national humiliation and national pride is shaped and reshaped in online discourse. It analysed how China's national myths of the Second Sino-Japanese War are constructed and reconstructed in the changing interplay between state and society. It also addresses how the Internet intersects with mythscape in remembrance of trauma and victory in Chinese online nationalism. While the nation-state is not a visible entity, national symbols and rituals provide a profound framework through which the nation can be visualised and imagined as a unified entity. Of particular significance, among all other national symbols and rituals, are those concerning war memories, as war can generate a set of national myths that lodge in the consciousness of the population and thus become a framework for explaining events and evaluating self-positioning in the world (Hutchinson 2009, 401-2).

This thesis has adopted an ethno-symbolist approach to nationalism studies and applied a discourse analytical framework. It examines the centrality of war myths in the creation and recreation of national identity. The emphasis of ethno-symbolism on history, culture, memory and symbols is especially useful for this research. It has allowed me to draw attention to historical and cultural dimensions and to examine Chinese nationalism as an intersubjective construction between state nationalism and popular nationalism. My study highlights that an ethnosymbolic framework is helpful in providing a more nuanced understanding of Chinese nationalism from a historical and cultural dimension. I regard online nationalism as predominantly discursive, as it is constituted by the use of language, both verbal and non-verbal, in meaning-making. A discourse analytical framework thus enables me to pay attention to the discursive dimension of nationalism through the lens of both the top-down construction and the bottom-up reception and reconstruction, and to gain an insight into the power relationship between state and society. My research primarily focused on discourse (in both textual and visual modes) relating to national humiliation and national pride that constitute the two key ingredients of Chinese nationalism (as identified in Chapter 2). Two cases were chosen for

empirical investigation: Chapter 5 on the commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre and Chapter 6 on the 2015 Victory Day Parade.

The study argues that Chinese online nationalism is constructed by a multiplicity of discourses via digital practices, characterised by the evolving dynamics between state and society. It disagrees with the assumption that Chinese nationalism is simply state-led. National symbols, myths and rituals have been produced and reproduced by both state and non-state actors through their discursive practices on the Internet. In this dynamic, the impact of digital-mediated communication on Chinese nationalism is manifest in two ways. First, national rituals of war commemoration, as an important means of patriotic education for the CCP, have been "relocated" from physical spaces such as Nanjing and Tiananmen to a virtual space – cyberspace. By incorporating technology into patriotic education, the CCP increasingly extends its discursive power in propagating patriotism, thereby making the Internet an institutionalised patriotic education venue. Second, online nationalist expressions and communication provide a rich ground for Chinese Internet users to explore their discursive space in political communication, reshaping the mythscape of the national past and reconstructing national identity.

This final chapter discusses the research findings and addresses the theoretical, methodological and political implications. It firstly summarises the key empirical findings of this research. It then re-visits the theoretical framework, highlighting the significance of examining Chinese nationalism in the political and cultural contexts within which they are embedded and reflects upon the methodological choice of doing discourse analysis. After that, it situates this research in the broader context of the rise of China and makes political implications of my study. Finally, it discusses the contributions and limitations of the study and directs attention to potential areas for future research.

7.1 Key empirical findings

My research has focused on two essential themes of Chinese nationalism - national humiliation and national pride - and highlighted that the landscape of Chinese nationalism is reshaped by a multiplicity of discourses via digital practices, characterised by the evolving dynamics between state and society. The key findings from the empirical investigation are as follows.

First, humiliation and pride, as important ingredients in both constructed political memory and embedded social memory, are often intertwined in the discourse of Chinese nationalism. While the discourse about national humiliation suggests the contrast between the dark past and a bright future, the discourse about national pride often brings back the memory of darkness and trauma to highlight national achievements and boost confidence in national rejuvenation. There is an evident inter-discursive relationship between humiliation and pride in the nationalist narratives. As shown in the empirical data, the suffering and/or the glory of the past, the achievements of the present and aspirations for the future are closely linked in the discourse of nationalism. Very often, cultural markers, such as family, that associate individual fate with national destiny strengthen the discursive links. Shame and glory set the cultural realm (as addressed in Chapter 3 on cultural contextualization), in which the Chinese government can effectively use the concept of national humiliation and national pride in the construct of collective memory and the (re-)definition of patriotism. Given the impact of history and culture on the construction of nationalism, this thesis argues that the understanding of contemporary Chinese nationalism cannot be understood thoroughly without situating it in its cultural and political structure.

Second, the Chinese government has taken a dominant approach to instrumentalising war commemoration in shaping victim/victor narratives and (re)constructing national identity. The dominance of the official discourse, both textual and visual, is facilitated by digital communication, framing the digital mediascape for patriotic education. The empirical study shows that remembrance of the past is selective under the national framework. The Nanjing Massacre commemoration case has highlighted that humiliation is specified, in much detail, in numbers, facts, emotions and dark colours, making distinct us and them representation in the victimisation narratives. National trauma is explicitly represented in the individual suffering of civilians, often among the raped, crying women and the dead bodies of children, which discursively depicts the vulnerability and the suffering of the nation. In contrast, the Victory celebration case has shown that pride and glory are performed in abstract uniformity and invulnerability by the PLA soldiers, which intends to visually construct national strength and national unity. The recent incorporation of the KMT's contribution to the war into official

remembrance reflects the CCP's new historical narratives and the effort to emphasise Chinese victor identity in constructing the war myth. In these two cases, national mythmaking focuses on the weakness of the past and highlights the present strength of the nation, thereby jointly reinforcing claims for national unity and the CCP's legitimacy.

Third, the Internet offers a discursive space for Chinese citizens to participate in political communication and practices (which was not available in the pre-Internet era), and it has become an important social force in the construction of memory and identity. This makes Chinese nationalism more contested and pluralized in the digital age. The analysis of the online popular discourse suggests that history and memory, consisting of both remembering and forgetting, involves memory contestation; the Internet provides the discursive space for contested memory. Noticeably, on the one hand, the official patriotic discourse is resonated, to some extent, by the popular discourse online. Social memories of the war provide the foundation upon which the official projects of war myth-making can find material recourses and generate resonance. Besides, cultural elements of the individual/group relationship are helpful in generating public resonance and strengthening national belonging. On the other hand, resistance is found in the popular discourse, which challenges constructed collective remembrance and highlights the problem of forgetting in the official narratives. It brings about the multiplication of forgotten histories and underplayed problems into political communication. The empirical data in both case studies evidences the divergence of memory politics between state and society. Nonetheless, despite the differences between the nationalist claims from the above and those from below, as well as among the voices within netizens themselves, differences and divisions can be contributing factors in the construction of contemporary Chinese nationalism. Nationalist sentiments from below are selectively empowered by the adaptive state and become integrated into the framework of the state-propagated patriotism. The online nationalist scenario reflects the discursive construction of national identity as a recurring process in the state-society dynamics.

Finally, due to the state dominance, nationalism is used as a discursive toolbox from which Chinese netizens explore their discursive power in the realm of China's politics. As censorship and self-censorship constitute the online environment of

unequal power relations between state and society, digital practices are the means by which netizens resist state dominance and actively explore their discursive power. More often than not, nationalist claims are the safe venue for exercising and exploring discursive power. To circumnavigate censorship, very often netizens participate in political communication in creative ways, and real meanings are hidden in creative language use, creating an emerging and evolving Internet culture. As the case studies have shown, their digital practices contribute to not only meaning-making through the reassessment of the past but also changing state-society power dynamics by gaining discursive power.

7.2 Theoretical and methodological implications

My research has adopted an ethno-symbolism approach to nationalism studies and used a discourse analytical framework for understanding the construction of Chinese online nationalism. This section aims to make theoretical implications for nationalism theory and reflect upon using critical discourse analysis on a non-Western case.

7.2.1 Nationalism theory

Most of the research on Chinese nationalism, as noted in the introduction and the review of the literature, tend to either focus on its instrumental dimension for political legitimacy or regard it as an independent variable in driving policy outcome. There is largely a deficit in a more nuanced understanding of the construct of Chinese nationalism, and the understanding also needs to be updated with empirical data concerning the use of new communication technology. This thesis is among the first research to adopt ethnosymbolism to the analysis of Chinese nationalism in the backdrop of the new phase of political communication in contemporary China.

Ethno-symbolism provides a useful theoretical perspective for my research to examine the national myths constructed and reconstructed on the Internet. This theoretical approach has guided me to investigate the role of collective memory and mythmaking in (re)constructing Chinese nationalism in the digital age. Under the theoretical guidance of ethnosymbolism, this thesis regards it significant to take into consideration the change and dynamics in understanding nationalism. This study has provided rich historical analysis of national commemoration demonstrating that

us/them representation has undergone a dramatic change and the construct of Chinese national identity has altered its content and ideological focus from Mao's era to the post-Mao's era. The discursive construct of national humiliation and national pride has shifted along with the changing international environment and domestic political subjectivity. The alteration is an ongoing process. The changes and dynamics, as demonstrated in my case studies, diffuse the primordial approach to nationalism studies, which regards nationalism as a development of much older processes of ethnicity and take social existence as unchanging.

The strength of this theoretical stance for this thesis was evident in two particular ways. One is its historical and cultural dimensions, which is essential to a more nuanced understanding of Chinese nationalism. This thesis has looked into the role of national myths and symbols that are largely discursive in nature in the construct of Chinese nationalism over time. It has highlighted the importance of contextualization. In this thesis, contextualization was conducted in an examination of relevant Chinese cultural elements on the notion of humiliation, pride and legitimacy in Chapter 3, and also in the historical analysis sections in both Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. Additionally, my research has examined the cultural aspects of language use as well as the role of technology in the construction of nationalism. Specifically, my analysis includes the cultural aspect of language use, in terms of both Chinese traditions but also the emergent Internet culture. The cultural factors of online nationalism include not only traditional understanding of the individual-group relationship but also new culture unfolding on the Internet as important social contexts. By doing so, my research makes an original contribution to the application of general Western theory in the study of a non-Western case.

The second theoretical strength lies in its perspective that nation building is not simply an elite project, but rather constitutes complex interplay between elite and various sections of the wider population. Instrumental interpretations of national myths as elite inventions fail to recognise the plurality of myth production and ignore aspects of popular resonance (Hutchinson 2009, 412). Elite projects, without capabilities to generate popular resonance and to interact with public opinions, cannot hold gain legitimacy. This is also relevant for an authoritarian country like China.

Rejecting the modernist understanding of nationalism, this thesis has provided empirical support for ethnosymbolism. The thesis argues that nationalism is not simply about state construction, but rather, it evolves through the interaction between elite projects and popular nationhood. This is not to discard the instrumental use of memory and history by the elites, but to shift some attention onto the popular reception. The empirical data evidenced that there are strong sentiments expressed by the people toward the country demonstrated in the swell of patriotism and sense of pride (see for example section 6.2.3 in Chapter 6). Besides, their essential understanding of being patriot can be different from the official portrayal of patriotism (see for example section 5.3.3.2 in Chapter 5). Through the reconstruction of the past, some historical memories are refilled with meaning for today[93]. This is done not only from the top-down forces but also from the bottom-up. The competing narratives from below have an interactive relationship with the state-produced myths. On the one hand, popular narratives are framed by the official narratives through institutions such as historical education and cultural products. On the other, they can become sources of government patriotic mobilisations and provide new ingredients for the state nation-building projects.

Under the theoretical framework of ethno-symbolism, this thesis takes into consideration change and dynamics in understanding nationalism. My research provided rich historical analysis of national commemoration demonstrating that "us/them" representation has undergone a dramatic change, and the construction of Chinese national identity has altered its content and ideological focus from Mao to the reform era. The content about national humiliation and national pride, as well as the emphasis in collective remembering, has shifted along with the changing international and domestic environment. The alteration is an ongoing process. These changes, as demonstrated in my case studies, reject the primordial approach to nationalism studies, which regards nationalism as a development of much older processes of ethnicity and take social existence as unchanging. In addition, in the ongoing changing construction of nationalism, the dynamics between elite projects

[93] For instance, in the case of the national victory parade, in comparison the role of the KMT, it is questionable to give much credit to the CCP for the victory, as shown in the popular discussion on the war history. Therefore, to gain more claim for political legitimation, the Chinese government has announced the extension of the war from eight years of resistance to fourteen years of resistance. This timeframe includes the partial war starting in the Northeast part of China in 1931, in which the CCP played a more noticeable role in fighting against Japanese aggression, in comparison to largely the non-resistance of the KMT regime.

and popular reception is important, which means that nationalism is not simply about state construction. Rather, it evolves through the interaction between elite projects and popular nationhood.

7.2.2 Discourse Studies

Arguing the significance of language use, the thesis regards online nationalism as predominantly discursive. Discourse is the primary arena in which power and meaning-making play out and are joined together in online nationalism. The Internet has provided new discursive space in which power relations are both embedded and changed through language use. This thesis has presented the methodological application of taking a critical approach to Chinese discourse studies. It has provided me with the tools to assess the state-society power relations in the digital age and renovate the understanding of Chinese nationalism through the lens of digital communicative practices. Cyberspace has replaced traditional geography (Spiegel 2000, 123), in the sense that the discursive realm of political communication and participation has shifted from physical locations (i.e. Nanjing and Tiananmen) to the virtual space of the Internet, as shown in both my case studies. The spatial shift highlights the necessity to understand the politics of nationalism through the digital lens, ultimately through the online use of language.

This thesis has shown that digital technologies have changed the means by which the landscape of Chinese nationalism is shaped. On the one hand, the government has to confront the emergence of Internet-enabled social forces and adapt to the change to maintain its dominance over online discourse. The adaptation strategies are manifest in the massive state media campaigns for the war commemoration events. With the help of audio and video, digitised political memory tells the myth of national humiliation and pride, more evidently and effectively, to the public. As shown in my study, the Chinese government has propagated the events through different digital platforms reaching greater audiences, and potentially more young people. Increasingly, to sustain its discursive dominance, the Chinese government has to adapt to new communication modes and set up a new governing pattern (for example Hung 2012). Notably, the traditional propaganda language is also modernised through new Internet features that make it more palatable to the public.

On the other hand, the Internet opens up the discursive space for nationalism to be expressed, articulated and redefined by pluralized online social forces. Online discourse studies thus should not be confined to the arbitrary centrality of the state despite its dominance. The realm of collective memories involves "dialogization" (Duszak 2013, 212), which means an interactive process of meaning negotiation between state and society. Evidenced in my research, it is in state-society dynamics that the mythscape is re-constructed and the meaning of nationalism is redefined; it is particularly the case in the digital age. Through participating in online activities (such as commenting, responding, reading, or paying tribute), netizens re-fill in contemporary nationalism with different ingredients. The digital practices have allowed netizens the means by which to use language in new ways. Such changes and reinterpretations, manifest in the online use of language in this research, are critical for the shaping of national identity and the persistence of nations (Smith 2009, 21).

7.2.3 Research methods

The thesis has employed tools from both the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) and the Multimodal approach (as outlined in Chapter 4). The discourse analytical framework has provided me with useful tools to analyse Chinese online discourse, in both textual and non-textual forms. This thesis contributes to the application of CDA in three ways. First, the majority of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) application on China studies has focused on education, English teaching, movie analysis, and foreign political leaders' speech. This thesis focuses on the use of language in Chinese politics of nationalism and contributes to the application of CDA in the Chinese case (see other examples such as Sandby-Thomas 2011 on the stability discourse). Second, CDA work has mostly focused on mass media such as newspapers and television, rather than digital-mediated discourse. This thesis presented the shift of focus from mass media to digital media. Just as Tannen and Trester suggest, viewing digital-mediated discourse from a discourse-as-social-practice perspective pertains to a shift of focus onto "how discourse in the new media shape the production of knowledge and the negotiations of power relations among participants in public online encounters" (2013, 48). Third, the application of CDA was conducted with careful consideration of the Chinese context. In this study, the use of language involves not only Chinese linguistic and cultural elements but also the emergent Internet culture that makes discourse pluralized. For the study of

online discourse in a non-Western case, both traditional culture and new Internet culture are essential for the CDA framework.

In taking this methodological stance, I am aware of the potential problems of using the Western methodology in analysing a non-Western case. In the application process, I have encountered difficulties in choosing usable approaches and figuring out useful analytical tools to make sense of the Chinese online discourse. I tried to minimise these difficulties by conducting a pilot study, bringing a Chinese discourse studies perspective into my analysis and justifying my analytical tools according to the features of the data. To make CDA more usable, I also considered the perspective of Chinese discourse studies and justified my analytical tools according to the features of the data. For instance, given the different features and modalities of data collected, I included both the DHA approach and the multimodal approach in my analytical toolkit and drew different focus in analysing data in each theme. Using different tools may potentially influence the systematic procedure of doing analysis, but the flexibility allows space to maximise research findings on the basis of research data.

Admittedly, my methodological decisions have influenced the perspective through which I study nationalism, the means by which I collect data and the way I interpret the empirical data. While the cases I selected focus on war commemoration events, my interpretation of Chinse nationalism may fail to capture the ongoing nationalist events regarding geopolitical issues such as the South China Sea territorial dispute, which can be a useful alternative empirical source. In addition, considering online nationalism as predominantly discursive, this study selected discourse analysis framework and used different analytical tools based on the features of the data. To improve the methodoligcal approach, future research could use other methods such as interview for supplementary data and explore the integration of DHA and multimodal framework in the study of online discourse.

7.3 Political implications

This thesis has illuminated the complex facets of Chinese online nationalism - consisted of national humiliation and pride, reflecting victim and victor identity, and evolving in the changing state-society relations. This section will draw out implications by situating the research in the context of the rise of China and Xi

Jinping's leadership. It specifically addresses three dimensions – China's identity politics, the CCP's political legitimacy and online activism.

7.3.1 Identity politics: continuity and change

One important question regarding the mythmaking of Chinese history has been raised since the 1990s - is national commemoration more about celebration for victory or remembrance of trauma? This question is not simply about what to remember about the war, but ultimately a question regarding national identity. The content of history and memory not only defines group goals and missions but also leads people to interpret the world through lenses defined by this particular purpose (Wang Z. 2008, 804). As highlighted in my thesis, the national myths China makes out of its past provide a window to the changes to Chinese national identity and its self-positioning in the international society.

Historically, the CCP has come into power by being nationalist, and today it is becoming more nationalist. Nonetheless, the essential content and focus of nationalism are different. As elaborated in my historical analysis, there has been a significant change in the construct of national identity since the PRC was founded in 1949. In the Mao era, the nationalist emphasis was on the *victor* identity of revolutionary heroism, and historical memories were shaped around the victor narrative about Chinese triumphs in removing "three mountains" – imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism. When it came to the reform and opening-up era under Deng's leadership, it witnessed a shift in focus onto pragmatic nationalism largely in favour of economic development and reform. The post-Tiananmen era saw the transitional phase of bringing back *victim* narratives about Chinese suffering. The victor narrative that has dominated the first three decades thus has been significantly challenged by the discourse about national humiliation in the nationwide campaign (Gries 2005). National humiliation has remained an important ingredient in the construct of Chinese national identity, as shown in the Nanjing Massacre commemoration case.

Along with the rise of China, there has been a shift in discourse from victimhood to victor-hood. Increasingly, the economic-nationalist approach is insufficient to generate political legitimacy, and the victim mentality can be a serious impediment to the nation-building project. Under the leadership of Xi Jinping as the third core

leader of the CCP, we see a notable shift in emphasis onto the *victor* identity in the stories China is trying to tell and the way that China engages with the world. While nationalist ideology used to be heavily focused on humiliation-based patriotism, an increasing amount of attention will be drawn on pride-based patriotism in Xi's era. The Chinese identity transitions (from victor to victim and again to victor) suggest that while national salvation was the core to its nationalist claims in the Mao era, and national development was the goal in Deng's era, for Xi's era, it is national rejuvenation that serves as the primary engine.

Under the new nationalist banner, the cultural roots of Chinese civilisation and the past of Chinese *ethnie* (referring to earlier ethnic communities), once regarded as the roots of the backwardness of China, are now resourceful grounds upon which the CCP generates public resonance and strengthens its legitimacy. The revival of Chinese civilisation has been adopted as the profound substance of China's rise (see for example Horner 2009, 168). In the light of today's successes and political needs, the past civilisation is politically re-appreciated. Under Xi's leadership, the role of historical ethnie and past civilisation will be more heavily employed in the official discourse. As Smith claims, "to forge a nation today, it is vital to create and crystallise ethnic components, the lack of which is likely to constitute a serious impediment to "nation-building" (Smith 1986, 17). While the cultural roots were nearly eradicated in Mao's era in the name of revolutionary struggle and national salvation, it is necessary for the CCP today to replant cultural roots and reclaim the civilisations of the ethnie past as a response to the new national condition (*guoqing*, 国情). Strategic ties and twist of traditional culturalism and modern nationalism can be essential to the incorporation of popular nationalism into state nationalism.

Despite the fact that both national humiliation and national pride are important ingredients in the construct of Chinese nationalism, China under Xi's leadership is under the transition from humiliation-based nationalism to pride-based nationalism. My research has shown that the CCP continues to remind people of the humiliating past (as shown in the Nanjing Massacre commemoration), whereas at the same time the new war narratives shift the emphasis of historical remembrance onto Chinese being a victor of the war and being a contributor to the world peace (as shown in the Victory Day parade). The shift signifies the different frame that the CCP uses to re-construct war myths and re-formulate Chinese victor-hood. The never-forget-

national-humiliation narrative has been heavily employed for more than two decades. However, now nationalist pride in reclaiming China's status and realising "Chinese dream" can be more fundamental to the Party's political legitimacy and social stability. Given the rise of China, legitimacy for the CCP does not only concern its political legitimacy at home but also China's image and legitimacy for its global role.

While the sense of inferiority and victimhood may be likely to trigger aggressive nationalism and even xenophobia, a sense of pride and victorhood can instil nationalism with a sense of confidence and openness, which is essential for China (see for example Pan 2015). Wang Yiwei (2006) argues that China should avoid the use of history about national humiliation in shaping Chinese national identity and positioning China in the international system because it hinders the positive identity construction of Chinese national identity. In view of the heavy dose of humiliation narratives in China's historical remembrance, many Chinese scholars today advocate the importance of promoting "great-power mentality", which requires confidence and rationality (Beijing Daily 2017). Li Zonggui thinks that Chinese people should change their complex from humiliation to pride and become confident and open-minded (ibid.). Confidence and open-mindedness can be contributing factors to peaceful rise of China.

Nonetheless, the transition from victimhood to victor-hood cannot happen overnight. The "history issue", as He Yinan argues, does not only involve "the misunderstandings between countries" but also, if not more importantly, "the domestic political and social ailments that generate them" (2007, 67). It is difficult to easily shift the war narratives and shape national identity when generations still remember what they have been taught at school about national humiliation and what their parents and grandparents told them at home about their personal experiences of suffering. Particularly when they are still consuming anti-Japanese products including TV series and online games on a daily basis. Thus, humiliation narratives remain an essential part of the historical remembrance. Another critical issue concerns instrumental, selective remembrance. When Chinese national identity has been shaped upon the dominant official narratives, there is "a debt of memory" that needs to be addressed in contemporary China (see for example, Lim 2014). The "debt of memory", which also reflects the gap between political memory

and social memory, may greatly limit the effectiveness of new national myths constructed by the state. These issues in historical remembrance may make it difficult to smoothly shift the narratives from being a victim to a victor in the construction of Chinese nationalism. The next section will address the implications of this research for the CCP's political legitimacy today.

7.3.2 Political legitimacy: domestic and beyond

Nationalism is an inseparable component of contemporary Chinese political culture that provides a base for the CCP to nurture its political legitimacy. Nonetheless, it is also commonly held that nationalism is a double-edged sword for the CCP (Gries 2005; Weiss 2014; Zhao 2004). On the one hand, it could help authorities to consolidate power and promote political solidarity by focusing animosity on external opponents, but on the other, it can put pressure on the government and cause backfire against its legitimacy to rule. As demonstrated in the thesis, the CCP has managed to take the digital means for nationalist mobilisation in the commemoration events. The online state campaigns have effectively publicised the events among netizens through the online media outlets and aroused public awareness of historical remembrance. This contributes to bolstering public support for nationalistic projects and policies in dealing with Sino-Japanese history issues. However, online grievances concerning the forgotten histories (i.e. Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution) and the debate over the role of the KMT in the War put under scrutiny the official nationalist narratives. As such, they invite criticism directed toward the CCP, which may undermine public belief in its political legitimacy.

The double-edged effect of nationalism has been acknowledged by many scholars (as addressed in Chapter 2). However, it should be noted that it is not only one claim that echoes within the academic circle, but rather, it has confronted the Chinese government on many occasions where the officials found popular nationalism run out of control (for example, the 2012 anti-Japanese demonstration escalated to riots in cities like Xi'an). From such cases, the Chinese government has faced and learned about the double-edged sword effect of nationalism, and therefore it is more likely to use the nationalist card more cautiously. In the face of the changing nationalist scenario in China, the Chinese government's role in these nationalist cases is not always monolithically facilitative. The least desirable scenario

for the CCP is to stand in opposition to popular nationalists, which would seriously damage the basis for its political legitimacy[94]. Notably, the CCP has taken "an agile, responsive, and creative" effort to re-legitimate the regime (Holbig and Gilley 2010, 395). It is quick to adapt to new national conditions to maintain its capacity to rule, as is manifest in the state response to the rise of Internet use in the thesis.

As regards political legitimacy, there is a wide gulf between Western perspectives and the Chinese perspective. Many studies have suggested that Chinese traditions still play an important role in maintaining political legitimacy in contemporary China (Tong 2011; Zeng 2014, 2016; Zhu 2011; also see discussion in Chapter 3). Zeng's research has revealed a remarkable cleavage between Western perceptions and Chinese understandings of political legitimacy. He argues that unlike many Western scholars, who place a strong emphasis on the CCP's legitimacy and consider ideology obsolete, Chinese intellectuals regard ideology as a crucial strategy to maintain legitimacy, as performance legitimacy is not sufficient to keep the CCP in power (Zeng 2014; 2016). Zeng (2016, 15-23) elaborates the CCP's ideological strategy, dividing ideology[95] into formal ideology, which justifies its communist rule, and informal ideology, which legitimises its authoritarian rule. For Zeng, informal ideology, including nationalism and cultural values, is "a kind of short-term solution that has a shelf life rather than more fundamental things" (2016, 22). This thesis, however, would suggest that rather than a short-term solution, informal ideology is pivotal to the CCP's political legitimacy, because it constitutes the essential link between state and society. Admittedly, there are potential problems in the CCP's use of informal ideology; for instance, nationalism may cause backfire, and some cultural elements are obsolete. Nonetheless, The CCP needs both formal and informal ideology to consolidate its rule, and very importantly, informal ideology can provide useful elements for nationalist mobilisation and social integration, ultimately justifying the CCP's rule across society. Therefore, nationalism, in conjunction with the cultural ties of China's ethnie past, will play a more significant

94 For example, in their study of social protests in contemporary China, Tong and Lei (2014) found that repression was extremely rare, consisting of only 2.8% of protests, and more than 90% of these cases were either tolerated or compensated by the government. They think the reason lies in the principle of moral responsibility deeply rooted in Chinese political culture. It encourages the masses to demand justice from the rulers and urges the rulers to respond to maintain political legitimacy (Tong and Lei 2014).

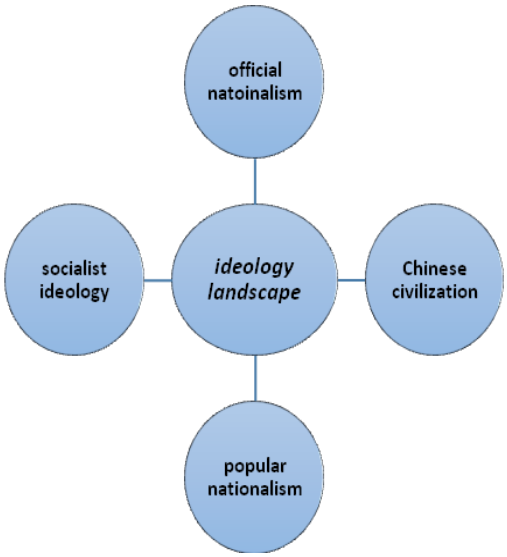
95 According to Zeng (2016), formal ideology, such as Jiang Zemin's Three Represents, Hu Jintao's Scientific Outlook of Development, is employed to justify its communist rule particularly among the CCP member audience; informal ideology, such as nationalism and values, is used to justify the authoritarian rule to the entire society (including the party).

role in the CCP's legitimation, especially as the line between formal and informal ideology is becoming increasingly blurred.

In the official nation-building projects, informal ideology (i.e. nationalism and cultural values) can be incorporated into state formal ideology in developing socialism with Chinese characteristics. It, to some extent, reflects the CCP's resilience to the changing national condition. Chinese cultural roots and the ethnie past will be useful for the CCP to accommodate the divergences between state nationalism and popular nationalism, generate public support and maintain political legitimacy. The CCP will continue to combine informal ideology with formal ideology to create consensus both within the Party and across society. Just as Callahan (2015, 983) remarks, China's ideological transition is from communism to "a curious combination of socialism and Chinese civilisation". Formal ideology (i.e. socialism) is integrated with informal ideology (civilisation and culture) in the CCP's ideological innovation.

I would further propose that the landscape of ideological innovation in China today is increasingly shaped in the socialist/civilisation integrating mechanism and driven by the official/popular nationalism dynamics, as illustrated in Figure 7.1. In the face of new challenges for political legitimacy, the CCP has to constantly change and react by bringing useful elements together in its nation-building projects. As contemporary Chinese political culture is still significantly influenced by the political legacy of the Mass Line (群众 路线, *qunzhong luxian*) (see Tang 2016, 5-9), to generate public resonance and to mobilise public support, the CCP needs to incorporate Chinese cultural values into its socialist agenda, use more elements of Chinese civilisation and speak the populist language.

Figure 7.1. Ideology landscape in the official/popular nationalism and socialism/civilisation dynamics



While it is already manifest in Hu Jintao's notion of "Harmonious Society" and "Peaceful Rise", the re-Sinicization of political discourses has been institutionalised as one nation-building project under Xi Jinping's leadership. Since Xi came into office, he launched the Chinese Dream campaign, which is a clear manifestation of drawing the discursive link of nation-state-people under the state historical and cultural framework. Chinese Dream, with the Core Socialist Values as its central pillar, represents a strategic shift in ideological construction for its political legitimacy (Gow 2017). The Core Socialist Values make explicit the combination of socialist ideology and Chinese civilisation and constitute a crystallisation of CCP values in contrast to Western liberal values. The combination of formal and informal ideology intends to speak to a wide range of audiences, including intra-Party members and other audiences at home (and even beyond). The framework argues that liberal democracy does not work for China and China should take its own path with a political system featuring Chinese characteristics (for example, Gow 2017; Pan 2009; Wang S. 2009; Zheng Y. 2010). It represents an ideological turn from China's "peaceful rise" to China's "peaceful revival". To further de-legitimise Western liberal democracy, the recent cases of Brexit in the UK and President Trump of the United States provide useful sources for the CCP to emphasise its claims for the "Chineseness" of the political system. Nonetheless, given the tension between socialism and Chinese traditions in its ideological strategy, the effectiveness depends on to what extent it can speak to its intended audience and to what extent the CCP can limit the space for alternative discourses.

Another dimension of legitimacy for China, as a rising power, concerns its external legitimacy in the international community. Many scholars draw attention to the "legitimacy turn" that highlights the interplay between power and legitimacy in the changing dynamics in the international structure (for example Clark 2014; Mulligan 2006; Zhang Y. 2015). For China to achieve or regain its great power status, China needs to struggle for social recognition in international society and secure the legitimacy of its power (Zhang Y. 2015, 315). Notably, the CCP's nationalist claim used to "not to be beaten" (不挨打, *buaida*) during Mao's era and then "not to be starved" (不挨饿, *buai'e)* in Deng's era. Today the CCP is trying to raise China's discursive power (话语权, *huayu quan*) in international society so as "not to be criticised" (不挨骂, *buaima*). While the CCP has long been criticised by the international community for playing the history card and fanning the nationalist flame, the CCP's recent moves in war commemoration, as shown in the thesis, explicates the government stance to publicise China's war experience to the international audience. In addition to publicising China's history, Chinese government initiatives, including One Belt One Road (OBOR) and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), are ultimately aimed at reforming global governance and putting China back to the centre of the world (for example Zhao 2016). In addition, a growing number of scholars look into concepts from Chinese ancient civilisations and philosophy and introduce a Chinese-style normative framework for international relations (for example Qin 2005, 2011; Yan 2008, 2011; Zhao T. 2006).

Nonetheless, domestic legitimacy may be gained at the expense of international legitimacy (and vice versa). For instance, in the case of the Victory Day parade, while the military parade helps the CCP to promote sense of national pride and consolidate public support for its rule, it is regarded as threatening by international audience, which may be counterproductive to China's national image. In addition, due to the underlying gulf in ideological and cultural contexts between China and the West, the Chinese stories and models, framed with an increasing amount of unique Chineseness, often fail to reach the intended audience with its intended messages[96]. The predicament for China is how China's stories can be told when

[96] For example, *My life, My China* is a collection of videos co-produced by Guan Video and China Institute of Fudan University. It tells stories about China from individual Chinese who are all Party-members and work in the media industry. This series of videos was released on YouTube targeting at the

people turn deaf ears in the first place. The question is also in which framework the stories can be better told – a Chinese one or a Western one. Due to the constraints of international practices and the lack of a clear vision, the Chinese state media fails to provide an alternative framework of discourse when promoting China's voice and image to the international audience (Zhang X. 2013). Furthermore, international legitimacy is more intimately connected with domestic legitimacy especially for great powers (Zhang Y. 2015, 317). The challenges for the CCP's legitimacy at home may problematise its legitimacy in the international community. The following section will make implications for the use of the Internet in China.

7.3.3 Cyberspace: power and activism

The contemporary landscape of online nationalism in China has highlighted that digital-mediated communication has changed state-society dynamics and reshaped the politics of nationalism. Online state-society dynamics, as examined in the thesis, reveals that state and society exhibit a complicated relationship under China's transformation in the information era. The Chinese state and society are mutually transformative via their engagement with (and disengagement from) each other in the Internet-mediated space (Zheng Y. 2008). The case of China, as Hughes (2004) has also rightly claimed, provides ample evidence that reminds us that the impact of ICTs is determined as much by the political and cultural contexts within which they are embedded, as it is by the nature of the technology itself. Internet use should be contextualised in the complex political dynamics in Chinese cyberspace. If research into online censorship practices[97] and digital activism in China focuses too much on the direct censorship and online resistance, it may limit the analysis of important social and cultural factors in Chinese society.

Notable in my research is the CCP's adaptability to the use of the Internet to respond to the rapidly changing environment. Xi Jinping has, on many occasions, highlighted the role of the Internet, referring to the "biggest variable" in predicting

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international audience. It shows the CCP's attempt in using the Internet in telling the national stories more convincingly through individuals' narratives. However, its effectiveness of "telling China's stories" is, to a large extent, limited by the selection of interviewees (mainly Party members and from media industry) and its evident official patriotism. The videos are available on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYfJG6cGfW84FVLuy7semEg.

97 Direct censorship is similar to Bourdieu's manifest censorship, which is imposed by "the official way of speaking and thinking about the world (1991, 138). This can be done through Internet law and direct deletion of posts. There is also implicit censorship, which complements the development of societal norms and values.

China's future and, thus, the most serious 'worry' in the "hearts and minds" of the whole Party (for example Xinhuanet 2014a). Increasingly, governance of the Internet needs to correspond with efforts to govern through the Internet (Yang 2014, 139). Internet governance is different from Internet control. It highlights the importance of paying attention to public sentiment and responding to it. Such reconfiguration entails a proactive approach to harnessing the power of information technology, and in this way, technology is re-positioned within the architecture of power (Creemers 2017, 88). As identified in Sullivan's research, the same tools that netizens use to mobilise online public opinion can be utilised by the Chinese government to "help it maintain control of society by enhancing its claims to legitimacy, circumscribing dissent, identifying malfeasance in its agents and using online public opinion to adapt policy and direct propaganda efforts" (Sullivan 2014, 24). Put simply, technology can also be used to the state's advantage. The state can manage the online public sphere by selectively tightening and loosening regulation, which is "a complex, interactive, proactive and adaptive process" (Guo 2015, 262). This process should be placed in the context of the CCP's struggle for domination and its interest in maintaining power with legitimacy, as Zhang (2011) reminds us.

Today the Internet-related concepts such as cyber security[98] and cyber sovereignty[99] by Xi's government are explicit nationalist claims for its state dominance over cyberspace. These emergent concepts demonstrate the government intention to place technology at the centre of an ambitious agenda for Internet governance both at local and global level (Creemers 2017, 85). Meanwhile, they help legitimise the government's tightened control of the Internet. The norms of security and sovereignty for cyberspace serve as China's attempt to reshape international cyber norms and also improve the CCP's regime security and legitimacy[100] (Zeng, Stevens and Chen 2017, 452-3). In this ambitious agenda, the Internet in China, as part of the

[98] "Without cyber security, there would be no national security; without informatisation, there would be no modernization", states Xi, describing cyber security and informatisation as "two wings of a bird and two wheels of an engine." See http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-02/27/c_133148273.htm

[99] Xi's concept of cyber sovereignty has two levels of significance: "an internal component where each government has the right to develop, regulate, and manage its domestic Internet in line with its national independent autonomy; and an external component involving the right to defend its Internet from foreign intrusion and attack." See https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/beijing-touts-cyber-sovereignty-internet-governance#sthash.4zzizsNl.dpuf. Xi's discourse of cyber sovereignty seems to be ambiguous and inconsistent as the conceptualisation and implementation is still an ongoing progress.

[100] Zeng, Stevens and Chen (2017) also argue that these concepts are not yet sufficiently developed in China's domestic discourse which significantly restricts its capacity to provide alternative norms for global internet governance.

global cyber community, is increasingly imprinted with Chinese characteristics and mingled with ideology, identity, and power. This thesis has provided empirical support for Schneider's study on China's digital networks, which remarks that the Chinese government has (with its programming power and switching power) effectively integrated digital media into its existing mass-media system (Schneider 2015). The thesis has also highlighted the spatial shift of patriotic education from traditional media to new media. That implies the Internet has been successfully incorporated into the patriotic education campaign, which focuses on spreading "positive energy" and shaping a positive image of the government. Online patriotic education can penetrate every facet of people's daily lives via new media outlets. A digitised version of patriotic education campaign is a response to and facilitated by, technology innovation.

At the same time, Internet use has provided a space for pluralized online activism, among which nationalist discourse is one prominent discursive realm for ordinary citizens to participate in China's domestic politics and foreign relations in the current political structure. The particular online nationalist mechanism has seen the emergence of online activist groups, including the voluntary 50-cent army (自干五, *ziganwu*), cyber warriors (键盘侠, *jianpan xia*), and little pinks[101] (小粉红, *xiao fenhong*). While it is useful to address the issue of the "fifty-cent army" to observe the government control of information, the emergent voluntary "army" in China demonstrates a special mechanism between state and society in the changing digital media environment (see for example Han 2015a, 2015b). While the prominent nationalists used to be angry youths, today we are facing "Red Guard 2.0", coined by Downey (2010). These online activists are mostly young, Internet-savvy people. There have been many cases of patriotic hacking, for instance, the 2008 CNN Beijing Olympics Incidents, the 2010 Hacker War with Iran, and the 2016 Taiwan President Election. In this landscape of online nationalism, netizens, assisted with digital technology and skills, "march" in the virtual world, and they conduct cyber attacks to defend their country, some of which are done not in violent ways but in leisurely

[101] Contrary to the general impression of Chinese nationalists being predominantly male, little pink members are largely young, educated women. In recent years, there are emerging instances of hacking and online bombarding organised by this nationalist group. In cases of conflict and crisis, they often mobilise netizens to guard the government against criticism and attack and jump onto Twitter and Facebook to call out enemies of the state. It has somehow gained momentum in China's online space and affected the global online dialogue.

(for example Di Ba expedition in 2016) [102]. Such emergence of new online activism serves as reminders that the story of China cannot be reduced to government control and suppression. Rather, what deserves more examination is the pluralization of online communication in the changing social dynamics under China's digital transformation.

More than a decade ago, Elizabeth Perry highlighted the effective role of the CCP's "emotion work" in mass mobilisations and regarded the CCP as "the world's most experienced and effective practitioners of emotionally charged mass mobilisation" (2002, 124). While today the Internet is being ideologically reshaped in the state-society dynamics, it is interesting and important to observe whether the Chinese government can continue to mobilise people in the information age and strengthen its nation-building projects by channelling online nationalist activism into the framework of the state-defined patriotism.

7.4 Contributions and limitations

This section summarises the contributions that my thesis has made to the study on Chinese nationalism and addresses certain limitations of this thesis. It then specifies some potential areas for future research.

7.4.1 Contributions

This thesis has contributed to the study on Chinese nationalism by situating the examination in historical and cultural dimensions and through the lens of Internet politics. It fills an important deficit in nationalism studies by applying general Western theories to a non-Western case. It presents a more nuanced understanding of the changing interplay between state and society in contemporary China. More specifically, the thesis contributes to the study on Chinese nationalism in the following four aspects.

First, it moves beyond the monolithic view of Chinese nationalism and examines both official nationalism and popular nationalism. It shifts the attention from the sole dominance of state nationalism or the impact of nationalism on Chinese foreign

[102] In January 2016, the members of DiBa (帝吧), a predominant nationalistic Baidu message board, flooded the newly elected Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen's Facebook and organized a social media war of memes, which rely on a combination of textual and visual materials to construct humorous parodies.

policy and offers a more nuanced understanding of the political and social dynamics. The research findings concur with other studies that demonstrate the interplay between state nationalism and popular nationalism (for example Gries 2005; Shen 2007; Zhao 2004; Callahan 2010). It provides empirical evidence and analysis for the changing and contested realm of Chinese nationalism involving state and society dynamics.

Second, this thesis is among the first to examine both the top-down construction and the popular reception in Chinese nationalism studies from an ethno-symbolism approach. The application of ethno-symbolism to China's case provides a theoretical exploration that highlights the link between the past and the present through a cultural and historical angle. My thesis has provided counter-arguments to the existing literature on Chinese online nationalism that regards online nationalism as an independent social force that may threaten the Party's rule (for example, Wang F. 2013; Wu 2005). Rather, this thesis claims that it is an important force that is, on the one hand, influenced by top-down nationalist propaganda and on the other, provides contents and motives to feed back to the national frame of nationalism. Cultural elements and ethnie past can be the resourceful nationalist ingredients that the CCP brings into its nation-building projects. The non-Western case presented in this study provides empirical support for the general theory of ethno-symbolism in nationalism studies.

Third, it provides empirical data for the Internet-based memory politics and the study of state-society dynamics in the digital age, arguing that the Internet has empowered the state and the society in different ways. As can be seen from the two cases, the Internet, on the one hand, has provided Chinese people with the discursive space for political communication and participation. Nonetheless, the Chinese government has effectively shifted their propaganda focus in space from the real world to the virtual world, in which nationalist claims can reach millions of Chinese people more quickly and, to some extent, more effectively. Technological innovation, in this case, can facilitate the CCP's ideological innovation. This has significant implications for the CCP's capacity to rule the country in an authoritarian system.

Finally, this study presents the methodological application of CDA in Chinese discourse studies. To make CDA more usable for my research, I have selected the appropriate tools in the discourse analysis toolkit and adjusted the methods by adding in Chinese traditional cultural codes as well as the emergent Internet culture, which may not be captured otherwise. It advocates the necessity for methodological re-adaptation when different cultural and political contexts and emergent culture are concerned. Put it another way, rigid application of a Western methodology is not appropriate for non-Western studies. Cultural sensitivity is essential, and changes should be made to take into account cultural contexts as well as the features of data.

7.4.2 Limitations and Future Research

It should be acknowledged that this thesis is potentially limited in several ways. First, while nationalism has multi-layered facets, including ethnic aspects and economic aspects, my theoretical framework has guided me to have focused on the historical and cultural aspects and looked into the state-society dynamics. It particularly looked into nationalism targeted at Japan and took war commemoration events as case studies. Narrowing focus in this way or that inevitably means that some potentially significant elements may be under-represented in the study. The particular angle of this research may have overlooked other aspects of nationalism and other events that can reflect other facets of nationalism in China today.

The second issue concerns the representativeness of the data, particularly the popular discourse. As specified in my methodology chapter, the popular discourse under analysis is largely based on the online comments in selected news portal sites and online discussion forum. It should be acknowledged that my dataset may not reflect public reception in other sites. Emergent popular social networks, for instance, Weixin (微信), may yield interesting data, and features of different sites could be further explored. Besides, regarding censorship, I have specified in the methodology chapter that it is part of the power dynamics that shapes the construction of Chinese nationalism online, and thus it is not an intervening variable but part of the power dynamics under my examination. Nonetheless, it should be noted that despite bearing this in mind when I did the analysis, it was sometimes difficult to identify exactly which posts are censored, particularly when considering the “soft” measure of censorship. Therefore, other methods such as

interview and participant observation may help contextualise the analysis and provide supplementary data.

Another limitation lies in categorization. I started with this research by trying to look at three levels in the construct of Chinese nationalism – the top-down state, the bottom-up netizens, and the middle-out intellectuals. I was going to examine intellectuals as the intermediary force in the state-society dynamics. However, in my pilot study, it turned out to be difficult to distinguish between intellectuals and netizens in the sites under study. Therefore, I merged the intellectuals together with netizens as the bottom-up force. Further study needs to be done regarding the role of intellectuals as the intermediary force. Alternatively, the role of the market may also yield interesting data, as business groups and interest for profit may play a role in shaping the nationalistic rhetoric. The research may have benefited from bringing more perspectives from media and communication studies. It has been addressed in my study regarding market consumerism, but the role of the Internet companies should be further explored to better understand the mediascape of Chinese nationalism.

Last but not the least, there is also an issue concerning my own subjectivity as a researcher in choosing case studies and conducting discourse analysis. I am a Chinese national and grew up in the institutionalised patriotic education. My own background may impact on the way I interpret the data. Being a Chinese national implies that I could be more sensitive to Chinese language and culture in which the discourse is embedded; however, I may have in myself certain taken-for-granted assumptions about China. Admittedly, the researcher is in discourse and behind discourse too. That is to say, the researcher consitutes part of the meaning-making process.

My research recommends some potential areas for future research. Above all, in-depth understanding of the impact of technology requires further assessment of online events and groups. This can help further understand the divergences within popular nationalism and unpack its mechanism with state policies. A closer examination of the mechanism can illuminate the micro-process of politicisation among netizens and the institutional conditions of the Internet. For instance, one area for further study concerns the relationship between gender and nationalism. As

demonstrated in my research, in the Nanjing Massacre case, the suffering of female civilians have been traumatised to symbolise the national suffering, whereas in the victory case, the masculinity of the soldiers in the parade are represented for the strength of the nation. Due to the scope of this research, this has not been fully explored in the thesis. An interesting aspect of gendered perspective also lies in the case of the emergent online activist groups - little pink. While angry youths are predominantly male, the emergent little pink group initially consist of mainly female nationalists who always tend to strongly back up the Party-state. Is this something to do with the government's appropriation of tradition and culture in the concept of 家国 (family-nation, *jiaguo*), in which family is linked with the nation? Alternatively, is it more to do with the social status and political awareness of women in Chinese society? How is the role of gender played out in the sphere of nationalist discourse? While nationalism has been generally regarded as a male phenomenon (Enloe 1989, 44), a gendered approach can yield interesting findings for the construction of nationalism and also for the changing social dynamics and political apparatus in China's transformation.

Another potential area is about long distance nationalism among oversea Chinese in the digital age. While this research examines only domestic websites, future research can probe into the impact of digital communication on national identity construction among Chinese diasporas by looking into nationalist representations on overseas websites. As Sullivan and Chen (2015, 269) has highlighted, the Internet provides a venue "where the dominant discourses of Chineseness can be questioned, subverted, and lived in a variety of ways by cultures and communities" in China or elsewhere. An examination of overseas nationalism can help us understand the relationship between culture, identity and technology beyond territoriality, as cyberspace, supposedly borderless, can foster new communities and meanwhile enable the reproduction of "old" communities. The role of the ICTs in linking the homeland and diaspora and in changing the boundaries of the nation deserves further exploration.

Also, the impact of digital-mediated communication can be further investigated by using multiple research methods and examining diverse platforms. Future research can use multiple methods, which can be helpful in illuminating multiple facets of online nationalism. For example, digital ethnography and semi-structured

interviews can be useful in generating in-depth qualitative data and provide triangulation to discourse studies. Regarding the sites for study, it will be useful to explore other emergent social networks sites, such as Zhihu and Weixin, which can illuminate new patterns of digital communication. A comparative study between sites can be useful to identify features of different communication patterns and their potential consequences.

7.5 Concluding remarks

As China continues to grow into a superpower, economically, politically, and militantly, understandably, the world pays great attention to the rise of contemporary Chinese nationalism. This thesis shifts the focus away from the monolithic view of Chinese nationalism onto the changing dynamics between official nationalism and popular nationalism in China's social transformation, which can offer us a more nuanced understanding of Chinese nationalism today. It examines Chinese nationalism through the lens of Internet politics, as the understanding of nationalist politics today needs to be viewed through digital practices and interactions of the information age.

By drawing upon ethno-symbolism and taking a discourse analytical approach, this thesis focuses on the discursive construction of national humiliation and pride and highlights a historical and cultural perspective is essential to unpacking nationalism. Through conducting case studies of commemoration events, it argues that the landscape of Chinese nationalism is reshaped by a multiplicity of discourses via digital practices, characterised by the evolving dynamics between state and society. The thesis provides empirical evidence to show that neither is contemporary Chinese nationalism simply an ideological tool of the CCP nor an independent ideology and movement at the grassroots. Rather, it is constructed and reconstructed in the changing state-society dynamics in interaction, negotiation and discussion, increasingly in digital practices.

The thesis has found that the Internet has reshaped the landscape of nationalism primarily in two ways. On the one hand, the CCP has effectively incorporated it into its patriotic education and nation-building projects. When places with historical and political symbolism, such as Nanjing and Tiananmen, are dislocated from their physical space onto the virtual space, political communication and political

participation are re-located too, thereby the landscape of national imaginaries being re-shaped. Digital forms of official propaganda replace the traditional posters. Patriotic education of the state has become digitised. On the other, technology provides the ground for Chinese Internet users to explore their discursive space in political communication. Political communication becomes pluralized in digital practices. Netizens may participate in nationalist politics as technology-armoured warriors, marching in discourse. Such evolving state-society dynamics contributes to the myth-making and the identity-shaping process in contemporary China. This thesis illuminates that the Internet has facilitated digital imagination and re-imagination of the nation; technological innovation, to some extent, facilitates ideological innovation. Just as Hutchinson (2017, 195) reminds us, one should not discount such dynamic role of ideological innovation, which is linked to the entry of new social actors into politics, the rise of new economic systems and communication networks. In the landscape of Chinese online nationalism, it can be seen that the CCP is constantly innovating its ideological strategy to generate its public resonance and maintain its authoritarian rule.

Two possible ways in which the relationship between online nationalism and the CCP could evolve have been clarified in Xu Wu's book on Chinese online nationalism (Wu 2007). Wu (2007) pointed out, the first scenario involves the incorporation of online popular nationalism into the current political system, and the second would be that it develops into an autonomous political movement and drives potential political change. It seems that the first scenario is how online nationalism is unfolding today a decade after Xu's observation. My research shows that there is an updated version of the patriotic education campaign, a digital one. Under this digitised patriotic framework, online popular nationalists are more liable to be incorporated into the state framework and offer sources of discursive power to the CCP over not only national interest and territorial sovereignty but also Internet sovereignty. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen to what extent technological innovation can facilitate ideological innovation and how well the government can govern through the Internet.

This thesis contributes to the studies on Chinese nationalism and Internet studies by providing a more nuanced understanding of contemporary Chinese nationalism with new empirical evidence. It offers an insight into the changing power dynamics

in China's social-political transition today. This thesis will be of interest to researchers concerned with Chinese nationalism, Internet studies, and Chinese discourse studies.

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