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CHINA AS A MULTI-NATIONAL COUNTRY:
A NOVEL INTERPRETATION OF CHINESE NATIONALISM

by

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Abstract

Chinese nationalism in official discourse is conspicuously reflected in CCP’s territorial claims to Tibet and Taiwan, where local nationalism is challenging the official definition of China as a unitary multi-national country as the constitution describes. Conventional wisdom, utilized by political propaganda, is considering the contemporary Chinese national boundary as the legacy of “Chinese history”, of which the popular version is deliberately depicted in public educational materials. This paper presents a qualitative content analysis of history textbook used in high school in China, showing the historical narratives, as a result of selection, about the Chinese nationhood boundary in ancient China, especially those regarding Tibet and Taiwan before twentieth century. Put into Brubaker’s framework of nationhood categorization, the defining of ancient China in the textbook implicates two coexisting, while controversial logics: statist logic and Han culturalist nationalism. These two competing logics may serve as the ideological factor for the unresolved territorial and ethnicity issues.

Introduction

Contemporary China is facing with the unsettled geopolitical issue regarding Taiwan and Tibet. The divergence of views on the belonging of these two regions should not be ignored, because the activities of local secessionists are treated as considerable threat to the national security by Chinese government. Tibetans who were upset at Han people’s invasion to their area and the central government’s violation to their culture had launched a number of protests in Tibetan regions, with strong appeal for real Tibet autonomy and independence. During the riot in 2008, it was reported that CCP sent military troops into Tibet to put down the rebellion, which cause injuries and death
among Tibetans. The causalities also occurred among Han residents in Tibet. In Taiwan, the development of democratic system would reduce the violence of protests, but it gives the secessionist forces the opportunity to take the power. When the DPP leader of the time, Chen Shui-bian, was running the presidency from 2000 to 2008, the relationship between the two sides of the strait deteriorated to the worst situation since the end of the 1970s because of Chen’s inclination to make Taiwan an independent country. The China-Taiwan war was on the edge of outbreak.

Though China’s insistence on its ownership of these two areas is often considered as a reflection of national interests, it could also be understood in terms of political ideology. The conflict between unificationist and secessionist is essentially the disputation between Chinese nationalism and local nationalism. The former insists that China should be a unified country, and Tibet and Taiwan are parts of China. This view is officially embraced by the central government in Beijing. On the contrary, the proponents of local nationalism provide support to the independence of either Tibet or Taiwan, arguing that China should relinquish its control to Tibet, or that China should admit Taiwan as an independent country. In other words, the geopolitical arguments have ideological base on the controversial nationality of Taiwan and Tibet, and on the unclear national boundary of China, both of which mirror the main component of nationalism in theory.

Nationalism is an ideology shaped by secular culture and invented by political entities. In Chinese case, the official nationalist doctrine is a product of the propaganda tool making use of Han cultural domination thesis. So how did CCP legitimate its ‘national unification’ argument through propaganda instruments? Focusing on the history
textbook used in Chinese high school curriculum, the research finds out the nationalist doctrine implicated by the education material and extracts the nationalist logic behind the historical narratives. Following Brubaker’s dualistic approach categorizing nationhood either territorial-based or blood-based, this analysis indicates that there are two similar logics co-existing in the official historical narratives, whereas the rhetoric contribution of Chinese nationality to ethnic minorities is less exclusive than blood-based, but is complemented by Han culturalist domination. Taken the distinction between French and German nationhood into consideration, it is reasonable to conclude that this two logics are in fact contradictory to each other, which might serve as the ideological base of the ambiguity in the CCP’s policy making for Tibet and Taiwan.
Literature Review

As a complex political and ideological concept, nationalism includes more than one dimension. Breuilly (1994) divided this ideology form into three parts: 1) There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character; 2) The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values; 3) The nation must be as independent as possible. From the prospective of stages where nationalism play its role, this ideology can also be categorized as popular nationalism and nationalism in politics (Chen 2007). In Chinese case, with the appeal for ethnical autonomy or even independence, local nationalism is a major opponent against official nationalism nurtured by the CCP, and serve as the moral base of ethnical social movement in minority areas such as Tibet and Xinjiang (Zhao 2004). On the other hand, official nationalism, different with those from the bottom in content, is an important pillar of the CCP regime’s legitimacy. Especially after 1994 when CCP leaders confirmed that “belief crisis” in Chinese society could challenge the authoritarian ruling, the nationalism as a rediscovered and reconstructed educational value was expected to fill the void of people’s mind and thus to contextually legitimate CCP’s governing (Zhao 1998). But what are the characteristics of Chinese official nationalism? It is hard to answer this question in one paper. However, the basic question could be addressed here: how does Chinese governor use educational instrument to define the Chinese nation under the ruling of the state? So the research question I am interested in is more corresponding to the first part in Breuilly’s definition than to the other two. This focus is of significance because defining nationhood is a universal political behavior, often determining the direction of
immigration policies, e.g. France and Germany (Brubaker 1992), and guiding the policy making process regarding to ethnical minorities. Base on this research, one may see varies faces of Chinese nationhood regarding to contentious territorial claims. After analyzing the high school history textbook, I clarify the official definition of Chinese nation, and find out the underlying nationalist logic that supports the historical narrative.

The significance of this study also rests on the challenge countering official narratives exerted by other nationalism in China, such as those prevailing in Taiwan (Hughes 1997), Tibet (Wolff 2010) and other ethnical areas (Zhao 2004). There are numbers of historical studies focusing on the evolution of the competition between different trends of nationalism both in the past century (Liu 2004; Cabestan 2005) and contemporary era (Smith 2010). To dealing with these challenges, education department has to come up with nationalist doctrine that could be logically acceptable and convincing to students.

This study is also an example of rigor exploration of Chinese nationalism, compared to particularistic and discursive work done by some scholars. Relying on historical approach, these scholars might end up resting on complex implication of nationalist ideology that is beyond the possible scope of single study. In addition, it is possible that they tent to take particularistic way to present their finding, not considering or even opposing that Chinese case can be fit into the theoretical framework originated from empirical evidence in Europe where the terms “nation” “nationhood” and “nationalism” were first used for analyses. A reflection of this approach, though sometimes implicit, is thick historical description of the flowing content and types of nationalism in China. The best example would be Zhao’s (2004) famous work on
nationalist ideologies and movements promoted by Chinese elites and mass from the beginning of twentieth century. After addressing the rising of Chinese modern nationalism from culturalism, Zhao illustrated two distinct strategies used by the KMT and the CCP in the process of nation building. What KMT adopted was “elite nationalism” for the ideological base of the revolution, in accordance with the belief that only knowledgeable, at least highly-educated person can truly grasp the nationalist doctrine, and thus disseminate it to the public (Levenson 1990). The KMT nationalist movement depended largely on the support and guidance provided by intellectuals. On the contrary, the CCP emphasized the power of grassroots mobilization, which became more prominent after Japanese invasion igniting strong nationalist sentiment among rural population, and eventually helped the CCP overturn the KMT regime. And the following is his discussion of “liberal nationalism” which emphasizes the importance of personal interest protected by nation, and its emergence, falling and challenge to authoritarian state. Next, he switched the topic to ethnic nationalism mainly in regions inhabited by ethnic groups, and “state-led nationalism” of which the promotion of economic interest serve as the legitimacy of CCP in reform era.

Zhao’s analysis would be too discursive to be a social science study, in that he included a variety of nationalist themes into one book, and the links between these themes are no more than subtle. But this does not mean that his work did not deserve credit: in fact, the rich historical data presented chronologically sets important empirical base for systematic social science study on Chinese nationalism such as the study I present in this paper. But social science analysts would probably miss their points if they put too many contents into one single work without integrating them through clear
theoretical thinking. Also, relying on discursive demonstration around the detailed contents would lead to over-emphasis on the uniqueness of nationalism in China. Again, I do not mean that this is not a legitimate approach, and I am not arguing that Chinese nationalism has no difference from European nationalism. However, comparative analysis would be hard to carry on if social scientists were not clear about the theoretical framework before they concentrated on particular matters.

For fear of ending up with discursive research result, I decided to be less ambitious than considering Chinese nationalism as a whole. I narrow the focus in two steps. First, among numerous sets of nationalist ideologies in modern Chinese history, I choose contemporary Chinese official nationalism as the subject. Second, I concentrated on the process of national definition, i.e. Breuilly’s first component of nationalism. I reduce the general question of “what is Chinese nationalism” to the concrete one “how Chinese nation be defined in official educational context”. In other words, this research focuses on the membership of Chinese nation in official discourse, or the ideological exclusion and inclusion of Chinese nationhood, which is one of the basic questions in nationalism study.

Furthermore, it is obvious that the way in which I study nationalism shows the opposition to the famous argument made by Anderson (1983) that nation is the result of imagination. His definition of nation as “an imagined political community” (p. 6) had been challenged by a number of scholars. For example, some embraced that nationalism is the result of social engineering, of which object is to “invent” the tradition. The state elites recalled the history, and built a connection between the national history and the national identity they aimed to promote. The connection made “history as a legitimator of
action and cement of group cohesion” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, p. 12). Corresponding to this hypothesis would be the opinion that nationalism is largely created by narratives provided by social elites. The “meanings of the nation are produced mainly through linguistic mechanisms” (Duara 1996, p. 45), and “Narratives…are necessarily selective processes which repress various historical and contemporary materials as they seek to define a community” (p. 49). So it is reasonable to assume that a researcher, having realized the historical process of generation, would regard nationalism as fluid ideological phenomenon that varies in time and space. It is by no means independent to historical context of a country; it was subject to the narratives given by different social forces, and the official one would be the product of nation building by the state; the meaning of nation would be diversely defined in different countries.

How does CCP, as political force strong enough to manipulate educational context, define contemporary Chinese nation through historical narrative? For the purpose of comparison, it is worth to look at nationalist logic prevailing in other countries. In his work, Brubaker (1992) articulated two standards respectively used in France and Germany to define their boundaries of nationhood. Frenchmen, especially political elites influenced by the notion of “grandeur of France nation” believed that the state’s power was strong enough to assimilate immigrants into French nation. As a consequence, the French nation was defined territorially, and the most important criterion for attribution of French citizenship is individual’s birth place: people who born in France would more likely to be given French citizenship, regardless of ethnicity and race. Unlike France where nation and state are fused, Germany sets nationhood and statehood distinctively. As “a product of the distinctive political and cultural geography of Central Europe” (p. 4),
the ethnocultural view of nationhood in Germany defined the national boundary by blood, and excluded non-Germany individuals from German citizenship regardless of their born places. With thick historical description illustrating the evolution of nationhood understandings and corresponding immigration policies, the author demonstrated two different logics of nation definition: *jus soli* in France and *jus sanguinis* in Germany.

Brubaker’s categorization of nationhood defining is similar to that provided by Smith (1971), who argues that there are two different forms of nationalism respectively from “statists” and “ethnicists”. Statists define the nation as a “territorial-political unit” whereas ethnicists define the nation as a “large, politicized ethnic group defined by common culture and alleged descent” (Smith 1971, p. 176). At first sight, present China, as a nation including fifty six ethnical groups within her territory in official discourse, is defined with the statist view that can be demonstrated in the analysis on the narrative about Taiwan and Tibet in history textbooks.

But that the basic logic behind official Chinese and French nation defining is congruence does not indicate that Chinese nationalism has little uniqueness. In fact, the particular role played by Confucian philosophy as an overwhelming cultural force pulls Chinese nationalism out of Brubaker’s framework to a limited extent. With historical retrospection, one can find that Confucian culture was neither embraced by single ethnicity as Smith may suggest, nor was defined exclusively inside the territory following the statist logic. Non-Han ethnicities, either ruled or ruling, are regarded as the members of Chinese nation if they accepted and learned Confucian philosophy; the other states such as ancient Japan and Korea, was under the influence of Confucian culture. In other words, culture in Chinese case was neither ethnic nor territorial; so Chinese Empire was
neither defined by ethnicity (as Germany) nor territory (as France) under the influence of strong elite culture. Hence some scholars opposed the term “nationalism” to define China before twentieth century. Instead, they invented “culturalism”, which means “the belief that China was a cultural community whose boundaries were determined by the knowledge and practice of principles expressed through China’s elite cultural tradition” (Townsend 1996, p. 12) to analyze Chinese case.

Based on this vocabulary extension, scholars developed “culturalism-to-nationalism thesis” that sets revolution era in the beginning of twentieth century as the time when modern nationalism emerged in China and when Culturalism was started to be replaced by nationalism (Harrison 1978). It is argued that traditional Chinese self identity was formed by shared Confucius culture, not by nationalism with the understanding of nation-state. China’s loss in 1895 Sino-Japan War ignited the outward nationalist sentiment and paved the way for the afterward dissemination of nationalism, and May Fourth was considered as a sign of culturalism’s extinction as a result of nationalism’s challenge. However, Townsend (1996) criticized this thesis by saying that “culturalism could co-exist with other ideas about state and nation, could lend support in modern times to both state and ethnic nationalism, and hence could retain some influence on Chinese nationalism down to the present” (p. 24). This research supports Townsend’s view by revealing that culturalism still has significant impact on current official narrative of Chinese nationalism, and showing the way in which this unique ideology supports the statist view in the history textbooks.
Why History Textbook?

Before moving on to data analysis part, it is necessary to clarify the reason why history textbook is important for the imposition of nationalist doctrine, and is worth to be the subject of nationalism study. Consistent with former discussion, I applied Breuilly’s framework to the explanation of the role played by history textbook. First, in order to strengthen the perception on the existence of Chinese nation in present, education departments resorts to historical events and phenomenon related to the evolutionary process of Chinese nationality, pointing out or making students take for granted that present multi-national China is an inevitable result from historical movement. Second, to emphasize the interests, values and independence of current nation, Chinese historical textbook spends considerable pages to discuss the humiliation suffered by Qing Dynasty in the late nineteenth century, and that brought about by Japanese invasion in the middle of twentieth century. Related to the negative narrative is the nationalist calling that youngsters should strive for the “great revival of Chinese nation”, which is one of the popular slogans of nationalism education. To sum up, for the purpose of conveying nationalist ideology, history narrative in the textbook has to be the result of selection: editors tell or even emphasize the stories they want students to learn, and conceal those unwanted in their perspective. This fact could be demonstrated in the severe debate on righteous description on the memory of Sino-Japanese War, especially Nanjing Massacre (He 2007).

Importantly, educators of nationalist ideology must convince students that it was certain defined historical root in the past where present Chinese nation grew from. The historical root must be clearly defined because it is the base on which other components
of nationalist ideology rest. Consider this: if Manchu was not considered as part of Chinese nation, the appeal for remembering the humiliation suffered by Qing would be untenable, because Han students would not regard, or at least would be skeptical, that those unequal treaties meant harm for them.

The contemporary state is very successful in convincing people that China and Chinese nation had already existed thousands years ago. Few students would cast doubt on the narrative that Qing was a dynasty in Chinese history, and that Manchu is one of the ethnicity in modern China. However, on the Internet there exists a famous argument that China had disappeared after Song Dynasty was overthrown and replaced by Yuan Dynasty established by Mongol. If Yuan Dynasty was considered as the result of the destruction of Chinese nation, so was Qing which was also founded by non-Han ethnicity. In fact, this perspective is not new: Sun Yat-sen set “to expel the Tatar barbarians (Manchu), to revive Zhonghua (China)” as part of the goal in the beginning of 1911 revolution.

This “Great Hanism”, of course, is objected by official history narrative, at least rhetorically. So how the textbooks depict the national story to ideologically legitimate the multi-nationality of China? The following parts answer this question by addressing the underlying statist logic, which especially functions in the legitimacy of CCP’s ruling to Tibet and that of “national reunification” relevant to China-Taiwan relationship.

The object of the content analysis is the officially-written high school history textbook with the title of “Chinese Ancient History”. Compared to the new textbooks emerging under the curriculum reform from 2004, this textbook is older. But it has been
nationally used from 2003 to the present, though it is replaced by new textbook in some regions. Following the old curriculum dividing history education content into Modern China History, World History and Ancient China History, only those students who choose liberal arts are required to take the last one. Hence this textbook is not designed for all the students. However, its importance could not be denied because the historical narratives of ancient China reflect the official view and thus the conventional wisdom accepted by the public, and because those student who choose liberal arts curriculum could be expected directing the public opinion in the future, taking advantage of their educational background. In addition, given that this textbook has not quitted the stage under the impact of New Curriculum Standard and is still popular among history educators (In fact, the new textbook system is under criticism because of its novel arrangement of historical content based on different themes rather than chronological arrangement), its influence in history education during recent decade could not be ignored.

The following sections present the result of qualitative content analysis of this textbook, which is conducted through three phrases. First, I take notes of the historical descriptions about ethnical groups that are included in Chinese history, such as their emergence, residence, migration and political involvement. In this stage, I interpret the implication to Chinese nationhood contribution to those ethnical groups. Second, I extract those narratives regarding political, economical, and cultural communication among different ethnical groups, especially those between Han Chinese and ethnical minorities from the textbook. In this stage, I find out the roles played by Confucianism and other national culture in the sinicization process of ethnical groups. Third, I specially focus on
the narratives about Tibet and Taiwan, including their maps presented in the textbook, analyzing their relations to the Chinese central government and explaining the logics behind the domestication of historical events regarding to them.

**Statist Logic and Han Culture Domination in History Textbook**

History, in essence, is a process of change. The stories in the past do not necessary fit the present situation. However, history has its significant in almost every country, and plays substantial role in the building of modern nationalism. In the case of PRC, historical education serves as the vehicle for teenagers to form a perception of modern China by retrospection. To accomplish this goal, it is crucial to invent links between ancient China and modern China in spite of dramatic change happened in ethnicity, regime and territory. This strategy can be seen in the modern language the textbooks use in the description. The most remarkable example may be the narrative about the establishment of Qin Dynasty. The Qin is defined as “the first multi-national state in Chinese history” (p. 25), which may be ahistorical because the Chinese nation-state was not considered founded until the establishment of Republic of China. Although it is possible that various nations formed Qin, one could cast doubt on the interpretation of Qin Dynasty presented in the textbook: why was it Chinese?

The answer gave by history textbooks follows the statist logic, or logic of *jus soli* in Brubaker’s terminology. In this case, it means that if an ethnic group settled inside the territory partly or entirely belongs to empires in history, it would be treated as a branch of Chinese nation; and that empires, regardless of its ethnicity (e.g. Han, Manchu, Mongol, etc.), are considered Chinese because capital cities was inside the territory currently governed by communist party. Especially, there are historical eras when non-Han
ethnicities established their own states, which are considered as dynasties in Chinese history if their capital cities rest on PRC’s territory.

Rhetorically, this logic is wearing the mask made of the narratives of “multi-national unified country” and “national amalgamation” in the textbook instead of expressed explicitly. The former, as mentioned before, is started to be used in the description of Qin Dynasty; while the later is started to be addressed as early as Chun-qiu and Warring States Period (both are pre-Qin periods), which is worth to be cited as below:

In the period of Chun-qiu and Warring States, besides Huaxia in Central Plains, there were other ethnicities dwelling all around. In the north there were Xiongnu and Donghu, in the west there was Rong, in the south there was Yue, etc. Through economic and cultural communication and frequent wars, these nations gradually amalgamated with each other. This process of annexation and mergence set the foundation for Qin to found unified multi-national country.(p. 14)

This paragraph clearly presents the theory that national amalgamation led to the emergence of unified multi-national country. It could also be understood as the argument that multi-national China is an inevitable result from various sorts of communication between ethnicities. Because of its importance, “national amalgamation” became an indispensable theme appearing in narratives on almost every political period.

However, for nationalism researcher, to address this superficial theory is not enough because it stops at rhetorical narration of ancient China and leaves the definition of state nationality unclear. In other words, even though the textbook makes the argument that national communication forms the unified China, it does not clarified the national boundary of China. In fact, the textbook takes it for granted without any evident explanation. What is the logic directing to the acquiescence of the country’s nationality? Only through in-depth analysis can researcher find out real logic hiding behind the
official historical narratives. This logic, as mentioned, is statist nationality. Additionally, it is often accompanied by culturist discussion claiming the domination of Han culture. For the purpose of elaborating these points laying the foundation for nationalist argument regarding to Taiwan and Tibet, I present two sets of narrative of “ethnic minority regime” among the official descriptions of Chinese history as below: Northern Dynasties from 439 AD to 581 AD and Liao Empire founded in 916 AD.

Narratives on ethnical minority regimes during Sixteen Kingdom era:

When Eastern Jin was ruling southern areas, over ten ethnic minority regimes were founded successively in northern and southwest areas in our country, which is called “Sixteen Kingdoms Period”. After that, from 439 AD to 581 AD, approximately contemporaneous with Southern Dynasties, Northern Wei, Eastern Wei, Western Wei, Northern Qi and Northern Zhou were successively founded by ethnic minorities in northern areas of our country, which is historically called “Northern Dynasties”. Northern Dynasties was in confrontation with Southern Dynasties for a long period of time, so they are together called Southern and Northern Dynasties.

In the end of Sixteen Kingdom period, Northern Wei founded by Tuoba in Xianbei tribe became increasingly stronger, and unified the Yellow River valley in 439 AD, started to confront Southern Dynasties. In the middle of fifth century, Northern Wei expanded its territory to Huai River area, and it became stronger than the Southern Dynasties.

Tuoba in Xianbei tribe originally settled in northern part of Greater Hinggan Range before they migrated to south in the end of Eastern Han Dynasty, and then became a strong military power in border. In the end of forth century, the leader of Tuoba, Tuoba Gui founded Wei Kingdom, which is historically called Northern Wei. Afterward, Tuoba Gui eliminated Later Yan, occupied Central Plain of China and set its capital in Ping City (Datong in Shanxi Province, China).

In the end of sixth century, Emperor Wu of Northern Zhou carried out a series of reforms: politically, he strengthened central authority and regulated official administration. Economically, he released slaves, punished bureaucrats and rich families who conceal information about lands and population under their control; he forced a great number of bonzes and bonzesses secularized themselves and participated into agricultural production. In military, he expanded the source of soldiers, eliminated Northern Qi and unified the Yellow River valley. After Emperor Wu died, the political realm was under chaos, and the authority was controlled by Yangjian.

Narratives on Khitan and Liao Dynasty:
Khitan originally settled near upstream of Liao River, lived a life of nomadism and fishing. In the end of Tang Dynasty, Qidan was getting stronger, and lived together with Han peasants who migrated to the northern side of Great Wall for the purpose of avoiding wars. Khitan people gradually acquired the skills of growing crops, weaving and construction. Some Khitan people started agriculture life.

Khitan was an ethnic minority in the history of our country. It was a branch of Donghu in the era of Qin and Han Dynasty. There is the record of Khitan in Weishu. At the beginning of Tang Dynasty, Khitan submitted to the authority of Tang, consisting of eight tribes with one leader for the tribe union.

In the beginning of tenth century, the leader of Khitan, Yelü Abaoji unified Khitanian tribes. He promoted the employment of agriculture and gradually accepting Han culture. In 916 AD, Abaoji claimed to be the emperor and founded Khitan State with the capital Shangjing. Abaoji was Emperor Taizu of Liao. Khitan people invented Khitanian words as imitation of Han Character (which is called Chinese Character today). During the ruling of Yelü Deguang, Abaoji’s son, Khitan occupied Sixteen Provinces of Youyun. Afterward, Khitan changed its country name to Liao.

Khitan society was under great influence of Central Plain area. Some Youzhou people such as Han yanwei became idea men serving for Khitan… The hereditary system of emperor successor assignment used in the Central Plain states was imitated by Abaoji.

The Liao ruler adopted “respective governance to Fan (Khitan and other ethnic minorities) and Han” in the political system, and set Southern Office and Northern Office in political central. Southern Office was taken charged by Han and Khitan people, following bureaucratic system of Tang Dynasty, for the governance to Han and Bohai people…Northern Office was taken charged only by Khitanian, ruling other Khitan people and ethnic minorities.

At first glance, multi-nationalism ideology in the historical narrations of these two ethnic minority regimes is not conspicuously presented. However, if considers the existence of them in the Chinese textbook in accordance with defining these ethnicities as branches of Chinese nation, one would realize that the discussion of them as part of Chinese history is consistent with the multi-nationality of China in official narration. So why are Khitan, Tuoba and other nations regarded as Chinese? The textbook gives the answers through its selective narratives, which could be summarized as three sets of arguments.
First, if an ethnic group settled inside the territory overlapping those controlled by different Chinese regimes in history, it would be treated as a branch of Chinese nation. For example, originating from a branch of Donghu in Qin and Han periods, Khitan is treated as “an ethnic minority in the history of our country”, which is reaffirmed by the fact that it was under the ruling of Tang Dynasty.

Second, regimes are considered Chinese if their capital cities rest in the regions currently belongs to PRC. For instance, Northern Wei set its capital in Ping City, which is contemporary at Datong, Shanxi Province in PRC. All the regimes founded during both Sixteen Kingdom Period and Northern Dynasties, without exception, set their capitals in the territory belongs to present China. In addition, the establishment of these regimes would strengthen Chinese nationality of these ethnic groups in official narratives.

Lastly, the textbook expresses a culturist attitude toward communication among various nations, of which the focus is the dominate position of Han culture. This narrative approach could be seen in its discussion that Khitan people learned from Han to live in agriculture life, and invented national written language following Han characters. In addition, the narration emphasizes the significance of its adoption of political system invented by Han. The Han domination is comprehensively demonstrated and highly praised in the narrative regarding the reform carried out by Xiaowen Emperor of Northern Wei, which is worth to be quoted below:

Xiaowen Emperor of Northern Wei carried out a series of reform, including: … to learn Han culture. After Northern Wei moved the capital to Luoyang, imitating Han’s regulation system and life style, Xiaowen Emperor encouraged Xianbei people to speak Han language in order to eliminate linguistic barriers between the nations; he changed Xianbei last name (consisting of two characters) to Han last name (only one character); forbade people wearing national dress, while regulate
officials and women’s costume following the clothes styles used in Southern regimes (which were founded by Han); promoted intermarriage with Han people, etc.

Xiaowen Emperor of Northern Wei was a politician and reformer with considerable achievements in the history of our country. He followed the historical trends, decisively carried out the reform, and adopted a series of measure promoting communication between different ethnical groups and Xianbei’s feudalization, which created opportunity for national amalgamation.

The positive evaluation of communication among various nations reflects the preference to multi-national definition of China in official historical narratives. Also, the description of Han culture’s domination prevails in the discussion of national amalgamation, though the textbook does not deny that Han people also acquired culture from ethnic minorities (p. 58). The Han culture domination thesis could be seen within the introduction part of fifth chapter, which is about the period from Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms to Yuan Dynasty: “At that time, although wars were frequent, communication regarding politics, economy and culture between various nations was intensive. Those regimes established by ethnic minorities were under influence exerted by advanced Han culture to various extents. Ethnic groups accomplished the process of feudalization successively, and national amalgamation went further.” (p. 97)

To sum up, the narration of national amalgamation with Han culture domination, along with the statist logic directing the Chinese nationality of ethnic groups, lays the foundation for the depiction of China as a multi-national country with historical root. In addition, considering the official propaganda as the powerful instrument that shapes people’s perception of Chinese nationhood, and directs the measures taken for ethnical minority problem to some extent, Chinese official nationalism does not fit into Brubaker’s dichotomous scheme very well. The reason why it is hard to categorize it into French style or German style is twofold. First, though statist logic is implicated in the
textbook, it would be biased to ignore the Han culture dominating the ethnicity communication and the process of sinicization of the ethnical minorities as a result, at least rhetorically. Second, however, the fusion of statist logic and Han culture domination thesis is not identical with the coexisting of French assimilation and German exclusion, in that an individual is German because of blood, whereas an ethnical group is labeled as Chinese partly because of the influence exerted by Han culture as official educational material describes. The following section demonstrates the application of this Chinese-style nationhood logic to the historical narrative about Tibet and Taiwan.

**Beijing’s Nationalist Claiming on Tibet and Taiwan**

The static logic and Han cultural domination function as the ideological base of the territorial unification of China in Beijing’s expectation. Both Taiwan and Tibet questions are unsolved geopolitical issues, in which the conflicts are essentially the results from competition between official nationalism and regional nationalism. But it should be noted that Beijing tend to consider Taiwan and Tibet in two different schemes. In Beijing’s discourse, Taiwan is the only unsolved problem for the “great task of reunifying the motherland”, which had been partly achieved after reestablishment of the control to Hong Kong and Macao; whereas Tibet is not even a “question” because as early as in 1950, Tibet was “peacefully liberated” and Tibetans had acknowledged central government’s control in exchange of their limited autonomy.

**The Background of Tibet Question**

It is true that Tibet and Taiwan has undergone different historical events, but the reality goes against Beijing’s narration, especially in 2008 when large scale of revolt
broke out in Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan where numbers of Tibetans, Han and Hui (Chinese Muslim) people were injured and killed. Tibet is far from reaching a settlement, and opposition to China’s ruling to Tibet never disappeared. Facing with Tibetan revolts, Beijing attributes the appealing of Tibet’s greater autonomy and even independent to conspiracy of “anti–China forces” aiming to splitting China. Also, in official narration, the Dalai Lama is the agency of the foreign forces in Tibet because his “secessionist activities” could not be done without international supports, which was not given without a price. This version of story is widely accepted by Han population, while was rejected by many scholars (Smith 2010; Zhao 2004).

The recent revolt and the CCP’s response in media to it were not new. In 1959, large scale revolts occurred in approximately same regions mentioned above. The Chinese government attributed the revolts to agitation and support of foreign anti-Chinese forces, which was the United States and India at that time. But this statement was untenable under rigorous scrutiny. In his historical work, Zhao (2004) argues that even though there might be international factors, they could not exert impact without aggravated ethnical tension caused by socialist transformation carried out in Tibetan regions. “Certainly, these revolts had an international element, but radical socialist transformation was undoubtedly a more direct cause. Beijing had called upon class struggle against the upper class and uncooperative traditional leaders. Very often, violence resulted as lower-class activists were encouraged to publicly humiliate and even torture members of the upper class and lamas, who were usually highly regarded as revered religious leaders. The violence and brutality appalled many Tibetan Buddhists”
Apart from the measure taken in the campaign, the socialist transformation itself actually reflected the policy of “assimilation via rapid integration into the Chinese state” (Wolff 2010, p. 157), and inevitably destructed Tibetan way of living, which was portrayed in official discourse as underdeveloped and unenlightened culture. Moreover, the “nationality fusion wind” blowing in the Great Leap Forward, and the targeting and breaking of so-called “four olds” (old culture, old habits, old customs, and old thoughts) in Culture Revolution had damaged Tibetan culture, especially Buddhism to a greater extent.

With these policy mistakes taken into consideration, it would be not surprising that Tibetans were upset and local nationalism earned popularity all around the minority ethnicity region. Having realized the policy mistakes as the main cause of aggravated ethnical tension, the CCP admitted that it was Great Han Chauvinism behind the radical policies and campaigns, “rather than local nationalism, was the more dangerous sentiment” (Zhao 2004, p. 194). Additionally, for the purpose of mitigating ethnical tension, Chinese government carried out inducement policy to dealing with ethnic problem, including leaving more political positions in local government to Tibetans, supporting economic development in minority ethnic regions and offering special social benefits to ethnic minority individuals. In strategy, The Chinese government moved from national assimilation to ethnic sensitivity policy, which was witnessed in the 1980s when central government made efforts to restore Tibetan cultural elements.

However, the 1980s’ honeymoon failed to yield the result that the CCP expected. The number of protests with appeals to ethnic autonomy and national independence increased, with the expectations of persevering national identity and ethnic culture
stimulated by inducement policy and opening up to outside world. “Contact with foreigners who were often appreciative of Tibetan culture or even sympathetic to the Tibetan independence cause helped to revive the Tibetan’s sense of their distinctive ethnic identity and led to the demand for real autonomy, if not independence.” (Zhao 2004, p. 203) Hence with the steadfast insistence on national unification, the CCP is now facing a dilemma: the discussion of real autonomy and independence is off the table; national assimilation would provoke ethnic minorities; inducement policy and employment of ethnic sensitivity would catalyze local nationalism, especially in Tibet. So the essence of Tibet question now is not about concrete policies, but Tibet’s controversial nationality. Most of Tibetans do not regard themselves as Chinese, while Chinese population had taken Tibet’s Chinese nationality for granted under the influence of official propaganda (Smith 2010). In official side, the legitimacy of the CCP’s governance to Tibet could be found in selective historical narratives, especially in high school history textbook.

Tibet in High School History Textbook

The history textbook serves to support the official nationalist argument that ‘Tibet is always a part of China’. Its editor resorts to history to find the evidence expected to convince students that Chinese governments had gain control to this region long time ago. The narrative related to Tibet in the textbook is presented below.

Narratives on Tibet during Tang Dynasty:

Tubo was a kingdom founded by Tibet ancestors. In the early age of seventh century, Songtsen Gampo became the king of Tubo and unified Tibetan Plateau with Luoxie (Lhasa’s ancient name). To strengthen his ruling, he followed Tang Dynasty in bureaucratic establishment. He set up authorities in every level,
established military organization with strict discipline, made rigorous laws, and had people create Tubo written language.

During the eras of Zhenguan when Emperor Taizong of Tang was on the throne, Songtsen Gampo sent envoys several times to make an offer of marriage to Tang. Emperor Taizong married Princess Wencheng to Songtsen Gampo. Princess Wencheng brought large volume of elegant handicraft and a variety of production technology and medical literature, which were greatly beneficial to economy and culture development of Tubo. From then on, Tang and Tubo built a good marriage relationship. In the following two hundred years, ratification from Tang emperors was necessary for enthronement of new king of Tubo.

In the beginning of Eighth Century, Princess Jincheng married king of Tubo. In the middle of Ninth Century, Tubo formed alliance with tang…which is historically called “Changqing Alliance”.

-Narratives on Tibet during Sui and Tang Dynasties. p. 87-89

-Narratives on Tibet during Yuan Dynasty:

During Yuan Dynasty, the economic and cultural connection between central government and Tibetan region was greatly strengthened. Mongol and Tibetan shared the same religion-Buddhism. The Yuan government conferred the title of “Guoshi” (Teacher for the country) to Tibetan leader Basiba. Also, Kublai Khan asked Basiba to create Mongol written language, which was called “Basiba-Mongolian word”. Mongol and Tibet had close relationship.

-Yuan) established Xuanzheng Institute for the administration of religious issue and the governance of Tibetan region.

-Narratives on Tibet during Ming and Qing eras:

During Ming Dynasty, Tibet was called Wusizang. The court set up Wei-su in Wusizang, assigned Tibetans as officials in various levels…Also, Ming Dynasty establish Monk official system in Tibet…The court held the authority to appoint and remove Monk officials…In Ming Dynasty, all religious sects in Tibet embraced the authority of central government.

-In Yongzheng Emperor’s era, Qing Dynasty sent ministers to Tibet as the permanent representative of central government who administered Tibet with Dalai and Panchen (the local religious leaders in Tibet). The establishment of grand minister resident of Tibet indicated the reinforcement of central government’s ruling to Tibet.

-Narratives on Tibet during Yuan Dynasty. p. 112
Ethnical relationship, along with international relationship, starts being a constant theme in history textbook from the narration of Han Dynasty. Except in Chapter Three where there is only “ethnical fusion” part but no international communication, these two sets of themes are described in every historical period after Han. It would be interesting to see the way in which the textbook distributes historical events into the two content categories, because it clearly indicates the national boundary drawn and acknowledged by official narratives. As shown above, Tibet issue comes into the teaching program in the narration of Tang Dynasty, and is classified as domestic ethnical phenomenon in every subsequent chapter. So it is clear that Tibet is considered part of China, and Tibetan is treated as a branch of Chinese nation in official narratives. How does the textbook, using concrete historical description, support the multi-nationalist argument that Tibetan was one piece of Chinese national jigsaw in history?

The narrative of Tibet follows the statist logic laid out in the last section. Tubo is treated as one of the regimes in Chinese national history because it set the capital in Lhasa which is currently under CCP’s control. So Tibet is part of China because Tibet was part of China in history; and Tibet was part of China in history because Lhasa is now in the territory of PRC. This tautology is not meaningless, because it demonstrates the confidence of CCP state’s power in assimilating various ethnical groups into one nation, which accords with the *jus soli* logic prevailing in France.

In addition, according to the textbook, the central governments in every Dynasty were in dominating position in the connection to Tibet. Even though Yuan and Qing were not regimes founded by Han people, there rulings in central plain were considered under the strong influence of Han culture, if taking the evolving political systems into account.
So the narratives of Tibet and Central Plain actually implicates the thesis of Han culture domination, of which the evidence could be seen in the descriptions about Tibetan rulers imitating Hanist political system, learning Hanist culture, inventing Tibetan writing language following Han characters, and even under undirected political control exerted by central government. Since Tang, Yuan and Qing governments are considered mirroring the contemporary government, the confidence of the power of central government is enhanced by the historical dominance of Han culture in ethnical relationships. To sum up, consistent with the general logics in official historical narratives, the narratives on Tibet employ the statist logic, which is further strengthened by the thesis of Han culturist dominance.

**CCP’s Perception of Taiwan Issue**

When the KMT candidate Ma Ying-jeou won the 2012 ROC president (the leader of Taiwan District) election, numbers of analysts argued that it was actually the victory of “1992 Consensus” over “Taiwan Consensus” held by the DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) leader Tsai Ing-wen during the campaign (Chen, Li, etc, 2012). What “1992 Consensus” implicates is “one China Principle” that there is only one Chinese nation, to which both China mainland and Taiwan belong. On the ground of the 1992 meeting between Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) and Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF), the CCP and the KMT reached the consensus that “one China Principle” should be the basis of dealing with Taiwan problem and the communication between the two sides of the strait.

While both sides agree that there is only one China, the political meanings of Chinese nation in CCP and KMT’s narratives are different in terms of state legitimacy.
The standing of Anti-secessionist in Taiwan, founded as early as in 1991 while later defined as the main point of “1992 Consensus”, can be described as “one China with different interpretations”, of which the original explanation is worth cited as below:

Both sides of the Taiwan Straits agree that there is only one China. However, the two sides of the Straits have different opinions as to the meaning of “one China”. To Beijing, “one China” means “the People’s Republic of China”, with Taiwan to become a “Special Administrative Region” after unification. Taipei, on the other hand, considers “one China” to mean the Republic of China (ROC), founded in 1911 and with de jure sovereignty over all of China. The ROC, however, currently has jurisdiction only over Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu. Taiwan is part of China, and the Chinese mainland is part of China as well.

-1991 Guidelines of National Unification

The CCP’s attitude toward this statement is ambiguous and under evolution. According to my preliminary investigation, there are at least two opinions expressed through official media and documents regard to the political definition of China. The first one repudiates the legitimacy of Republic of China as a political entity, arguing that Taiwan is part of China under the governance of communist state (However, it is claimed that if this arrangement came true, “one China, two system” should be applied, that Taiwan could sustain its democratic system while to be part of PRC). This position was first clearly expressed since the beginning of conversation between two sides in the White Paper The Taiwan Problem and Reunification of China published by Taiwan Affairs Office in 1993: “There is only one China in the world, Taiwan is an inalienable part of China and the seat of China’s central government is in Beijing. This is a universally recognized fact as well as the premise for a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question.” (Taiwan Affairs Office, 1993)

It is worth noting that this attitude was a presentation of Chinese nationalism regarding to Taiwan held by both Mao Zedong and Kiang Kai-shek. After fleeing to
Taiwan, Kiang launch a number of nationalist campaign aiming to establish the imagined Chinese nation among Taiwan population (Hughes 1997), and made “counterattack to mainland” as prevailing political slogan. Lying behind this strategy was the argument that there should only be one legitimate state governing the Chinese nation, and this state was ROC. In the CCP side, it was PRC. Since the communist power establishment throughout mainland China, the CCP’s standing in Taiwan issue could be best seen in the official discourse on “liberation” claiming that communist regime was the only legitimate national political entity in China, Republic of China was the story in the past, and Taiwan was a problem left over by history due to international environment which should be solved by further liberation. The policy of “liberating Taiwan” was “the main content of Taiwan policy” in Mao’s era. Though after Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee in 1978, the party’s policy had started to move away from military statist unification to peaceful national unification under the principle of “one China, two systems”, neither the CCP nor the KMT literally acknowledge the legitimacy of the other regime across the strait.

But there is no denying that the controversy around political meaning of China had lost its priority in the agenda of strait issue. With the increasing of political, economical and cultural communication between mainland China and Taiwan, and the decline of strait tension during the KMT governance term from 2008 to present, the CCP has moved away from the radical standing to milder attitude, by showing its subtle leaning to “one China with different interpretation”. For example, in his speech for Strait Peace and Prosperity Forum, Li Ya-fei, the vice president of ARATS defined the “1992
“Consensus” as “the insistence held by both sides on one China principle with respective oral statements”.

But again, there is little sign pointing to the CCP’s acknowledgment of ROC regime as the legitimate governor of state in contemporary era. First, Li’s speech did not indicate that the “oral statement” was about the political meaning of China. Second, though Taiwan media reported this speech with the title “1992 Consensus is one China two interpretations”, Li’s talk could be seen as an exception because official narratives of the CCP tend to emphasize the one China principle while avoid explaining the “different interpretation” issue. This was more clearly shown in Anti-Secession Law (Tenth National People's Congress 2005):

There is only one China in the world. Both the mainland and Taiwan belong to one China. China's sovereignty and territorial integrity brook no division. Safeguarding China's sovereignty and territorial integrity is the common obligation of all Chinese people, the Taiwan compatriots included. Taiwan is part of China. The state shall never allow the “Taiwan independence” secessionist forces to make Taiwan secede from China under any name or by any means.

- Article 2, Anti-Secession Law, PRC

The “Taiwan independence secessionist forces” mentioned in this legal document is mostly led by the DPP, the largest out-party in Taiwan. It was formed aiming to challenge the Chinese nationalism constructed by the KMT after their settlement in the island (Hughes 1997). Taiwanese nationalism, as opposed to Chinese nationalism serves as one of the party principles and ideological basis of Taiwan independence movement. Corresponding to Taiwanese nationalism were Lee Teng-hui’s declaration that “cross-Strait relations should be considered as ‘nation to nation, or at least special state-to-state
ties”, and Chen Shui-bian’s argument that “Taiwan and China are each one country on each side of the Strait” (Hickey 2011, p. 236).

It is not surprising that the CCP strongly opposed Taiwan’s independence though today it emphasizes more on “the peaceful development of relations” and “the maintenance of the status quo”. To sum up, the CCP’s overall attitude toward Taiwan issue could be understood, under the political sociology framework, as three components. First, Chinese government steadfastly insists the “one China principle” that China is a nation including Taiwan as a local region which should not be separated. Second, the CCP government is the only legitimate regime in Chinese nation, as UN acknowledged. Lastly and interestingly, the legitimacy of ROC is ambiguous. On one hand, the CCP has to admit that in reality Taiwan is not under its control. On the other hand, it refuses to acknowledge ROC as Chinese state by avoiding the “one China two interpretations” issue, and to accept ROC’s ruling in Taiwan as governing activity of legal modern state by using “the leader of Taiwan district” instead of “ROC President” when referring to Ma Ying-jeou in official report.

So how does education section, under CCP’s control, explain Taiwan issue to Chinese teenagers through nationalist narrative? What logic does the description follow in textbooks? The following section presents the result of content analysis on high school history textbook widely used in China.

Taiwan in High School History Textbook

Taiwan does not appear in the textbook until the description of the Three Kingdom era, when a number of mainland people migrated to the island according to
historical record, and Taiwan became to be part of Chinese history. “230 AD, Sunquan sent military troop led by General Wei Wen and General Zhuge Zhi to Yizhou (Taiwan), strengthened the economical and cultural connection between Taiwan and Mainland. This is the earliest record about mass migration from Mainland to Taiwan in ancient literature.” (pp. 53-54)

Afterwards, Taiwan is constantly shown in the following maps of Chinese regimes, but there is no literarily discussion on Taiwan except in the last chapter:

In the end of Ming Dynasty, colonist from Netherlands invaded and occupied Taiwan of our country. In the beginning of Qing Dynasty, 1661, Zheng Chenggong, who was fighting with Qing Troop in southeast cost, landed Taiwan with over three hundred battleships. His troop defeat Netherland colonists after tough fighting. In 1662, Taiwan came back to its mother country. In Taiwan, Zheng, his son and grandson developed agriculture and commerce, promoted culture and education, strengthened national security gave peace to the people.

After Zheng chenggong recovered Taiwan, he sent his troops to everywhere in Taiwan to open up virgin soil. Also, he appointed agriculture master to pass on advanced agriculture technology of Han to local ethnic minorities. So a mass of virgin soil was exploited. In addition, Zheng chenggong was an enthusiast in developing commodity production...

-Chapter Six, Section Six, International relationship in Ming and Qing eras, p. 140

Since Taiwan was reunified to mainland as a part of China, the power struggle between Zheng family and Qing court on the island authority is treated as domestic affairs:

After Zheng Chenggong resumed Taiwan, Taiwan was under the ruling of Zheng family. In 1683, Qing court appointed Fujian commander-in-chief, Shi Lang, as the leader of the troops marching towards Taiwan. Zheng’s army was defeated in the battle in Penghu; Zheng Keshuang (grandson of Zheng Chenggong) surrendered. Taiwan then was incorporated into Qing’s territory. In the following year, Qing established Taiwan official residence, which was subordinate to Fujian Province. The establishment of Taiwan official residence strengthened Taiwan’s connection to the mainland, promoted the exploitation of Taiwan and solidified the coast defense of mother country.
Based on the Taiwan-related content in the textbook, it is clear that Chinese nationality was given to Taiwan following the statist logic and Han domination thesis. Though the narrative on migration in Three Kingdoms era does not sufficiently implicate Taiwan’s belonging to China, it actually leaves a hint foreshadowing later descriptions. Without any explanations, Taiwan is shown in the maps of the territories controlled by Sui, Tang, Yuan, Ming and Qing— the regimes that once governed “unified China”, and even Song, which only controlled part of “Chinese territory”. These maps reflect the popular official statement that “Taiwan is always a part of China from ancient times to the present”.

In other words, regardless of the original nationality of native Taiwanese, they were Chinese because Taiwan was under control of the central governments or local Hanist government (that founded by Zheng Chenggong). And Chinese nationality of Taiwan does not change with the alternation of controlling governments, if these governments are all Chinese (as mentioned above, Yuan and Qing are all considered Chinese although they were founded by non-Han ethnicities). Hence the Netherlands’ occupation in Taiwan is described as a loss of Chinese territory; Zheng Chenggong is treated as “the hero of nation”, of which “nation” refers China, who fought against foreign invaders. The Chinese nationality of Taiwan is further supported by the narratives regarding the spread of Han culture and state-led exploitation of the island, which implicate the thesis of Han culture domination.
So the narrative in the history textbook about Taiwan embraces the ground rule that Taiwan should be part of China and must not be spitted out as an independent nation. However, it does not provide an unambiguous answer to the legitimate successive ruler of Taiwan. In reality, both the CCP and the KMT declares that their regimes are orthodox in representing China (with Taiwan as part of it), but the former does not have actual control power to the island, while the later does not have that to the mainland. But confronting the challenge from the secessionist led by the DPP, they reach a consensus that there is only one China, though it is unclear that which regime, PRC or ROC, is more legitimate than the other one.

**Conclusion**

History textbooks play an important role in the nationalist education programs. As the object of this research, the textbook gives a portrait of ancient China as a multi-national country, which implicates the historical root of multi-national China in contemporary era. Especially, its narratives on Tibet and Taiwan clearly mirror the nationalist view that Tibet and Taiwan are parts of China because they were always under control of Chinese governments. According to the qualitative analysis on the textbook, the historical definition of China as a multi-national country is supported by statist logic with the help of Han culture domination thesis. The evidence showing that an ethnicity was settled inside the territory controlled by Chinese regimes (including those founded by non-Han ethnicities) imposes the Chinese nationality on this ethnical group, which is further strengthened by the emphases on the communication between Han and this ethnical group where Han’s dominance in economy and culture is considered significant in the process of “national-fusion”. 

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The historical narrative in the textbook is consistent with the conventional wisdom that “Han is China’s main ethnic group, and Chinese consists of Han and other ethnical minorities”. So Tibetans are Chinese; Taiwanese, regardless the variety of ethnical groups on the islands, are Chinese. I found two explanations to this conception gave by the textbook. One follows the nationhood definition prevailing in France where people believe that the state is strong enough to assimilate a variety of ethnical groups settling inside the territory. The other one, however, employs the Han domination thesis in ancient China, implicating that an ethnical group should be one member in Chinese family because of the influence exerted by Han. It should be noted that Han domination is manifested in overwhelming culture (mainly Confucius culture) and economy (agriculture), whereas not necessary in political power. Mainstream Chinese scholars do not consider the fact that Manchu pulled down the Ming Dynasty (founded by Han) as a process of conquering Chinese nation, but treat it as a replacement of regime for the same nation. They justify this argument by saying that even though non-Han ethnicities once conquered Han and occupied the territory, they had to learn Han culture and political system in order to govern the whole country. Once they ran the country in Han’s way, they should be regarded as Chinese.

The second logic set Han as the representative of Chinese, which is similar to that in nationhood definition in Germany and to the “ethnicist nationalism” in Smith’s term. But Chinese nationhood, rhetorically, is less exclusive than that of Germany. An ethnical group would not be treated as Germany because of the blood, while it would be rejected to become Chinese because of the culture, if follow by Han domination logic. Hence I would conceptualize this logic as “Han culturalist nationalism”. However, both Han and
German are two overwhelming ethnicities representing their nations, and there would be a tendency to consider “Han culturalist nationalism” and “Han chauvinism” together. It is far from clear that if they are different qualitatively or the same. If interpreted as same ideology, it is intriguing to see that while the former is expressed in official educational material, the later one is opposed in public documents, even in the constitution (Tenth National People's Congress 2004):

The People’s Republic of China is a unitary multi-national State created jointly by the people of all its nationalities. Socialist relations of equality, unity and mutual assistance have been established among the nationalities and will continue to be strengthened. In the struggle to safeguard the unity of the nationalities, it is necessary to combat big-nation chauvinism, mainly Han chauvinism, and to combat local national chauvinism. The State will do its utmost to promote the common prosperity of all the nationalities.

-Preamble, Constitution of the People's Republic of China

Some may argue that the difference between these two concepts is only quantitative. But the question is how to draw the boundary between them. This is worth asking because the state’s opposition to “Han chauvinism” essentially follows the statist logic in defining the multi-national China, while the propaganda tool instills “Han culturalist nationalism”, which is close to but less radical than Germany’s ethnicist view, into students’ mind. In order to make the official nationalist doctrine consistent and not self-contradictory, criteria should be invented to draw the line between the two concepts. But this kind of criteria does not exist in reality.

To sum up, if we take Germany and France as comparative cases into consideration, “Han culturalist nationalism” and the statist logic are contradictory to each other, but they coexist in official discourse. Are they compatible in the official discourse? We do not have exact answer. But the blurry boundary between “Han culturalist nationalism” and “Han chauvinism” together. It is far from clear that if they are different qualitatively or the same. If interpreted as same ideology, it is intriguing to see that while the former is expressed in official educational material, the later one is opposed in public documents, even in the constitution (Tenth National People's Congress 2004):

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nationalism” and “Han chauvinism” would cause real problem that transcend the logical realm. In fact, the central government is now facing with challenge in maintaining the national unity by overwhelming political power run by Han people. Take Tibet as an example. If solely follows the French logic or comply with the opposition to “Han chauvinism”, Tibet would acquire Chinese nationality in territorial and statist sense, and multi-culturalism should be adopted so their unique culture could be preserved. So some scholars argue that a good solution to Tibet question is to govern Tibet in a federal system. However, it is unrealistic for the CCP to change the authoritarian system to federal. Even though Tibet is currently administrated together by Tibetan and Han officials, it is Han officials on top who really hold the wisp. This situation is consistent with the Han domination thesis and reflects “Han culturalist nationalism”. Consequently, following the statist logic, the CCP promises the autonomy in minority ethnicity areas on one hand, while it fails to fulfill the promise by policy makings aiming at changing Tibetan culture with the confidence to Han culture superiority on the other. Hence the ambiguity in official Chinese nationalism would be the ideological base for the riots in Tibet.
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