

Re-constructing the Nation: Struggles in Portraying Minority Ethnic Groups in Chinese Mainstream History Textbooks

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD Degree

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Word count (exclusive of bibliography):

91,442 words

Signature:

Abstract

This thesis examines the changes to the portrayal of minority ethnic groups in Chinese history textbooks since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. It finds that ideological shifts in Beijing have led to minority ethnic groups being portrayed in changing and even contradictory ways in school textbooks. In the history textbooks of the 1950s, the Chinese nation was largely defined as a Han nation-state, and other ethnic groups were generally represented as non-Chinese who had historically been 'threats' or 'enemies' of the Han/Chinese. It was not until the reform era from the late 1970s that a more inclusive and multi-ethnic conception of the Chinese nationhood was adopted, with 'minority' ethnic groups incorporated into the Chinese historical narrative and portrayed more positively. However, as the Communist Party took an increasingly nationalist turn from the 1990s, simultaneously downplaying messages of socialist internationalism, Han ethno-centrism became more apparent once again in textbook narratives, with minority ethnic groups correspondingly marginalised. This thesis also finds that, although non-Han groups were portrayed very differently in history textbooks to match shifting political ideologies, what remained unchanged throughout PRC history was the representation of the backwardness of the non-Han in relation to the Han who were always portrayed as advanced. Based on this examination, this thesis argues that while history education has always been used by the Communist Party to inculcate a highly state-centred vision of national identity, underlying conceptions of the Chinese nationhood have been rather fluid, and there has been no consistent progress towards a more inclusive notion of 'Chineseness'. Instead, different visions have co-existed and competed, reflecting tensions inherent in the project of constructing modern national consciousness: China has struggled (and is still struggling) to stretch the short, tight skin of the nation over the gigantic body of its empire.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my two supervisors, Prof. Paul Morris and Prof. Edward Vickers. They have been extremely helpful and supportive throughout my PhD study, and their support has meant a great deal to me. I thank them for their wisdom, patience and inspiring supervision which have helped me to go through this long journey. The experience of being supervised by them will be a valuable asset to my life.

I also want to say thanks to Dr. Germ Janmaat and Dr. Edmund Waite for their valuable suggestions on my upgrade, and Prof. Bob Cowen and Dr. Christine Han for the suggestions they made and the help they provided during my study.

Special thanks are given to Prof. Geoff Whitty who has shared his insights on many issues with me. His encouragement was invaluable and I will remember the conversations we had during my study journey.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to my family who have supported me during my study. Without their love and encouragement, it would have been impossible for me to complete this thesis. I appreciate all the things they have done for me.

Abbreviation

CCP Chinese Communist Party

KMT Nationalist Party

PE Patriotic Education

PEP People's Education Press

PRC People's Republic of China

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Understanding the issue

1.1.1 Background

China has 55 officially identified minority ethnic groups with a combined population of almost 106 million (8.41% of the total 1.3 billion population).¹ Unlike Western countries such as Britain or France, the minority ethnic population in China is largely indigenous and most live in the border regions, which accounts for more than half of China's territory. These minority ethnic groups, ranging in size from about 2,000 to 17 million, have very different cultures. While some such as the Tujia and Manchu have similar aspects to those of the dominant Han, others such as Tibetan or Uyghur are very distinct in terms of religions, languages and customs. In this sense, China is a real multi-ethnic country.

Although these peoples are referred to as minority ethnic groups (*shaoshu minzu*), many are actually in the majority in the local regions where they live. For instance, in the Tibet Autonomous Region, despite a large number of ethnic Han immigrants in recent years, until 2010 more than 90% of the population are Tibetan (NBS, 2012). In the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, although the Han population increased from 6.7% in 1949 to 39.7 % in 2004, the Uyghur are still the largest group in the region, accounting for 45.7% of the whole population (SBXUAR, 2013), and in some regions in southern Xinjiang such as Kashgar and Hotan, the Uyghur population accounts for more than 90%.

¹ These ethnic groups are identified by state-organised academic groups during the period from 1950s to 1980s. It was a copy of similar project launched in the Soviet Union under Stalin's rule. More details of this project will be introduced in Chapter Five.

Moreover, in terms of GDP, the economic development level of most minority ethnic regions is relatively low compared to the eastern coastal provinces where most of the Han groups live, but many of these regions provide a large amount of crucial natural resources such as oil, gas, various mining and agricultural products such as cotton, which are all in considerable demand by China's fast-developing economy. In addition, since most minority ethnic groups live in China's border regions and there are often significant number of the same ethnic groups living on both sides of the national border, minority ethnic groups are strategically important to China in terms of national security and international relations. For instance, the Belt & Road Initiative, the Chinese government-oriented strategic plan to link China to Europe, covers most of the western part of China where most minority ethnic groups live.

Finally, in recent years China has been experiencing a period of intensive ethnic tension which is evidenced by the violent clashes in Tibet in 2008 and Urumchi in 2009 which led to more than hundreds of fatalities being reported. These incidents were regarded as some of the most serious publicly reported ethnic clashes since the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Since then, more than 10 incidents described as 'terror attacks' or 'ethnic riots' took place not only in minority regions but also elsewhere in China (i.e. Beijing in 2013 and Kunming in 2014). At least as significant are various forms of 'everyday resistance' identified by Bovingdon (2010). It is clear that the issue of ethnicity has become a political and public concern in China nowadays.

1.1.2 Debating Chinese-ness: the representation of minority ethnic groups in China

Despite this multi-ethnic reality of China and the strategic importance of Chinese minority ethnic groups, China has often been seen as a homogenous entity, not only by the majority ethnic Han group, but also by academics within and outside

the country. Indeed, for the majority Han population, the constant use of the term *shaoshu minzu* ('minority ethnic groups' or 'minority nationalities') itself serves to reinforce the sense that the definition of 'China' as a single national unit is fixed and given.² This homogenous image of China is often linked to the assumption of an unproblematic continuity of China from ancient to modern times, and therefore ignores the fluidity and diversity of 'Chinese-ness' in different historical periods. For example, in his book *The Chineseness of China*, Wang Gungwu (1991, p.2) recognises the changeable meaning of Chinese-ness in history, but nevertheless claims that 'what is quintessentially Chinese is the remarkable sense of continuity that seems to have made the civilisation increasingly distinctive over the centuries'. Being a historian who contends that nation-states are a modern phenomenon, Hobsbawm (1991) nevertheless saw China as an exceptional case which could not be compared with other countries, because it was an 'historical state' and even as early as 2,000 years ago, it already had the characteristics of a modern nation-state with its population all sharing one culture and one language. Levenson (1968) and Jaquez (2012) believe that China is a 'civilizational state' rather than a nation-state. While their view is different from Hobsbawm's in understanding the nature of China, they also imply that all Chinese people share one particular civilisation.

Their view, while popular and appealing, especially to the Han Chinese,³ creates problems in understanding the notion of a modern Chinese identity. According to Gladney (2004, p.6), their view was influenced by the modern ideology of the nation-state which took 'cultural uniformity for granted', and where China was

² In this thesis, I translate the term *shaoshu minzu* as 'minority ethnic group' or 'minority nationality', noting that until the early 2000s the standard translation was the Soviet-style 'minority nationality'.

³ Scholars such as Mullaney (2012, p.2) argue that the concept of the ethnic Han itself is a modern invention of the early 20th century, and that the Han identity in fact functions 'more like an umbrella term encompassing [a] plurality of diverse cultures, languages and ethnicities.' The controversies around the development of Han identity will be discussed in Chapter Four and Five.

'often portrayed as a homogeneous nation-state'. This view of a homogenous China, for Gladney, not only downplays the long-existing local diversities of society, culture and politics, but also implies equivalence between the Han and Chinese people, equates their cultures, and sees China as a Han state. Lams (2013) also reminds us that this view of a homogenous China imply the 'naturalisation of the connection between the Han culture and the Chinese culture, or the conceptual paring of the ethnonym Han with Chinese civilisation'. Following this narrow understanding of Chinese-ness, the essence of Chinese identity has often been defined by Han cultural traits or qualities such as Confucianism, Chinese writing characters (*hanzi* - 'the characters of Han'), a biogenetic, neo-racist notion of pan-Chinese yellowness, and the sacred status of certain symbols like the Yellow Emperor (*huangdi*) (Gladney, 2004, p.xv).

Some others, while acknowledging the existence of non-Han groups in China, nevertheless tend to view minority ethnic groups only as complementary to the Han in China. Indeed, as shown in Leibold's (2010) research on online Han Chinese nationalism, many Han Chinese do not genuinely believe that minority ethnic groups are equal to the Han and therefore discriminate against minority ethnic groups. Their view echoes the traditional Sino-centric view of the world, which treats minority ethnic groups as subjects of the Chinese 'civilising mission' (Harrell, 1996; Vickers 2015). This Sino-centric view is often supported by the so-called 'assimilationist' historians such as Ping-ti Ho (1998) and indeed most Chinese historians, who generally argue that minority ethnic groups were often attracted by the more advanced Han Chinese civilisation, so even those groups who conquered and ruled China were assimilated by the Han and ultimately became Chinese. A more nuanced version of the 'assimilationist' view often addresses the cultural compatibility of the Chinese identity and a sense of unity which enables the Chinese to assimilate or merge with other cultural groups, though paradoxically most holders of this view at the same time often assert a

'fixed' and 'given' core of Chinese-ness (Tu, 1994; Wang 1991; Watson, 1995). More details on the traditional Sino-centric view will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Recent historical studies on China have criticised this Sino-centric vision and tend to see Chinese history from the perspective of the 'margins'; i.e. the non-Han minority ethnic groups. For instance, reviewing the relationship between the nomadic groups in the Mongolian Plateau north of the Great Wall and the regimes of the Central Plain (*zhongyuan*; China or the Sinic regimes), Barfield (2011) argues that the nomadic groups such as the Hun, the Turk or Mongols should not be simply regarded as 'peripheries' of the Sinic regimes which have always been at the centre of Chinese historical writing. Nor should they simply be considered as admirers of the latter's civilisation, and therefore have the former always wanting to become the latter. Instead, he contends that the nomadic groups in the north of China actually enjoyed a more powerful status in the relationship between the two; they often blackmailed the regimes of the Central Plain and extorted wealth from them. According to Barfield, this blackmail was the core for understanding their relations and the fundamental clue for understanding the rise and fall of regimes from both sides. For example, he notes a parallel of the rise and fall of powerful regimes in both the Central Plain and north of the Great Wall in history. He argues that powerful regimes rose on the Central Plain as a result of collective efforts to defend against invasion or blackmail from the north. But once a powerful regime in the Central Plain was formed or established, very often an equally powerful (if not more powerful) regime in the north was also formed as a counter-balance to carry out collective blackmail activities against the powerful regime of the Central Plain. He gave examples of this parallel relations, such as the Han Dynasty vs the Hun Empire (*xiongnu*) between 200 BCE to 200 CE and the Tang Dynasty vs the Turk Empire (*tujue*) between 600 to 900 CE.

Similarly, a group of historians often regarded as the 'new Qing history' scholars, such as Crossley (1990; 1999), Rawski (1996), Millward (2002), Elliot (2001; 2006), and Perdue (2005), also reject the view of the 'assimilationist' scholars and argue that minority ethnic groups who conquered and ruled China were not simply assimilated by the Han Chinese, but instead tried to maintain their distinctive ethnic identity which was fundamental to their strategy of ruling China and the surrounding regions. Moreover, according to Elliot (2012), the non-Han groups in history actually widened and enriched the meaning of being Chinese to include not only the Han group, but non-Han groups as well. In other words, as Gladney (1994) argues, minority ethnic groups become the defining elements in the concept of Chinese-ness. The views of the 'new Qing history' scholars will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

Scholars working on modern Chinese history, such as Dikötter (1992), Harrison (2001), Leibold (2007), Mitter (2003; 2004), and Zhao (2004), also reject the view of a 'fixed' and 'given' Chinese identity that has continued from ancient to modern China. What they often argue is that the modern sense of China is actually the result of its modern construction by Chinese nationalist intellectuals and politicians (mostly Han). This construction process started in the 19th century when China, under the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644 - 1911 CE), encountered Western powers, and has continued to the present-day China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In general, these scholars see this construction process in China in the last two centuries as a transition process from a traditional empire to a modern nation-state, although this does not mean that the transition will be successful or ever completed. Based on theories of nationalism, their research has shown how the modern sense of the Chinese nation has been constructed through various instruments or vehicles such as museums, rituals and schooling, and in different historical periods, including the Republic Period (1911 - 1949) and

the PRC period (1949 - present). Their views will be further discussed in Chapter Five.

As Esherick et al. (2006) and Bulag (2006) point out, this transition has not been as smooth as modern Chinese elites would argue, but rather full of tensions and conflicts which have continued in present-day China. Esherick and Bulag also identify one of the main tensions in this transition: to transform the non-Han subjects of the previous multi-ethnic Qing empire into Chinese republican citizens. The crucial task of this nation-building project in both the Republic and PRC periods has been to construct a vision of the Chinese nation to incorporate these non-Han groups. Indeed, Leibold (2007) examines the policies and narrative strategies of both the Nationalist party (KMT) and CCP towards non-Han groups before 1949, and concludes that these non-Han groups were at the core of both parties' vision of the Chinese nation, although in slightly different ways. (This will be further discussed in Chapter Five.) Harrell (1994) and Vickers (2015) look at the strategies adopted by the Communist government after 1949, and argue that a Chinese version of the 'civilising mission' has been carried out to incorporate the non-Han groups by assimilation. All these strategies, whether they focus on accommodation or assimilation, and whether they are practised through government policies or institutions such as schools, were used to nationalise the non-Han groups. These strategies are important to the Chinese government especially the CCP since it finally defeated the KMT in 1949, as it is about legitimating the modern Chinese state to rule the various non-Han groups and regions in China.

To many Han Chinese elites, it seems the success of the Chinese strategies to incorporate minority ethnic groups, such as the civilising project, whether Confucianist or Communist, relies on their ability to justify their claims of being 'advanced' or 'civilised'. Gladney (1994) shows in his writing that the construction

of the *majority* Han group as ‘united, monoethnic, and modern’ largely depends on the construction of *minority* ethnic groups as ‘exotic, colourful, and primitive’. The civilising mission, in this sense, is not only about ‘civilising’ the non-Han groups, but also about legitimising the Han dominance. Gladney (1994, p.93) also argues that ‘the politics of representation in China reveals much about the state’s project in constructing, in often binary minority/majority terms, an “imagined” national identity.’ In other words, representation of minority ethnic groups becomes an indispensable part of the construction of the Chinese nation. Therefore, by analysing official representations of minority ethnic groups in China in, for example, state-authorized textbooks, it becomes possible to better understand the nature of the official construction of the Chinese nation, as well as the inherent problems and tensions embedded in this construction process.

1.1.3 History education, textbooks and national identity

Among the various strategies mentioned above, education clearly plays an important role in incorporating or ‘civilising’ the non-Han groups in China. Examining Chinese governance in frontier regions over four periods (the Ming dynasty, middle and late Qing dynasty and the PRC), Vickers (2015) convincingly shows that education was and is an important tool for the Chinese regimes to conduct their ‘civilising mission’ to transform the ‘barbarians’ at the frontiers, especially in the south, and implement central control, in both premodern and modern times. In other words, the education of minority ethnic groups, very often carried out by coercion, has always been an important way of legitimising Chinese rule. He also particularly notes that there was a massive expansion of Chinese schooling for indigenous populations in the late Qing dynasty, which shows a changed perception of China from a ‘culturally pluralist empire’ to a ‘single nation’ which requires ‘the transformation of all inhabitants into a citizenry sharing a common culture.’ He further points out a much larger scale of expansion

was carried out by the Communist regime after 1949 to socialise local minority ethnic groups as citizens of a unified nation-state.

Many scholars have noted that modern mass education systems often play a significant role in the creation and development of modern nation-states. Examining state formation in six countries across the world, Green (2013) illustrates the link between the development of the modern state and the mass education system. Theorists of nationalism such as Gellner (1983) also emphasise the determining role of mass education system in the 'making' of modern nations. According to him, the development of the high culture of industrial society is crucial to the creation of modern nations, but the development of high culture requires large numbers of literate labourers, something that could only be produced by a standardised mass education system. Gellner (1983) also argues that mass public education is necessary for nations because it can endow citizens with a sense of identity and loyalty to the nation. Smith (1998a) even argues that it is now the public mass education system, rather than language and linguistic culture, which is the most important factor that binds the state and culture together and makes the creation of modern nation-states possible.⁴ More discussion on the role of mass education system in nation construction will be provided in Chapter Two.

While many, if not all, school subjects can be used by states to instil a sense of national identity, history teaching in particular is used for this purpose. This has been examined by many scholars with case studies across the world (Foster & Crawford 2006; Hein & Selden 2000; Vickers & Jones, 2005). Under the guise of

⁴ Smith (1998) gives an example of using mass public education to forge national consciousness. During the French Third Republic, leaders of the Republic devised a universal system of mass public education based on a standardised curriculum, particularly in 'national' subjects like literature, geography, history and physical education. As Smith (1998, p.39) points out, since then, the 'message of French grandeur and territorial integrity became an important element in French national consciousness for succeeding generations.'

patriotism, by inculcating in students an official version of a shared past, states tend to deploy history education to instil a state-defined collective identity to create group cohesion and maintain a sense of belonging amongst its citizen (Foster & Crawford, 2006, p.5). In this way, unsurprisingly for many countries, nationalist ideology became the dominant theme in history education.

Examining various cases in Asia, Jones (2005a) shows that the rise of Asian nation-states in modern times has changed the dominant purpose of teaching history from general-purpose moralising to the narrative construction of nationhood. Indeed, as Vickers (2005, p.11) also points out, the principle of historical writing in pre-modern China 'was to explain the rise and fall of ruling dynasties by reference to a set of eternal moral norms embodied in the Chinese classical canon,' but this has changed since the creation of the modern Chinese nation-state in the early 20th century, which evidenced the creation and development of modern historiography in China and an explosion of 'new' historical writing on *national* history (Moloughney & Zarrow, 2011). Jones (2005b, p.65, 74) also notes that although 'history and education in China became intertwined with regime legitimation, culture and value transmission, and the making of dutiful citizens more than two millennia ago', it was not until modern times that political powers such as the KMT (pre-1949) and CCP (post-1949) started to use history education to establish a new nationalist narrative 'principally to define the nation-state, its national people and their unique characteristics and to compare China favourably against its Others.' In other words, modern history education is distinguished from pre-modern forms by the way in which it is bonded to the idea of the nation-state and is used for constructing the nation.

Although history as a school subject is adopted by almost all modern nation-states to instil a certain national identity, it is taught and learned in different ways in different countries. For example, in some countries historical knowledge is

taught to students as 'an authorised version beyond criticism', whereas in other countries it is treated, at least to some extent, as 'a living tradition of debate over the past, whose findings are always provisional and open to revision' (Vickers, 2005, p.19). To understand how history is taught and learned in a particular country, one has to take into consideration a whole range of issues; for example: the way the history curriculum is developed, either top-down or a school-based curriculum; how history teachers are trained; and the way students are assessed (ibid.). Scholars including Marsh and Morris (1991) point out that in most East Asian countries, teachers and students tend to have a relatively high degree of reliance on textbooks in the classroom. Vickers (2005, p.5) also argues that officially approved textbooks play a much more central role in schools in East Asian countries than in countries where other teaching and learning materials are available and used in the classroom. He further notes that in most East Asia countries especially in China, not only does the mode of assessment encourage the rote memorisation of authorised texts, but 'a strong and long-standing belief in the need for authoritatively "correct" versions of history have all tended to reinforce the importance attached by both students and teachers to the approved texts' (ibid., p.5). These factors all increase the importance of textbooks in history teaching and learning in countries like China.

Therefore, as Foster and Crawford (2006, p.2) assert, an analysis of history textbooks is important since it not only allows for exploration of the 'views, values and interests involved in making of curriculum', but also reveals 'a particular form of national memory, national identity and national consciousness' which states seek to shape. However, although textbooks are used by the state to deliver 'a shared set of values, a national ethos, and an incontrovertible sense of political orthodoxy' (ibid., p.1), this seemingly shared, national and incontrovertible version of legitimated knowledge or 'truth' in textbooks is not politically neutral to every national citizen. Critical studies of textbooks reveal that they are conceived,

designed and authored by real people with real interests; in other words, they are closely related to power relations and are the result of struggles between competing groups such as ethnic groups or social classes (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1993). Foster and Crawford (2006, p.4) also point out that textbooks are the result of negotiations and compromises of 'intensely political activity and debates, controversies and tensions' because they are important for the dissemination and transmission of dominant cultural forms. In many ways, as they further argue, history textbooks are:

'based upon the cultural, ideological and political power of dominant groups that tend to enforce, and reinforce, cultural homogeneity through the promotion of shared attitudes and the construction of shared historical memories.' (Foster & Crawford, 2006, p.4).

In this sense, school textbooks become a device of social control. Indeed, through the process of knowledge selection, school textbooks often deliver the knowledge of the dominant groups, and therefore are used to legitimise their control over the dominated. This will be further discussed in Chapter Three.

While in most Western democratic societies this selection often involves struggles between competing social groups, what is selected for school textbooks in China is largely (if not entirely) determined by the Communist government, as the publication of school textbooks is strictly controlled by the party-state. Therefore, textbooks published in China are also treated as vehicles for legitimising the Party's rule. Thus, while in most Western societies this process of knowledge selection and control is regarded as a form of 'hegemony' (in its Gramscian usage), what is practised in China is actually a form of direct control. This is particularly true with issues related to national identity and ethnicity.

Two important aspects of school history textbooks are noted in this thesis. First, over time, there is an ongoing continual process of writing and re-writing and re-designing of the textbook material to reflect the changing interests and ideologies of dominant groups in the shifting political and social circumstance. Consequently, 'even non-negotiable "facts" about the past are always open to interpretation [...] to comply with contemporary issues' (Foster & Crawford, 2006, p.6). This means that every ten or so years, textbooks are being re-written and new versions are published to continually legitimise the rule of the dominant group. Second, while the writing of history textbooks involves a certain amount of 'knowledge selection'; 'de-selection' and 'forgetting' are equally important in the process (Crawford & Foster, 2007). As a result, while some aspects of the nation's history are specifically included and highlighted, others are deliberately excluded and suppressed. In this way, through textual inclusion and exclusion, the historical experiences of some groups become privileged and achieve authoritative status, whereas those of others, such as minority ethnic groups, may become forgotten, marginalised and subordinate (Foster & Crawford, 2006, p.6). This deliberate and narrow construction of historical memory by the powerful group, while facilitating their own dominance, inevitably causes the absence of 'alternative knowledge' and 'a plurality of discourses and narratives that might emerge from oppositional histories' (ibid., p.6). Since history writing is so closely linked to group identity construction, some groups become predominant in the construction of an official collective identity, whereas others are marginalised or excluded. It is based on these perspectives that this thesis examines state-controlled mainstream Chinese history textbooks published since 1949.

1.2 Research aims and questions

This thesis examines the portrayal of minority ethnic groups in the writing of national history in different versions of school textbooks published since the foundation of the PRC in 1949. It has two main research aims, and each is subdivided into research questions.

First, since ‘peripheries’ are often seen as the key for defining the boundary of a group (Tu, 1994), by looking at how minority ethnic groups’ stories, including their cultures, heroes and their relationship with the dominant ethnic Han group, are told in Chinese school textbooks, this thesis hopes to explore the nature of the official discursive construction of the Chinese nation in these books. It hopes to reveal:

In what ways is the *nation* defined, particularly with regard to the issue of ethnicity, and whether minority ethnic groups are included or excluded from the ‘national history’? If included, in what ways are they incorporated?

Since this thesis focuses in particular on the changes of the portrayal of minority ethnic groups across different versions of textbooks, it also tries to illustrate the fluidity of ‘Chinese-ness’ as a layered and contested discourse, subjected to change under a dynamic political and social environment. This allows the thesis to reveal the underlying ambiguities, tensions and conflicting ideologies in this official discursive construction of the nation in school textbooks.

Secondly, focusing on the relationship between nation construction and history education, this thesis hopes to explore how education, and textbooks in particular, have been used by the Chinese government to serve its nation building project. It focuses on ‘the role of the state in circumscribing what should and should not be publicly remembered, defining what constitutes the nation and the rights and

duties of citizenship' (Vickers, 2005, p.32). The research question for this research aim is:

What role has been assigned to the school curriculum in attempts by the modern Chinese state to socialise both Han and 'minorities' as citizens of a multi-ethnic Chinese nation?

1.3 Previous studies on the representation of minority ethnic groups in Chinese textbooks

In recent years, there has emerged an extensive body of literature on both Chinese minority education and textbooks studies. However, only a few works focus on how minority ethnic groups have been portrayed in Chinese school textbooks. Vickers (2006, 2015) has researched this issue in various degrees in several of his writings on education in China. He has particularly examined the effect of the rise of nationalism in China since the 1980s on the representation of minority ethnic groups in school textbooks. According to him, the rise of nationalism in China in recent years has led to a turn towards a Han ethnocentric vision of Chinese identity. As a result, the histories of minority ethnic groups such as Tibetan and Mongolia have been distorted in textbooks to reinforce a state-centred and homogenising vision of Chinese nationhood. Vickers (ibid.) has also found that minority ethnic groups are generally portrayed as 'colourful but backward'. While their historical link to the central state is highlighted, their independent histories are entirely ignored in history textbooks. This way of representing of minority ethnic groups, according to Vickers (2006, p.44), fails to 'provide Han Chinese students with the basis of any real understanding of their ancient and complex histories and cultures.'

Chu (2015) examines the representation of both minority ethnic groups and the Han group in three types of current Chinese elementary textbooks used in the subjects of 'Chinese Language' (*yuwen*), 'Moral Education and Life' and 'Moral Education and Society'. He argues that the Han ideology is overwhelmingly dominant in these textbooks and as a result, minority ethnic groups are marginalised and information about them are 'incomplete and stereotypical' (*ibid.*, p.469). For example, he finds that minority ethnic groups are often linked to the idea of 'traditional' and are often positioned as 'others', whereas the ethnic features of the Han are generally not mentioned to normalise the Han as a cosmopolitan identity. His finding echoes findings of other scholars such as Gladney (1994) who also observes that the images of minority ethnic groups are often constructed as 'primitive, exotic and distant' (*ibid.*, p.477). The reason for that, according to Chu, is because information about minority ethnic groups in textbooks are mainly constructed and presented from the perspective of the Han people. He concludes that this unequal representation of minority ethnic groups reflects the unequal power relations between Han and minority ethnic groups in the real world.

Both Vickers and Chu's research are insightful in revealing how minority ethnic groups are presented unfavourably in school textbooks in China. Some of their findings clearly signal the findings of this thesis, as will be discussed later. Nevertheless, because their research focuses only on contemporary textbooks, they do not provide a historical representation of how minority ethnic groups in Chinese textbooks has changed and why these changes have taken place.⁵

⁵ Although Vickers (2006) analyses the current history textbooks, he does refer to previous textbooks occasionally. He also notes that changes of representation are mainly due to the turn to nationalism as the dominant ideology in China since the 1980s. Nevertheless, his focus is on current textbooks and textbooks published in early period of the PRC history (e.g. before 1980s) are not analysed.

Baranovitch (2010) examines changes in the representation of minority ethnic groups by comparing three versions of history textbooks for senior high school students published in 1951, 1956 and 2003. She finds that, compared to earlier versions, those published in 2003 embraced a new multi-ethnic narrative in which minority ethnic groups were portrayed more positively. For example, while the 1951 textbooks depicted minority ethnic groups as 'non-Chinese others' or even as 'foreigners', the 2003 textbooks clearly stress the notion that they have always been Chinese. She explains that one of the reasons for this change was that, in the 1950s, the nation-building project was still at its very beginning, so minority ethnic groups were portrayed as 'others' intentionally since this helped to consolidate the national consciousness among the Han, who would constitute the core of the newly established nation-state (ibid., p.110). Another explanation Baranovitch (ibid., p.110) provides is that, in the early 1950s, textbooks were preoccupied with Marxist ideology and ideas of class struggle, and since this was already enough to construct a sense of a nation, there was no need to pay much attention to issues of ethnicity. According to her, the 2003 textbooks adopts a multi-ethnic vision of China because editors of textbooks felt that the identity and unity of the Han group was already strong enough, so it was time to move to the next stage of the nation-building project by incorporating minority ethnic groups into the Chinese nation. She also explains that since the decline of the revolutionary paradigm in textbooks in the late 1970s, editors have had to face ethnic diversity in China. As a result, issues of ethnicity have become a key theme in Chinese history textbooks and a multi-ethnic narrative has been adopted as a solution to this problem.

While Baranovitch's research provides a historical perspective on changes of representation of minority ethnic groups in Chinese textbooks, her explanations are nevertheless misleading. Partly this is because she does not examine textbooks published between the 1960s and 2000s, and so misses important

changes and shifts in content of textbooks which may have led to very different conclusions. This thesis also disputes her claims that textbooks published in the 2000s fully embrace a multi-ethnic vision of Chinese nationhood, and that minority ethnic groups are totally incorporated into the Chinese self. As will be discussed later, the reality is more complicated: competing narratives co-exist in textbooks published in 2000s and minority ethnic groups are to large degree still excluded in the conception of Chinese nationhood.

By providing a full and coherent examination of changes of portrayals of minority ethnic groups, this thesis will fill the research gap and provide an insight into how changes of the state's agenda and the dominant political ideology have affected the representation of minority ethnic groups in the construction of Chinese nationhood.

1.4 Significance and limits of this thesis

In recent years, many studies on the education of minority ethnic groups in China have been preoccupied with the idea of 'multiculturalism'.⁶ Vickers (2015, p.68) particularly criticises this preoccupation, and points out that underlying this rhetoric is an analogy between challenges of 'minority' education in China and Western countries where the term multiculturalism was first developed, and where the main issue is in fact integrating immigrant populations. Another assumption of the rhetoric of 'multiculturalism' in China is that the education of minority ethnic groups is referred to as a 'social problem' or 'social phenomenon'

⁶ For example, one academic paper published on Qinghai Ethnic Studies in China recently examines the multiculturalism policies in Canada and concludes that China should also adopt similar policies to construct the 'unitary and multi-ethnic state' (*yiti duoyuan*) (Zhou & Shen, 2017). Moreover, in 2013, Beijing Normal University, the leading university for education studies in China, established its Multicultural Education Centre. Xinjiang Normal University in Urumqi held its first international conference on 'Multiculturalism and Education' in 2014.

which needs to be managed or must be resolved by social interventions. Vickers (ibid., p.69) further points out that, as a result of this assumption, much research on the education of minority ethnic groups has focussed primarily on the 'educational "effectiveness" of the state's educational policies, rather than on their function in buttressing an essentially colonial governing arrangement.' He argues that these studies confine their discussion to 'politically neutral territory' (ibid.). This assumption also positions China as a nation-state, and minority ethnic groups are supplementary to the 'Chinese'.

Unlike these studies, this thesis looks at the issue of ethnicity from the aspect of nationhood and nation construction. By revealing the underlying and overarching tensions in the notion of 'Chinese-ness' in history textbooks through examination of changes of representation of minority ethnic groups, this thesis argues that the core issue for the education of minority ethnic groups in China lies in the complex nature of the Chinese nation-building project, which fails to include minority ethnic groups in the 'imagined Chinese community' (Anderson, 1991).

However, this thesis focuses on analysing state authorised textbooks in China, and inevitably adopts a top-down and elite-based approach to investigating the construction of the Chinese nationhood and the official strategy to create, cultivate and implement national identity through its institutions. It does not plan to investigate representations of culture, popular beliefs and sentiments of the people, which also form an important aspect of Chinese national identity. This thesis acknowledges that the officially constructed national identity does not necessarily represent popular and individual national identities which themselves are worthy of study.

It also recognises that students' knowledge of history comes from various sources, and only part of their knowledge is from the classroom. It acknowledges that both teachers and students may have different interpretations to the narrative

in textbooks, and as Apple and Christian-Smith (1993) point out, it should not be assumed that whatever content is offered in school textbooks or discussed in the classroom is directly transmitted into the mind of a student without any filtering or engagement with the subject matter. Indeed, students' reception of knowledge is a complex issue. Although the way that students learn history from a state-approved curricular or textbook is an important related topic, this thesis does not attempt to address it, as it may involve different research fields such as psychology of learning. This will be explained in more details in Chapter Four.

1.5 Outline of this thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter Two provides a theoretical discussion of nationalism to gain an understanding of nation construction and national identity formation. It reviews current debates on nationalism, and particularly focuses on a crucial question: are nations and national identity historically 'natural' and 'given' or constructions of modern period. By doing so, this chapter seeks to lay a theoretical foundation for understanding nation construction in China and to form an analytical framework for examining construction of nationhood in Chinese textbooks, particularly in relation to the issue of ethnicity. Chapter Three focuses on methodological issues. It first provides a theoretical examination on the nature of knowledge, curriculum and textbooks and then discusses issues about data and research methods for this thesis.

Chapters Four and Five provide a review of the development of Chinese identity in pre-modern times before 1840, and early modern times from 1840 - 1949. In particular, it reviews literature on the role of minority ethnic groups in forming the consciousness of being Chinese: as non-Chinese 'others' in the pre-modern period, and internal 'others' in the early modern period. This review hopes to

explore the underling tensions of the construction of a Chinese-ness from a historical perspective. This tension, as this thesis later shows, has continued in the PRC period and has been manifested in the writing of Chinese history in school textbooks.

Chapters Six, Seven and Eight analyse history textbooks published in different periods of the PRC period: the socialist period (1949 - 1976), the modernisation and transition period (1976 - 1989) and the patriotic period (1989 - 2000s). These chapters pay particular attention to shifts of dominant political ideologies in each period, and how textbooks were rewritten in accordance with the shifts. By doing so, it hopes to examine: first, how the idea of a Chinese nationhood has been constructed and reconstructed under different political and social circumstances; and second, how school textbooks have been manipulated by the government to serve this reconstruction. Following these three chapters, Chapter Nine draws conclusions from the review and analysis and provides suggestions on changes in future.

Chapter 2. Understanding Nationalism: A Theoretical Review

2.1 Introduction

In the Introduction chapter, I argued that the problem facing minority ethnic groups in China is closely related to the issue of China's nation-building project and construction of a national identity. To understand and critique claims such as 'China has been a nation since ancient times' or 'minority ethnic groups have been part of China since time immemorial', which often appear in official Chinese discourses such as government policies or textbooks (and are accepted by many ordinary Han people), one must understand some core issues: What is a nation? How does a nation come into being? In what ways do people identify with a nation? These questions all lead to a fundamental field of study: nationalism.

The study of nationalism is important not only because it is 'the ultimate source of political legitimacy' but also because it 'structures our daily lives and the way we perceive and interpret the reality that surrounds us' (Özkirimli, 2010, p.2). On the one hand, nationalism is fundamental to understanding some extreme forms of conflict such as ethnic clashes, national secessions and wars between countries. On the other hand, nationalism can also be something that we 'take for granted', as the 'context of our everyday life' but that nevertheless has a great influence over us and our decisions such as moral decisions and value judgments (ibid.).⁷ Moreover, aside from 'bad nationalism', which can involve violence and conflict, nationalism can be a source of solidarity among people or citizens (Calhoun, 2007, pp.7-8; Özkirimli, 2010, p.3). As Calhoun (2007, p.8) argues, since the world has become a world of sovereign nation-states, nationalism, through the model of the 'nation', has greatly influenced or shaped the ways in

⁷ This is often regarded as 'methodological nationalism' – a 'pervasive tendency to equate the concept of "society" with that of the "nation", to presuppose that the nation is the natural and necessary form of society in modernity' (Özkirimli, 2010, p.2).

which membership and difference are constructed internationally such as national identity.

In relation to this Ph.D thesis, theories of nationalism are particularly useful in understanding (i) issues related to ethnicity within a nation, for example, minority ethnic groups' claims and activities for independence or more autonomy; and (ii) the state's strategic responses and activities related to inter-ethnic relations and national identity to incorporate minority groups. In fact, the root of some of the tensions between the major ethnic group and minority groups, and between minority groups and the state, are all related to nationalism. Different ethnic groups and the state itself often have different and even competing visions and understandings of their nation. For instance, ethnic minority groups often struggle to challenge the existing social system to try to access more power and resources (political, economic and cultural), and in so doing provide an alternative vision of the nation-state. The state in turn often responds with a strategy to either reinforce its own vision of itself as the nation-state or implement changes in its nationalist ideology to maintain its legitimacy and control over its minority groups. All these perspectives have nationalism at their core, and this concept must be understood before one can investigate how the Chinese state has established, maintained and adapted a political education strategy in response to these challenges.

Moreover, nationalism is important to understanding both the nationalist nature of writing national history and the purpose of history education in modern national education systems. Özkirimli (2010, p.3) points out that social researchers often take the existence of nations for granted and make it the natural background for their analysis. This is particularly the case with history – 'the very tools of analysis by which we pretend to practice scientific history were invented and perfected within a wider climate of nationalism and nationalist preoccupations' (Geary 2002,

p.16). In fact, as Geary (*ibid.*) further points out, modern methods of researching and writing history were not 'neutral instruments of scholarship' but 'were developed specifically to further nationalist aims.' Studying theories of nationalism is therefore useful to understand how history and history education have been used by states to serve nationalist claims and how they have become a battlefield for politicians.

Scholars in the past have produced an enormous body of work on nationalism. However, the study of the concept and discourse surrounding nationalism is not so straightforward. This is because nationalism is defined, interpreted and used in very different ways which can often be 'mutually incomprehensible' (Brown, 2000, p.2). For example, Tilly (1960, p.300) concludes three different views of nationalism: 'as a set of ideas about the origins, character, and political destinies of nations; as a sentiment shared by particular groups of people; and as a form of politics.' As a result, researchers such as Özkirimli (2010, p.299) claim that there is no one 'general' theory of nationalism, neither is there 'one' nationalism. Instead, researchers have established conceptual ambiguities and concluded that there are many different approaches to understanding this notion.

By engaging with the current literature on theories of nationalism, this chapter provides a theoretical discussion on some key issues in the field. It focuses on a discussion of the antiquity or modernity of nations – an issue often phrased as the question 'When is a nation?' (Connor, 1990). According to Smith (1998a, xi), this issue 'has become central to the study of nationalism over the last few decades,' since it is fundamental for understanding the 'origins, nature and consequence of nationalism.' Therefore, in the following two sections of this chapter, I will review two classic understandings of this issue, often labelled as two approaches to nationalism: 'primordialist' and 'modernist'. The two sections mainly focus on the following question: are nations 'natural' and 'given' from

immemorial history, or are they modern constructions? An analysis of the main criticisms of these two approaches is also provided to point out the limitations of each.

A presentation and comparison of the two types of nationalism in this thesis will form the basis of a theoretical framework which will be used to analyse nation construction in China and how the education system and history education in particular have been used by the government of China to construct an official Chinese identity. Particularly, this framework will be used to gain an understanding about why there have been changes in the portrayal of minority ethnic groups in Chinese history textbooks published in different periods of PRC history.

2.2 Understanding nationalism: the primordialist approach

Primordialism is referred to by Özkirimli (2010, p.49) as an umbrella term to describe the belief that 'nationality is a "natural" part of human beings' and 'nations have existed from time immemorial.' As its name implies, the term primordialism is linked to meanings of 'existing from the very beginning of time' or 'earliest in time' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2008). In general, it highlights the idea of 'primeval' or 'primitive' and something generally 'ancient' (ibid.). It is also used to describe something 'that constitutes the origin or starting point from which something else is derived or developed, or on which something else depends; fundamental, basic; elemental' (ibid.). According to Özkirimli (2010, p.49), the first scholar in nationalism studies to have employed this word was Edward Shils, who used it to describe relationships within the family. Shils (1957) argues that family members often feel attachment to each other and this attachment can only be described as 'primordial'. He further explains that the reasons for this attachment

are not only for the function of interaction but also 'because a certain ineffable significance is attributed to the tie of blood' (ibid., p.142). Based on this understanding, Shils stresses the 'coerciveness' of the primordial properties of objects and the ties of blood in his understanding of nations and nationalism.

Indeed, primordialists tend to portray nations as an 'organic community' whose members often feel 'an innate and emotionally powerful attachment to it' (Brown (2000, p.6). To most primordialists, members of a nation are linked to each other by an 'overwhelming emotional bond', which stems from primordial ties such as kinship or cultural traits such as religion (ibid.). According to primordialists such as Shils (1957), these primordial ties have a 'a binding effect on human beings' and are necessary for the development and maintenance of a modern society. As a result, primordialists often highlight the 'naturalness' and 'givenness' of nations, since they believe that primordial ties are '*a priori*, underived, prior to all experience and interaction' and not 'sociological' (Özirimli, 2010, p.55).

Although most primordialists generally agree with the idea of the 'naturalness' and 'givenness' of nations and/or antiquity of nations, as Özirimli (2010, p.50) points out, there is no monolithic universal understanding of the primordial approach. Three versions are generally identified by scholars as the most influential, so will be discussed in this chapter: the social-biological, the culturalist and the perennialist.

2.2.1 Socio-biological theory

As its name suggests, the socio-biological theory stresses the importance of biological links between community members in a nation. The distinguished socio-biological theorist Pierre van den Berghe (2001, p.274) explains that in its simplest form: the socio-biological theory suggests that communities of nations are defined by a shared common ancestry. Thus accordingly, just like ethnic

groups and race, nations are seen by socio-biological primordialists as 'forms of extended kin groups' (Smith, 1998a, p.147). In other words, nations are simply kinship 'writ large', 'super-families' of distant relatives knitted together by 'vertical ties of descent, reinforced by horizontal ties of marriage' and 'maintained by endogamy' (van den Berghe, 2001, p.274). Following this understanding, according to van den Berghe (2001), modern nation-states are just a political formation of tribes.

Indeed, kinship and common ancestry are key themes for socio-biological primordialists to understand nations and nationalism. Van den Berghe (1978, p.404) argues that kinship is the 'objective, external basis of a nation' and the foundation for the powerful prerequisite sentiments necessary for the formation of nationalism. He uses kin selection theory to explain his theory. According to him, for the survival of the genes of an individual and their genetic relatives, individuals are genetically and/or instinctively inclined to favour kin over non-kin (van den Berghe, 2001). Moreover, even though the myths of common ancestry are not factually verifiable, socio-biological primordialists argue that they are still a useful concept to explain how individual members of a community bond together and define their identity through reliance on their birth culture and childhood (Brown, 2000). In fact, they argue that myths of common ancestry have to be believed by members of the community in order to be effective in the formation of ethnicity and nation (Smith, 1998a, p.148).

Scholars such as Jones (2005b) and Vickers (2005) have claimed that this socio-biological understanding of nationhood has proved particularly powerful and appealing in East Asian countries due to the long-established traditions of ancestor veneration found there. Indeed, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, common ancestry, lines of descent and blood links were key themes in the revolutionary rhetoric of early Chinese nationalists such as Zhang Taiyan. In fact,

as many scholars such as He and Guo (2000), Vickers (2009a) and Zhao (2004) all point out, such themes have been recurring in Chinese official discourse in the post-Mao period, especially since the 1990s.

If, according to socio-biological primordialists, kinship is the defining factor of a nation and a prerequisite for understanding the power and passion of ethnic ties in nationalism, then how do we recognise our kin? Van den Berghe (1978) argues that any cultural marker which can finely discriminate us from our near neighbours will do. Since it is impossible for individuals to recognise their tens of thousands of 'kinsmen', socio-biological primordialists offer an alternative cultural indicator to help to identify members of the same genetic group. They argue that people sharing the same cultural traits are descended from the same ancestor, therefore, similarities of language, religion, custom and other cultural traits are possible clues that members can use to identify co-members (Smith, 1998a, p.148). To socio-biological primordialists, this is particularly so in the cases when the physical difference between two neighbouring groups are not obvious. In these cases, as van den Berghe (1978, p.40) argues, cultural criteria of group membership such as different accents, body adornments and the like are more salient than physical ones. In this way, socio-biological theory claims that culture and language become proxies for biological kinship. This is, however, where socio-biological primordialism overlaps with the second group of primordialists – the culturalists.

2.2.2 Culturalist theory

In contrast to socio-biological primordialists, culturalists claim that the 'naturalness' and 'givenness' of a nation stems from the 'innate power of cultural affinities of language, religion and custom' (Brown, 2000, p.7). They argue that since the 'purity' of the kinship community (i.e. group endogamy) could be undermined by immigration, conquest and inter-marriage over hundreds of

thousands of years, 'cultural given' becomes a rather more important factor to explain the power and passion of ethnic bonds and nationalism (Smith, 1998a, p.151). For example, Geertz (1993, p.258), in applying the culturalist theory to new states formed by old societies in Asia and Africa, argues that people in these nations were bonded by primordial ties such as language, customs, religion and cultural givens rather than civil ties of rational society. According to him, these cultural ties were the real reason for the continuing power of ethnicity, which also explains 'the sense of overriding commitment and loyalty to the cultural identities that they forged' (ibid., p.259-60). In other words, for culturalists, it is cultural 'essence' that defines ethnicity and nationalism (Smith, 1998a).

However, it can be observed that there is a theoretical confusion in culturalists' theory, which likely stems from the area in which they overlap with socio-biological version of primordialism. While most culturalists still believe that the power of cultures is rooted in biological links – for example, they believe that 'collective memories' are important for binding a group because they are evidence that people are all offspring of the same ancestor – in reality, people often do not see a necessary link between ancestry and identity. This is because these cultural symbols and 'collective memories' are a result of a socialisation process that is transmitted through generations, 'in part from parents to children, but in part through also the public channels such as religion, literature arts and education' (Brown, 2000, p.7). In other words, cultural symbols and collective memories can be learned by outsiders if they are willing to be assimilated. This is the theory adopted by sinologists such as Levenson (1968), who claims that pre-modern China is an example of people united by civilisation rather than biology. According to this type of culturalist view, in pre-modern China, it was theoretically possible for non-Chinese to become Chinese by adopting the Chinese culture, that is a body of eternal and transcendent wisdom inherited from 'the ancients' (more details about Chinese culturalism will be discussed in

Chapter Four). As a result, common ancestry is not regarded as the defining factor for a community, but common culture. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged in this thesis that socio-biological primordialism and culturalist primordialism are often mixed up. So in reality, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, while on some occasions they become competing visions of rival groups of nationalists (i.e. the reformists and the revolutionaries in the late Qing dynasty), on other occasions they are combined by nationalists.

2.2.3 Understanding nations as ‘antiquity’: perennialism⁸

Even though socio-biologists and culturalists have differing (though often overlapping) views on whether the primordial bond of ethnicity and nationalism is rooted in biology and genetics or culture (or some combination of both), they agree that nations have existed from the dawn of history (Özkirimli, 2010, p.58) and therefore present nations as ‘a modern version of far older and more basic social and cultural communities’ (Leoussi, 2001, p.253).

This idea of ‘antiquity’ of nations is particularly highlighted by Smith (1998a, p.159), who introduces the term ‘perennialism’ to refer to the idea of the historical antiquity of ‘nations’ and their immemorial and/or perennial character. In general, perennialists do not deny the modernity of nationalism as a political movement and ideology but they generally regard nations as ‘updated versions of immemorial ethnic communities’ or as ‘collective cultural identities’ that have existed since time immemorial (ibid.). In other words, they argue that nations (and ethnic groups) are ‘a constant and fundamental feature’ of human society throughout recorded history (ibid. p.9)

⁸ Some scholars such as Smith (1998a) regard perennialism as a separate approach to nationalism, but this thesis has treated it as a sub-approach of primordialism as it also stresses the mystical features and historical roots of nations.

Smith identifies two versions of perennialism. The first is called 'continuous perennialism', which asserts that the roots of modern nations stretch back into the distant past, in some cases several centuries and in other cases even millennia (as Chinese official discourses claim, as will be examined later). According to Smith (1998a), this version of perennialism emphasises the idea of 'continuity' and stresses a continuity of culture and identity over long periods of time linking ancient nations to their modern counterparts. The second version is called 'recurrent perennialism' which refers to those who see nations as 'a category of human association that can be found everywhere throughout history' (Smith, 2000, p.3). According to Smith, this version of perennialism argues that particular nations may come and go but nations themselves (as a form of association and collective identity) are ubiquitous and will be 'recurrent' (ibid., p.3). This is similar to what is often believed in historical writing in China: different dynasties come and go but 'China' will last forever.

According to both versions of perennialism, there are evidences to support their claims of the 'continuity' and 'recurrence' of nations. First, examining the case of Western Europe, perennialism argues that there are sufficient documents and chronicles which prove the existence of 'nations' and 'national sentiment' from the later medieval epoch (Özkirimli, 2010, p.58). Secondly, historical research also shows notable continuities between modern national cultures and their antecedents in patterns of geopolitical regions and relations (Gat, 2013, p.30-31). Finally, many ordinary people's phenomenological experience informs them that nations have always been there (ibid.). This is 'witnessed' by many of the distinguishing characteristics of national cultures, such as language (ibid.). To this end, for perennialists, despite the fact that national identity (and ethnic identity) is subject to long-term emergence, transformation and dissolution, nations have continued or recurred since time immemorial.

2.2.4 Critics of primordialist approach

As mentioned previously, the primordialist understanding of nations and nationalism is particularly popular in East Asian countries and China in particular. Scholars such as Özkirimli (2010) have also claimed that most groups in reality tend to adopt the primordialist understanding of their own nations. Primordialist theories appear to be useful in explaining most conflicts that have taken place across the world since the Second World War, for example Yugoslavia. According to Özkirimli (2010), arguably, the most valuable aspect of primordialism in its theoretical construction of nationalism is its explanation of the emotional ties that it says exist between individuals and their country. They examine why citizens are willing to make unusual sacrifices for their country and they say that this 'can only be justified by myths of common ancestry and analogies of ethnicity to the family' (Horowitz, 2002, p.75). Other theorists on nationalism have not provided an alternative explanation for this strong passion, but have criticised primordialism for the following reasons.

The first criticism disagrees with primordialists' claim that ethnic and national identity are innate and exist as part of human nature, therefore rejecting the implication that essential characteristics of identity are transmitted from one generation to the next and are fixed and static (Özkirimli, 2010, p.61). This criticism, focusing on the constructive nature of identity, argues that ethnic and national identity are in fact 'socially constructed' because individual choice, tactical decisions, political opportunities, cultural structures and so on no doubt have a strong impact on identity (ibid.). This criticism points out that it is rare 'to find cultures so clearly discrete, non-overlapping and distinct that they automatically become the basis for different social groupings' (Gat, 2013, p.32). Brass (1979, 1991) also contends that even the most 'primordial' parts of people's identity are often manifold, subject to choice, and dependent on the situation.

Brass uses language as an example of his criticism. He argues that people's language is influenced by factors such as where they live and their religion, which are fluid and dynamic properties and continually subject to the influence of immigration, assimilation and religious reform (Brass, 1991, p.71). Smith (1995, p.33) also points out that specific events such as intermarriage, migration, external conquest and the importation of labour have made it unlikely that many ethnic groups will be able to preserve their 'cultural homogeneity' and pure 'essence', as posited by primordialists. As a result, an individual's original ethnic and national identity can be considerably changed, and what was originally there may disappear and be replaced with something different. Therefore, boundaries and ethnic and national identity are 'continuously negotiated and redefined in each generation as groups react or adapt to changing circumstances' (Özkirimli, 2010, p.61).

Another criticism of the primordialist approach is its assumption that the meaning of a name or a group's identity remains constant over time. Geary (2002, p.41) is particularly critical as he explains that, for him, the current meanings of names of ethnic groups are discontinuous phenomena because the social realities underpinning groups continually change as their members experience transformation which in some cases is rapid and radical. This is the case for many countries in the world, from Europe to Asia.⁹ For example, as will be discussed in detail in Chapters Four and Five, the meaning of 'China' (*Zhongguo*, or *Hua*) has changed in both pre-modern times and early modern times (and even in PRC China, as examined in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight), sometimes to include non-Han groups and in other cases to explicitly exclude non-Han groups.

⁹ Geary (2002, p.118) argues as an example that in the sixteenth century, the meaning of 'Goths' in Spain was very different politically, socially, culturally, linguistically and religiously compared with third-century Goths in the kingdom of Cniva. Similarly, Breuilly (2005, p.22) points out that 'the continuity of a term such as English does not automatically mean a continuity in the meaning of the term.'

Therefore, as Geary (ibid.) argues, 'with the constant shifting of allegiances, intermarriages, transformations, and appropriations, it appears all that remained constant were names, and these were vessels that could hold different contents at different times. Indeed, to Geary (2002), names are renewable resources as 'old names could be reclaimed, adapted to new circumstances and used as rallying cries for new powers.' Under the same name, nations could claim continuity, even though there had been radical discontinuities in their history. As will be examined in Chapter Five, the invention of the identity '*Hanzu*' (Han nationality or Han ethnic group) by early Han Chinese nationalist Zhang Taiyan is a classic example supporting Geary's criticism.

The third critique of primordialism is directed at its claims that ethnic and national ties are rooted immemorially. Gellner (1996, pp.367-8) argues that there are some countries that are relatively new, such as Estonia, which have developed a vibrant culture as a type of modernist process. He further questions why, if 'given' factors (i.e. continuing blood ties) are determinant to the formation of nations, only very small proportions of ethnic groups become aware of their common identity? Furthermore, why do some nations remain established while others disappear into history (Gellner, 1983, p. 4), if after all, there are only around 200 countries in the world? Primordialists appear unable to answer these questions.

Indeed, critics of primordialism have pointed out that before the rise of modern nation states, nations were not basic units of political organisation in Europe or other regions of the world such as the Ottoman Empire (Calhoun, 2007, p.2). There were different groups who claimed they were different from other groups, but these were not understood as 'formal equivalents, or sovereign-basic units for recognition of self and other at the same time' (ibid.). Moreover, before modern times the collective organisation of 'the people' was not considered as basic to political legitimacy in the way that the modern nation-state is (ibid.). Neither was

the development and integration of the national culture seen as an important project, which is visible in modern nation-states (ibid.).

Critics have also pointed out that primordialists often rely on elite groups' concerns about the existence of national consciousness but ignore the consciousness of the masses (Connor, 1990, p.98). If national consciousness is a mass rather than an elite phenomenon, then it becomes difficult for primordialists to argue that mass people in most countries have always had a clear idea about being members of a nation. Historically, the public at large have tended to be illiterate or semi-illiterate and isolated in rural villages. Most of them would not have had a sense of being members of a national community until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Connor (1990, p.98) also argues that 'until quite recent times it is doubtful whether ostensibly nationalistic elites even considered the masses to be part of their nation.'

In *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernisation of Rural France, 1870 - 1914*, Weber (1976) convincingly shows that until 1870, most rural and small-town people in France did not consider themselves as members of a French nation, with many maintaining this position as late as World War I. What Weber also found was that to the mass of peasants who made up most of France at that time, their meaningful world and identity seldom extended beyond their village. Similarly, researching archives of immigrant documents in the U.S.A., Connor (1990, p.95) also shows similar findings to Weber. When most immigrants arrived from Europe, one or two centuries ago, many of them had no clear national identity but rather a local identity. In other words, it is clear that nations and nationalism were not always considered to be inherited in pre-modern times (Calhoun, 2007, p.9). In contrast, what these critics believe is that nations and nationalism are modern constructions that only appeared during and after the industrialisation epoch. Their ideas will be discussed in the section below.

2.3 Understanding nationalism: the modernist approach

The modernist approach to the study of nationalism was often seen as a reaction to the primordialism approach. In contrast to the primordialism approach which claims that nationalism is an ancient phenomenon, the classical modernist scholars believe that 'nations and nationalism are intrinsic to the nature of the modern world and to the revolution of modernity' (Smith, 1998a, p.3). More specifically, they argue that both the formation of nation-states as well as the nationalism which arose took place over the past two centuries were 'the products of specifically modern processes like capitalism, industrialisation, urbanisation, secularism, and the emergence of the modern bureaucratic state' (Özkirimli, 2010, p.72). According to them, the formation of nations is not something that rooted in time immemorial, but is rather a modern and recent phenomenon which occurred since the French Revolution and more recently in Africa and Asia (Smith, 1998a, p.19).

Indeed, most modernist scholars generally believe that modern nation-state and nationalism stemmed from Europe where the industrial capitalism was first developed. Industrial capitalism, they argue, occurred after the advent of industrial revolution of the late 18th Century and led to the emergence of a new societal class, the bourgeoisie, who wished to establish their own political power. They sought to do this by overturning the old order and through the establishment of a new nation state, which they believed could help them to establish the necessary political and legal framework which would enable the development of new economies. This process was further reinforced by the spread of industrialisation which produced a distinct economic structure and opportunities for social interaction, which in turn helped to develop a distinct sense of common identity, based on economic aspirations, among the wider populace (Brown, 2000,

p.17). Therefore, modernists claim, national identities are not 'natural instinctual ties to organic communities, but rather as resources employed by groups of individuals (especially elites) of the pursuit of their common interests' in response to changes in the economic environment (Brown, 2000, p.13).

Moreover, modernists also generally contend that nation-states are not the product of natural historical forces but rather 'of the rational, planned activity' in the modern era (Smith, 1998a, p.19). In contrast to the primordialists, who believe in the 'givenness' and 'naturalness' of nations, modernists argue that the formation of the nation is the result of rational choices made by its members, who decide to 'build' the nation based on their own self-interests (Brown 2000; Özkirimli, 2010; Smith, 1998a). In other words, they suggest that nations were formed in response to ideas and agents or developed as a framework in response to a community's political, economic and social aspirations and interests. This idea is further explained by Brown:

'the resultant development of economic interdependence, and of social interactions, led to a new awareness of common interests and common values which manifested itself as a growing sense of "national" community, so that the state become the nation-state, and thereby became more centralised, effective sovereign.' (Brown, 2000, p.17).

However, as some scholars (Brown 2000; Özkirimli, 2010; Smith, 1998a) have found, there are many branches in the modernist approach and apart from the basic belief outlined above, 'modernists have very little in common' (Özkirimli, 2010, p.72). Among the scholars, Tom Nairn (1977) and Michael Hechter (1999) propose socio-economic models which examine the phenomenon of nationalism in the modern era in terms of uneven development due to the exploitation of peripheral regions (whether inside nations or between different nations). John

Breuil (1993) and Paul R. Brass (1991) focus on the political aspect of nationalism, and emphasis on the role of the modern centralising state, of elites and political coercion in the formation of nations. Ernest Gellner (1983) and Benedict Anderson (1991) examine how social and cultural transformations which occurred during industrialisation had facilitated the creation of nationalism and nations. It is acknowledged in this thesis that all these theories are helpful for understanding the formation of modern Chinese state. However, for the reason of limit of space, this thesis will only introduce one of them, Ernest Gellner, not only for the reason that he is 'at heart of modern nationalism studies' (David McCrone, 1998 p.viii), but also because his theory helps to reveal the constructive nature of nation and nationalism which is very relevant to the topic of this thesis.

2.3.1 Ernest Gellner's theory of 'high cultures' and the role of mass schooling in nation-building

In broad terms, Gellner's theory of nationalism explains how and why nationalism became a sociological necessity in the modern world and why 'it is nationalism which engenders nations and not the other way around' (Gellner, 1983, p.55). He distinguished 'modern' societies from 'traditional' societies by introducing the concept of 'high culture', which according to him was 'a specially cultivated, standardised, education-based, literate culture', which only emerged in the era of industrialisation (ibid., pp.50-2).

Gellner analyses the creation of high cultures during the process of societal transitions from agro-literate societies to modern, industrial ones. According to him, agro-literate (or pre-modern) societies were stratified and controlled by elites, so it was not possible or desirable to create a single and homogeneous culture for all members of a given polity, since an individual's place in the social system was ascriptive (Gellner, 1983; 1996). These conditions made it impossible to create nations or foster nationalism (ibid.). In contrast, industrialised societies

were characterised by high levels of social mobility and where the individual's status or role in society were dynamic. Additionally, in industrial societies the nature of work involved 'controlling, managing and maintaining a machine with a fairly sophisticated control mechanism', which required general and transferable skills which was very different from the agro-literate societies where work was essentially manual (ibid.). According to Gellner (1983), it was under these conditions of industrialisation that a standardised, homogeneous, and centrally sustained high culture became prevalent amongst entire populations within the boundaries of a certain state and not just amongst elite minorities. Additionally, at the same time the 'local dialectical idiosyncrasy' started to disappear (Gellner, 1983, p.55).

In Gellner's analysis, it was during the industrial revolution that 'power' and 'culture', start to come together and enjoy their 'marriage relationship' (Gellner, 1987). He goes on to explain that the homogeneous high culture thus began to pervade the whole of society, within the boundaries of the state and united all its members (ibid.). At the same time, the high culture was being sustained and protected by the polity (ibid.). Using a metaphor, he explains: 'just as every girl should have a husband, preferably her own, so every culture must have its state, preferably its own' (Gellner, 1996, p.110). What happens next is expected: the successful new high culture of the state is imposed on the population who had low culture (Gellner,1983, p.57). This according to him is the 'secret of nationalism' (Gellner, 1987, p.18) and where he believes nations came from, in his words paraphrased, nations did not create nationalism, rather, nationalism defined and created nations.

Amongst the many modernists who all point out the function of mass education system in 'making' the modern nations, Gellner (1983) in particular, paid attention to this issue. According to Gellner, the development of high culture requires

literate labourers and citizens which could only be produced by a standardised mass education system. He points out that although in modern society the work is highly specialised, the distance between its various specialisms is far less great and most jobs in industrial society require basic literacy and numeracy. Therefore, Gellner (1983) argues that the development of the industrial society is sustained by standardisation of culture. As he explains:

‘A modern society is, in this respect, like a modern army, only more so. It provides a very prolonged and fairly thorough training for all its recruits, insisting on certain shared qualifications: literacy, numeracy, basic work habits and social skills. [...] The assumption is that anyone who has completed the generic training common to the entire population can be re-trained for most other jobs without too much difficulty.’ (Gellner, 1983, pp.27-8).

Furthermore, since the industrial society was based on the idea of ‘perpetual growth’, a continuous transformation of the occupational structure became necessary for development (ibid.). Under this condition, man must be ‘mobile, and ready to shift from one activity to another, and possess the generic training which enabled him to follow the manuals and instructions of a new activity or occupation’ (ibid., p.35). In this way, it became the precondition for the industrial society to be literate, which in turn required a new model of education - the mass public standardised schooling.

According to Gellner (1983), mass public education was also necessary for nations because it could endow its citizens with a sense of identity. In fact, he argues that it was the fundamental task for mass public education system to instil loyalty to the nation in its citizens (ibid.). This is also seen necessary in order to sustain the high cultures for industrial societies. In Gellner’s word, ‘Modern man

is not loyal to a monarch or a land or a faith, whatever he may say, but to a culture' (ibid., p.36).

Obviously, this type of education is very different from education in premodern societies where education was not only largely contextual, but also usually given by family and village schools. Currently in modern society, education is often public, standardised, academy-supervised and diploma-conferring institution for the inculcation of the skills, techniques and values of modernity, namely, 'exo-socialisation' (Smith, 1998a, p.31). Moreover, the modern education system is large and complex since only a large and complex system can 'produce' a great number of 'clerks' or 'citizens'. This large and exceedingly expensive educational infrastructure can only be funded and controlled by modern state which in turn is large and competent enough to sustain and supervise a public, mass education system (ibid., p.32). In this way, it is now the public, mass education system, rather than language and linguistic culture, which is the most important factor that binds the state and culture together. This, according to Smith (ibid.), is the reason why we live in an age of nationalism.

2.3.2 The constructive nature of nations and nationalism: constructivism¹⁰

Gellner (1983) has rightly observed that although nationalism sometimes takes pre-existing cultures as raw materials and turns them to nations, it does so in a very selective way. On the one hand, it sometimes uses aspects and material available from the old 'wild' cultures, on the other hand, it sometimes obliterates pre-existing cultures altogether, and in still other situations it invents cultures where they did not previously exist (ibid., pp. 48-9). As he points out:

¹⁰ Scholars such as Brown (2000) regards constructivism as a separate approach to nationalism, but this thesis views it as a more sophisticated, nuanced variant of modernism.

‘Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored. [...] The cultures it claims to defend and revive are often its own inventions, or are modified out of all recognition.’ (ibid., pp. 55-6).

Gellner (ibid., pp. 48-9, 55-6) sees this process as ‘an inescapable one’ and he further points out that it is in this way, that nation-building becomes ‘culturally creative, fanciful, positively inventive’ and nationalism becomes ‘a contingent, artificial ideological invention.’

This approach to nationalism proposes a new way of thinking about national phenomena and is regarded as constructivism by scholars such as Brown (2000). Since the 1980s, under the influence of ‘postmodernist’ theories, constructivists do not view nations as real substantive entities, but rather as construction of ideologies which are built up through a variety of processes and institutions. Nationalism then becomes a type of ideological consciousness which ‘filters reality, rather than reflects it’ (ibid., p.20). According to them, crucial to the success of nationalism are factors such as ‘comprehensive institutionalisation of roles, expectations and values’, which also rely on the ‘creation of an infrastructure of social communications - transport, bureaucracy, language, education, the media, political parties, etc.’ (Smith, 1998a, p. 19). The constructivists also believe, as do the modernists that national elites are responsible for constructing the edifice of the nation-to-be (ibid.).

The constructivist interpretation of ‘culture’ is that it is no longer a static phenomenon, but rather composed of ‘fluid and dynamic interpretations which treated culture as a deeply contested concept whose meaning is continually negotiated, revised and reinterpreted by successive generations and by various groups that are presumed to make up the “national” society’ (Özkişimli, 2010, p.169). Nationalism, according to constructivists, is neither rationally chosen nor

innately given, but a constructive work which is largely 'unconsciously or intuitively' as a category of understanding (Brown, 2000, p.21). Therefore, when the state establishes a multi-level organisational structure (e.g. parliament, regional administrative structures) and conducts its activities along racial, ethnic or national basis, 'such institutionalisations come to define the ideological parameters for those who function within them' (ibid.). In this way, as Brubaker explains, the state provides:

'a pervasive system of social classification, an organising "principle of vision and division" of the social world, a standardized scheme of social accounting, an interpretative grid for public discussion, a set of boundary-makers, a legitimate form for public and private identities, and [...] a ready-made template for claims to sovereignty. Institutional definitions of nationhood [...] constitute basic categories of political understanding, central parameters of political rhetoric, specific types of political interests, and fundamental forms of political identity.' (Brubaker, 1996, p.24).

In this way, constructivists such as Calhoun (1997) argue that a nation is not only an 'entity', but also an 'ideological construction', defined by 'a symbol system known as the national essence, which consists of the myths, rituals, ceremonies, and folklore that relate how the nation came to be and what it stands for' (Dittmer & Kim, 1995, p.30). The constructive perception of nations and nationalism can be found more obviously in the so-called 'state-nations' (i.e. multi-national states such as Canada, Russia, and obviously, China), which according to Deutsch and Foltz (1963), means the territorial states attempting to create cohesive nations out of heterogeneous ethnic populations. For countries whose legitimacy is threatened (either by enemy from outside or split movement from inside), this 'nation construction' process is often referred to 'official nationalism', or patriotism

(Anderson, 1991). According to Seton-Watson (cited in Anderson, 1991, p.86), where this term is borrowed from, the 'official nationalism' is 'a means for combining naturalisation with retention of dynastic power, in particular over the huge polyglot domains accumulated since the Middle Ages, or, to put it another way, for stretching the short, tight, skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire.'

Looking at the transitional process from empires to nations, scholars such as Esherick et al. (2006, p.2) found that 'official nationalism' is particularly apparent for newly founded countries where the state elites have tended to adopt nationalism and to 'systematize the language, define the culture, construct the histories, and invent the traditions of their new nations.' Indeed, they seek to employ schools, museums, newspapers and the media to 'discover, record, propaganda and institutionalize' the nationalist ideologies and 'national flags and emblems are designed, songs composed, postage stamps circulated, rituals performed, traditions invented, and holidays celebrated', all to reinforce this national framework (ibid., p.23). In so doing, the state elites attempt to instil a sense of national identity in a population who had not yet established a national consciousness, relying on the assumption that people tended to define their national identities through identification with such symbols (Dittmer & Kim, 1995, p.19). In this way, by reproducing 'a whole complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices', nationalism has shaped people's way of understanding the world and nations are 'reproduced as nations and their citizenry as nationals' (Billig, 1995, p.6).

2.3.3 Critics to modernists and the constructive nature of nations and nationalism

According to Özkirimli (2010, p.130), the most controversial aspect of Gellner's theory of high culture is its claim about the correlation between nationalism and

industrialisation. Scholars have demonstrated with counter examples how Gellner's theory does not conform with reality. For example, Kitching (1985, p.106) claims that there are some countries where nationalism existed before industrialisation, e.g. Germany. Breuilly (1996, p.162) also points out that anti-imperialist or post-colonial nationalist movements are an example of nationalism without the pre-requisite of industrialisation e.g. India and that while sometimes nationalism encouraged modernisation and industrialisation, in other cases, nationalism tended to preserve traditional identities and structures (Breuilly, 1993, p.419). Therefore, as Hroch (2006, p.25) concludes, 'industrialisation can [only] be regarded as one amongst many preconditions of successful nation formation', but 'certainly not the "starting point" of the spread of nationalism.'

The second criticism to Gellner is that he neglects or underestimates the role of politics in nationalism. For example, Breuilly (1985, p.71-2) argues that political rather than cultural factors were significant in the unification of Germany. O'Leary (1998, p.63) emphasises this further: 'What appears to lack is a sustained and developed sense of the political', by which he meant that it is politics that determine which cultures become nations.

The third criticism to modernist like Gellner is that he exaggerates the role played by the elites in the creation of nations on the one hand, and on the other hand, ignores the contribution of the non-elite or masses to nationalism. As Breuilly (1993, pp.48-51) rightly points out, it would be wrong to think of nationalism as solely limited to the politics of national elites. In fact, it should rather be viewed as a chronological progression which emerged from the elite and then spread to mass involvement, as Hroch (1985) would suggest (though he also admits the critical role of the elite in nationalist development). Therefore, nationalism should not be only seen as a 'top-down' process which exclusively focuses on elite's manipulation of the 'masses' (Smith, 1995, p.78). Indeed, critics also argue that

enough attention should be paid to 'the needs, interests, hopes and longings of ordinary people' who are not 'simply passive recipients of manipulative discourses imposed from above; they have their own reasons to acquiesce to them' (ibid., p.40). In fact, this critic also applies to constructivism: nations may ultimately be invented or 'constructed' entities, but they are so for entirely understandable reasons (emotional and psychological as well as socio-economic or political) - which is why they come to command such fervent loyalty from both elites and 'masses' (Brown, 2000). Moreover, Robinson (1977) also notes that the actions of the elite are limited and constrained by social and cultural context such as religions and values, and this has also been overlooked by modernists and constructivists.

Finally, critics to constructivism also claim that the constructivists' interpretation of nationalism and nation lacks sociological solidity (Özkirimli, 2010, p.195); they treat the nation as simply 'a narrative text or a cultural artifact' and reject 'all together the notion of the nation as a real community' (Smith, 2000, pp.61-2). Smith (1998b, p.500) also notes, 'to make the claim stick, there must be "objective" components in that area's pasts that still bind populations together and distinguish them in some degree from outsiders.' Whether these 'objective components' are linked to an ethnic core which is based on common ancestry (as a primordialist would argue), or a civic core which is based on common interest (as a modernist would argue), is a question for negotiation, it is clear some elements are missing.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed two main theoretical approaches to nationalism and nations and critiques of these theories, demonstrating the weaknesses in each.

The primordialist approach notes the importance of primordial ties such as blood and cultural links as a pre-requisite to nationalism and nations and generally believes in the antiquity of nations. The modernist approach, by contrast, argues that the development of industrial capitalism is crucial to the rise of nationalist movements and the creation of modern nation-states, and therefore understands nations as a modern and recent phenomenon. Some modernists also see nationalism and nations as something invented, and therefore recognise the constructive nature of modern nations.

As mentioned previously, scholars such as Vickers (2005) have noted that the primordialist vision of the nation, and of essentialist, ethno-cultural conceptions of national identity are particularly significant in East Asian societies. The understanding of ancient origins of a state or nation is particularly significant in societies such as China, Japan and Korean, partly due the long-recorded history of states in these societies (Jones, 2005a). However, a closer examination of the histories and cultures of these nations would call into question claims of the immemorial purity of the national essence. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, scholars such as Dikötter (1992, 1997) have argued that modern Chinese identity was largely the invention of early twentieth-century nationalists who were heavily influenced by the ethno-culturally essentialist and neo-racialist conceptions of nationhood current in Europe at that time, and a Darwinist, zero-sum vision of international relations in an age of competing imperialism.

This thesis, therefore, while acknowledging the power of the vision of nations as mythical kinship communities in generating loyalty from both the elites and the masses in China, still sees Chinese nationalism and national identity as a consciously-invented phenomenon which elite groups have constructed as a part of strategy for both resisting and competing with the West (including Japan), and legitimising and justifying their control of the people, particularly the non-Han

groups. Like many other countries, the modern system of schooling in China, and in particular school textbooks, have been assigned an important role in transmitting the idea of nationhood and national identity to the masses. The politics of textbooks will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3. Methodology

If knowledge is power, then those that control it are particularly mighty.

Slater (1992, p.19)

3.1 Introduction

As already discussed in the Introduction chapter of this thesis, history textbooks are often used to deliver particular versions of nationalist history and thus are used to cultivate certain national identity. Indeed, although the role textbooks play in the whole education process varies from country to country, in general textbooks are often seen as one of the most important education instruments in schools. The examination of school textbooks therefore is very helpful for us to get insights into education system in different countries (especially in terms of the political and cultural norms or values that promoted in the system) (Pingel, 2010, p.7).

While much research about textbooks tend to see schools as neutral enterprises and also tend to take the knowledge in school curricula and textbooks for granted, this research, drawing on the tradition of critical theory, denies and questions this position and instead focuses on how and why particular versions of knowledge (i.e. history) are organised and selected in textbooks. It understands knowledge in general and curricula and textbooks in particular as social constructions which have complicated relationships with wider political and social contexts. This thesis agrees with the argument made by scholars such as Apple (2004, p.5) and Young (1971b, p.25) that schools not only 'process' people, they 'process' 'knowledge' as well. In particular, this critical understanding of knowledge argues that education is a political act which helps to legitimate the control of one group (i.e. the dominant group) over other groups (i.e. the dominated). In other words, education is about reproduction of power and knowledge is about control.

The first section of this chapter discusses the nature of knowledge and school textbook and particularly pays attention to the selective tradition of knowledge in textbooks. The discussion about the nature of school knowledge and textbooks lays down the theoretical foundation for this thesis in terms of understanding the content of history textbooks published in China. Based on this, the second section provides details about the research data and methods used in this research.

3.2 A Critical understanding of the nature of knowledge, curriculum and textbooks

3.2.1 The constructive nature of knowledge

Michael Young (1971a, p.2) points out that many concepts in education such as 'able', 'bright', 'dull' and 'stupid' are in fact socially constructed, reflecting 'some in a position to impose their constructions or meanings on others.' This is also true of our understanding of what is considered as 'science' or 'scientific' which should be treated 'not as absolutes but as constructed realities realized in particular institutional contexts' (ibid., p.3). Young (ibid., p.20) further argues that 'what "does" and "does not" count as "science" depends on the social meaning given to science, which will vary not only historically and cross-culturally but within societies and situationally.'

In the last several decades, a group of scholars have revealed the constructive nature of knowledge or 'what counts as knowledge' and they have tended to treat knowledge as socially constituted or constructed (Young, 1971a, p.5), which in turn, means that a sociological enquiry into the intellectual content of what counts as knowledge becomes possible (Young, 1971b, p. 20). Blum (1971, p.117) researches the notion of 'a corpus of knowledge' adopted by Hobbes, Descartes and Marx and shows how each of them understand knowledge as 'a product of

the informal understandings negotiated among members of an organized intellectual collectivity.’ Similarly, Young (1971a, p.9) also suggests that ‘bodies of knowledge’ could be understood as ‘normative orders’ or sets of defining rules which members, in the process of constructing the bodies of knowledge, come to share.

While this perspective enables people to see knowledge as socially constructed, for example, with respect to how historians construct their theories and concepts, a further enquiry could be made about why certain social and cultural meanings and not others are regarded as knowledge (therefore are defined as worthwhile to transmit to future generations through institutions such as schools). Whitty (1974, p.125) also rightly points out that what is more important is to consider ‘how and why reality comes to be constructed in particular ways and how and why particular constructions of reality seem to have the power to resist subversion.’

It seems clear that the answer to these questions will inevitably lead one to think the political nature of knowledge. Indeed, as Apple (2004, p.xix) claims, the question asked by Herbert Spencer many years ago – ‘What knowledge is of most worth?’ - should not be regarded only as an educational issue, but ‘inherently ideological and political’. In a similar way, Gorbutt also notices the ideological nature of knowledge and claims:

‘Knowledge at all levels, common sense, theoretical and scientific thereby becomes thoroughly relativized and the possibility of absolute knowledge is denied. Whereas Marx and Mannheim, key figures in the sociology of knowledge, asserted that some knowledge can be free from social bias, Berger and Luckmann argue that all knowledge is socially constructed and ideological.

Truth and objectivity are human products.’ (Gorbutt, 1972, p.6-7; cited in Whitty, 1985, p.13).

In this way, as many scholars in this field have observed, it seems there is a strong link between what is taught in schools and the social structure outside schools. For instance, Young defines his central work as an attempt to relate the principles of selection and organisation that underlie curricula to their institutional and interactional setting in schools and classrooms and to the wider social structure. As he argues, the criteria of defining and selecting knowledge in school curricula ‘will inevitably have developed in a particular social and historical context’ (Young, 1971b, p.37). Apple (2004, p.32) also notes that school knowledge is generated out of political and economic conflicts ‘outside’ schools. In addition, he sees education problems as essentially structural and claims that any research in school knowledge needs to situate the knowledge taught in schools within the real social conditions which determine the elements (ibid., p.x).

Therefore, school curricula, as one of the major message systems in education (along with pedagogy and evaluation), have become the focus of political struggle since they officially define what counts as valid knowledge (Apple, 2004, p.25; Bernstein, 1971, p.47; Whitty, 1985, p.38). Indeed, since curricula are one of the major mechanisms through which knowledge is ‘socially distributed’, they are closely linked to power and control. As Apple (2004, p.45) also reveals, curricula are ‘essential elements in the preservation of existing social privilege, interests, and knowledge, which were the prerogative of one element of the population, maintained at the expense of less powerful groups.’ Therefore, as he further claims, in order to identify the underlying principle of knowledge selection and organisation, it becomes necessary to rigorously scrutinise the form and content of the curriculum which reflects the ‘cultural expressions of particular groups in particular institutions at particular times’ (Apple, 2004, p.xxii).

3.2.2 Politics of textbooks

It is quite true that as the written or realised form of school knowledge, for hundreds of years textbooks have played a central role in most education systems across the world. Indeed, textbooks not only interpret and translate the official syllabus into specific teaching units and materials, but are almost the only effective instrument for curriculum development. In other words, textbooks largely define school curriculum (Dominguez, 1992, p.159).

Moreover, in most countries textbooks still dominate the learning process - textbooks largely determine the mode and scope of teaching and study (Nordkvelle, 1992, p.149). Not only do many teachers rely on textbooks as they find textbooks are the most useful guides for preparing and structuring their lessons, but very often they also refer to the textbooks during the classroom teaching.¹¹ In some countries (such as China) where the curriculum is rather rigid and textbooks basically mirror the curriculum exactly, 'the teaching follows the textbook chapter by chapter or even paragraph by paragraph and students read part of the book aloud in class' (Pingel, 2010, p.46). Indeed, to many students, textbooks are their first and sometimes only early exposure to books and to reading (Apple & Christine-Smith, 1991, p.5), and it is even also observed that in some schools in the world, studying, memorising and reciting textbooks become students' major model of learning (Davis, 2006, p.xii).¹² Moreover, textbooks are often seen as the authoritative source by students who at the same time tend to

¹¹ It is acknowledged that textbooks play different role in different education systems. In some systems, textbooks mainly provide a source of information rather than the structure of a course, whereas in other systems textbooks are the only or the central medium for teaching (Pingel, 2010, p.47). In the latter case, as Jensen (1995, pp.11-21; cited in Pingel, 2010, p.47) states, textbooks 'comprise the subject'.

¹² This is not to deny that students also learn in many different ways, for instance, from the atmosphere of their school and from the life of their community (Foster & Crawford, 2006, p. ix). 'Textbooks are, however, a very important vehicle for shaping student's understanding of the world, not least because they perceive that textbooks represent the "official" point of view of grown-ups' (ibid., p. ix).

reject knowledge from alternative sources as invalid (ibid., Preface. p.xiii). As Davis (2006, p.xiv) claims, 'if information and interpretation is not in the textbook, most students quickly come to understand that no necessity exists for them to learn this knowledge.' What is more, in many education systems, 'students routinely have expected to be tested on all or most of the knowledge that their textbooks contain' (ibid., p.xii). Therefore, so powerful are textbooks that they are even regarded as the 'grammar of schooling' (ibid., p. xii) and they have often become the key part of any effort of education reform (Altbach, 1991, p.1).

In many countries textbooks often need to be approved by the authority (central or local) before they can be used in the school system. The procedure for approval varies in different countries, but generally the main criteria is about whether or not textbooks support the syllabus or the national curriculum which is often approved by authorities as well (e.g. Ministry of Education and their Inspectors, centrally-appointed groups of professional educators and teachers, or examination boards) (Slater, 1992, p.14). As a result, textbooks become not only economic artefacts, but political as well (Apple, 1991, p.7).

Therefore, textbooks have been constantly modified and revised in order to reflect the changes of values and beliefs and particularly political ideologies in differential historical periods of which they are a part. For instance, Bello and Shaver (2010) examine the portrayal of Christopher Columbus in American textbooks and find that the portrayal of Columbus has evolved according to changing political ideologies. They further argue that it seems heroes are defined according to the needs of a particular historical period and the ideological values of the culture (ibid.). Whitty (1985, p.36) also provides a similar case in charting the growth of the Social Studies curriculum, claiming that one of its aims was to fit the changing demands of British capitalism and democracy.

According to Williams (2014, p.5) and Apple and Christine-Smith (1991, p.2), the change of textbook content to serve shifting ideologies is most visible during periods of social upheaval (i.e. rapid social, political, and economic change). It is also observed by Williams (2014, p.1) that governments tend to revise school textbooks (among other things) to respond to changes in the external or internal environment which threatens (real or imagined) to its legitimacy. He further argues:

‘The nature of these revisions, seen in the context of the changes that appear to have sparked them, provides indirect insight into the dilemmas a particular nation faces as it seeks to deal with some of its primary contradictions, but also more general patterns in the behavior of nations as they respond to changing circumstances and perceived threats.’ (Williams, 2004, p.1).

However, it should also be noted that while textbooks are often revised to cater to ideological needs, ‘major ideological frameworks do not get markedly changed’ (Apple & Christine-Smith, 1991, p.10).

Similar to schooling and curricula, textbooks are also socially constructed to the interests of dominant groups whose knowledge and culture are legitimised by textbooks (Crawford, 2000, p.1). This indicates that textbooks also become a means for social control which helps to maintain the power of the powerful. According to Anyon (2011, p.128), this control is made ‘by the imposition of ideological boundaries, by predisposing some choices and not others, by legitimating some ideas, activities, and groups, and not others.’ Based on her examination of the portrayal of the working class in American textbooks, she further argues that textbooks have contributed to the formation of attitudes that make it easier for powerful groups to manage and control society (ibid., p.126).

This is probably why political rather than pedagogical interests often influence textbook writing (Foster & Crawford, 2006, p.2) and the manufacture of textbooks thus involves inclusion and exclusion of 'the expectations of numerous, and often competing, interested parties concerning what constitutes legitimate curriculum knowledge' (Anyon, 1979; cited in Crawford, 2000, p.1). The inclusion and exclusion of 'official knowledge' in textbooks is practiced through a process of selection from a vaster range of possible knowledge. The tradition of 'knowledge selection' has been particularly discussed by scholars such as Raymond Williams (1961) who asserts that education is not a product like cars or bread, but must be seen as a selection and organisation from all available social knowledge at a particular time, which involves conscious or unconscious choices. Indeed, the manufacture of textbooks involves selection of knowledge which constitutes a particular version of reality. This particular version of reality not only reflects the values considered important by dominant groups, but also signifies more profound political, economic, and cultural relations and histories (Apple & Christine-Smith, 1991, p.3). Thus, it is clear that the selection is someone's selection which often privileges certain groups over others. In this way, textbooks become a source of controlling power. As Bernstein (1971, p.47) also pointed out thirty years ago: 'How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control.'

It should also be noted here that on the one hand through the selective tradition, one group's knowledge is given 'an official stamp of approval'; on the other hand, the selection also produces social silence (i.e. voices from other groups) (Crawford, 2000, p.1; Foster & Crawford, 2006, p.7). Indeed, according to Crawford (2000, p.1), 'what is often absent is a plurality of discourses and narratives' which might emerge from the oppositional discourses and narratives. Foster and Crawford (2006, p.7) also argue that while the selective tradition

ensures that some knowledge receives privileged and authoritative status, it nevertheless produces a narrow construction of social representation which ignores or marginalises alternative knowledge and visions.

Therefore, we can conclude that the content of textbooks is not neutral and textbooks are surely used to 'provide ideological justification for the activities and prerogatives of these groups and do not legitimize points of view and priorities of groups that compete with these established interests for social acceptance and support' (Anyon, 2011, p.123). Indeed, it seems clear that the inclusion and exclusion of knowledge in textbooks often serves ideological purposes and ideology often becomes the main criteria of textbook selection since the selection is often based on ideological presuppositions serving the interests of some groups in society (Anyon, 2011, p.111; Apple, 2004, p. 44). As Crawford (2000, p.2) also notes, the content of textbooks is 'selected, reproduced, and structured' around specific sets of ideological aims. In return, the control of textbooks' content also becomes a key factor to consolidate the ideological dominance of one group over less powerful groups (Apple, 2004, p.54). In this way textbooks become ideological products and it is based on this understanding of ideology that the nature of textbooks is explored in this thesis.

This thesis acknowledges that the critical reviews on knowledge and textbooks provided above are mainly based on experiences of Western societies where hegemony (in its Gramscian usage) rather than coercive and direct control is the dominant form of controlling. The situation in China is much more complex than this since the methods used by the Chinese state to control minority regions (in particular the most restive areas, such as Tibet and Xinjiang) are in fact rather less subtle than the term 'hegemony' implies. Arguably, what is observed in Tibet and Xinjiang is more like coercive control practiced by the Chinese state (with forces), which actually shows the failure of their efforts to exercise hegemony

over much of the 'minority' population there. It is with respect to the Han majority that the party-state's 'hegemonic' discourses (including those relating to definitions of nationhood and the place of 'minorities' within it) have acquired greater traction. Since this thesis is researching about how the non-Han groups are represented in Chinese mainstream textbooks which are mainly used by students of the dominant Han group, the idea of using textbooks for hegemonic control is still a valid and useful concept to this research.

3.3 Research data

As briefly mentioned in Chapter One, this thesis focuses on analysing school textbooks rather than on students' acquisition of knowledge. It is acknowledged in this thesis that the students' response to the textbooks is in itself something worthy of another study, and will probably be the focus of my next research project. However, my research for this PhD is into school textbooks published in China, which themselves are important research foci, especially considering their quasi-policy status in China. Indeed, since the CCP government has had a monopoly of power in controlling the production of textbooks, these textbooks have become some of the best documents for examining the official ideologies and what the CCP government has wanted its schoolchildren to learn across time. Therefore, the study of textbooks alone is very meaningful and will lay a solid foundation for my (or other researchers') future studies on how students receive the 'official knowledge'.

This thesis examines history textbooks for junior middle school students (aged 13 to 16) published by People's Education Press (PEP) in the PRC since 1949. The reason why junior secondary level has been chosen is because in primary schools, history has never been comprehensive and in some historical periods

history is subsumed within the subject Social Studies (*shehui*) (Jones, 2005b). History in senior secondary schools in China is not part of compulsory education, so only a limited number of students would study it. PEP has been chosen not only because it is still the biggest and most influential publisher in the Chinese textbook market, but also because for a long period between 1949 and 1992 it was the only publisher allowed to edit and publish textbooks used nation-wide.¹³ So PEP is the only choice if the objects of study are textbooks published across PRC history. PEP is also directly subordinate to the Chinese Ministry of Education, and therefore strictly controlled by the government. In this sense, it best represents and reflects the state's official ideologies on national identity that are represented in textbooks.

The junior school textbook 'Chinese History' (*Zhongguo Lishi*) is particularly examined in this thesis. In particular, the volumes of Chinese Ancient History (*Zhongguo Gudai Shi*) are examined, since they contain content about minority ethnic groups, and the main purpose of this content is to illustrate to students how these groups have 'come' to be Chinese, thereby legitimising Chinese rule. Chinese Ancient History normally covers the period from the prehistoric age to the late Qing dynasty (1840). These volumes contain the state's explicit and implicit views on ethnicity, and are where the issue of ethnicity is most discussed across all school subjects.

According to the RICT (2010), nine versions of the history textbooks were produced between 1949 and 2016, and seven are examined in this thesis for the reason of availability (see Table 3.1). Normally, each version of Chinese Ancient History consists of two or, on two occasions, three volumes. The dates in Table 3.1 below indicate the publication year of editions of volumes from different

¹³ During the Cultural Revolution, textbooks were edited and published by local authorities, and there were no textbooks used nationwide (*quanguo tongyong jiaocai*) (RICT, 2010)

versions of textbook examined in this thesis. The most recent version (2001) were bought at the PEP bookstore, and others were obtained from the National Library in China and the Museum of Textbooks in the PEP which has the collection of almost all the different Chinese textbooks published in the 20th century.

Table 3.1 Versions and editions of history textbooks

| Version | Volume | Details about versions and editions of textbooks |
|---------|----------|---|
| 1952 | Volume 1 | Original version issued in July 1952; revised in April 1953 and printed in May 1953. |
| | Volume 2 | Original version issued in January 1953; revised in October 1953 and printed in November 1953. |
| | Volume 3 | Original version issued in May 1953; revised in April 1954 and printed in April 1954. |
| 1955 | Volume 1 | Original version issued in 1955; revised in 1960 (the fifth edition) and printed in July 1960. |
| | Volume 2 | Original version issued in 1955; revised in 1960 (the sixth edition) and printed in July 1960. |
| 1978 | Volume 1 | Original version issued in March 1978; revised in December 1979 and printed in March 1981. |
| | Volume 2 | Original version issued in August 1978; revised in February 1980 (the third edition) and printed in October 1981. |
| 1981 | Volume 1 | Original version issued in November 1981; printed in June 1984. |
| | Volume 2 | Original version issued in June 1982; printed in October 1984. |
| 1986 | Volume 1 | Unknown about the year the original version was issued; according to RICT (2010), it should be the year 1986; revised in December 1986 (the second edition) and printed in February 1990. |
| | Volume 2 | Unknown about the year the original version was issued; according to RICT (2010), it should be the year 1986; revised in June 1987 (the second edition) and printed in August 1991. ¹⁴ |
| 1992 | Volume 1 | Original version issued in October 1992; printed in April 2000. |
| | Volume 2 | Original version issued in April 1993; printed in October 1996. |

¹⁴ Only the first half of this volume talks about ‘Ancient Chinese History’. The second half continues to introduce Early Modern Chinese History. This is because history curriculum in 1986 included World History in junior middle school to reflect the spirit of ‘opening’ in the Reform era. As a result of shrinking hours of teaching, the 1986 version of textbooks for Chinese Ancient History massively reduces the words in history textbooks.

| | | |
|------|----------|--|
| | Volume 3 | Unknown about the year the original version was issued; according to RICT (2010), it should be the year 1992; revised in October 1994 and printed in April 1999. ¹⁵ |
| 2001 | Volume 1 | Unknown about the year the original version was issued; according to RICT (2010), it should be the year 2001; revised in June 2006 and printed in June 2012. |
| | Volume 2 | Original version issued in December 2002; printed in November 2011. |

As Table 3.1 shows, the textbooks examined in this thesis were published at various times since the foundation of the PRC. By analysing textbooks published over such a period, this thesis will reveal how the notion of Chinese-ness and the officially defined Chinese identity was portrayed, how it evolved, and how minority groups were represented differently in this national narrative construction depending on the major ideology of the state.

3.4 Research methodology and methods of analysis

This thesis largely takes a constructive and interpretative approach. As has been discussed in detail in Chapter Two, this thesis focuses on the discursive and constructive nature of nations, mainly seeing them as ideological constructions. It also views textbooks as official knowledge that is mainly defined by the state. The national history told in textbooks is therefore the state's interpretation of history, and so what this thesis analyses is not historical 'fact', but rather how the Chinese state interprets history for the purpose of nation construction.

¹⁵ Only the first four lessons in the Volume 3 are about Ancient Chinese History. The rest lessons are about Early Modern Chinese History. This is because the 1992 versions of textbooks massively expanded the content about Chinese Ancient History so there isn't enough space in the first two volumes.

As this research focuses on analysing the official discursive construction of the nation through history textbooks, research methods such as classroom observation or interviewing students are not considered in this thesis. I was planning to interview textbook editors from PEP, but later I found that this was not an easy task since the topic of ethnicity is a sensitive issue in China and editors were reluctant to talk about their views on this issue. Instead, I have turned to analysing the academic publications of several influential PEP editors who were in charge of editing different versions of history textbooks. In my analysis of their academic writing, I have particularly concentrated on what they wrote about the issue of representation of minority ethnic groups in history textbooks and the differences between editors from different generations. The purpose is to analyse how the change of political climate in China has made it possible for later editors to understand the issue of ethnicity in China in different ways, which in the end also contributed to how the minority ethnic groups were portrayed in school textbooks.

Therefore, this research mainly adopts methods of qualitative text analysis to analyse textbooks. There are a variety of research methods used for textbook analysis: linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis and narrative analysis etc. These methods are all useful for textbooks analysis; for example, critical discourse analysis is often used by scholars to analyse power relations embedded in the content of textbooks.¹⁶ However, it is narrative analysis that is mainly used in this thesis because the focus of the thesis is the analysis of historical narratives adopted by the Chinese government to tell the 'stories' of the nation to students, and how 'stories' of minority ethnic groups are incorporated in this nationalist narrative. Scholars such as Riessman (1993, p.4)

¹⁶ For instance, Chu's research (2015), which was discussed in the Introduction chapter, uses critical discourse analysis to analyse unequal power relationship between ethnic groups that manifested in textbooks in China.

argue that '[a] primary way individuals make sense of experience is by casting it in narrative form.' Similarly, Neisser and Fivush (1994, p.136, cited in Webster & Mertova, 2007, p.4) point out that:

'particular events become important parts of our life because they provide some meaningful information about who we are, and the narrative forms for representing and recounting these events provide a particular structure for understanding and conveying this meaning.'

So historical writing, especially writing national history, often takes the form of narrative to make sense of historical events. What children are told in school history textbooks, therefore, can be seen as 'stories' about the nation told by the state to help the students to make sense of their nation.

Linguistic analysis is also used to analyse the language or vocabularies used in textbooks when discussing issues related to minority ethnic groups. For example, whether positive vocabularies such as 'brave' or 'talented' or negative vocabularies such as 'brutal' or 'savage' are used to describe minority ethnic groups. Apart from texts, visual information such as photographs, maps and of textbooks design are analysed with multi-modal analysis. These methods are also used to explore how the narrative related to ethnicity is conveyed in textbooks both implicitly and explicitly.

The content of textbooks related to minority ethnic groups is allocated to specific themes to assist in the analysis. These themes are mainly generated from my data analysis. Four main themes are identified in this research: the introduction of minority ethnic groups; ethnic relations including conflicts; the rule of minority ethnic groups in China; and minority ethnic groups under the Han rule. It is under these four themes that most issues related to minority ethnic groups are

discussed in these textbooks. Some examples of issues covered by each theme are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Themes and issues from textbooks

| Themes | Examples of issues covered |
|---|---|
| Introduction of minority ethnic groups | What information about minority ethnic groups are introduced to students? Is this information positive or negative? Are their cultures, heroes and achievements introduced? |
| Ethnic relations | Do textbooks give minority ethnic groups and the Han group equal status in introducing their relations? For example, are minority ethnic groups portrayed as less civilised in comparison to the Han? Are textbooks discuss more on communication and trade between different ethnic groups or are textbooks pay more attention to conflicts between ethnic groups? How do textbooks discuss ethnic conflicts in history? Are textbooks taking a neutral stance in introducing ethnic conflicts? Who are depicted as enemies in conflicts? Are details of ethnic conflicts given to students? |
| Rule of minority ethnic groups in China | Are textbooks positive or negative to minority ethnic groups' rule in China? Is their rule legitimised as Chinese rule or 'alien' rule? Are their ethnic backgrounds highlighted when textbooks discuss their rule? |
| Minority ethnic groups under the Han rule | What are the focuses of discussion when the Han rule is introduced? Do textbooks in particular discuss the Han's policies towards minority ethnic groups? |

Apart from these four themes, other crucial themes related to the issue of national identity, such as the Yellow Emperor or *Huangdi*, the mysterious figure who is

often regarded as the 'common ancestor' of the Chinese (see Chapter Five), are also examined to reveal how the complex relationship and tensions between national identity and the identity of minority ethnic groups are presented in textbooks.

This thesis particularly focuses on comparing textbooks published in different periods of PRC history. Scholars such as Hawkins (1983) and Jones (2005b) have generally regarded the end of Cultural Revolution in 1976 as a turning point for China's national development strategy. This thesis recognises this turn therefore also uses 1976 as a dividing point between the first period (identified as 'socialist period') and the second period (identified as 'modernisation and transition period'). As will be introduced with more details later, the years between 1949 - 1976 was identified as 'socialist period' because during the period socialist ideologies such as class struggle were predominant in Chinese society and in teaching materials such as textbooks. During the year between 1976 - 1989, China launched the 'reform and opening' policy to modernise China in a relative liberal political environment. But the 1989 (the year of Tiananmen protests) became a turning point again as the central government in Beijing has since then strengthened ideological control and has increasingly turn to take a state-centred nationalism as its strategy for ruling legitimacy. Therefore, this thesis uses the 1989 as a dividing point between the second period and third period (identified as 'patriotism period').¹⁷

The thesis therefore focuses on comparing the portrayal of minority ethnic groups in textbooks published in these three periods. The rationale for comparison is to

¹⁷ This thesis acknowledges that periodisation is not an exact science, and there are certainly some important shifts in political ideology and national policies within these broad periods selected (see Jones 2005b). Moreover, different political ideologies have often co-existed in PRC history; for example, patriotism has always been a core ideology in the CCP's ruling strategy but since 1989 has been particularly promoted across sections of the society, and particularly in the education system.

explore how the content of textbooks has changed, and to what extent this is reflective of changes occurring in politics and society, accepting that there may be a significant delay between a change in policy and that change reflecting in the textbooks. Therefore, both consistency and inconsistency of textbooks content with regard to issues of national identity and ethnicity are analysed.

Finally, some important government policies and political events such as the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 are also examined, as they are important signals of major political ideological changes in the history of the PRC. Important education policies related to minority ethnic groups are also discussed. The purpose of these examinations is to provide a basis for analysing the state's political and ideological changes and alterations in the content of school textbooks.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the constructive nature of the school curriculum and politics of textbooks and based on this has proposed methods for analysing history textbooks published in China. But before moving on to analyse history textbooks, I will use the next two chapters to provide a brief historical review of the development of Chinese identity in both the pre- and early-modern periods. The purpose of these two reviewing chapters is to reveal the complexity and fluidity of the meaning of being Chinese and its dynamic and interactive relations with the non-Han groups who had played a determining role in this identity construction process throughout Chinese history.

Chapter 4. Defining ‘Chineseness’ in Imperial China: A Brief Critical Review

China has been Chinese, almost from the beginning of its recorded history.

Jared Diamond (1998, p.322)

4.1 Introduction

When the best-selling author and evolutionary biologist Jared Diamond made the statement quoted above, he was trying to explain to his audience the question ‘how China became Chinese’. Indeed, many Western scholars of both nationalism and Chinese studies have been surprised by the exceptional ‘political, cultural and linguistic monolith’ of China, as shown, for example, by the question asked by Watson (1995, p.81):

‘how was it possible for a country of continental dimensions, inhabited by people who speak mutually unintelligible languages and exhibit an amazing array of ethnic difference, to be moulded into a unified culture [state]?’

Trying to give an answer, Diamond (1998) argues that it was the superiority of the Chinese civilisation that influenced neighbouring peoples, drawing them into an ‘ancient melting pot’. His view echoes that of the historian Wang Gungwu (1991, 2003), who also attributes the expansion of China from the Yellow River to the present PRC territory to the assimilating power of the Chinese civilisation, in which the people of surrounding regions (non-Chinese) were attracted by the superior Chinese culture and so voluntarily adopted this culture and eventually became Chinese. Similarly, admitting cultural diversity in the PRC, China’s most famous ethnographer Fei Xiaotong (2003) also asserts that Chinese people (as

represented by the ambiguous term *zhonghua minzu*) had a long history of racial and cultural melding (*minzu ronghe*).

These standard views of China (and Chinese history) clearly reflect modern historical writing which is influenced by nationalist ideology, projecting the current modern state back into history and showing the linear development of its current territory and people. In East Asian countries, the writing of national history tends to present nations as 'rooted and eternal places rather than dynamic and political processes', but this 'naturalising' of the nation often becomes a barrier to scholars in understanding history, since it can easily distract people from exploring 'the complex interactions among discrete, yet fuzzy and imbricated, cultural traditions over space and time, and from discovering how these traditions are mediated by the globally circulating discourses and practices of modernity' (Leibold, 2007, p.4).

In the case of China, nationalist historical writings often ignore the complexity of the historical interactions between the Chinese and neighbouring peoples (now called 'minority ethnic groups'), and the central role of these 'margins' in shaping the development of Chinese identity. They also tend to ignore or downplay both ideological and material conflicts and tensions in the transformation of once non-Chinese regions such as Tibet or Mongolia into frontiers of the modern Chinese state. According to Leibold, it is therefore necessary to:

'unbound the nation-state, breaking down the teleology of national time and the confines of national space, to reveal the various historical and social contingencies that contribute to the existing national entities and their cultural traditions.' (Leibold, 2007, p.4).

This chapter and the next provide a critical historical review of the development of Chinese identity in both the pre-modern and early modern periods, especially focusing on the role of the Chinese margins in this development. Some ambiguity

and confusion of terminology is inevitable in such a historical review, partly because of the teleological historical writing in modern times which regards non-Chinese groups in history as 'eternal Chinese minority ethnic groups' that were non-Chinese in history but are regarded as Chinese in modern historical writing. This ambiguity and confusion are also due to the ambiguity of the Chinese concept of *minzu*, which can be used to express a cluster of meanings similar to the English words 'race', 'nation', 'people', 'ethnic group' or 'nationality' (ibid., p.8). In this chapter I will not provide prior definitions of these terminologies, but use them with my interpretation based on the specific contexts.

This chapter focuses on the development of Chinese identity in the pre-modern period which is conventionally defined as ending in 1840, the year of the First Opium War. It will first briefly review the original development of the consciousness of being 'Chinese', either *Xia* or *Hua*, along with a sense of 'otherness' referring to the *Yi*, or 'barbarians'. It will then review the most popular approaches to understanding Chinese identity: first Chinese culturalism, which defines 'Chineseness' as an inclusive and largely descriptive identity based on culture; then alternative ethno-racialist approach which sees Chinese identity as exclusive, largely impermeable and conferred by descent. In the second section of this review, I discuss recent studies of Chinese history - sometimes referred to collectively as 'the new Qing History' (*xin qing shi*) - which focus on the issue of Chinese identity from the perspective of marginal groups, and in particular on their role in creating 'Han identity' in the distinctive context of the Qing Empire (1644 - 1912).

4.2 Popular assumptions of Chinese identity: two Sino-centric views

4.2.1 The story of origin

Based on archaeological findings in regions near the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, official Chinese historiography claims that the history of the Chinese state can be traced back to 2,000 BCE, and regards the Xia (roughly 2029 - 1559 BCE), Shang (roughly 1559 - 1046 BCE) and Zhou (roughly 1046 - 771 BCE) as China's first three dynasties. Very often, the three dynasties are presented as a linear development of the same homogeneous group of Chinese which lasted for several thousand years until the foundation of the People's Republic of China. However, archaeological findings and historical researches in recent years have suggested that these dynasties were founded by different groups. Moreover, although the Xia is now officially regarded as the first Chinese dynasty, according to Wang Mingke (2013), it was not until much later around 770 - 476 BCE that people around the Yellow River valley started to develop a sense of 'we' to distinguish themselves from surrounding 'others'. Wang (2013) argues that, before this period, there was no clear boundary between these groups, and that some of the 'other' groups (such as the *Rong*, one of the 'four barbarian groups' surrounded 'China' or *hua*, see discussions below) were close military and political allies of the Zhou in their military conquest of the Shang.

According to Wang (2013), climate change during this period gradually forced the people on the margins of the Yellow River valley into a nomadic lifestyle, which led to fierce competition in this region, where production was mainly based on farming. People living in the valley gradually developed a shared identity as they drew together to establish collective defences against the surrounding 'others' (ibid., p.129). Wang (ibid., p.190) argues that this process (of forming a shared identity) involved constructing 'collective memories' and myths of common ancestry and 'structural amnesia'. As the previously heterogeneous groups in the regions of the Yellow River valley gradually adopted the Yellow Emperor (*Huangdi*), a mysterious figure regarded as the ancestor of the *Xia* group, as their common ancestor, their original ancestors were 'forgotten' to varying degrees,

although some were incorporated into the new shared founding myths of the *Xia*. Thereafter, these groups living in the Yellow River valley started to develop a kind of ethnic self-awareness and regarded themselves as *Xia* or *Zhuxia* (lit. various groups of *Xia*) (Wang, 2013).

To distinguish themselves from the surrounding 'others', the *Xia* gradually developed their identity identified based on their agricultural production model and related lifestyles. The *Xia* group also developed an ethnocentric self-image, imagining themselves as being located at the centre of the world. This spherical concept of being at the centre gradually became the idea of the Middle Kingdom or the Central State (*Zhongguo*). Since then, the idea of 'centrality' became a key element in Chinese identity until it was challenged by the arrival of the Western powers in the 19th century. Increasingly, *Zhongguo* was also used interchangeably with *Hua* or *Xia* by this group. According to Wang (2013), the creation of boundaries between the *Xia* and other groups involves a simultaneous process of exclusion: the sense of otherness. As a result, while the *Xia* group gradually identified them as *Hua* (civilised), *Huaxia* (the civilised *Xia*) and *Zhongguo* (the Middle Kingdom), the surrounding 'others' were increasingly referred to as *siyi*, or 'barbarians of the four quarters'; the *Yi* in the East, *Di* in the North, *Rong* in the West, and the *Man* in the South (Wang, 2013; Yi, 2008). According to Yi (2008, p.20), this vision of the Middle Kingdom surrounded by barbarians gradually developed into the idea of a China-centred world order or *tianxia* (all-under-heaven).

The competition for resources between the *Xia* and nomadic *Yi* continued for the next several thousand years and finally resulted in the gradual building of the Great Wall by the *Xia* group. The Great Wall was constructed not only as a military installation to help the *Xia* to defend against the nomadic groups, but also to separate these two groups from each other and so demarcate their group

identities. Over the next 2,000 years of Chinese history, those who saw themselves as the heirs of the *Xia* continued to define their own identity by 'othering' the surrounding groups, as exemplified by the terms *Huayi zhibian* and *Yixia lun*, both of which can be translated as 'distinguishing the Chinese and barbarians'. Next I examine the main ideologies of this identity definition: Chinese culturalism and the ethno-centric assumption.

4.2.2 Chinese culturalism and the 'civilising mission'

Yi (2008, p.19) argues that at the core of Chinese culturalism is the belief that *Huaxia* (or China) is and has been the only true civilisation, and this position remained unchallenged even when the *Huaxia* was under military occupation and threats from aliens due to their alleged backwardness. The elites of the *Huaxia* group developed this solipsistic worldview because they believed not only that their agricultural economic model was more complex than those of the nomadic *Yi*, but also that their culture and lifestyle were more splendid. They defended their claims of superiority by showcasing their culture as highly evolved with 'gorgeous attire and rich ornaments' and sophisticated literature (Yi, 2008). Indeed, so proud was the *Huaxia* group of their own culture that they named themselves the *Hua*, meaning 'splendid, colourful and beautiful' (ibid., p.24). Based on this belief in cultural superiority, the *Huaxia* group also believed that their values were the supreme universal moral code, and their culture a superior universal culture (Harrison, 2001, p.20). This sentiment of cultural superiority of the *Huaxia* group was summarised by a scholar during the Tang dynasty (618 - 907 CE): '*Zhongguo* is called *Xia* because it possesses great propriety and righteousness, and is named *Hua* for its splendid clothes and literature' (Yi, 2008, p.24). They believed that the *Huaxia* (or the Middle Kingdom) was not just an example of a civilisation, but was in fact the epitome of civilisation itself (Harrison, 2001).

Meanwhile, the elites of the *Huaxia* defined the surrounding others as ‘un-civilised’ or ‘barbarians’, as these groups had not yet learned the proper ways of dressing, eating, dwelling and/or traveling (Yi, 2008). Indeed, in the eyes of the *Huaxia* elite, the nomadic life meant close ties with animals and an inclination to militarisation; both were thought primitive and brutal in comparison to the *Huaxia*, which emphasised literariness over militarisation, as reflected in the imperial civil service examination or *keju* (ibid., p.22). In this way, the *Yi* that surrounded the Middle Kingdom (*Huaxia*) were devalued as backward since they had no culture (Harrison, 2001, p.20). As Yi (ibid., p.24) points out, phrases naming ‘barbarian groups in four quarters’ in Chinese were always linked to negative connotations whatever their original meaning.

In the view of Chinese culturalism, the cultural dimension thus became the most important criterion in distinguishing the *Huaxia* and the *Yi* (Yi, 2008, p.22). If one was familiar with the *Huaxia* or Chinese culture, one would be regarded as a member of *Huaxia* or Chinese. This culturalist view is also summarised by Rawski (1988, p.33, cited in Yi, 2008, p.22) who states that Chineseness ‘became defined by dietary habits (the Chinese did not eat dairy products), by clothing styles, and especially by traditions concerning marriage and death.’

In theory, the boundaries between the *Huaxia* and *Yi* were open; the ‘barbarian’ *Yi* could be transformed into *Huaxia* through learning and adopting the *Huaxia* civilisation or way of life, mostly represented by Confucian rituals and norms. This fluidity of boundaries between the *Huaxia* and *Yi* is clearly reflected in the Confucian school’s *Gongyang zhuan* (or New Text, commentaries on Confucius’ *Chunqiu*), which strongly advocates the theory of ‘using the Chinese (*Xia*) ways to transform the barbarians (*Yi*)’ (Dikötter, 1992, p.3). In other words, it was believed that the *Yi* or ‘barbarians’ could be culturally absorbed: *laihua*, ‘come and be transformed’, or *hanhua*, ‘become Chinese or civilised’ (ibid.). By the same

token, Mencius claimed that 'barbarian rulers' (*Yi*) could be acceptable so long as they adapted to the Chinese way (Yi, 2008, p.23).

Yi (2008, p.19) points out that Chinese culturalism was not merely an abstract concept, but one that was institutionalised and reinforced through the *keju*, or civil service examination. According to him, this in turn shaped the Chinese education tradition that was dominated by a broad sense of Confucianism. The *keju* was introduced during the Sui dynasty (581 - 618 CE) to suppress the traditional power groups (aristocrat-literati, lit. *shizu*) 'who had dominated and reproduced top officialdom as a result of their monopolisation of scholarship in the classics on a family basis' (Yi, 2008, p.25). It was designed to help the emperor to select 'the most morally worthy of his subjects whatever their origins' (Harrison, 2001, p.14), and lasted for more than 1,300 years almost without interruption, until the end of the imperial era in the early 1900s. Scholars such as Harrison (2001, p.12) and Yi (2008) point out that although the content of the examination changed over time, it still promoted an orthodox state ideology based largely on classical texts of Confucianism such as the Four Books (*sishu*) and Five Classics (*wujing*). These classic texts of Confucianism promote the idea of linking personal morality (*xiushen*, to cultivate oneself) to the governance of the country (*zhiguo*) and rule of the world (*qi tianxia*, lit. unify the world in peace). As a result, those who passed the *keju* felt ready to take the world (*tianxia*) as their own responsibility since they were confident in their moral and cultural accomplishments (Yi, 2008, p.27).

Although Chinese culturalism stresses the idea of the inclusiveness or openness of Chinese identity, it also advocates an exclusive worldview and cultural assimilation. As Dikötter (1992, p.2) points out, the *Huaxia* world view of *tianxia* (all-under-heaven) lacks an obvious sense of cultural pluralism since the world was perceived as one homogeneous unity called the 'great unity' (*datong*) (ibid., p.3). Indeed, in the ideal world of Chinese culturalism, the 'barbarians' would flow

in and be transformed. This homogeneous conception of the world is also reflected in the *tianxia* ideal of ‘*wangzhe wuwa*’, or ‘the King leaves nothing and nobody outside his realm’ (Yang, 1968, p.26; cited in Leibold, 2007, p.22); in other words, all will become similar and all will become *Huaxia* or Chinese.

According to this *tianxia* world view, all subjects were measured according to criteria set by the ruling elites of the *Huaxia* who dominated the assumption of cultural superiority. This is reflected in the Confucian idea of hierarchy based on the moral values of *wenhua* (i.e. civilisation, which literally means ‘literary transformation’) (Harrell, 1996, pp.8-9). This idea classifies peoples as closer to or further from the centre on the basis of just how much *wenhua* they had (ibid.). According to Schwartz (1959, p.52; cited in Harrell, 1996, p.18), from the Confucian point of view, *wenhua* refers to the moulding of the person, and by extension the community to which the person belongs, by ‘training in the philosophical, moral, and ritual principles considered to constitute virtue.’ Therefore, in Confucianism’s hierarchy, there was a scale of personal civilisation: the most civilised were those who were most acquainted with the relevant literary works, that is, scholar-officials who served in the imperial state and who served as theoreticians of the moral order (Harrell, 1996, p.18). The non-elite groups of the *Huaxia* were cultured to lesser degrees, because although they basically followed the model of scholar-officials in terms of family life, religion, language and other attributes such as rituals, they did not have direct knowledge of the important literature (ibid.). The non-*Huaxia* or non-Chinese groups were a step down, since they were not even indirectly acquainted with the moral principles laid out in the classics (ibid.).

According to culturalism scholars such as Wang Gungwu (1991), this conviction of the moral (if not necessarily technical) superiority of their civilisation was fundamental to the concept of Chineseness. Wang Gungwu (ibid., p.75) also

argues that the belief in cultural universalism was an important feature of the Middle Kingdom regimes, as it legitimised the rule of the Chinese emperors who were seen as representatives of the highest moral order: the '*tianzi*' or 'son of heaven' whose power was justified by the highest world order, Heaven (ibid.). This sense of moral and cultural superiority not only enabled the Chinese elite groups to assert and maintain dominance over their vast territory and population, but also provided them with justifications which they used to legitimise their claims for expansion. In this view of Chinese culturalism, the Chinese elites regarded their relationship with the non-Chinese 'others' as a process of making them more cultured, as a transformation from uncivilised to civilised (Harrell, 1996, p.20). So strong were they in their moral rightness, that the Chinese elites even justified their conquests of non-Chinese regions not as wars but rather as a commitment to civilise the primitive and backward barbarians living along the Chinese borders (Vickers, 2015).

For those whose views were shaped by culturalist assumptions, the Chinese urge to civilise the non-Chinese was not associated with coercion and the need to dominate (Wang, 1991, p.27). According to Wang, the non-Chinese barbarians were expected to *lai-Hua* ('come to China') or become sinified, because they were inexorably drawn in by the superior Chinese civilisation, the magnetic attraction of the exemplary sage-ruler of China and the practices of his exemplary state. Vickers (2009a) argues that this rhetoric became a central theme of much traditional Chinese historiography. He points out that contemporary Chinese school textbooks also emphasise the attraction of Chinese civilisation which led to the peaceful assimilation (*ronghe*) of non-Chinese border peoples (Vickers, 2015, p.55). This is how, in the view of culturalism, there was a gradual 'unification' of such peripheral peoples with China, which finally led to 'the expansion of China from its original Yellow River heartland in the first millennium BCE to the current borders of the People's Republic' (ibid.).

However, in reality, not all the 'barbarians' were automatically attracted by Chinese civilisation, and very often this expansion, although carried out in the name of a civilising mission, was achieved by a mix of strategies including military conquest and forced civilising activities such as coercive schooling. As Schneewind (2006, p.38) illustrates, violence and coercion were often involved to achieve rapid forced assimilation, and as Vickers (2015) shows, education was particularly used by the Chinese imperial state to transform and enculture the 'barbarians' through a rigid curriculum, schooling, and the forced learning of Chinese culture. This was to help the 'barbarian' groups to know Chinese characters and understand moral principles (*shizi mingli*) (ibid.). In this context, Vickers (ibid., p.39) argues, 'schooling served as one among a number of instruments serving a central desire for control on the cheap', and remained 'closely linked with more brutal forms of suppression.'

A crucial step of this civilising mission involved defining and devaluing the marginal groups (i.e. various *Yi* groups) as 'barbarians' or 'backward'. This defining and devaluing can be found in many writings by Chinese literati depicting non-Chinese groups. For example, examining the Chinese writers who visited Taiwan in the late Ming period, Teng (2004) finds that they deployed a rhetoric of primitivism and described the native groups in Taiwan as a 'lost tribe forgotten by time'. She argues that the Chinese writers deployed a historical metaphor representing tribal peoples as anachronistic survivors from ancient times to serve 'to demonstrate their cultural inferiority and to legitimate the civilising project of the hegemonic centre.' The representation of the non-Chinese groups as primitive and backward thus legitimised China's mission to civilise them.

Clearly, Chinese culturalism has long been used by the Chinese elites to legitimise not only their control over the population of China, but also their expansion and conquest of non-Chinese groups. According to Rowe (1994,

p.421), Chinese culturalism justified a 'process of coerced "civilisation" which was part of a larger process of elite assertion of cultural hegemony over commoner populations, Han and non-Han alike.' It has been a predominant paradigm in understanding Chinese history over the last fifty years, and has been considered as the core element of Chinese identity by scholars such as Wang Gungwu. However, since the 1990s, scholars such as Dikötter (1992) have challenged it by identifying another paradigm focusing on an ethno-centric or racialist conception of Chinese identity.

4.2.3 Ethno-centric assumption of Chinese identity

In contrast to Chinese culturalism which sees culture as the most important criterion distinguishing Chinese (*Hua* or *Xia*) from surrounding 'barbarians' (*Yi*), the ethno-centric assumption sees Chinese identity as exclusive and ascriptive and based on ethnic difference, and stresses the fundamental and unbridgeable gap between the Chinese and barbarians (Leibold, 2007, p.22). This exclusivist or ethno-centric vision of Chinese identity rejects the idea of cultural universalism, but believes in the incompatibility between the respective natures of the Chinese and the 'barbarians'.

This assumption was notably discussed by Frank Dikötter (1992, p.1), who argues that there has been a long tradition in China of distinguishing people by physical characteristics, and a strong consciousness of biological continuity. He finds that texts written about the same time as *Gongyang zhuan* (New Text, discussed above) stress the incompatibility between different groups. For example, a quote from *Zuo zhuan* (or Old Text), written around the fourth century BCE, claims that 'if he is not of our lineage/race, he is sure to have a different mind' (*fei wo zu lei, qi xin bi yi*) (ibid., p.3). Dikötter (ibid.) argues that this sentence seems to support the suggestion that at least some degree of racial differentiation existed during the early Chinese civilisation. Moreover, the text of *Liji* (Book of

Rites, one of the 'five classics', written around third century BCE) also underlines that the 'Chinese and barbarians all have [their own] nature, which cannot be moved or altered' (ibid., p.4).

According to Dikötter (1992), this ethno-centric and exclusivist assumption of Chinese identity was especially prevalent in the writing of Chinese literati when China was under various kinds of threat from 'barbarian' groups. During these periods, the political threat posed by the 'others' (either spiritual or military) challenged the traditional Chinese ideal of cultural universalism and the sense of cultural and moral superiority. This challenge, in turn, facilitated the generation of a defensive reaction from the Chinese elite groups, and caused them to adopt 'beliefs clustered around the negative pole of the dominant value-system', i.e. they tended to stress on the essential difference between the 'barbarian' groups and the Chinese (ibid., p.20).

For example, when Buddhism became popular in China during the Six Dynasties (221 - 589 CE), and there was a feeling that it threatened the cultural and moral superiority of China, it was strongly condemned by Chinese literati who developed a strong sense of anti-Buddhism which later expanded into 'a position of mutual exclusiveness' (Dikötter, 1992, p.18). The Chinese native religion Daoism was also created and developed during this period as a form of Chinese opposition to Buddhism (ibid.). This exclusivist view was expressed in an article called '*Yixia Lun*' (Distinguishing the Chinese and Barbarians), written by Gu Huan (390 - 453 CE), one of the most famous scholars of the period:

'Buddhism originated in the land of the barbarians; is that not because the customs of the barbarians were originally evil? The Taoism originated in China; is that not because the habits of the Chinese were originally good? [...] Buddhism is not the way for China. Taoism is not the teaching of the western barbarians. Fishes

and birds are of different origins, and never have anything in common. How can we have Buddhism and Taoism intermingle to spread to the extremities of the empire?' (Ch'en, 1952, cited in Dikötter, 1992, p.19).

It is clear from his writing that Gu Huan stressed the different nature of the Chinese and 'barbarians'. A similar rhetoric again became prevalent during the Northern Song (960 - 1127 CE) and Southern Song (1127 - 1279 CE) dynasties when several 'barbarian' groups including the Khitan/*Qidan*, which founded Liao (916 - 1125 CE), and Jurchen/*Nvzhen*, which founded Jin (1115 - 1234 CE) conquered and occupied northern China and had continuing conflicts with the Chinese Song regime, which had to move to the south to avoid being conquered. According to Dikötter (1995, p.21), due to military weakness of the Chinese regimes during the period, it had to abandon its previous discriminatory attitude in its diplomatic communication with the Liao (Khitan) and Jin (Jurchen) regimes. However, Dikötter (ibid.) notes that this did not prevent officials from continuing to despise foreigners as 'barbarians', and the internal official records and private correspondence of this period reveal that the Khitan and Jurchen groups were referred to as 'inferior people', 'barbarians', 'caitiffs' or simply 'animals' (ibid.). Intermarriages with the Khitan group were also criticised, even though this practice had earlier been favoured by many Chinese people (ibid.). Many uncompromising scholars who campaigned to recover the lost territories in the north particularly rested their argument on the belief in fundamental difference between the Chinese and these groups (ibid.).

Meanwhile, lineage increasingly became a significant feature of Chinese identity during the period, when there was large scale immigration from the Central Plain to the south to avoid 'barbarian' conquest. One way for these immigrants to assert their Chinese identity was to claim that their ancestors were immigrants from the

north of China. Therefore, making genealogies (*zupu*) was prevalent during the Southern Song and stories about the history of family migrations and lineage were popular (Faure, 1989). In many cases these histories were traced back to high ranking officials of the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE. Some of these claims were very dubious, since most genealogies were written more than a thousand years after the event (*ibid.*). In this way, Chinese identity came to be closely embedded in the symbols of the ancestral cult (Cohen, 1994, p.99).

The ethno-centric assumption of Chinese identity was especially reinforced during the rule of the Mongol Yuan (1279 - 1368 CE) and Manchu Qing (1644 - 1911 CE) dynasties in China. The Mongols divided the population of the empire into different official categories, and placed the Chinese (the previous Southern Song people) at the bottom of this classification. This certainly reinforced a kind of ethnic or racial consciousness among the Chinese elite, who tended to regard the Mongols as foreign rulers. According to Dikötter (1992, pp.23-4), while some Chinese Confucian literati actively joined the Mongol rule and became officers during the period, some Song loyalists refused to serve in the Mongol government, partly due to 'an incipient racism' against the Mongols, regarding them as 'of a non-human origin' (*fei renlei*) and compared them to 'dogs and goats'.

This anti-barbarian exclusivist assumption peaked after the Manchu conquered China in the 17th century. According to Dikötter (1992, pp.24-5), there was no marked opposition in northern China, and indeed many welcomed their arrival for its restoration of law and order and suppression of peasant revolts and banditry. However, the Manchu encountered fierce resistances in the south, and thousands of loyal Chinese were massacred (for example, in the city of Yangzhou and Jiading). Many loyalist Chinese or Ming scholars not only refused to serve the Manchu but also developed loyalist ideas characterised by racial hostility to the new rulers (*ibid.*). For example, Gu Yanwu (1613 - 1682 CE) rejected the idea

that barbarians could be morally transformed, and emphasised the sense of shame in serving under barbarian rule (ibid.). Based on traditional ideas concerning environmental determinism and the different nature of the barbarians, Wang Fuzhi (1619 - 1692 CE) developed a theory which used the concept of 'category' (*lei*) to highlight the essential distinctions between Chinese and barbarians since they belonged to different categories (ibid., p.27). In his work entitled Yellow Book (*Huangshu*), Wang named China as the 'yellow centre' (*huangzhong*), in opposition to other mixed colours representing various barbarian groups. According to Wang, it was important to maintain the purity of categories, which could only be preserved by strict boundaries and a specific lebensraum (*dingwei*). This, according to Wang, was the first duty of the Chinese emperor (ibid.). In this way, Wang clearly rejected the notion of cultural universalism and excluded the 'barbarian' groups from the definition of China.

The Manchu rulers were so worried about this rhetoric focusing on the difference between the Manchu and the Chinese, seeing the Manchu as aliens and therefore delegitimising Manchu rule, so there was an official campaign (*wenzi yu*, or 'literary inquisition') during the Qing to suppress literati who continued to insist on ethnic differences between the Manchus and the Han Chinese (Dikötter, 1992, p.25). When the Manchu emperors launched the project to collect and re-edit all books (i.e. '*siku quanshu*' or Four Treasuries), the majority of anti-Manchu works were banned. Nevertheless, despite this suppression, this exclusivist and ethno-centric assumption of Chinese identity persisted and was used by Han Chinese revolutionaries in the late Qing in combination with new ideas such as race and social Darwinism to motivate anti-Manchunism (this is discussed in the next chapter).

4.2.4 Relationship between the two conceptions of Chinese identity

This chapter has so far discussed the two distinctive assumptions relating to Chinese identity: one focusing on culture, and the other on ethnic difference. It seems that the two are in opposition to each other: the former promotes the idea that Chineseness is defined by culture and that non-Chinese barbarians can be transformed into Chinese if they are civilised or sinicised, whereas the latter stresses the idea that the difference between Chinese (*Xia*) and non-Chinese barbarians (*Yi*) is essential and no one can cross ethnic boundaries. The two assumptions led to different ways of dealing with frontier 'barbarian' groups: the ethno-centric required a strict policy of ethnic segregation, or adopting a 'loose rein' (*jimi*) policy of accommodation and bribery to maintain the boundary between the Chinese and non-Chinese, whereas culturalism promoted civilising projects to assimilate the non-Chinese through education and moral leadership, and 'to break down the barriers between barbarism and civility' and validate 'the universalism of the emperor's rule' (Leibold, 2007, p.22).

However, in reality, as Dikötter (1992, p.29) points out, 'Chinese attitudes towards outsiders were fraught with ambivalence' and, as is shown later in this study, that ambivalence is still evident in the school textbooks. Both assumptions have been used by Chinese elite groups in history to legitimise Chinese rule in different contexts. By emphasising the moral and cultural superiority of the Chinese and the possibility that all people could become Chinese by adopting Chinese culture regardless of their innate physical and environmental differences, culturalism was often used to pursue social totality and served to legitimise the territorial expansionism of the Chinese state (Leibold, 2007, p.22). However, when their sense of cultural superiority was threatened by outsiders, for example, during the Six dynasties and the Song dynasty, Chinese elites often adopted the exclusivist or ethno-centric view of Chinese identity and stressed the fundamental difference and unbridgeable gap between the Chinese (*Xia*) and 'barbarian' (*Yi*) groups. As Dikötter (1992, p.29) puts it: the exclusionist view was often used to expel the

barbarians and 'seal the country off from the perverting influences of the outside world.'

In this sense, the two assumptions, although distinct from each other, are also complementary. Leibold (2007, p.23) points out that the relationship between them was 'complex and firmly rooted in the institutions, literary canon, and historical memory of imperial China', and that depending on the specific political and historical context, the Chinese elites could use 'either, or a contradictory combination of both, to reify or redraw the boundaries for inclusion or exclusion within the Chinese political community' (ibid.). In other words, both culturalism and ethno-centricism were actively involved in the process of defining Chinese identity, ironically giving the 'barbarians' (*Yi*) a crucial role in shaping the meaning of being Chinese and transforming Chinese identity into a 'residual category comprised of all those who were not barbarians' (ibid.).

As Leibold (2007, p.23) points out, whatever approach or combination was dominant, both advocated military expeditions either to 'forcibly bring recalcitrant barbarians into the Chinese cultural and political orb' (the inclusivist) or 'to prevent the barbarians from breaching the Great Wall and raiding the central plains' (the exclusionist). The combination of the two may well lead to the belief of one-way assimilation: only the 'barbarians' might be transformed to Chinese, the other way was not possible. As Mencius (372 - 289 BCE) claims: 'I have heard of men using the doctrines of our great land to change barbarians, but I have never heard of any being changed by barbarians' (Dikötter, 1992, p.18). In other words, while 'barbarians' can become Chinese by adopting Chinese ways, 'the nature of Chinese was regarded as impermeable to the evil influences of barbarians' (ibid.). In any case, as Dikötter (ibid., p.29) notes, 'the foreigner was never faced: the myth of his inferiority could be preserved. Absorbed or expelled, he remained a nonentity.' It was only in the 19th century that the Chinese imperial worldview was

broken by Western imperialist powers. But before I go on to discuss this in the next chapter, in the next section I will review the issue of Chinese identity from the perspective of the marginals (i.e. *Yi* or 'barbarians').

4.3 Barbarians defining Chinese identity

Although the two assumptions underpinning Chinese identity are distinct from each other, they are both grounded in a profoundly Sino-centric perspective and therefore look at the relationship between the Chinese (*Xia*, or centre) and its 'barbarian others' (*Yi* or marginals) from the view of the Chinese or the modern Han group. As a result, while the ethno-centric assumption tends to regard the rule of 'barbarians' (such as the Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing) as alien rule, Chinese culturalism sees these dynasties as Chinese, for the reason that these 'barbarian' groups eventually were all assimilated (or sinicised) and became Chinese. Following the idea of Chinese culturalism, the conquest or incorporation of regions such as Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang during the rule of the 'barbarians' (Yuan and Qing) is seen by Chinese nationalist historiography as the unification of these regions with the eternal multi-ethnic state. Indeed, in their view, these regions and groups have always been Chinese.

Some scholars have challenged this Sino-centric view and have started to view the issue of Chineseness from its margins or periphery. Several decades ago Lattimore (1962) focused his investigation on a multi-ethnic, multicultural zone which he termed the 'reservoir zone' between the nomadic steppe and Chinese Central Plain, which has served as a bridge between the two since the people of this zone were familiar with both cultural systems. Chen Yanke (1977, cited in Leibold, 2007, p.21), a leading Chinese historian, researched the history of the Sui (581 - 618 CE) and Tang (618 - 690 CE) dynasties, founded after a chaotic

period of 'barbarian' rule in northern China, and argued that Chinese societies and political systems were more affected by the 'barbarian' rulers than the other way around. In recent years, a group of scholars researching the history of the Qing dynasty (1644 - 1911 CE) founded by the Manchu group also abandoned previous Sino-centric perspectives and examined it from the view of its ruling group the Manchu. They generally reject the 'assimilationist' view held by supporters of Chinese culturalism and argue that the Qing should not be simply regarded as a Chinese dynasty, not only because the Manchu retained their distinctive ethnic identity, but also because the Qing was very different in nature from previous Chinese dynasties founded by the Sinic group.

As Leibold (2007, p.21) points out, their research has replaced the Sino-centric view with a view focusing on a 'dynamic "polyethnic" or "multistate" system whose cultural and political core was in a constant state of flux.' Investigating Chinese history from the margins, this new research agenda has not only allowed a reconsideration of the role of non-Chinese (*Yi* groups) in Chinese history, but also led to a major rethinking of issues related to Chineseness, including both the identity of the Han and minority ethnic groups and the nature of inter-ethnic relationships in modern China (*ibid.*). What they generally argue is that these 'barbarian' groups were not passively defined by the Chinese, instead, they had been influential in shaping the meaning of being Chinese, and in many ways had challenged the way the Chinese defined themselves.

4.3.1 Problems of defining the Han

The Han are the largest and dominant group in the PRC, accounting for more than 90% of the population. Seeing the Han group as the 'main stem' (*zhugan*) in the developmental history of China, Chinese official history tends to regard their identity as something given and natural that can be traced back to the *Huaxia* group several thousand years ago. Borrowing from Fei Xiaotong's (2003)

metaphor of the 'snowball', some Chinese scholars such as Xu Jieshun (2012) have started to assert the constructive nature of Han ethnic identity, but nevertheless still trace its history back thousands of years and identify the *Huaxia* as the core of this snowball. What Xu argues is similar to the culturalist thesis discussed in the previous section: the reason why the Han became the largest group in China is due to its attractive civilisation which enabled it to continuously merge with other non-Han groups i.e. the *Yi* or barbarians. These views present an unproblematic identity of the Han and its relationship with Chinese identity which has evolved constantly until the creation of the PRC.

Researchers have shown that the concept of Han identity is rather a modern creation of Chinese nationalists in the early 20th century. Clearly, the term itself was not used as a group name before the Han dynasty (202 BCE - 220 CE). Elliott (2012, p.180) argues that, during the Han dynasty, the term *Hanren* (the people of Han) was a political concept generally applied to the people under the governance of the Han emperors and had no reference to culture, descent, language, or anything which could be understood to indicate ethnic identity. During the Han dynasty, other names such as *Xia*, *Hua*, *Huaxia*, and *Zhongguo* (Middle Kingdom) were indicative of the group's cultural self-identity (ibid.). The use of the term to identify people of the Central Plain decreased over time, and gradually fell from use after the Han dynasty collapsed around 200 CE. Instead, new terms emerged, such as *Weiren* and *Jinren* (people of Wei, people of Jin), and these names were then used to refer to the people of the Central Plain under the respective regimes. It was not until 400 years after the fall of the Han Empire that the term *Hanren* (people of Han) was reintroduced as an ethnic identifier which implied a person equal to *Huaren* (people of Hua) or *Zhongguo ren* (people of the Middle Kingdom) (ibid.).

This change occurred during the Southern (420 - 479 CE) and Northern dynasties (386 - 581 CE) (*nanbei chao*), a period characterised by the influx of nomadic groups from the north and the establishment of many regimes and dynasties in northern China (Yi, 2007). During the period, a nomadic group called the Sarbi (*Xianbei*) founded the Northern Wei dynasty and ruled a large area in what is present day northern China, including the Central Plain. To legitimise their rule, Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei launched a series of reforms to adopt Chinese culture, including moving the capital to the Central Plain, encouraging inter-marriage between Sarbi and Chinese, promoting the Chinese-style clothing and embracing the literary heritage of the Middle Kingdom (Elliott, 2012, p.180). However, despite its wide-scale acculturation programme, the Sarbi and its Northern dynasty were still perceived by the *Huaxia* group as a 'cold, forbidding, and distant foreign country' or the 'barbarian' north (ibid., p.181), and they fled to southern China and founded the Southern dynasties (*nanchao*). Trying to legitimise their rule and the further conquest of the southern regimes, Sarbi rulers 'began to form a consciousness of *Zhonghua* (China) that was distinct from a worldview that had Han at its centre', thereby reshaping the idea of the empire and locating the Sarbi within it (ibid., pp.181-2). Based on this new enlarged vision of the empire, the barbarians could also become the *Hua* (Chinese), but at the same time were distinguished from the Middle Kingdom people (*Xia* or previous *Hua*) who were now called the Han. According to Elliot, this new way of re-imagining China was fundamental to the formation of the modern Chinese identity:

'The re-imagination of a Greater Chinese would require a reconceptualization of empire and political legitimacy in the old Han geographic heartland that was not predicated on the old Han order – an epoch-making moment that, distant in the past though it is, may still be recognized as a vital prelude to the formation of the modern Chinese nation-state.' (Elliott, 2012, p.182).

Due to intensified interaction between the Chinese and the 'barbarians' in a context of alien rule, the word 'Han' was now used as name for the previous 'Hua', whereas Hua now referred to a broad concept of Chineseness and so the meaning of 'Chinese' had been changed by the 'barbarian' groups. China was not only the *Huaxia* group's 'China', but the 'barbarian' group's China as well.

However, the meaning of Han (and hence Hua, or China) kept changing over the next thousand years as a result of continuing conflicts between the *Huaxia* and various *Yi* groups from the north. For example, 'Hanren' (people of Han) during the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271 - 1368 CE) referred to various groups including Khitan, Jurchen and previous *Huaxia* people under the rule of the Liao and Jin, whereas the *Huaxia* group (or the Han people) in the south under the rule of Southern Song were regarded as *Nanren* i.e. 'Southerners' even though they would still identify themselves as *Hua*, *Huaxia* or Chinese. In this way, as Elliott (2012, p.187) argues, the idea of Han became a 'fungible and capacious term that could be expanded according to administrative need – such needs, after all, being the primary motive behind classifying populations in the first place – and lacked any firm ethnic connotations.' The northern 'others' (in this case, the Mongols) clearly played a significant role in re-defining and re-imagining the idea of 'Han'.

The Mongols were overthrown by the Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644 CE) whose founder was a Southerner. To gain maximum support from people for his rebellion, its founder, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328 - 1398 CE), used the slogan of 'expelling the barbarians and restoring China'. But he had a difficult task since the northern territories had been ruled by *Yi* groups (including Khitan, Jurchen and Mongol) over the preceding two or three centuries, and many *Hanren* had been partly acculturated to the *Yi* and whether they still identified them as Chinese (in the sense of being *Huaxia*) or not was debatable (Elliott, 2012). Indeed, some *Hanren*

in the north and the Southerners both spoke very different languages, and the customs practiced by both groups were quite different from each other now (ibid., p.188). To overcome this problem, the founder of the Ming dynasty devised a strategy of expanding and broadening the meaning of the word 'Han' to integrate both the Northerners (*Hanren*) and the Southerners (*Songren*) into a single group. At the same time the boundaries of who could be a Han were narrowed to exclude other ethnic groups who were formerly categorised as *Hanren* by the Yuan rulers. In this way, the Ming ensured that the word and the name Han became equivalent to the word Hua and China. As Elliott (ibid., p.179) points out, the word Han 'began to acquire something of its modern meaning'. However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, it would not be until early 1900s that the idea of the Han identity was evoked by Han nationalists to call for revolution and rebellion against Manchu rule.

4.3.2 Qing: Manchu empire or Chinese empire?

The Ming ruled China for about 300 years until replaced in 1644 by a 'barbarian' group from north-eastern China (i.e. the 'reservoir zone') called the Manchu, who founded the Qing dynasty (1644 - 1912 CE), often regarded by Chinese historiography as the last Chinese dynasty in premodern history. The group was originally called the Jurchen, claiming they were the descendants of the founders of the Jin dynasty around the 12 - 14th century. The Jurchen leader Nurhachi (1559 - 1626) reorganised several tribes in the region and renamed them the Manchu. The Qing not only conquered China (i.e. the Ming), but also other regions such as Mongolia, Tibet and part of central Asia and ruled this multi-ethnic empire for 300 years until replaced by the Republic of China in 1912. Influenced by the idea of Chinese culturalism, Chinese orthodox historiography (in both the mainland and Taiwan) traditionally does not regard the Manchu Qing as an alien rule but as a Chinese dynasty, because they believe that the Manchu were

eventually sinicised, a view particularly articulated by scholars such as Ping-ti Ho (1998) who echoes Gungwu Wang (1991) in his belief that after conquering China the 'barbarians' were always attracted by the 'civilised' Chinese culture and therefore were willingly assimilated or sinicised. Their argument was based on several points. First, the Manchu Qing almost entirely adopted the legal and institutional structure from the previous Ming dynasty. Second, after 1800, most Manchu were unable to speak their own ethnic language, but all could speak Chinese. Therefore, it did not matter whether it was the Manchu or the Han who were ruling China, because the distinction became irrelevant as they were both working to re-establish China's unity, sovereignty and prosperity. They also explain that this is the reason why Han elites were willing to play a leading role in resolving crises faced by the Manchu regime, such as suppressing the rebellions from either the Han (the Taiping Rebellion) or minority ethnic groups (the Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang).

However, this view has been challenged in recent years by a group of scholars known as the Altai School, who have started to research Qing history from the perspective of the Manchu and have developed a new paradigm – 'the new Qing history' – which emphasises the non-Han features of the Qing dynasty and the idea that the success of the Manchu minority rule in China (in the modern sense) was not due to their assimilation into the Han, but to their ability to maintain their distinctive Manchu identity. According to these scholars, this enabled the Manchu to govern different ethnic or cultural groups effectively and maintain the vast territory of their empire (Rawski, 1996; Struve, 2000). They also place the Qing in the broader context of Asian and world history, and therefore regard it as an Inner Asian empire which developed from the Altai mountains, rather than a Chinese empire which emerged from the Central Plain (Rawski, 1996). This point is particularly articulated by Perdue (2005), who sees the Qing as an expansionist colonial power since it shared significant similarities with other competing colonial

powers during the period, deploying many similar policies, ideologies and technologies long-associated with European early modernity, including, for example, cartography and ethnography to make the ethnic-linguistic cleavage that has been identified as a central factor in the rise of nationalism in Europe and America (Hostetler, 2001; Leibold, 2007). They claim that the Qing regime had distinct characteristics and was different from other Chinese dynasties. Consequently, the Manchu should not be regarded as assimilated 'barbarians', but as an Inner Asian group which played a special role in world history (Perdue, 2005).

As discussed previously, when the Manchu conquered China, they were resisted by some Ming loyalists such as Wang Fuzhi who asserted the fundamental difference between the Manchu (as barbarian) and the Chinese. The resistance was fierce and it took the Manchu several decades to control all the previous Ming territory. To discredit Wang Fuzhi's claims (and similar claims from other Ming loyalists), and to legitimise Manchu rule, the Qing emperors such as Yongzheng (1678 - 1735 CE) used the argument of Chinese culturalism and argued that the Manchu had been civilised since they recognised and accepted Chinese civilisation (Guo, 2005). To show their Confucian credentials, after conquering the Ming/China, the Manchu rulers retained the Ming civil administration and its *keju* examination system and began to actively patronise Chinese arts and literature (Leibold, 2007, p.26). During the reign of the early Qing emperors such as Kangxi (1654 - 1722 CE), Confucian ethics and cultural practices were also normalised and institutionalised at the local level in the former Ming territories (*ibid.*). As a result, by the end of the 16th century, most Han Chinese literati accepted Manchu rule as legitimate and adopted the rhetoric of universalism (ironically argued by 'barbarian' Manchu emperors), stressing that culture rather than ethnicity defined the boundaries of Chinese rule over the Central Plain (*ibid.*).

With its full incorporation of previous Ming territory by 1683, over the following century the Manchu also successfully conquered Mongolia, Tibet and part of central Asia, and by the time of the Qianlong emperor (1736 - 1796 CE), the Qing not only had more than doubled the size of Ming territory and established the current boundaries of the PRC, but also drawn together five major constituencies which are reified today as the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui (Muslims), and Tibetan (Leibold, 2007, p.26). Like many other major states during the same period, the Qing had become a multi-ethnic empire.

However, as scholars of the 'new Qing history' point out, unlike the traditional Chinese emperors who were often portrayed as the centre of civilisation and were obligated to pursue the civilising mission of transforming barbarians in the image of the emperor, the Qing emperors generally recognised and respected the different cultures and languages of the empire's main subjects, and treated them equally and differently according to their cultures, although some assimilation policies persisted, particularly with the aborigine peoples in the south-west of what had been the Ming imperium (Vickers, 2015). Instead of encouraging cultural assimilation, the Qing emperors generally attempted to 'fix and naturalize these ethnic boundaries by imposing different legal and governance structures, collecting and maintaining genealogical records, and promoting different cultural practices' (Leibold, 2007, p.27).

Indeed, instead of trying to assimilate all the different major cultural groups of the Qing empire, the Qing rulers attempted to control these groups by adopting strategies that 'often paralleled or echoed ideologies and practices seen in the Russian, British, Mughal and Ottoman empires' (Vickers, 2015, p.56). These have been thoroughly studied by the 'new Qing history' scholars over the last several decades. For example, using the term 'simultaneous emperorship', Crossley (1992; 1999) notes that the Qing emperors presented different identities

to different groups of their subjects: a Ming-style emperor or *tianzi* (the Son of the Heaven) to his Han subjects; the 'khan of khans' to the Mongol tribes; patron of religious leaders such as Dalai Lama to Tibetans; and the head of all the Manchu bannermen. They were often trained to speak at least the five languages of the major groups of their subjects, and their multilinguistic skills certainly helped the Qing rulers to present specific images and legitimise their power to different cultural groups of the Qing empire (Rawski, 1996). In this way, the rulers of the Qing empire became the 'pivot' of different imperial subjects, similar to their counterparts in other empires.

Vickers (2015, p.56) further points out that a strategy of indirect rule, a practice often used in the administration of the British empire, was also adopted by the Qing to rule its different subjects. Indeed, apart from the previous Ming territory where the Han made up 95% of the population and held sway, the Qing often incorporated and established local rulers as the agents of imperial authority, not unlike the British approach in India. For instance, in Mongolia, the Qing ruled through the princes system, awarding noble titles and encouraging a tribute system (Esherick, 2006, p.231). In Tibet, the Qing supported and sponsored the religious and secular authority of the Dalai Lama and other official noblemen (Esherick, 2006, p.231; Rawski, 1996), and in Xinjiang, especially the south and east of Xinjiang where there was a large Muslim population, the Qing relied heavily on local elites for governance. Hereditary princes had titles conferred on them by the Qing court in the most important oasis cities, and the indigenous officialdom of begs (*boke*) in more distant regions (Di, 1998, p.287; cited in Esherick, 2006). The Qing also adopted appropriate and distinct legal systems depending on the local context, and so 'sought to exercise authority at minimum expense through collaboration with existing elites', while maintaining administrative control and the right to appoint and dismiss these officials and rulers (Vickers, 2015, p.56).

There were other strategies adopted by the Qing rulers, making the Qing very different from previous Chinese dynasties (*Huaxia*). For example, the written and spoken use of languages such as Mongolian, Uyghur and Tibetan were encouraged and these languages were used to administer the disparate cultural groups (Crossley & Rawski, 1993). Ideologies and institutions such as rituals and religions were also adopted by the Qing rulers to legitimise their rule. For example, in the previous Ming territory, the Qing rulers adopted traditional Confucian rituals and showed their respect of traditional Chinese gods and the tradition of ancestry worship, even sponsoring the funeral rituals of the last Ming emperor. Meanwhile, in addition to the Manchu traditional religion of Shamanism, the Manchu rulers also accepted and sponsored Tibetan Buddhism, which would make it easier for them to control both the Tibetans and the Manchu's important military ally, the Mongols. The Qing also established a unique administrative organisation, the *Lifanyuan* or Court of Colonial Affairs (lit. Department of Barbarians' Affairs) under Manchu rather than Han nobles, to regulate the non-Han groups of the empire and ensure the preservation of their cultural traditions.

In deploying the various strategies discussed above, the Manchu rulers created narratives which were different from those of the traditional Chinese states or dynasties. According to 'new Qing history' scholars, these strategies and institutions were crucial for the Manchu rulers in establishing, governing and consolidating a long-lasting multi-ethnic empire, increasingly redirecting loyalties toward a central Qing subjecthood and away from shifting regional and ethnic ones (Leibold, 2007, p.28). One result of this loyalty was that, although in the early Qing era many Han sacrificed their lives to resist the invasion of Manchus who were seen as aliens, by the end of the dynasty, when the empire encountered threats from Western powers, many of the Han elite transferred their xenophobic prejudices to the West and sided with the Qing and their Manchu rulers.

The 'new Qing history' scholars also argue that the ability of the Manchu to take these strategies and therefore run this multi-ethnic empire rested on their ability to maintain their Manchu identity. However, since the Manchu were vastly outnumbered by their Han subjects with roughly one Manchu per 350 Han, they found that it was increasingly difficult to maintain their cultural identity. Indeed, after one hundred years of living in formerly Ming territory, the culture, spirit, skills and lifestyle which had previously defined Manchu identity were increasingly eroded. Most Manchu during this time were increasingly losing their ability to speak the Manchu language. This led the Manchu rulers to sense an identity crisis, and as a result, they launched a series reforms to revive Manchu ideologies and cultural practices, including a frugal life-style (in comparison to the luxurious Han Chinese lifestyle), the Manchu language, horse-riding, archery and hunting, even though these skills were not practically useful during that period (Crossley, 1997, 1999; Elliott, 2001, 2006).

Due to the fluid nature of banner identity and the material benefit of banner membership (including a monthly silver and grain stipend, and privileges in the *keju* examination), there had been an increasing number of 'fake Manchus' who had attached themselves to the banner system, and this eventually led to a major financial crisis for the Qing state (Leibold, 2007, p.28). To cope with both identity crisis and financial crisis, the Qing rulers launched a major reorganisation of the banner system to exclude the non-Manchu members. The criteria used to define Manchu, however, were strikingly similar to what the anti-Manchu Ming loyalists had promoted: genealogical descent. So, the Manchu rulers not only started to create and promote their myths of a common place of origin in the Changbai Mountains, but also attempted to identify 'true' Manchus through tracing genealogies (i.e. the nine halas), even though these genealogies were also largely made up and based on unreliable legends. Nevertheless, as a result

of this reorganisation, this invented Manchu identity and banner membership increasingly became imbricated (Elliot, 2001, cited in Millward, 2002).

Thus, through a series of strategic reforms, the Manchu group was able to successfully avoid total sinicisation and re-cultivate and preserve their identity. They were not only able to establish an imperial universalism to legitimise the external boundaries of the empire over the lands of various cultural groups, but also to establish internal boundaries between the Manchu, the Han, the Mongols, the Tibetans and the Hui people by adopting the narratives of descent (Leibold, 2007, p.28). However, by institutionalising genealogy as the primary marker of identity, the Qing rulers also provided 'both a literature of descent and a political imprimatur for racial thinking' (ibid.). As Leibold (ibid.) notes, although lineage had long served as marker of identity in China, 'these reforms marked an important turning point in the use of genealogies to create more rigidly fixed "racial typologies".' Ironically, the development of this new discourse of race finally contributed to the downfall of the Qing empire, which was overturned by groups of Han nationalist revolutionaries who 'mapped this new language of kinship onto the rich tradition of ethnocentrism to label the Manchus as [an] alien, barbarian race' (ibid., p.29). This will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter provides a historical review of the development of Chinese identity in the pre-modern period, roughly defined as before 1840 CE. It reviews the historical roots of two popular assumptions on Chinese identity: one promotes a culturalist view of China whereas another one promotes an ethno-centric vision of China. It also argues that the two assumptions were both used by Chinese elites in imperial times to either justify the Chinese expansion or defend their

identity under threat from outsiders. This review also shows the fluidity of the meaning of being Chinese and its complex and contradictory nature. Based on this, it argues that Chinese identity is not fixed or given, but is formed through a complex, ongoing negotiation between the Chinese (*Xia*) and the 'others' (*Yi*).

Moreover, this chapter also reviews the 'new Qing history' and shows that the 'other' groups have played a significant role in shaping the development of Chinese identity in imperial China. This analysis of Chinese identity and history from the perspectives of the marginals (i.e. the *Yi*) is very useful for rethinking modern Chinese historical writings, as exemplified in school textbooks, which often show a strong nationalist narrative based primarily on Han ideology.

Following on from this critical historical review, the next chapter focuses on early modern Chinese history (1840 - 1949). Seeing this period of history as a key stage for the formation of modern Chinese identity, the next chapter will examine how the Han Chinese nationalists struggled in transforming the Qing empire into a modern Chinese nation-state. It will consider the continuing tension between the two Sinic assumptions (shown in a more exclusive Han formulation and a more inclusive *Zhonghua minzu* expression), as well as challenges from the non-Han groups to the Han-defined idea of Chineseness during this period.

Chapter 5. The Development of Modern National Identity in China: in Late Qing and the Republic Period (1840 - 1949)

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed how the Manchu Qing rulers on the one hand largely adopted Chinese culturalism (e.g. by continuing the traditional Chinese civil exam, paying tribute to the Confucius temples, etc.) as a ruling strategy to govern their majority subjects the Han people (especially the Han elites); whilst on the other also trying to maintain their distinctive Manchu identity in order to legitimise their rule over various ethnic groups in the frontier regions of the empire. Their strategy was relatively successful as both the 'civilised' and 'barbarian' groups were able to develop a sense of commitment to the emperor as well as a sense of belonging to the Qing empire. As a result, as Leibold (2007, p.9) concludes, 'by the late Qing period (if not earlier), most subjects of the empire (both Sinic and non-Sinic) accepted the existence of a distinct, albeit fuzzy, "Chinese identity", even if that community seemed to lack a single, precise autonomy for itself.'

However, this 'fuzzy Chinese identity' was seriously contested by the arrival of the Western imperialist powers in late Qing. The traditional imaginary which held 'China' to be the only civilised place in the world was seriously invalidated for many Chinese elites (mainly Han). Indeed, the advanced technologies of the Western powers, most apparent in their steam-powered gunships, shocked many Chinese elites and some of them started to turn to 'learn' from the West. This is shown in the famous slogan of the 'self-strengthening' movement during the second half of the 19th century: 'learning the advanced skills/technologies of the (Western) barbarians to control them' (*shiyi changji yi zhiyi*). These elites were also forced to develop a new world view as they increasingly realised that China or the Qing empire was not at the centre of the world under heaven, but only one

state in a world of theoretically equal but competing states (Harrison, 2001, p.7). Further, under the influence of the modern discourses such as race and social Darwinism, which were imported to China in late Qing, Chinese elites were developing a new sense of collective identity centred around the idea of nationalism and racial competition.

In this way, Western imperialist powers (new 'barbarians') challenged the meaning of 'being Chinese' in the late Qing period and 'precipitated a new national project aimed at scrutinising, redefining, and in some cases abandoning traditional cultural values in the search for a new, more robust identity' (Leibold, 2007, p. 6) - a process described by Joseph Levenson (1968) as a transition from culturalism to nationalism. However, this transition of identity was coincident with the transition of China from a traditional empire (with a single geographic region) to a modern nation-state. What would be the place of the Manchu ruling group (and many other ethnic groups at the frontier of the Qing empire) in the future Chinese nation-state? In other words, should the future Chinese nation be founded on the Qing geo-body (therefore a multi-ethnic empire-state) or should it be a pure Han nation-state? Chinese intellectuals in the late Qing had to face this difficult question and they proposed a variety of answers.

The Qing dynasty finally fell in the end of 1911 as a result of the Han ethnic nationalist movement. Immediately after it collapsed, various ethnic groups in the Qing frontier regions sought independence from the newly founded Republic of China and achieved their goals to differing degree.¹⁸ Their counter-nationalist movements show clearly their rejection of the Han nationalists' vision of Chinese nationhood. While various political powers in the new Republic of China were

¹⁸ The Outer Mongolia finally was able to get independent from China, while Tibet declared for their independence for a while before the Communist party finally controlled the region in 1951. Moreover, in Southern Xinjiang, the Uyghur group established an independent 'Eastern Turkistan' state which lasted for about twenty years in 1920s and 1930s.

competing forcibly for leadership in China, they were also in competition to propose their visions of Chinese nationhood, including how to integrate ethnic groups at the frontier regions.

This chapter traces the transformation and development of Chinese identity in the context of modernisation. It is divided into two main sections. The first section focuses on the last several decades of the Qing empire (1840 - 1911). It focuses on analysing how Chinese elites in the late Qing responded to the identity crisis in the context of imperialist aggression, and in particular how non-Han groups were placed in their construction of new Chinese identity. The second section focuses on the Republic period (1911 - 1949). It discusses the strategies and policies towards the non-Han groups used by the two most important rival powers during the Republican period, namely, the Nationalist party (Kuomintang or KMT) and the Communist party (CCP). Since neither party had much opportunity to implement their policies in the frontier regions, this section focuses on their narrative strategies designed to integrate the non-Han groups into their vision of Chinese nationhood.

5.2 The development of modern Chinese national identity in the late Qing dynasty (1840 - 1911)

5.2.1 Background

Chinese officials and their Marxist historians have long marked the 'Opium War (1840 - 1842) as the beginning of Chinese modern history (Harrison, 2001, p.60; Wakeman, 1975, p.1). The rationale for this is that since then China was forced to interact with the modern world, represented by Western imperialist powers, and underwent dramatic internal changes (Wakeman, 1975, pp.1-2). In

Communist terminology, China then entered the 'half-feudal and half colonised' (*ban fengjian ban zhimin*) period.

While this explanation of external causation is largely accepted by many researchers, scholars such as Wakeman (1975, pp.1-2) point out that there were also important inner sources of social changes in China even before the Opium War. Firstly, throughout the Ming-Qing period, China was increasingly becoming a highly integrated society by traditional standards (especially economically) (Johnson, 1987, p.360). Secondly, the power of Han political elites was significantly enhanced in late Qing period as a result of the Taiping rebellion (1851 - 1864) which seriously weakened the power of the Manchu ruling group. While the two internal sources of social change are an important prerequisite to the transition of Chinese identity in the later Qing period, the arrival of Western imperialist powers nevertheless decisively challenged traditional Chinese identity. The imperialist powers made the Qing rulers and especially the Chinese elite groups aware of a new world order of competing independent states which seriously threatened traditional Chinese ideas of identity which were bound up with the *tianxia* worldview (i.e. all-under-heaven, discussed in the previous chapter) (Harrison, 2001, p.86). As discussed in the previous chapter, traditionally the belief that Chinese civilisation was superior to that of any other country was firmly held by most Chinese elites and this was at the core of the way Chinese understood themselves in relation to others (Mitter, 2004, p.26). However, the defeat of China by various imperialist powers who were, for example, 'with superior British technology literally outgunning anything the Chinese defenders could offer', this belief was significantly damaged (ibid., p.30).

Moreover, the increasing chance of contact with Europeans and their culture since the Opium War had made the traditional culturalism 'psychologically unacceptable' to various groups of people in China (Harrison, 2001, p.71). The

groups included but were not limited to employees of Western organisations, Chinese migrants who had returned from Southeast Asia and other countries such as the U.S.A. (for example, in the case of Sun Yat-sen), and students who studied abroad, either self-funded or funded by the Qing government (for example, Yan Fu). Based on their experience of contact with Western people or even living in Western countries, these people began to look for a new way of understanding the world and themselves as Chinese (ibid., 2001, p.72). For many of them, such as Yan Fu and Sun Yat-sen (whose view will be discussed below), their new identities were developed in a new context with the modern discourse of race and nation.

5.2.2 The discourse of race, social Darwinism and nationalism

As discussed above, at the same time as the meaning of the traditional Confucian universe was fading away for many Chinese, early Chinese intellectuals actively participated in inventing a new sense of identity (Dikötter, 1992, p.65). They began to look beyond Western technical skills and turn their focus to underlying differences between Chinese and Western culture (Harrison, 2001, p.73). A lot of Western literature on social and political theories were translated in China during this period. The racial theories and social Darwinism popular in Western societies at the time were particularly attractive to many Chinese intellectuals as they felt these concepts fitted well to the Chinese context.

Western racial theories had spread around the world by the late nineteenth century and reached China through a variety of sources, including missionary schools and travellers to the West (Zarrow, 2012, p.150). Among the early pioneers, Yan Fu (1854 - 1921) was the initiator of the racial transformation of

Chinese identity.¹⁹ Influenced by Western ideas, Yan Fu abandoned the traditional distinction between a civilised centre and a barbarian periphery, instead embracing a new world order and group membership based on the discourse of race. In his translation of Western works, Yan Fu presented a world of four main races: the yellow, the white, the brown and the dark, and defined them with distinctive biological features and geographic locations (Dikötter, 1992, p.68). Yan Fu's four-race categorisation was soon revised by other intellectuals such as Liang Qichao (1873 - 1929), who basically divided mankind into five main races: yellow, white, red, brown and black (ibid., p.77). Intellectuals such as Tang Caichang (1867 - 1900) also 'juxtaposed five continents to five skin colours: the Asian as yellow, the European as white, the American Indian as red, the Africa as black, and the Australian as brown (i.e. *Ya Ou Mei Fei Ao, huang bai hong hei zong*)' (ibid., 1992, p.78).

It seems that in developing a new sense of racial identity, Chinese intellectuals incorporated the Western concept into indigenous modes of representation. As Dikötter (1997, pp.13-4) notes, 'the invention of racial identity in early modern China was largely the product of interactions and fusions of different indigenous schools of thoughts, such as New Text Confucianism, statecraft scholarship (*jingshi*), classical non-canonical philosophies (*zhuzixue*) and Mahayana Buddhism.' In other words, 'foreign ideas were assessed against, and intergraded within, a pre-existing framework' (Dikötter, 1992, p.65). Indeed, the word 'race' was translated in Chinese as *zhong-zu* (breed of lineage) and the word *zu* (lineage) was central to traditional Chinese identity as it was used for creation and maintenance of group boundaries in traditional Chinese society. In this way, the word *zu* was now given two levels of meaning, as *lineage* and as *race*. As a

¹⁹ Yan Fu was sent to England to study in the Royal Naval College for two years in the 1870s. During his study there, he became interested in English works on social theories and after he came back China he started to translate some of these works, including Thomas Huxley's *Origin of Species* and Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*.

result, the newly invented racialised identity - *huangzu* - could be understood both as the 'yellow race' and as 'lineage of the Yellow Emperor' (Dikötter, 1997a, p.7).

Moreover, it seems that the traditional idea of 'civilised vs. barbarian' which had been one of the core elements of Chinese identity was now reformulated into the new racial understanding of Chinese identity. As Dikötter (1997a, p. 6) notes: 'Confucian social hierarchies underwent a permutation into new racial taxonomies: binary distinctions between "superior races" (*liangzhong*) and "inferior races" (*jianzhong*) were often extrapolated from existing social hierarchies.' As a result, many reformers were imbued with a sense of racial superiority and claimed the 'yellow' and 'white' were 'wise' and 'rulers', whereas other peoples were often labelled as 'stupid' and 'slaves' (Dikötter, 1992, p.81; Dikötter, 1997b, p.16). For example, Dikötter (1997a, p.6) notes that Liang Qichao continuously dichotomised his five races into 'noble' (*guizhong*) and 'ignoble' (*jianzhong*), 'superior' (*youzhong*) and 'inferior' (*liezhong*).²⁰ It should be noted that by adopting this racial discourse, the social inequality of different population groups was 'made to appear permanent and immutable' to many Chinese intellectuals since their differences were firmly located inside the body (*ibid.*, p.7).

The development of a new racial understanding of Chinese identity during this period also led to a new way of conceptualising 'barbarian groups'. Many Chinese intellectuals now viewed the ethnic groups at China's frontier regions as sub-races of the yellow (Zarrow, 2012, p.151). For instance, Yan Fu once wrote that although China had been 'conquered' by outsiders such as Mongols and Manchus, it had never fallen to a truly alien race since these groups were all members of the yellow race (*ibid.*). However, the belief that these groups all

²⁰ Liang Qichao once wrote that 'India did not flourish because of the limitations of her race. All the black, red and brown races, by the microbes in their blood vessels and their cerebral angel, are inferior to the whites. Only the yellows are not very dissimilar to the whites' (Dikötter, 1992, p.82).

counted as yellow didn't guarantee them the same status as the Han, and the trend was to emphasise their difference. So, the idea of racial inferiority or superiority was also applied to sub-races of the yellow within China. For example, one Chinese writer of this period recognised Genghis Khan as the only one of the yellow race who could compete with the white race, but he also disdained to worship him as the Mongol race was the public enemy of the Han race (Dikötter, 1992, p.112). In contrast, the author admired a Ming loyalist Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga, 1624 - 1662) because he not only defeated the Dutch (the white race) but also fought against the Manchu who enslaved the Han race (ibid., p.112).

Indeed, Chinese intellectuals during this period tended to 'conflate the yellow race with the Han' (Zarrow, 2012, p.151). For instance, Liang Qichao regarded the Han as the only 'genuine yellows' as they were the 'initiators of civilisation and had civilised the whole of Asia' (Dikötter, 1992, p.86). Liang therefore regarded the Han as quite unique and claimed that 'there is no way to compare the ethnic groups of frontier regions to the Han' (ibid.). In fact, he even declared that the terms 'Han race' and 'yellow race' were synonymous (ibid., p.87). On the other hand, the yellow sub-races in China, for example the ethnic Miao group, were described by Liang as China's aborigines, similar to America's reds or Australia's blacks, 'who were doomed to rapid extinction and deserved no further attention' (ibid., p.86). In general, under the discourse of race, ethnic groups at frontier regions of Qing were still considered to have no culture and thus still were not regarded as equal to the Han (ibid., p.93).

Along with the introduction of the discourse of race in the late Qing, social Darwinism was also introduced in China by Yan Fu at the same time (in the middle 1890s). Chow (1997, p.36) and Mitter (2004, p.30) note that Chinese intellectuals' understanding of Darwin's theory of evolution mainly followed Thomas Huxley who applied the idea of 'survival of the fittest' and 'struggle for survival' to human

society and argued that like species, races are also in competition for survival, and ‘those races that did not come out on top in the evolutionary battle were doomed to become slave races, or worse still, disappear completely.’ In fact, the idea of social Darwinism was particularly convincing (though terrifying at the same time) to many Chinese intellectuals in late Qing period since it fitted so well with what they saw around them: the European and Japanese imperialists were encroaching, Korea and many other former Chinese tributaries were colonised, and China itself was too vulnerable to control its own fate against the aggression of these powers (Chow, 1997, p.36; Harrison, 2001, p.73).²¹ As a result, Chinese intellectuals in the late Qing easily accepted a social Darwinist worldview, and combining this with race theories: they naturally conceptualised their conflicts with the European powers as ‘racial struggles’ between the ‘yellow’ and the ‘white’ (Chow, 1997, p.36).

It is clear from above discussion that Chinese intellectuals like Yan Fu had now abandoned the culturalist view of an eternally expanding moral centre in which ‘barbarians were inevitably drawn towards civilisation, and instead presented a world where the races competed for survival and those that failed were wiped out’ (Harrison, 2001, p.73). Following the idea of racial competition, ‘racial extinction’ (*miezhong*) and ‘racial survival’ (*baozhong*) became a genuine concern shared by many Chinese intellectuals who felt threatened by the imperialist powers (Dikötter, 1992, p.101). Yan Fu wrote his concerns that ‘They will enslave us and hinder the development of our spirit and body ... The brown and black races constantly waver between life and death, so why not the 400 million yellows?’ (Dikötter, 1997b, p.16). The reason why coloured people had lost in the racial competition, according to many Chinese intellectuals, was due to their lack of

²¹ Mitter (2004, pp.34-5) argues that the war between Japan and Russia (1904-1905) on Chinese soil (Manchuria - north-eastern China) stimulated many Chinese and convinced them that China’s own fate was controlled by other countries.

'ability to group' (*he qun*) (Dikötter, 1992, p.104). Translating Spencer's book on Sociology as *qunxue* - 'the study of groups', Yan Fu was also convinced that group solidarity or group cohesion (*qun zhiyi*, or 'groupism') was the key to 'progress, evolutionary survival, and the acquisition of wealth and power' (Dikötter, 1992, p.104; Leibold, 2007, p.30).

However, Chinese intellectuals soon realised that grouping based on racial thinking alone could not save China from the danger of racial extinction since Japan, who belonged to the yellow race as well, had joined the imperialist powers to oppress and colonise China (Zarrow, 2012, p.57). So, a new group identity was needed to unite the Chinese people in the context of racial competition. To Chinese intellectuals and radical students of this period, the new identity turned out to be based on the ideology of nationalism as it 'erects borders against the outside and unites the group inside' (Dikötter, 1992, p.110). Indeed, Liang was attracted by the idea of nationalism and even claimed that it was 'the most brilliant, just, and fair of the world's ideologies (*zhuyi*)', for it provided the principle needed to prevent other peoples from infringing on the freedom of the Chinese (Esherick, 2006, p.235). Borrowing from the Japanese translation of nationalism (i.e. *minzokushugi*), Liang translated nationalism in Chinese as *minzu zhuyi*, which since then has exerted a lasting influence on Chinese political terminology (Dikötter, 1992, p.109; Esherick, 2006, p.235). The term 'nation' was translated as *minzu*, which literally combined the Chinese character for 'people' (*min*) and 'race' or 'lineage' (*zu*) (Dikötter, 1992, p.97). It is clear that Liang's translation expressed a nationalist vision based on the concept of race. His racial understanding of the nation was shared by other Chinese intellectuals such as Yan Fu, who publicly declared that the sentiment of nationalism/patriotism is rooted in racial nature (*ibid.*, p.109). In this way, the idea of race and nation overlapped in the term *minzu* (*ibid.*). As these Chinese intellectuals also learned that nation-state had become the dominant political form in global politics, they

'had begun to have a strong interest in the expansion and legitimation of these new forms of identity' (Harrison, 2001, p.74). Since then, a new type of Chinese identity based on a racialised understanding of the nation began to develop among a small but growing group of the population in China (ibid.).

Liang was annoyed by the fact that the Chinese nation, though the key basis of Chinese identity, didn't have a proper name for itself. Liang noted that although historically China was identified as *Zhuxia* (various groups of the Xia), *Han*, and *Tang*, these were merely inconsistent dynastic designations (Leibold, 2007, p.32). So Liang began to employ the term *Zhongguo minzu* (Chinese nation, or the nation of the Central Kingdom), *Zhongguo zhongzu* (Chinese race, or the race of the Central Kingdom), and eventually *Zhonghua minzu* (Chinese nation, or the nation of the central and civilised) to refer to this new Chinese identity (ibid.). However, who should be defined as *Zhonghua minzu*? Is it an inclusive concept embracing all the groups of the Qing empire? Or is it an exclusive concept that only includes the Han people? In other words, 'where should the boundaries of the *minzu* be drawn?' (ibid., p.30).

Chinese intellectuals in the late Qing disagreed with each other and proposed different visions of Chinese nationhood. One group of intellectuals, mainly represented by Kang Youwei (1858 - 1927) and his one-time disciple Liang Qichao (1873 - 1929), saw the threat of imperialism as the main challenge for China and therefore asked for the unity of the Manchu and Han (and other ethnic groups) to save China from the crisis. This group are often regarded as 'reformists' as they advocated political reform to establish a constitutional monarchy in China and supported the Manchu ruler as Chinese monarch. Another group of intellectuals, mainly represented by Zhang Taiyan (Zhang Binlin, 1869 - 1936) and Zou Rong (1885 - 1905), argued that the incompetent nature of the Manchu was the main reason for the Chinese crisis and claimed it was impossible to

change the situation before the Manchu rule was removed (i.e. anti-Manchuism) (Chang, 1971; Leibold, 2007, p.29). They are often regarded as the 'revolutionaries' since they advocated a revolution to overthrow the Manchu Qing regime. While the reformists promoted the idea of 'greater nationalism' (*da minzu zhuyi*) which included all ethnic groups dwelling on the territory of the Qing empire into their vision of Chinese nationhood, the revolutionaries in contrast promoted the idea of 'narrow nationalism' (*xiao minzu zhuyi*) which defined only the Han as Chinese and therefore excluded all the non-Han groups (Dikötter, 1992, p.97). In the next two sections, I will discuss how the main representatives of the two groups worked to construct their view of the Chinese nation and how the non-Han groups were placed in their vision of Chinese nationhood.²²

5.2.3 The reformists

According to Duara (1995, p.74), although Kang was influenced by modern ideas and called for a modernising reform in China, his concept of the Chinese nation nevertheless retained the Confucian culturalist tradition. Debating with the anti-Manchu revolutionary Zhang Taiyan, Kang cited Confucius' words about the 'distinguishing the civilised and barbarians' (*huayi zhibian*) (as introduced in the previous chapter) and argued that 'although the Manchus were barbarians in the Ming, by now they had acquired Chinese culture and so had become Chinese' (ibid., p.74). He further asked 'whether it was necessary for China to get rid of Manchus in order to build a new nation or whether the nation could embrace all ethnic groups on a harmonious basis, including the Manchus, Hans, Miaos, and Moslems, as well as the Tibetans' (Onogawa, 1970, p. 245, 249; cited in Duara, 1995, p.74). It is quite clear from his words that Kang embraced a multi-ethnic

²² It should be noted that despite their different views of the Chinese nationhood, both groups are nationalist in nature as the main political concern of both groups was to save China from the potential 'death of the state and extinction of the race' (*wangguo miezhong*) (Leibold, 2007, p. 30).

vision of China and his idea of the Chinese national community should be 'composed of people with shared culture and not restricted to a race or ethnic group (imputed or otherwise)' (Duara, 1994, p.74).

Following Kang, Liang Qichao also supported the idea of a constitutional monarchy and advocated a multi-racial vision of China under the Manchu monarchy. However, Liang was more influenced by Western political thought than Kang and therefore developed his political thinking based on sophisticated Western theories (mainly via Japanese sources). After Liang arrived from Japan in 1898, his idea about the 'group' (*qun*) had increasingly transformed from an ambivalent concept of race to a clear and distinctive concept of national community (Chang, 1971, p.156). So, unlike his teacher, Liang became increasingly critical of the Confucian ideal of a 'universal community of peace' (*tianxia datong*) and saw this as an obstacle to the development of China as a nation-state (ibid.). Indeed, in his work 'New Citizen' (*xinmin shuo*) published in 1902, Liang already advocated a strong nationalist consciousness and took the 'nation-state' as the unit of the struggle for survival (Zarrow, 2012, pp.76-7). In other words, the nation-state became for Liang the 'terminal community' and the 'ultimate focus of loyalty' (ibid., p.157).

However, Liang increasingly realised that the idea of nationalism promoted by the revolutionaries did not fit well in the Chinese context, since it is based on the idea that a state is 'composed exclusively or even predominately of a single ethnic nation' (Zarrow, 2012, p.76). This idea of nationalism, which he calls 'narrow nationalism' was unhelpful in uniting the Han and other ethnic groups in China in their defiance of outside imperialist aggression, which for Liang was the most worrying issue. To tackle the problem, Liang began to develop what he called 'broad nationalism' - a "great Chinese" form of nationalism that was ethnically

pluralistic and based on a political conception of citizen participation under a constitutional monarchy' (ibid.).

Influenced by European thinkers such as Gustav Bornhak and Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, Liang was attracted by the idea of citizenry and statism and believed this was the solution for China (Chang, 1971, p.260). From their writings, Liang had increasingly made a critical distinction between the concept of 'nation' (*minzu*) and 'state' (*guojia*): while the former was associated with the idea of ethnicity, the latter was associated with the idea of citizenry (*guomin*) (ibid.). This distinction between nation and state was important to Liang in constructing his 'broad nationalism'. Liang learned from Bluntschli that although in modern times the nation-state was the predominant type of state, 'a state need not necessarily be made up of a single nation' (ibid.). In other words, while in some cases a nation can be dispersed over several states, in other cases nations might join together and form one state (ibid.). From here Liang concluded that nationalism (while important) 'was not the only way to achieve statehood'; instead, 'citizenry (*guomin*) was the essential condition for the formation of a state' (ibid., p.261). Based on this understanding, Liang constructed a vision of a modern Chinese state made up of citizens of different ethnic groups and criticised the indiscriminate use of 'nationalism' by revolutionaries as it 'might very like turn out to be a barrier to rather than a catalyst for the unification of a multiethnic China' (ibid.).

However, while on one hand reformists like Liang promoted an inclusive and multi-ethnic vision of Chinese nationhood, on the other, Liang also continued to use the civilised/barbarian distinction between the Han and non-Han ethnic groups and therefore explicitly advocated assimilation of other ethnic groups into the Han. Liang made his argument based on social Darwinism and the idea of 'racial competition'. According to Liang, racial competition would inevitably lead to the domination of just a few races as some which developed progressively

would be able to defeat their inferior counterparts, who would inevitably 'disappear either through extinction or absorption' (Zarrow, 2012, p.152). Liang argued that in the racial struggles between the white and yellow, the final victory depended on the racial improvement and the unity of yellow races (ibid., p.153). Racial improvement however, according to Liang, 'only arises from an amalgamation of many different races' (Leibold, 2007, p.32). Based on this idea, Liang warned that Chinese 'inferior races' (*liezhong*) such as the Manchu must be assimilated to the superior Han, otherwise they would eventually face extinction (Zarrow, 2012, p.153). As Liang claimed, 'it was the Manchu's only hope; the Han, as a numerous, intelligent, and productive people, would survive foreign occupation and even the dismemberment of China - but the Manchus, who were few, stupid, weak, and ignorant of work, would not' (ibid.).

In fact, Liang even promoted the idea of 'national imperialism' (*minzu diguozhuyi*) to assimilate the non-Han ethnic groups as he believed that China's survival 'requires us to adopt imperialist tactics to unite the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui, Miao and Tibetan peoples in constituting a single large *minzu* with the Han at its core' (Leibold, 2007, p.33). To verify his idea, Liang rejected the Western notion of racial purity in China and argued that 'each of these races shared a long history of intermarriage, and their mixed blood created a single Chinese *minzu*' (ibid., p.32). Liang's ultimate goal, according to Pamela Crossley (1999, p.353), was not a Chinese republic, but a 'Chinese national empire' - where 'the mighty Han people dominate and eventually assimilate the weaker, ahistorical races on the environmental margins of the Chinese geo-body.' To this end, as Leibold (2007, p.33) claims, although Liang had tried to promote a vision of civic and multi-ethnic China, 'there remained an essentialised racial core' in his vision.

5.2.4 The revolutionaries

Different from the reformists, the revolutionaries attributed the weakness of China to the Manchu and became more and more convinced that the Manchu were unable to lead China to win the racial competition with the imperialists. Many Han intellectuals (and radical students in Japan) then developed a solid commitment to destroying Manchu rule and many of them devoted themselves to the work of reconceptualising China as an exclusive Han race-state - which was regarded by Liang as 'narrow nationalism'. Among the revolutionaries, Zhang Taiyan played a significant role in constructing an anti-Manchu racial ideology. However, Zhang faced the problem of distinguishing the Manchu from the Han under the racial discourse, because the Manchu were also regarded as belonging to the yellow race (Chow, 1997, p.38). So, to confront the deep-rooted culturalist ideas used by the reformists to claim that the Manchu had become Chinese as they had accepted Chinese culture, Zhang also turned back to the classic Confucian writing *Zuo zhuan* (Old Text, discussed in the previous chapter) to seek an equally widespread belief in kinship bonds as determining group identity (ibid., pp.38-9). As a result, Zhang incorporated the modern racial discourse with Chinese indigenous beliefs such as lineage (which was prevalent during the Qing period and used by the Manchu rulers to maintain their identity) to reconceptualise a new identity - *Hanzu*, or the 'Han lineage-race' - to distinguish the Han from the Manchu (ibid., p.39). To further develop his ideas on *Hanzu*, Zhang created the term 'race-surname' (*zhongxing*) to distinguish the Manchu from the Han (ibid., p.41). According to Zhang, surnames had been used in China as a method of keeping an accurate record of decent purity, therefore they can also be used as evidence to claim that Han and Manchu were different races as the Manchu (and other ethnic groups) often used different surnames (ibid.).

From this point, Zhang used lineage terminology to construct a new Chinese identity which excluded the Manchu. Invoking the idea of ancestor worship (which was the core idea of the lineage), Zhang argued that 'the Han Chinese people

were descendants of the Yellow Emperor and should not be subject to oppression by other “tribes” (Chow, 1997, p.40). The Manchu, according to Zhang, was ‘belonging to a fundamentally and immutably different race than the vast majority of the Chinese people’ (Leibold, 2007, p. 31).²³ Therefore, Zhang claimed that accepting the Manchu rule was ‘similar to worshippers forgetting their “real descent-line” (*dazong*) in the ancestral hall and adopting someone with a different surname as heir (*yi yixing wei hou*)’ (Chow, 1997, p.40). Since the Manchu were as ‘stupid as deer and pigs’, Zhang called for the Han to overthrow the Manchu, as it was intolerable for the civilised and superior Han to subject themselves to the rule of a barbarian and different race (Chow, 1997, p.41; Zarrow, 2012, p.168). As he wrote: ‘Today five million Manchus rule over 400 million-plus Han only through rotten traditions, making them stupid and keeping them ignorant. [...] As soon as the Han wake up, the Manchus will be unable to rest peacefully within the Great Wall’ (Zarrow, 2012, p.168).

Zhang’s construction of the *Hanzu* identity (and the idea of establishing a Han racial-state) was powerful and particularly attractive to the revolutionaries who were increasingly determined to carry out a ‘racial revolution’ (*minzu geming*) to overthrow Manchu rule (Leibold, 2007, p.31). Zou Rong, an eighteen-year-old passionate revolutionary, was inspired by Zhang’s idea and wrote a simple but massively popular book - the ‘Revolutionary Army’ (*gemingjun*) - which helped to simplify and popularise Zhang’s idea among the increasingly nationalistic Chinese youth (Leibold, 2007, p.31).²⁴ Following Zhang’s idea, Zou also

²³ Zhang claimed that the ‘Manchu race’ (*manzhou zhong*) is an uncivilised race descended from the Donghu (Eastern Barbarians) of the Jin dynasty (265 - 420 CE) (Leibold, 2007, p.31). He further argued that the Manchu was attempting to usurp the ‘heirship’ (*zongzhi*) of the *Hanzu* by ‘systematically destroying its racial consciousness through the institutionalization of alien customs and practices like the queue hairstyle’ (ibid.).

²⁴ It was estimated that about a million copies of ‘Revolutionary Army’ were published in the early 1900s (Zarrow, 2012, p.155).

incorporated the idea of race and lineage to distinguish the Manchu from the Han and wrote emotively:

‘What you, fellow countrymen, today call court, government or emperor are what we once called Barbarians (of North, South, East or West), Hsiung-nu [Hun] or Tartars. These tribes, living beyond the Shanhaiguan [in north-eastern China], were not by origin of the same race as the illustrious descendants of our Yellow Emperor. Their land is foul land, they are of a furry race, their hearts are beast’s hearts, their customs are the customs of the users of wool, their writing is different from ours, and their clothes are different from ours.’ (Dikötter, 1992, p.118).

From this it is clear that Zou classified the Manchus (with other northern barbarians) as racially distinct from the Han. But what makes the Han Chinese distinct from the Manchu? Similar to Zhang, Zou also promoted the idea that the Han people were literally descended from the Yellow Emperor whereas others were not, which made them foreigners (Zarrow, 2012, p.157).

Indeed, the Yellow Emperor, a mythical figure who appeared in the ancient historian Sima Qian’s (145 - 90 BC) influential history book, ‘Records of the Historian’ (*shiji*), was now considered as core to the revolutionaries’ discursive construction of a Han racial state. In fact, since the idea of lineage and descent line played a key role in the revolutionaries’ definition of Chinese identity, they had naturally come to the Yellow Emperor and reconceptualised him as the common ancestor of the Han race-lineage. Just as a lineage is linked by an original ancestor, the whole Han race-lineage was also linked by an original common ancestor - the Yellow Emperor (Dikötter, 1992, p.117). In this way, the Han people were represented as his ‘sons and grandsons’ (*huangdi zisun*), a

terminology which has still be adopted by Chinese official discourse (such as textbooks) to refer the Chinese in PRC today (Chow, 1997, p.47).

The idea of the Yellow Emperor as the 'first ancestor' of the Han quickly became popular among the revolutionaries and become one of the core ideas of their political rhetoric (Chow, 1997, p.48). For instance, Liu Shiwei (1884 - 1919), one of the leading thinkers among the revolutionaries, advocated in 1903 the introduction of a calendar dating from the Yellow Emperor (Zarrow, 2012, p.172). Liu argued that this calendar would bring China in line with the Western and Islamic nations, which dated from Christ and Mohammed respectively (ibid.).²⁵ It is clear that Liu regarded the Yellow Emperor as the key symbol in constructing a continued descent line of the Han race and therefore making a distinctive Han identity. Liu also claimed that even though there were different dynasties in Chinese history, all the Han rulers were descended from the Yellow Emperor (ibid.). As a result, with the articulation of the revolutionaries, the Yellow Emperor, who had previously only been regarded as one of the several sage-kings in history, had become 'the founder of the nation politically, culturally, and biologically' (ibid., p.173). In other words, he became the most important national symbol in the revolutionaries' discursive construction of the Han/Chinese race-state. According to Zarrow (ibid.), this rhetoric had since become 'a nationalist cliché' that has continued to reverberate to the present day (as will be shown in my analysis of textbooks).

It is noted that the reformists such as Kang Youwei also used the Yellow Emperor to construct a more inclusive and multi-ethnic Chinese nationhood, arguing that the 400 million Chinese (including various non-Han groups) were the sons and

²⁵ This is different from the reformist Kang Youwei who promoted the introduction of calendar dating from Confucius, i.e. seeing the cultural symbol of Confucian religion as the most important defining factor to Chinese identity (Dikötter, 1992, p.116; Zarrow, 2012, p.172).

grandsons of the Yellow Emperor (Chow, 1997, p.47). However, while both groups had helped to transform this mystical figure into a key national symbol with the modern discourse of nationalism, it seems the revolutionaries' message (i.e. that the Yellow Emperor was the common ancestor of the Han) was nevertheless more powerful, as the revolutionaries finally overturned the Qing dynasty in 1911 and won the chance to fulfil their vision of Chinese nationhood.

5.3 Discourses on the Chinese nationhood and policy changes on non-Han groups in the Republic of China (1911 - 1949)

5.3.1 The 1911 Revolution and the new vision of the 'Republic of Five Races'

The anti-Manchu revolution finally broke out in the city of Wuchang (in southern China) in October 1911 and at the beginning of the next year (1st January 1912), the Republic of China was established, with Sun Yat-sen as its provisional president. The revolution was led by Han nationalists in the name of Han national self-determination (Esherick, 2006, p.243). Therefore, the revolution government in Wuchang naturally claimed the establishment of a Han republic based on the eighteen provinces of China proper (i.e. roughly the territory of the Ming dynasty). This idea of a Han republic was represented by the revolutionary flag which had eighteen stars on it (ibid., p.238). Moreover, a ceremony was held in honour of the Yellow Emperor – 'the common ancestor of the Han' (ibid.). At the ceremony, a military anthem was played with the highlight of the Yellow Emperor. Below are the verses of the anthem:

'Raise the Han,

Raise the Han,

Raise our great Han.

Destroy the Manchu,

Destroy the Manchu,

Destroy the thieving Manchu.

The spirit of the Yellow Emperor,

Helps us to kill the thieves.'

(Esherick, 2006, p.238).

It is clear from the anthem that the revolution was defined as a racial revolution against the Manchu. Indeed, following the uprising in Wuchang, 'tens of thousands of Manchu bannermen and officials became the target of angry revolutionaries seeking racial revenge' (Leibold, 2007, p.37). As a result, wholesale slaughter of Manchu in their garrisons took place in Wuchang and several other cities (most notably Xi'an) (Esherick, 2006, p.238). To escape from these violent attacks, many Manchus had to hide their ethnic identity by abandoning their surnames and adopting Han ones, a practice that continues in the PRC era.

However, the Han nationalist rhetoric inevitably extended to the exclusion of other non-Manchu ethnic groups and as a result these groups reacted with their own racial nationalism. As Duara (1995, p.76) notes, 'the construction of the Han Chinese self as the national subject necessarily threatened other non-Han groups' - which the reformists such as Kang Youwei had warned it would. Indeed, frontier groups such as the Mongols and Tibetans did not actually equate the Qing empire with China (*Zhongguo*) and they saw themselves as similar to the Han who were forced to incorporate with the Qing empire (ibid.). The fall of the Qing then

provided them with an opportunity for independence as well, just like their Han counterpart (ibid.). Therefore, after the news of revolution reached Ulan Batur, with support from Russia, the elites of Outer Mongolia (the Khalkha Mongol) also declared independence from China, even two days earlier than the foundation of Republic of China (Bulag, 2006, p.264; Leibold, 2007, p.39).

It was in these circumstances that the revolutionaries turned to invoke those reformists' vision of nationhood and called for the creation of a republic including the five major racial/ethnic groups of the Qing - Han, Manchu, Mongol, Tibet and Muslim (and as a result, the boundaries of the new republic were also to follow the outline of the Qing empire) (Duara, 1995, p.76). In other words, the revolutionaries now sought to 'supplement their racialist narrative with the culturalist narrative of the nation espoused by their enemies - the reformers and the Qing court itself' (ibid.). As a result, within a couple of months of the revolution, not only there was a call to end the violence against Manchu, but a new vision of a 'republic of five races' (*wuzu gonghe*) had also increasingly gained support among the revolutionaries (Esherick, 2006, p.244; Leibold, 2007, p.37).²⁶

As a result, when Sun Yat-sen had his inaugural speech as the provisional president of the Republic of China in Nanjing on the New Year's Day 1912, he stressed the importance of racial and territorial unity and made it clear that the new regime would be a republic of five ethnic groups based on the Qing territory (Esherick, 2006, p.245; Leibold, 2007, p.38). So now the new phrase associated to the Chinese nationhood was not 'expelling the barbarians and restoring China' (as Sun advocated at the beginning of his revolutionary activities), but 'the five races as one family' or 'the republic of five races' (Esherick, 2006, p.245).

²⁶ For example, the leading revolutionary newspaper *Minlibao* (Minli newspaper), in a front-page editorial in early November 1911, stated that 'Once we have wreaked our great revenge and the republic is established, then we must combine the Muslims, Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchus into one state (*guo*) with equal rights' (Esherick, 2006b, p.245).

Following this new vision, various nation construction works were carried out. For example, this new ideology of 'five-races republic' was symbolised with the new five-bar national flag of the republic (*wuse qi*), including 'red, yellow, blue, white, and black stripes to present the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui, and Tibetan peoples respectively' (Esherick, 2006, p.245; Leibold, 2007, p.38).

5.3.2 Strategies of early Republic leaders towards frontier groups: Yuan Shikai's 'going imperial' and Sun Yat-sen's new *minzuzhuyi* /nationalism

However, while new rhetoric such as 'the republic of five races/nationalities' and 'regard all (nationalities) with equal benevolence' (*yishi tongren*) became increasingly popular in the revolutionary camp, beneath this rhetoric were still racial narratives centred around the Han (Esherick, 2006, p.245; Mackerras, 1994, p.55). Indeed, the superiority of the Han was still an 'unshakeable conviction' among revolutionaries, and many of them still believed that 'an inferior minority people (*minzu*) certainly cannot rule over a superior majority people' (Esherick, 2006, p.245). When the revolutionary Alliance Society (*Tongmenghui*) was reorganised as the Nationalist Party (KMT) in the middle of 1912, its new manifesto still called for 'the strict implementation of racial assimilation (*zhongzu tonghua*)' (Mackerras, 1994, p.55). There was no doubt among the revolutionaries that the Han will be the dominant in the new Republic.

On the other hand, as Leibold (2007, p. 39) points out, 'The sudden shift in revolutionary rhetoric did not fool the frontier peoples as they sought to free themselves from Chinese hegemony.' Indeed, Outer Mongolia continued to seek support from Russia to guarantee their 'self-rule' and they also signed the Russian-Mongol agreement in 1912 to keep their independent status (Esherick, 2006, p.249). The situation in Tibet was also threatening. In the early months of 1912, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama gave order to drive away all the Chinese and

Manchu officials and troops, which 'signalled his desire to remain independent of the new Chinese republic' (Leibold, 2007, p.39). The Dalai Lama also declared that 'the patron-priest relationship that had tied his predecessors to the Manchu emperors was at an end and Tibet would henceforth be independent' (Esherick, 2006, p.242; Leibold, 2007, p.39). It seems clear that the idea of a 'republic of five races' was only a one-sided wish from the Han nationalist republicans, and their wish to transform the Qing geo-body into the new Chinese state would not be an easy task.

So how did the political leaders of the early Republic respond to these real threats to their claimed vision of 'republic of five races'? In other words, how did they try to resolve the tension between their Han nationalist claims (which was fundamental to the revolution) and their claims of the continuity of the Qing geo-body to the Republic? Bulag (2006, p.261) notes that to 'keep the splintering frontiers within a new unified nationalist China', the Republicans such as Yuan Shikai (1859 – 1916, the First President of Republic of China) adopted various techniques of rule used by the previous Qing empire. This was regarded by Bulag (2006, p.261) as 'going imperial' which 'refers to a tapping into the heritage of the former empire's techniques of rule in the service of nationalism.'²⁷ For instance, both Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhism and the awarding of noble titles, which were used strategically by the Qing emperors to maintain their control over the two regions and the people there, were repeatedly used by Yuan Shikai in the 1910s to 'lure the "rebellious" Mongolian and Tibetan peoples back into the national fold' (Bulag, 2006, p.264; Leibold, 2007, p.39). In fact, to win the support of the Mongol nobles, Yuan's republic government even promised to award the Mongol nobles

²⁷ Bulag (2006, p.261) clarifies that using the word 'imperial' or 'imperialism' does not mean that 'the Chinese republic became imperialist with a specific set of ideologies and programs for infinite territorial expansion.'

with higher titles and higher salaries than they had received under the Qing (Bulag, 2006, p.265).

To this end, although Yuan was acting in his role as the president of the newly founded republic, he continued his imperial inheritance to particularly deal with the previous frontier subjects of the Qing empire. Indeed, to Yuan, some of the imperial techniques of rule were necessary in guaranteeing the loyalty of the diverse populations (Bulag, 2006, p.261). In this way, as Wakeman (1975, p.252) also notes, 'searching for an unimpeachable source of unity and authority, he [Yuan] fell back on the old imperial model.' In fact, in 1915, Yuan arranged for a popular campaign to proclaim him emperor of a new dynasty and in the first few months of 1916, Yuan ruled like an emperor with received imperial rituals (Bulag, 2006, p.266; Wakeman, 1975, p.252). Arguing that Yuan's enthronement was an effort to search for 'immediately useful techniques of rule', Peter Zarrow (2001, p.179) rightly points out, 'the new regime under Yuan Shikai faced the twin tasks of retaining control over the territories of the Qing (partly in the name of a hegemonic Chinese nationalism that had blamed the Manchus for betraying China to the imperialist powers) and asserting its authority over the centrifugal tendencies of Chinese society itself.' He further argues that as the republic state claimed ruling power over diverse frontier groups of the imperial subjects, it is no wonder that Yuan turned to 'imperial rituals' (ibid.). In this way, to some degree, the empire was restored and the imperial system was also revived in the name of the Republic (Bulag, 2006, p.261).

Bulag (2006, p.264) argues that the use of imperial heritages such as awarding religion and noble title lead to 'the imbrications of the nation and empire'. In other words, 'going imperial' was used to resolve the tension between the 'tight skin' of a modern nation-state and the 'giant body' of an empire. As he further notes, 'The repeated turns to the imperial heritage for the nationalist project thus point to the

profound inadequacy of nationalism as an appeal to different ethnic groups with conflicting aspirations some even aspiring to their own nation-states' (ibid., p.261, 264).

However, while on the one hand this 'going imperial' might be effective in retaining the land and peoples of the former Qing Empire, on the other hand, as Bulag (2006, p.261) rightly points out, it also violated 'the very sensibility of nationalist ideology'. Indeed, nationalist republicans in southern China fiercely condemned Yuan's plan of returning to the imperial system and they called for the 'Campaign to Protect the Republic' (*huguo yundong*) (1915 - 1916) to overthrow Yuan. Meanwhile, these imbrications of 'nation' and 'empire' also created problems to the now nationalist frontier groups - as manifested in the humiliating handover ceremony of the Outer Mongolia authority to the Republic of China.²⁸ The Chinese general Xu Shuzheng who regained control over Outer Mongolia not only impelled a reform to 'sinificate' or 'nationalise' Outer Mongolia, but also abolished its autonomy (ibid., p.267). This certainly aggravated the discontentment of the ruling group of Outer Mongolia, and finally led them to rebel again and established a communist People's Government in 1921, which later transferred to the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) after the death of the Khutughtu (ibid.).

The independence of Outer Mongolia became the test event of how the Han Chinese conceived the nationhood of the republic. In fact, not only there was a nation-wide call for a war on the Mongols immediately to regain China's 'lost sovereignty' over this distant frontier (even at the risk of provoking war with Russia), but Sun Yat-sen and future leaders of the KMT and CCP (such as Chiang

²⁸ According to Bulag (2006, p.267), the ritual of the handing-over included 'the kowtowing of all officials to Hsu [Xu Shuzheng, the Han Chinese general sent by the Republic government in Beijing] and the personal reverence of the Khutuktu [Khutughtu, the highest-ranking lama and the emperor of the short-lived Outer Mongolia Empire] to the Chinese flag.'

Kai-shek and Li Dazhao), all responded harshly to the Mongolia independence and called for a 'blood and iron policy' to suppress the rebellions and reunite the country (Leibold, 2007, pp.40-1). Moreover, the 'Mongol crisis' had induced many Chinese of the time to begin to 'imagine themselves as members of a single community - a "deep, horizontal comradeship" worth both fighting and dying for' (ibid., p.40). Indeed, under the rhetoric of nationalism which had been widely disseminated by the growing commercial press, telegraph, and railway systems, many Chinese had developed a new geographic concept in which the previous frontiers of the empire (or exterior, *waifang*) was transferred as national territory. In a similar way, the once geographically distant 'barbarians' were now reconceptualised as underdeveloped 'national minorities' (ibid., p.42).

In this way, under this new 'spatial and temporal definition' of the single community (*minzu*), 'the frontier and its minority nationals were seen as vital to the health and future progress of the entire *minzu*' (ibid.). As Leibold (2007, p. 42) points out, 'Frontier affairs shifted from the private domain of government officials to the realm of public opinion', as 'sovereignty was now rooted in an awakening citizenry (*guomin* or *gongmin*) and in the active participation in the life of the *minzu*.' Since then, territorial integrity of the nation and the *minzu*'s well-being had become 'an important concern for each and every citizen' (ibid.).

It was against this background that Sun Yat-sen, after several years in exile in Japan, redeveloped the concept of *minzuzhuyi* (nationalism) in his 'Three Principles of People' or 'Three greatest -isms' (*sanmin zhuyi*) to construct a new national imaginary (Leibold, 2007, p.43).²⁹ After 1920, Sun gave a series speeches (including those which he gave at the KMT's National Conference) to

²⁹ The 'nationalism' in the old 'Three Principles of People' mainly refers to the nationalism of the Han i.e. driving out the Manchu barbarians and restoring China, a copy of the slogan used by the Ming founder to rebel the Mongol rule several hundred years ago.

reintroduce his *sanmin zhuyi*, and redefined his 'nationalism' (*minzu zhuyi*) as forming a national consciousness which 'would fold all the peoples and territories of the former Qing empire into a unitary *Zhonghua minzu* (Chinese nation)' (ibid.). As a result of this new political philosophy, Sun claimed that although the ethnic groups in China's frontier regions had a perfect right to exist within the Republic of China, 'they must be prepared to "constitute a single powerful nation" together with the dominant Han' (Mackerras, 1994, p.56). To Sun, assimilation was necessary to achieve the unity of the Chinese nation-state. As he said in a speech in Guangzhou on 6 March 1921:

'The name "Republic of Five Nationalities" exists only because there exists a certain racial distinction which distorts the meaning of a single Republic. We must facilitate the dying out of all names of individual peoples inhabiting China, i.e. Manchus, Tibetans, etc. In this respect we must follow the example of the United States of America, i.e. satisfy the demands and requirements of all races and unite them in a single cultural and political whole.' (Mackerras, 1994, p.56).

It is clear from Sun's statement that he had now felt uncomfortable with the earlier idea of 'republic of five races' but instead envisioned a composite 'melting pot' of the republic with the superior Han race at its core (Leibold, 2007, p.43). Moreover, Sun claimed that 'it is the majority Han who will be dictating the nature and shape of the single cultural and political whole into which all should unite' (Mackerras, 1994, p.56). Indeed, the Han were regarded by Sun the core of the republic since they 'had an important role to play in fashioning a more positive or constructive nationalism, sacrificing itself to merge with the other races "in a single furnace to create the new order of the *Zhonghua minzu*"' and thereby enabling China to 'quickly surpass America and Europe and become first in the world' (Leibold, 2007, p.43). 'When we speak of China', Sun concluded, 'no

matter what *minzu* may be added to our country in the future, they must be assimilated into our *Hanzu* (the Han racial/ethnic group) (ibid.).’

However, it should also be noted that after the 1920s Sun and KMT’s policy about frontier groups was increasingly influenced by the Bolshevik-controlled Third Communist International (Comintern) (ibid., p.54). Seeking military and political assistance, Sun accepted the Russian advisor Mikhail Borodin who had played an important role in overseeing the policy-making of the KMT (ibid.).³⁰ It was against this background that when the Manifesto of the Chinese Nationalist Party’s First National Conference (the so-called Reorganisation Congress) was drafted, the principle of self-determination was formally addressed in the Manifesto (though only under the condition that it was *after* the success of the Chinese revolution as a whole [not ‘*before*’, as required by some conservative KMT members]) (ibid., pp. 55-6). In another document drafted by Sun (*Jianguo Dagang*, or ‘the Outline for National Reconstruction’) about the same time, he also confirmed the responsibility of the national government to help China’s ‘domestic, small, and weak *minzus*’ toward ‘self-determination and self-rule’ (*zijue zizhi*) (Leibold, 2007, p.56; Mackerras, 1994, p.57).

But it is noted by scholars that the language of the Manifesto was in fact ‘vague’ and even contradictory (Leibold, 2007, p.56; Mackerras, 1994, p.57). Indeed, the Manifesto on the one hand guaranteed the right of self-determination to minority nationalities, but on the other hand stressed the idea of a ‘free and united Chinese nation’. The vague and contradictory language used in the Manifesto reflects the reluctance of Sun and other Chinese elites to allow minority nationals to carry out

³⁰ As a result, the KMT was required to cooperate with the newly founded CCP (the United Front) and CCP members were even allowed to join the KMT which led to about two hundred of them attending the Chinese Nationalist Party’s First National Conference on January 20, 1924. For a while (until 1927), the two largest revolutionary parties became a political alliance to create a ‘revolutionary united front against their common enemy - domestic warlordism and international imperialism’ (Leibold, 2007, p.53).

their own ethnic nationalism. In other words, the idea of nationalism or self-determination could only apply to the Han (Leibold, 2007, p.57). The argument for this unequal treatment was the inability of the minority nationalities to resist the imperial powers - which was repeatedly addressed by the Han nationalist leaders throughout the time (ibid. p.57).³¹ To this end, the nationalist leaders such as Sun Yat-sen remained committed to the idea of national unity (despite the fact that government he headed in 1924 actually controlled only a small part of China).

5.3.3 Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT's nationalist policy towards minority nationalities

After the death of Sun in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek increasingly took the power of the Nationalist government (KMT) in Nanjing. After a series of 'Northern Expedition' (*beifa*) from southern China and negotiation with different warlords, Chiang finally reunified the country in theory.³² Although Chiang claimed him as the inheritor of Sun's revolutionary ideas, he nevertheless had different perceptions about the nation, as exemplified by the violent collapse of the KMT-CCP united front and the decision to jettison the five-colour flag (representing the five races of the republic) as the national emblem (Leibold, 2007, p.58; Mackerras, 1994, p.59). Indeed, in the KMT's Third National Congress in 1929, the party not only called for 'the uniting of our 400 million people into a single, large *guozu* (race-state or state-nationality)', but also formally removed the content about national self-determination from the list of Sun's core political texts (Leibold, 2007,

³¹ For example, in a speech in 1921, Sun Yat-sen claimed that Chinese minority groups 'no longer possess the ability to defend themselves' and must 'depend on the help of the *Hanzu*' (Leibold, 2007, p. 57). According to Sun, 'the task of fostering a glorious and large *minzuzhuyi* (nationalism) and assimilating the Tibetans, Mongols, Hui, and Manchus into our *Hanzu* in constructing of the biggest possible race-state rests solely with the self-determination of the Han people' (ibid.).

³² Chiang had successfully convinced most regional powers in China proper and Manchuria to join Chiang's regime in the name of national unity.

p.58). According to Mackerras (1994, p.59), the Third Congress document uses expressions such as *Zhonghua guozu* (the Chinese state-nationality) and *guozu zhuyi* (state-nationality-ism) to address the ideas of unity of the Chinese state and the fusion of the sub-groups into the one grand nation rather than any singular 'nationality'. Moreover, despite the petition from Mongol groups for the establishment of an autonomous government in Inner Mongolia, the Chiang government not only dismissed these ideas as 'propaganda whipped up ... by the Third Communie' (i.e. the Communists) (Mackerras,1994, p.59), but also established three provinces in the Mongolia territory (Suiyuan, Chahar, and Jehol),³³ which was anything but autonomous since this 'immediately threaten[ed] the banner and league system inherited from the Qing empire and the accompanying aristocratic privileges' (Bulag, 2006, p.272; Leibold, 2007, p.58). In this sense, Chiang was hostile to the idea of self-determination as he thought this was the scheme of imperialist powers to split up China.

But in reality, most frontier regions during this period were mainly controlled either by semi-independent warlords or imperialist agents who saw the frontier region as their personal colony (Leibold, 2007, p.53; Mackerras, 1994, p.49). Therefore, the KMT Nationalist government rarely had the real power to control the issues in frontier regions but had to adopt 'a more pragmatic and inherently conservative approach to the frontier questions' (Leibold, 2007, p.52). The result was that Chiang's government at the beginning was willing to allow (even though reluctantly) a high degree of political and cultural autonomy (i.e. self-rule) to

³³ Chiang also had the intention to create another province called Xikang between Sichuan and Tibet. But it should be noted that although the decisions (such as setting up provinces in Inner Mongolia) were made by Chiang's Central government in Nanjing, in reality regional warlords near frontier regions (such as Yan Xishan in Shanxi province in the south of Inner Mongolia) had enjoyed great influence on government policies on frontier issues.

minority nationalities such as the Mongols and Tibetans, in exchange for their acknowledgement of Chinese sovereignty (ibid.).³⁴

However, Japan's invasion of China's north-eastern region (the Manchuria) on 18 September 1931 and attack on Beijing on 7 July 1937 had largely stimulated a growing tide of nationalism across China in the late 1930s and early 1940s (Leibold, 2007, p.115). Many Chinese felt the threat of 'the death of the state and the extinction of the race' again, so many now echoed Sun Yat-sen's call in 1924 for a revival of China's lost *minzuzhuyi* (nationalism) (ibid., p.116). Therefore, not only was there a 'national salvation movement' (*jiuguo yundong*) around China, but some Chinese elites also viewed that Japanese invasion as an historic opportunity for China to cultivate a new 'national spirit' (*minzu jingshen*) (ibid.). So, to defeat the Japanese, the unity of the nation was required to form a solid state-nationality. As a result, there was a strong call for 'fostering a single identity from among China's numerous parochial, class, and ethnic identities to ensure the Chinese *minzu*'s continued existence in the Darwinian struggle for the survival of the fittest among nation-states' (ibid.). As Manchuria had been occupied by the Japanese invaders who at the same time were encouraging Chinese minority nationalities such as the Mongols and Muslims to 'liberate' themselves from the Han Chinese (ibid.), the Chinese state elites highlighted 'the urgent need to incorporate the former Qing frontier regions and their peoples into the new Chinese nation-state' (ibid., p.144). After this, the state elites 'began to think of both themselves and other former subjects of the Qing empire as an organic

³⁴ For example, Chiang's government did manage to pass a Law in 1931 to call for 'preservation of the Mongolia banner system in all those regions occupied by Mongolian people and not currently under Chinese county administrations' (Leibold, 2007, p.59). Trying to establish a pro-Nanjing regime in Inner Mongolia, Chiang gave his first public speech on the KMT's frontier policy in 1934 and clearly promoted the idea of self-rule at frontier regions such as Inner Mongolia (ibid., p.66). In fact, in his speech, Chiang even claimed that the Soviet Union's voluntary federation (*lianbang ziyou*) was a model to China to establish a federation of five races (*wuzu lianbang*) (ibid., p. 67).

whole, ordering the rich ethnic diversity of the new Republic into a single national community labelled the *Zhonghua minzu*' (ibid.).

It was against this background that Chiang published the famous book 'China's Destiny' (*Zhongguo zhi mingyun*) in 1943 (ghost-written by Tao Xisheng, a KMT historian), which became the KMT's new political manifesto. The overall idea of the opening chapter of the book, which is called the 'The Growth and Development of the *Zhonghua minzu*,' was to argue that all 'Chinese citizens', including the Manchu, Mongol, Tibetan, Hui and other frontier minorities, were interrelated 'lineage branches' (*zongzhi*) of a 'single, consanguineous *Zhonghua minzu*' (Leibold, 2007, p.52). To support this argument, the book claimed that the various Chinese 'lineage' (*zongzu*) 'were either descendants of a common ancestor or interrelated through marriage' (ibid., p.143). In other words, 'the main and branch lineages (*da xiao zongzhi*) all belong to the same bloodline (albeit a mix one)' (ibid.). In the revised edition, which was published in the following year, the book added a paragraph to emphasise that 'the differentiation among China's five peoples is due to regional and religious factors, and not to race or blood' (Mackerras, 1994, p.58). In short, 'all of China's five nationalities belong to the same racial stock and share a common ancestry' (ibid.).

To this end, Chiang and the KMT party now discursively imagined the Chinese nation-state as 'ancient, unified, and homogeneous' (Leibold, 2007, p.52). As a result of this new imagination of the Chinese nationhood, the KMT not only 'strongly oppose[ed] any form of political or cultural autonomy for the frontier minorities', but also 'attempt[ed] by force to assimilate all ethnic diversity in to a single Chinese race/nation' (ibid., pp.51-2).³⁵ As Bulag (2006, p.272) notes, 'the

³⁵ Mackerras (1994, p.60) provides an example about the assimilationist policies in Guizhou in the mid-1940s. According to him, the Provincial Governor Yang Sen claimed to eradicate all differences among the nationalities forcefully. Yang also declared that 'no nationality (*minzu*) may have different clothes, scripts, or spoken languages'

Chinese Nationalist party-state was now poised to destroy any ethnic traces and, explicitly following the American melting-pot model, to assimilate the four non-Chinese nationalists into a reimagined and reconstituted primordial Chinese Nation (*Zhonghua minzu*) based on the Han Chinese.’ As a result, the KMT’s policies towards frontier minority nationalities were often criticised as ‘assimilationist’ or the ‘policy of *Hanhua*’ (Hanification or Sinicisation) by its rival the CCP during the time and later after the foundation of the PRC.

5.3.4 From communism to nationalism: domesticating the frontier issue in the discourse of CCP minority policy

While Chiang’s policy was criticised by its rival CCP as ‘fascist’ or ‘chauvinistic’ (Leibold, 2007, p.51), the CCP was also trying to develop its own strategies and policies towards minority nationalities which reflected their distinctive visions of the Chinese nationhood. Bulag (2012, p.93), in his analysis of CCP’s policies toward frontier groups before 1949, introduced an ontological division of the Han into two as ‘good Han’ and ‘bad Han’. According to him, the CCP’s strategies towards minority nationalities before 1949 was to play the role of ‘good Han’ in comparison to ‘bad Han’ which the CCP often attributed to the KMT and various warlords at frontier regions. In this way, by introducing a new morality (good vs bad), the CCP developed a new framework to reconceptualise its relationship with minority nationalities: now there were not only Han and non-Han, but ‘good Han’, ‘bad Han’ and non-Han. Bulag (2012, pp.94-5) also argues that this new framework helped the CCP to transcend the ethnic boundaries and portray themselves as ‘friends’ and create an alliance with these non-Han groups. In

and predicted that ‘within a few years it will be impossible any longer to hear disparate languages in Guizhou, to see any strange costumes, or to find any differences among the ethnic groups’ (ibid.).

other words, the Han were divided into two groups who were in competition for integrating the ethnic groups into their vision of the Chinese nationhood.

Bulag's point became an important perspective to understand the CCP's strategies and policies towards the frontier groups before the foundation of PRC. Indeed, the CCP had to distinguish itself from the KMT and construct a different vision of nationhood to win over the minority nationalities whose support was vital to the party's survival. So, while Chiang's policies were often criticised by the CCP as a betrayal of Sun Yat-sen's policy of minority self-determination and self-rule which Sun developed from his Comintern advisors, the CCP has often claimed that it is the CCP that continued and implemented Sun's ideas on minority nationalities (Leibold, 2007, pp.51-2).

Indeed, the influence of the Comintern to the early development of CCP's frontier policies was significant. Following the Comintern, the CCP began to use the idea of 'class' (*jieji*) to distinguish nationalities in China into 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' (Bulag, 2012, p.96). Therefore, the non-Han groups were often seen by the CCP as 'being oppressed and exploited' by the Han (or the 'Bad Han') and therefore were in need of help or 'liberation'. As a result of this class analysis, the CCP now did not see Han nationalism as 'an unmitigated good' (ibid.). Evaluating Han nationalism (like any nationalism) in light of new universal values (i.e. socialism), the CCP now regarded Han nationalism as containing 'multiple and contradictory potential: nationalism is just if it opposes imperialist oppression, but it becomes imperialistic if it serves to oppress a weaker nation' (ibid.). Moreover, to the CCP, 'nationalism or ethnicity is no longer structured in the binary opposition "self" and "other" but is multilateral: one's nationalism is set in relation to both oppressor imperialism/colonialism and oppressed nations' (ibid.). In this way, the CCP represented themselves as 'Good Han' who were not only sympathetic to the

oppressed smaller nations and ethnic groups, but also were in opposition to Han nationalist extremists or 'Bad Han' (i.e. the KMT).

Therefore, early CCP policies toward minority nationalities often highlighted the idea of 'the equality among nationalities' and the responsibility of the CCP to oppose the national oppression and to promote 'friendship between the laboring people of their own nation (*minzu*) and the laboring people of the colonized and oppressed nations' (Bulag, 2012, p.96) The most explicit example of the CCP's adoption of the socialist idea on frontier issues was its support to the independence of Outer Mongolia. Influenced by their first Comintern advisor Hendricus Sneevliet (alias Maring), the CCP not only 'incorporated the Bolshevik policy of national self-determination into their political manifesto', but also 'launched an aggressive propaganda campaign aimed at legitimating the national aspirations of the Mongolian people' (Leibold, 2007, p.83). For instance, in one CCP document issued in 1923, the CCP justified its defense of Out Mongolia's independence and claimed that 'on the basis of China's political reality, further following the spirit of respecting national self-determination, we should not force those people who are different from us economically, in national history, and linguistically, to suffer with us from the pain of imperialist and warlord rule' (Bulag, 2012, p.98). To this end, the CCP's position was distinctive from the 'field of vision' set by the KMT and the larger Han nationalist atmosphere that was hostile to Mongolian and Tibetan independence (ibid.).

However, after the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925, CCP's policy in supporting independence of Outer Mongolia was fiercely criticised and attacked by the KMT especially by some more conservative groups within the KMT (such as the Western Hills fraction [*xishanpai*] and the Young China Party [YCP]) (Bulag, 2012, p.98; Leibold, 2007, p.85). Under the attack of the KMT and pressure from its own

party members, the CCP became increasingly vague or even contradictory on the issue of self-determination of minority nationalities.³⁶

Meanwhile, apart from the contradictory nature of the statement, Leibold (2007, p.87) notes that the Manifesto of the CCP's Sixth National Congress also marked an important shift in how the issue of the national question in China was framed: the Bolshevik discourse on the national question was now 'a question concerning the minority nationals within Chinese territory'. According to Leibold (ibid.), this was the first appearance of *shaoshu minzu* (minority ethnic groups/nationalities) in CCP party documents. By reconceptualising the problem (of frontier people) as the 'Chinese national minority question' (*Zhongguo shaoshu minzu wenti*), the CCP attempted to redefine the issue as 'a purely domestic matter pertaining to the ethnic and territorial integration of the former Qing geo-body' (ibid., pp.87-8).

According to Leibold (2007, p.88), the 'vague and contradictory' CCP discourses on the issue of ethnicity continued throughout the 1930s, under the background of the decreasing influence of the Comintern on the internal affairs of the CCP. As the nationalist sentiment had been increasing in the party, it seems that the top-leaders of the party reached a consensus by the time of the Long March (*changzheng*) in 1935: 'the right of temporary secession would apply only to Outer Mongolia - which had already occurred in 1924 with the assistance of the Soviet Red Army - while all other newly defined minority nationals would to be permitted mere political and cultural autonomy within a unitary Chinese state' (ibid.). In other words, the party had increasingly split with Bolshevik ideology and emphasised 'the joint struggle of all Chinese nationalities to carry out collective liberation from

³⁶ For instance, in defense of the CCP's position on the Mongol issue, in 1924 the then party leader Chen Duxiu's language to support the Mongol shifted subtly from 'Mongolian independence' (*Menggu duli*) to more ambiguous expression 'independent self-rule' and 'independent resistance (*duli fankang*)' (Leibold, 2007, p.86). The Manifesto of the CCP's Sixth National Congress which was held in Moscow (due to Chiang Kai-shek's bloody purge of the CCP and the collapse of the United Front in 1927) also used a vague and contradictory language to call for 'the unification of China and the recognition of the right of national self-determination' (ibid., p.87).

foreign imperialism' (ibid., p.92). In fact, Mao Zedong was already calling for a firmly bounded Chinese nation-state in 1934, claiming 'only by assisting the Chinese Soviet government in obtaining victory on a *national* scale can the government achieve a thorough victory' (ibid., pp.92-3). In other words, Mao was beginning to develop 'new imagined community' - the Chinese people (*zhongguo ren*) - which consists of all the oppressed peoples (i.e. a community of 'good people') including various nationalities (Bulag, 2012, p.99).

This vision of China was reinforced after Japan's full-scale invasion of China in 1937. As introduced previously, Japan's invasion of Beijing stimulated a nationwide tide of nationalist sentiment. Similar to Chiang's KMT, the CCP during the period also turned to nationalist ideology and called for national unity based on a single collective Chinese identity. The party claimed that China's 'national salvation movement' belonged not solely to the proletariat but to all Chinese classes (Leibold, 2007, p.97). Therefore, worrying that the Japanese were 'destroying the national consciousness of the Chinese people (*zhongguoren*)', Mao and the CCP stressed the importance of forming a new 'national consciousness' (*minzu yishi*) that 'would bind the sentiments of all nationalities, and classes into a single national identity' (ibid.). Indeed, according to Leibold (2007, p.100), 'the interconnected destiny of all "Chinese nationalities" (*Zhongguo minzu* or *Zhonghua minzu*) became one of the central themes' of the CCP's articles and policy papers issued during this period. Moreover, 'claiming that all nationalities within China suffered equally from Japanese subjugation', the CCP also contended that 'the "fate" (*mingyun*) of all nationalities hinged on their joint resistance to and eventually defeat of Japanese imperialism, which required creating an environment that was conducive to the natural fusion of all nationalities into a single *Zhonghua minzu*' (ibid.). Since then, the ambiguous term '*Zhonghua minzu*', which can simultaneously be understood as 'the Chinese nation' or 'the various nationalities of China', had become a core political rhetoric

of the party's discourse in 'imagining China as a composite yet multi-ethnic nation-state' (ibid., p.102).

To this end, Mao's CCP and Chiang's KMT paralleled with each other as both parties (and their leaders) not only attempted to 'shore up Chinese morale, patriotism and unity', but also require a new, collective sense of identity: 'one that would transcend both ethnic and class divisions and join all Chinese in a single composite and indivisible *Zhonghua minzu*' (ibid., p.97). In other words, both parties had become nationalist in nature despite their different claims in ideology.

However, there had been a tension between the CCP's emphasis on Chinese nationalism and its ideological foundations as a proletarian party. As Leibold (2007, p.97) notes, the CCP's stress on the nation (i.e. saving the Chinese nation) 'presupposed the existence of a distinct and peculiar Chinese "people" (*remin*), "race/nation" (*minzu*), and "culture" (*wenhua*) worthy of protection.' This to some degree undermined the CCP's ideological foundation since it was supposed to 'commit to transnational class revolution, not the preservation of a single national culture or people' (ibid.).

Moreover, domestically, the turn to nationalist rhetoric and the stress on 'national unity' had also inevitably undermined minority nationalities' claims for genuine autonomy or self-rule (if not independence). Indeed, to guarantee the leadership of the CCP (and the Han) in liberation movements of the oppressed minority nationalities, the CCP turned to invoking the 'culturalist' view and claimed that the 'backwardness' of the frontier minorities 'prevented them from pursuing their own national liberation without the assistance of their Han "elder brothers"' (ibid., p.101). For instance, one CCP's policy document on Inner Mongolia argued that 'the Mongolian people's cultural dependency on Lamaism, their political disunity, and their "extremely complex and unequal" socioeconomic structure were listed as "special characteristics" that determined their historical "backwardness"' (ibid.).

As a result, the CCP claimed that ‘the burden of impelling the Mongols, Hui, and other “backward minzus” (*luohou minzu*) toward their own liberation fell on the shoulders of China’s most advanced *minzu* - the “Han ruling *minzu*” (*tongzhi minzu de Hanzu*) (ibid.).’ The CCP, as the political party of the Han nationality’s most progressive class (i.e. proletarian), therefore would assume ‘ultimate responsibility for propelling the reluctant minorities toward their own national liberation’ (Leibold, 2007, p.101; Mackerras,1994, p.77). In this way, the traditional ‘Chinese culturalism’ (the Chinese/Han being the ‘civilised’ with the non-Chinese/Han being ‘uncivilised’ or ‘barbarian’) was revisited and reconceptualised by the CCP in revolutionary rhetoric to tackle the ideological tension between its claims on proletarian liberation movement and Chinese national unity.

To this end, there seems no significant difference between the CCP’s attitude toward frontier minorities and many earlier Chinese intellectuals and politicians such as Liang Qichao, Sun Yat-sen and even Chiang Kai-chek and his party KMT for that matter (Leibold, 2007, p.52; Mackerras,1994, p.77). These Han Chinese elites, whether they started as monarchists, revolutionary republicans, nationalists or communists, in the end all came to share a strong desire to transform the Qing geo-body into a new unified Chinese modern nation-state. Just as Bulag (2012, p.98) rightly points out, the difference between the CCP and the KMT or other nationalists ‘was not one between non-nationalists and nationalists but rather between two strands of Han nationalism, differing primarily in the method or manner of building a new China.’

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate the effort made by Chinese intellectuals and political leaders to construct a modern Chinese identity during the late Qing and Republic period, and how they tried to deal with the difficult task of incorporating the Qing geo-body in this modern vision of Chinese nationhood. As I have attempted to illustrate throughout the chapter, this task (of incorporating the frontier groups of the Qing empire into the new Chinese nation-state) was a central rather than peripheral issue to all leading Chinese modern elites.

By deploying communist ideologies such as 'liberation of the oppressed', the CCP represented itself as 'friends' and 'alliance' of minority nationalities (i.e. the 'Good Han'). This strategy was relatively successful as it facilitated the survival and growth of CCP and contributed to the final victory of the CCP in competition with KMT. However, as I have demonstrated, the CCP faced tension between its internationalist ideology (communism) and nationalist vision of forming a unified Chinese state. Although the party strategically adopted the idea of 'sinification of Marxism' (*makesi zhuyi zhongguohua*) (e.g. giving up its support to self-determination and making the frontier issue a purely domestic one) to deal with the tension, the party inevitably became similar to its rival KMT and shared a Han dominated vision of nationhood. Minority nationalities, while on the one hand were promised 'nationality equality and autonomy', on the other hand were not allowed to carry out their own liberation/nationalist movement to get independence from China.

The tension remained unresolved even after the foundation of the People's Republic and the CCP continually struggled with its ideological dilemma i.e. as being both socialist and nationalist. School history textbooks, while on the one hand had been used by the party to inculcate a certain version of the nationhood (for example, China as a unitary multi-ethnic nation since ancient times) to

discursively incorporate the previous empire frontier subjects into Chinese national citizenship, on the other hand inevitably embedded this ideological tension. The next three chapters, therefore, by looking at how minority ethnic groups had been portrayed differently in history textbooks from different periods of PRC history, will try to demonstrate how this discursive construction of the Chinese nationhood (to incorporate minority nationalities) was implemented and how the ideological tension had been manifested in history textbooks published throughout the PRC era.

Chapter 6. Establishing Socialist and Multi-ethnic Narratives: Minority Ethnic Groups in Chinese History Textbooks between 1949 to 1976

6.1 Introduction

The CCP finally defeated the KMT and established the People's Republic in 1949, and won the opportunity to realise its vision of the Chinese nation. After the foundation of the PRC, the CCP began to carry out its nation-building project to consolidate its control over the land and people within the PRC borders. One central aim was to transform the previous Qing frontier groups, most of whom had retained some degree of *de facto* independence during the Republican period, into PRC citizens. Apart from setting up administrative structures such as autonomous regions (*zizhiqu*), with which the CCP (following the example of the Soviet Union) had experimented in the regions under its control before 1949, the CCP also launched various projects such as 'nationalities identification' (*minzu shibie*) to place all PRC subjects into a definitional grid of official nationalities to grant these people 'nationhood' and facilitate central rule (Hirsch, 2005, p.6).

Socialist ideologies were also used by the CCP to legitimate its rule and establish and secure a new means of social control over the vast population, Han and non-Han alike. By inculcating socialist ideologies among its masses, such as the doctrines of class struggle and Marxist historical materialism, the CCP hoped to establish a new sense of loyalty to replace the traditional values and morality, such as Confucianism and the belief in the many religions by non-Han groups. The only loyalty that was facilitated and sanctioned was loyalty to the Party, the new socialist nation and the proletariat (Hu, 1974). The Party was convinced that it was only through this political and ideological indoctrination, 'a new social order, new human relations, new values, and a new self-image in accordance with a new ideology' that a new 'socialist civilisation', could be created (ibid., p.44).

In this way, as Harrell (1996) notes, a Communist version of a 'civilising project' was carried out by the CCP government to 'civilise' both Han and non-Han masses with a socialist vision of the nation, and to transform them – regardless of their ethnic background – into socialist citizens of a modern Chinese nation-state. The frontier groups were particularly targeted in this civilising project since their loyalty to the new Chinese state was considered important to the stability of the new-born country and the CCP's vision of a unified multi-ethnic China based on the Qing geo-body. In many ways, the Communist version of the civilising project was interwoven with the CCP's nation-building project, and this is the context for understanding the Party's efforts to integrate its non-Han groups during the period of Mao's rule.

Education was assigned an important role in this Communist civilising project, whether with respect to the Han themselves or the non-Han groups on China's frontiers. As Vickers (2009a, p.57) points out, in the early decades of the PRC, the idea that education should serve the central goal of building a socialist society was a core theme of government policy. Indeed, according to him, during Mao's period (before the end of 1976), 'Education at all levels and in all contexts was heavily freighted with political messages, and was expected to prioritise indoctrination in official ideology' (ibid.).³⁷ Jones (2005b) also notes that moral-ideological education in the New China was strongly emphasised as a means of creating model socialist citizens who would put the well-being of the nation and its people ahead of personal desires. The significance of socialist political

³⁷ Apart from formal knowledge imparted from the curriculum, students were asked to study a wide range of political materials which included Party and government documents, current events such as Party and government congresses, and important speeches and announcements by Party leaders (Chen, 1981). Vickers (2009a, p.57) also points out that: 'Socialist ideals not only permeated curricular content; they were also reflected to a considerable extent in the structures and practices of the education system itself, from the construction of primary schools in rural villages to the system of recruitment to universities and colleges and the compulsory work placements that followed.'

education is clearly shown in the following statement made by one of the Chinese Ministers of Education in the early years (1959) of the PRC:

'[...] we insist that education must be in the service of proletarian politics and that undertakings must be combined with political thought, because only in this way can we train the type of personnel who are both red and expert. For this reason, we hold up as the soul of all school work the political education of Marxism-Leninism and the political task of the Party. Moreover, we had put into effect the guiding principle of "let politics be the Commander-in-Chief" in all fields of cultural and scientific education.' (Hu, 1974, p.37).³⁸

Although all aspects of the school curricula were permeated with socialist ideologies, history was selected early on as the principal school subject for inculcating socialist ideologies and morality and transmitting and universalising the official narrative of legitimate succession which was now 'scientifically proven' by historical materialist laws (Jones, 2005b, p.72). Therefore, a revision and re-evaluation of the national historical narrative in textbooks was needed to provide students with 'an elementary understanding of the laws of historical development: that the labouring people (*laodong renmin*) create history, and that class struggle drives history forward' (ibid.). The themes of class struggle, revolutionary heroism and the Marxist categorisation of the stages of societal development from primitive communism through slave, feudal and bourgeois states to socialism were all highlighted in history teaching during the period to 1976 (Vickers, 2009a, p.60). By doing so, the CCP hoped to establish a new shared memory based on

³⁸ This statement is quoted by Hu from an article entitled 'The Great Revolution and Development in Our Country's Educational Task' in the book *Chien-kuo shih-nien* (Ten Years of National Construction) (Hong Kong: Chi-wen Publishing Co., 1959).

a 'historical materialist viewpoint' which would help to legitimise communist rule across China, and amongst all ethnic or national groups.

This chapter focuses on examining two versions of textbooks – the 1952 and 1955 versions – which were published in the Socialist period when Mao was leader of the CCP when socialist ideologies were predominant in Chinese society and its education system. By examining the representation of minority nationalities in these textbooks, it explores to what extent and in what ways the adoption of socialism influenced how these groups were portrayed in textbooks, revealing the ideological strategies used by the CCP to integrate the various minority nationalities and, in the process, establish a new national identity for the PRC.

6.2 Continuing the legacies of the Republic period: non-Han groups as non-Chinese in the 1952 version of textbooks

After the foundation of the PRC on October 1, 1949, the CCP immediately planned to establish a new national education system which would be closely controlled by the Party. So not only was a centralised public-school system (with the Party supervising education administration at all levels of government from central to local) planned, but the CCP also established a centralised and unified system of curriculum development and textbook production (Jones, 2005b, p.72; RICT, 2010, p.91). In 1950, just one year after the foundation of the PRC, the CCP established the People's Education Press (PEP) as a subsidiary agency of the Ministry of Education which, by the mid- to late-1950s had acquired a virtual monopoly over primary and secondary school curricula and textbook publication, and had assumed responsibility for producing teaching outlines and published sets of teacher handbooks (ibid.). It was clear that the CCP was determined to

follow the Soviet model: 'all children would follow the same course, with the same textbooks, at the same time' (Jones, 2005b, p.72).

It took a little while for the CCP to actually achieve its goals, and there was a brief transitional period when different regions ran different education systems, and textbooks were selected by local authorities from a range of sources: the Yan'an edition, the Soviet edition, abridged versions of professional (preferably Marxist) scholars' works, or those books from the Nationalist era judged politically acceptable (Jones, 2005b, p.72; Shi & Fang, 2012). In early 1952, the MOE issued a policy document called *Interim Regulations for Middle Schools* which aimed to regulate and standardise the middle school education system in the newly founded PRC, including establishing its purposes, teaching plans, inspection processes, assessment and administration (RICT, 2010; Shi & Fang, 2012). Its publication shows that the CCP government was beginning to exercise strict control over curriculum and textbook publication. Later that year, the PEP published its first version of uniform textbooks for nationwide use to replace the previous diversified textbooks (RICT, 2010, p.91).

6.2.1 Establishing socialist narratives

Examining the content of the 1952 history textbooks, it is clear that they had already adopted a socialist narrative in interpreting Chinese history. The *Interim Regulation* made it clear that the function of middle schools in the new China was 'to educate the younger generation with Mao's Thought which was seen as the application of Marxist theory in the practical situation of Chinese revolution' (RICT, 2010, p.90; Shi & Fang, 2012, p.47). The adoption of Marxist views of history is evident in the Table of Contents of the 1952 history textbooks, which named its first three chapters *Our Country's Primitive Society*, *Our Country's Slavery Society* and *The Initial Stage of Our Country's Feudal Society - the West Zhou, the Spring and Autumn, and Warring States*. This shows that textbook editors

tried to interpret China's historical development against a socialist model of historical materialist evolution, evolving from the primitive communist stage to slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist society, before making the final transition to communism.³⁹

Class struggle (*jieji douzheng*) was also clearly the dominant theme in the 1952 version of textbooks, and was used to explain the rise and fall of China's ruling dynasties. Much attention was given to landholding patterns and taxation systems to show the exploitive nature of society (slavery or feudal) and the tensions between the landlords and peasantry (or slave-owners and slaves) which finally lead to righteous peasant uprisings (*nongmin qi yi*). At the end of each dynastic period the textbooks introduced a peasant uprising as the driving force that destroyed the ruling class and also as a positive and progressive force in China's historical development. For example, the 1952 version of textbooks used a whole lesson (*jie*) to introduce the uprisings at the end of the Qin (221 - 207 BCE) and Tang dynasties (618 - 907 CE), and whole sections (*mu*) to introduce several others at the end of dynasties such as the West Han (206 BCE - 8 CE), Yuan (1209 - 1368 CE) and Ming (1368 - 1644 CE).

A total of six peasant uprisings appear in the lesson titles, and this version of the textbooks included great detail about the class struggle (*jieji douzheng*), through descriptions of how the ruling classes exploited and oppressed the people and how the latter resisted, often with heroic rebel leaders. The final chapter of the three volumes was a piece by Mao Zedong called *The Concluding Mark of Our Country's Feudal Society*. In this chapter, Mao used Marxist historical materialism to analyse Chinese history and concentrated his interpretation from the perspective of class struggle (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol. 3, p.83).

³⁹ This Marxist model of social evolution was adapted first by Guo Moruo (1892 - 1978) for the Chinese context.

6.2.2 Continuing the primordialist view of nationhood

Although the 1952 version clearly adopted a socialist narrative to tell students about the history of China, it also adopted a primordialist vision of China as a nation, and illustrated Chinese history from a Han ethno-centric perspective. For example, introducing the origins of China, the 1952 version of textbooks were not very different from their KMT predecessors, and traced Chinese history back to the 'Peking Man', which was called 'Chinese pithecanthropus' or *zhongguo yuanren* in this version of the textbooks (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.1, p.1). Probably because the 'Out of Africa' theory was not at that time developed, this version of textbooks claimed that Peking Man was the common ancestor of all humans (*renlei de zuxian*) rather than only the Chinese common ancestor (ibid.). Nevertheless, the idea of 'common ancestry' was delivered to students, and the textbooks said that this was 'a great honour of our great motherland' since the fossils were found in China (ibid.). The idea of common ancestry was also reinforced when the textbooks later introduced the concept of 'clan society' (*shizu shehui*) which, according to the textbooks, consisted of a group of people who were offspring of an 'old grandmother' (*lao zumu*) and therefore 'shared the same surname' (ibid., p.4).

6.2.3 Non-Han groups as non-Chinese others

While adopting a primordialist vision of Chinese nationhood, the 1952 version of textbooks did not develop a multi-ethnic understanding of China and therefore defined China as a Han nation-state. The term *shaoshu minzu* (minority nationalities or ethnic minority groups) was not used in the 1952 version of textbooks, and instead they used 'tribe' (*buluo*), 'race' (*zhongzu*) or 'tribe-race' (*buzu*) to refer to the non-Han groups. For example, the Mongols were described as a 'nomadic tribe' (*yumu buluo*) (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.73), while *Hu* (barbarians), the traditional term which was often used for the non-Chinese

barbarians, was also repeatedly used in the 1952 textbooks to refer to non-Han groups. For instance, the 1952 textbooks still referred to various kingdoms founded by five non-Han groups as 'kingdoms of Hu' [*huren wangguo*] (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.1, p.68). This seems to suggest that there was no clear word or definition of minority and majority, which together constituted the whole concept of being Chinese. When the textbooks used the term 'zu', it mainly referred to the idea of race rather than ethnic group. For example, when the textbooks introduced the Manchu, it states that it Manchu (*Manzu*) was 'a race (*zhongzu*) with only small population' (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, p.53). The reason why these groups were not regarded as minority ethnic groups is probably that by the time this version was prepared and published, China was about to start its nationalities identification project, so the CCP had not yet established a new way of conceiving of the nation so as to include all the different groups.

As a result of this exclusively Han-centric vision of nationhood in the 1952 version of textbooks, the words 'China' (*zhongguo*) and 'Han' were used interchangeably, and the regimes founded by the Han were often positioned as equivalent to China in the various historical periods. For example, when talking about the foundation of the Western Han Dynasty, the lesson used 'The Han Gaozu Emperor Unifying China [*zhongguo*]' as the title of the section (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.1, p.36), which shows that the editors regarded the Western Han as China. It therefore becomes understandable that the Hun and other groups were generally portrayed as non-Chinese within later lessons on the relationship between the Western Han and these groups. Based on the same understanding, regimes founded by non-Han groups such as the Khitan Liao (907 - 1125 CE) in northern China in parallel with the Han/Chinese (or *Huaxia*) regime (the Northern Song) in the south were introduced as a sub-issue of the Northern Song (even the Northern Song was founded 50 years later than the Liao). This shows that this version of the textbooks only regarded the Northern Song as China during this period, and that

the 1952 version of textbooks still adopted the traditional Han-centric understanding of the Chinese history.

Consistent with this narrowly defined exclusivist Han definition of Chinese-ness, those non-Han groups (or *Yi*) were generally portrayed as ‘foreigners’ or ‘aliens’ in the 1952 version of textbooks through the usage of words and descriptions such as ‘outside race’ (*waizu*), ‘different race’ (*yizu*) and ‘other race’ (*biezu*). For example, in describing the conflicts between the Northern Song and Khitan Liao and Tangut Western Xia, the 1952 textbooks noted that the Northern Song was ‘continually harassed by *outside races (waizu)*’ (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.55). Similarly, when introducing two famous patriotic poets during the Song dynasty, the 1952 textbooks mentioned that they felt anger when they saw that ‘the Central Plain was occupied and the people of the Han race were crucially oppressed by the *alien ruler (yizu tongzhizhe)*’ and they ‘were eager to recover the lost land of the motherland’ (ibid., p.85). This also suggests that these non-Han groups were still not seen as ‘Chinese’ by the textbook editors in the early 1950s and the 1952 version of textbooks still followed what the revolutionaries in early 20th century had believed when they carried out the Han nationalist revolution to throw over the Manchu Qing ruling.

6.2.4 Non-Han groups as ‘uncivilised’, and the ‘civilising mission’ of the Han

Since these groups were generally regarded as non-Chinese, the 1952 version of textbooks provided very little information about them, very often with only their names and less than one sentence of introduction. They would rarely discuss the culture or civilisation of these groups, even when such non-Han groups were ruling China, such as the Mongol Yuan or Manchu Qing. In the very few cases when their cultures were mentioned, the information was not only short and simple, but also narrowly focussed; for example, the invention of a writing script

by the Tibetan (*Tubo*), Nanzhao, Xixia and Jurchen (*Nvzhen*) groups were the only things mentioned in the 1952 version of textbooks in reference to their culture.

In the rare cases when their cultural achievement was acknowledged, it was under the condition that these groups benefited from learning from the Chinese regimes. For example, introducing the Tangut Western Xia regime (*Xixia*, 1032 - 1227 CE), the textbooks explained:

‘After ascending to the throne, [*Yuanhao* - the King of Xixia] copied the system of the Northern Song to reorganise the government; [he] created the script of Xixia by imitation of the form of the script of Han [*hanzi xingshi*].’ (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.53).

Similarly, when the 1952 version of textbooks introduced the Nanzhao (a parallel regime to Tang (618 - 907 AD), located in the southwest of current PRC territory) as a country that was ‘advanced in culture’, the lesson also stressed that this was because it ‘absorbed advanced technologies from Tang’ (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.35). From these examples, it is clear that the cultures of these non-Han groups were generally not recognised in this version of the textbooks and therefore they were regarded as non-civilised.

Instead of introducing the culture of these non-Han groups, the 1952 version of textbooks mainly concentrated on describing their military strength, a reflection of the barbarian nature of backward people (see Chapter Four). For example, when introducing the Tubo group (Tibetans), the textbooks states: ‘Tubo people followed military order strictly and had strong fighting capacity. They also adored heroes who died in battle’ (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.31). Similarly, the notable persons and heroes of the non-Han groups mentioned in the 1952 version of textbooks were predominantly military leaders, with their military talent noted, for example, the Tubo’s leader Qizongnongzan was described as ‘brave

and tactical and used powerful force to expand territory' (ibid.). In fact, not even a single cultural figure – historian, artist, poet or scientist – of the non-Han groups was mentioned in this version of the textbooks for their cultural achievements (although four Tibetan religious leaders were mentioned, but with the focus on their role as Tibetan political leaders, rather than their religious achievements).

In contrast, not only were many Han Chinese cultural celebrities discussed in detail in the same version of the textbooks, but the Han were typically depicted as using culture rather than force to pacify and assimilate these 'un-civilised' or 'barbarians' groups. Indeed, even when the military leaders of the non-Han were introduced, the textbooks often highlighted the influence of Chinese culture on them. For example, when introducing Nurhachi (1559 - 1626 CE), the great leader of the Jurchen group and founder of the Qing, the 1952 version of textbooks stated:

'Nurhachi often contacted and communicated with businessmen of the Han race, so he learned the language and script of the Han race. He also liked to read *The Romance of Three Kingdoms* and *Water Margin* [two famous Chinese novels] and accepted the advanced culture of the Han race.' (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, p.30).

This example clearly reflects the 'assimilationist' point of view (as discussed in Chapter One and Four), which promotes the idea that the 'barbarian' non-Chinese conquerors would inevitably be assimilated by the Han Chinese due to their lack of civilisation.

This example also suggests that the 1952 version of textbooks still adopted the culturalist assumptions of Chinese identity and defined the 'other' groups as backward (*luohou*) or un-civilised (*wei kaihua*) in comparison with the advanced

or civilised Han Chinese, and so the traditional ideology of the ‘distinguishing civilised and barbarians’ (*hua yi zhi bian*; see Chapter Four) in conceptualising Chinese identity was still dominant. For example, the Lai group was explicitly labelled as ‘half-civilised’ (*ban kaihua*) (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.1, p.19) and the Manchu (*Manzu*) were also described as ‘backward in economics and culture’ (*jingji wenhua bijiao luohou*) (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, p.29).⁴⁰ In other cases, the ‘backwardness’ of these groups was defined by the socialist standard, and they were labelled as at ‘lower stages’ of social evolution in comparison to their Han counterparts. For example, while the Chinese (or Han) regimes were introduced as being already in a ‘feudal society’ (*fengjian shehui*), when the Hun, Jurchen and Mongol groups were introduced, the 1952 version of textbooks labelled them respectively as ‘a slave country’ (*nuli zhi guojia*), ‘living primitive lives’ and ‘in the end phase of the clan society’. This reflected a fusion of similarly hierarchical Confucian and Communist concepts of ‘civilisation’, according to both of which non-Han groups were defined as backward or un-civilised.

As discussed in Chapter Four, Chinese culturalism was often used to justify the military expansion of China as part of its civilising mission, and the 1952 version of textbooks adopted this rhetoric, though in a relatively implicit way (in comparison to later textbooks). Discussing China’s conquest of the non-Han groups, very often the ‘advancement’ of the former and the ‘backwardness’ of the latter were highlighted. For example, after introducing the Qin’s reforms (221 to 207 BCE) in unifying the measuring and writing systems as evidence of advanced economic and cultural development, when the textbooks later introduced the Qin’s conquest of the Southern Yue (*Nanyue*) in southern China, it in particular

⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that in the 1952 textbooks the Lai tribe was described as a powerful regime in the Shandong peninsula and had competed with the Qi Kingdom (one of the ‘five hegemons’ during the Spring and Autumn era [770 - 476 BC]) for several centuries. However, none of the latter textbooks mentioned the Lai tribe and its conflicts with the Qi kingdom. In other words, later textbooks presented the region as a purely Han/Chinese region.

claimed that the Southern Yue was a race of 'half fishing-and-hunting and half farming' (*ban yulie ban nonggeng*), a backward model of economic production according to the Marxist model of social evolution (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.1, p.34). This justification of Chinese expansion was expressed more explicitly in the case of Tang history (618 - 907 CE) which was described as an expansionist empire in Chinese history in the 1952 textbooks. After introducing the expansion of the Tang Empire and its conquest of non-Han groups such as the Turk, Tiele, Tuyuhun and various groups in the Western Region (*xiyu*), although the lesson criticised the Tang's conquest, it nevertheless concluded that: 'the high level of the Tang culture had brought great influence to the different groups in Asia' (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.18).

6.2.5 Non-Han groups as enemies: the conflict between the Han and non-Han

Depicting these groups as Asian rather than Chinese clearly reinforced the dichotomy between the Han as Chinese and these non-Han groups as non-Chinese others. Following this narrowly defined conception of Chinese-ness, the 1952 version of textbooks adopted the traditional conception of Chinese identity and therefore portrayed non-Han groups as the opposition and positioned as fundamentally different to the idea of China/Chineseness. As a result, these groups were generally portrayed as rival groups, or enemies of China, and the words 'enemy' (*dirén*) and 'threat' (*weixie*) were often used in association with the non-Han groups in the 1952 version of textbooks. For instance, when the Hun (*Xiongnu*) was introduced, the textbooks depicted them as a 'threat' to the regimes in the Central Plain and described it as 'a powerful enemy of the Western Han empire' (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.1, pp.33-4, p.40). In fact, these two words were repeatedly used across the 1952 textbooks to describe the non-Han groups when their relationship with the Han Chinese was discussed.

As a result, the relationships between the Han and non-Han in the 1952 version of textbooks concentrated on conflicts, and this is reflected in the Table of Contents. While 8 of the 56 lessons were directly related to non-Han groups, 7 of those focused on conflicts, with the only exception discussing *The Fusion of Hu [Barbarians] and Han in the Northern Dynasty*. For instance, the title of the chapter about the Khitan Liao and Tangut Xixia was *Conflicts between the Northern Song and Liao and Xixia*. Examining the content of this lesson, it focused exclusively on the wars between the Northern Song and these two non-Han regimes, with detailed descriptions about how the latter invaded China and how the Chinese people resisted. It is clear that the 1952 version of textbooks constructed the Chinese identity by focusing on antagonism between the Han and the non-Han. In fact, words such as ‘invasion’ (*ruqin* or *qinlue*) were frequently used to refer to non-Han attacks on the Han regime, and the brutality of the non-Han also became a focus of discussion. As the following example from the section on ‘The Development of the Khitan and Its Invasion Towards the South’ (*qidan de fazhan he nanqin*) shows:

‘The Khitan army were very barbaric, plundering and killing all the way [towards south]. After entering Kaifeng [the Song capital], they carried out looting every day. [...] The invasion of the Khitan this time had led to all the counties in Shanxi and Henan being robbed into empty. In the city Anyang, there had accumulated more than ten thousand skeletons.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, pp.41-2).

Moreover, it is also noted that conflicts between the Han and non-Han were generally portrayed in racial terms in the 1952 version of textbooks, which suggests that they used the conflicts to promote patriotism among students and a Han-centric exclusivist vision of national identity. To reinforce this narrowly defined national identity, not only were the detailed and vivid descriptions of the

conflicts which focused on the 'brutality' of the non-Han groups repeatedly told to students, but the heroism of the Han/Chinese people and their resistance to 'invasion' also became the key feature of discussions on inter-ethnic conflicts. For example, discussing the conflicts between the Jurchen Jin (1115 - 1234 CE) and Southern Song (1127 - 1279 CE), the 1952 version of textbooks described:

'Since the invasion of the Jin people [*Jinren*], the Chinese people [*zhongguo renmin*] had been continuously enslaved, insulted and massacred. Farming fields had been continuously occupied and their production had been continuously destroyed. In the occupied area, not only the mass labouring people suffered seriously from disasters, but the small and medium-sized landowners were also greatly harmed. Therefore, with few exceptions of shameless rulers and big landlords who attempted to sell the motherland and surrendered to enemies [i.e. the Jurchen Jin], the vast majority of the people and some of the generals responded to the atrocities of the Jin people with actual struggles. [...] In order to defend the native land and motherland, the Chinese people picked up any weapons that they found, and formed a rebellious army to fight fiercely against the enemy.' (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.67).

This description bears a striking similarity to the discussions of the Sino-Japanese war (1937 - 1945) in post-Mao history textbooks (Mitter, 2003, 2007). This way of writing was clearly designed to stimulate patriotic feelings among students. As a result, treaties signed after these conflicts were described as 'humiliating' (*quru*) (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.56) - also to stimulate a sense of patriotism, again, a similar narrative that was adopted by the Chinese official historiography to describe China's suffering at the hands of Western imperialists since the Opium War (i.e. the 'one hundred years of humiliation') (Mitter, 2003).

In fact, similar to the narrative for the Sino-Japanese war, Han military leaders in conflicts with non-Han groups were also particularly praised in the 1952 textbooks, and many were labelled as a 'national hero' (*minzu yingxiong*) for their 'patriotic spirit' in defending the Chinese nation. For example, the 1952 textbooks used a section entitled 'National Heroes Who Resisted the Enemy' (*kangdi de minzu yingxiong*) to discuss several anti-Mongol leaders, including the famous General Wen Tianxiang (1236 - 1283) (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.76). Zheng Chenggong (1623 - 1662) was also labelled as 'the great national hero' (*weida de minzu yingxiong*) for his anti-Manchu resistance (ibid., p.47). The most representative example is Yue Fei (1103 - 1142), the famous Han general who played a leading role in the conflict with the Jurchen Jin. Traditionally, he was often portrayed as a heroic figure in Chinese literature, who devoted himself to the anti-Jurchen war. Reading the 1952 textbooks it appears that they have fully adopted this Han-centric narrative, since Yue Fei is explicitly referred to as a 'national hero':

'Yue Fei was an enthusiastic patriot [*ai guo zhe*]. He resolutely resisted the invasion of the Jin people [Jurchen] and became the central pillar of the anti-Jin forces at that time. [...] Yue Fei devoted his life to the cause of the struggle against aggression, and his noble patriotic character carried forward the fine tradition of the nation.' (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.70).

6.2.6 Non-Han groups as alien rulers: the non-Han rule in Chinese history

Consistent with this Han exclusivist vision of China, the rule of non-Han groups in China was portrayed negatively to stress the illegitimate nature of their 'alien rule' and the 1952 version of textbooks focused exclusively on how the Han people were oppressed by these 'alien rulers' and how they had resisted them. For example, discussing Mongol rule during the Yuan dynasty, the 1952 version

of textbooks focused exclusively on the brutality of the Mongol and the Han resistance: the three sections of this lesson were called 'Destroying the Rural Economy', 'Racial Oppression' and 'The Great Peasants' Uprising'.⁴¹ While the first section recounted how the rule of the Mongols destroyed the economy in northern China and its heavy tax on Chinese peasants, the second provided vivid details about how the Han people was discriminated against and oppressed under the 'population category' system:

'In the eyes of the Mongol rulers, the Han people, [though] as the majority, could be arbitrarily abused and insulted. [...] There were many ways for Mongolia rulers to oppress the Han people. [...] [If] the Mongols beat the Han people, the Han people were not allowed to fight back. [If] the Mongol people killed the Han people, as penalty they were only to be sent to the army. The watchmen of the village [Mongolians] could arbitrarily insult the wives of Han people and not be punished by the law.' (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, pp.79-80).

The language used in these statements was clearly very strong, especially when considering that these textbooks were for junior middle school students. Again, the focus on the brutality of the non-Han rule, through the use of the example of sexually insulting females, reminds readers of the discussion on the Japanese army during the 'Nanking Massacre' in textbooks published in Post-Mao China. This clearly suggests that the Mongols were treated as non-Chinese invaders and therefore that their rule was not legitimate.

⁴¹ In contrast, the titles of the four sections on the rule of the Chinese Ming dynasty (which overthrew the Mongol) are 'The Development of Handicraft Industry', 'The Development of Maritime Transportation', 'The Link of Great Canals in the South and North', and 'The Prosperous Development of Business and Cities' - all directed to positive developments of China under the Han rulers which replaced the 'barbarian' Mongol foreign rule.

To further delegitimise non-Han rule, Han resistance was also a dominant theme during the lessons on the rule of non-Han groups; this was applied to both the Mongol rule and the Manchu rule. For example, the 1952 textbooks used four lessons to introduce Manchu Qing history, with two of them focused on the resistance of the Han against the Manchu conquest and rebellion of the Han and various other groups against the Manchu rule. In the lesson on 'The Qing Army Entering Pass [China] and the Struggles of the Han People against the Qing', the titles of three of the four sections were: 'The Anti-Qing Struggle in the South of Yang-Tze River and Huai River', 'The Anti-Qing Struggle in the Southwest' and 'The Anti-Qing Struggle in Coast Areas of the Southeast'. From the titles of these sections it is clear that the main theme of the lesson is to highlight the resistance of the Han against the Manchu, delegitimising the Manchu rule in China. It should be noted that the 'Yangzhou Massacre', which revolutionaries in the early twentieth century had promoted to inspire anti-Manchu sentiments, was also discussed in the 1952 textbooks. This shows the similarities of the narratives adopted by these Han nationalists and the CCP in the early 1950s, despite latter's claim on its socialist principle. Examination of the content of this lesson also shows that not only were vivid and detailed examples of the Han resistance against the Qing army provided to students, but anti-Qing leaders were also clearly depicted as a 'patriot with a national consciousness' or a 'national hero' who sacrificed their life to fight against foreign invasion and occupation (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.2, p.44, 47).

Similarly, in the lesson on 'The Ruling Policies of the Qing and The Anti-Qing Struggles of Various Ethnic/Racial Groups', the first half focused on how the Manchu Qing rulers suppressed the Han and other ethnic/racial groups, including the Mongols, Uyghurs and various groups in the southwest, before in the second half introducing the anti-Qing struggles organised by the Han and other groups. Again, detailed information concerning the suppression and resistance were

discussed, and the lesson used four pages to discuss the Manchu Qing suppression and five pages for the resistances of various ethnic groups, including the Han (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, pp.53-61). Using the section 'The Strategy to Rule the Han' as an example, this first introduced the unequal treatment of the Han officials within the Qing bureaucratic system, and then turned its focus on how the Qing had attempted to rule the Han by strict control of the Han group. Here, the lesson used two paragraphs to discuss 'literary inquisition' (*wenzi yu*) during the Qing rule and provided details about how the Han intellectuals were cruelly punished for their anti-Qing thoughts (ibid., p.54). Another paragraph was also used to condemn the Qing rulers for deleting or destroying any books which could be used to 'inspire racial thinking' (ibid., pp.54-5). All these ruling strategies, according to the lesson, were to 'rule the thoughts of the Han' and 'suppress anti-Qing thoughts' (ibid., p.54).

These discussions on how ethnic groups were suppressed or exploited by the Manchu were once again used to delegitimise the Manchu rule and thus justify all resistance against the rule of the Manchu Qing, which were also discussed in detail in the remainder of the lesson. Moreover, it can be noted that similar to the discussion on inter-ethnic conflicts, the Han resistance against non-Han rule was often interpreted in racial terms. For example, the 1952 textbooks used the phrase 'struggles of anti-racial suppression' to describe the Chinese resistance against the Qing army (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, p.41), and when introducing the Han uprisings at the end of the Mongol Yuan rule, the lesson mentioned that one of the leaders, Zhu Yuanzhang, who later became the founder of the Ming dynasty, used the slogan 'expelling the barbarians and restoring China' (*quzhu hulu, huifu zhonghua*) to call for resistance against the Mongol rule (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, p.2). As discussed in Chapter Five, this slogan was reinstated by Han nationalists, including Sun Yat-zen, to call for a revolution to overthrow the Manchu rule at the turn of the twentieth century. The use of this

slogan in the 1952 textbooks again shows a strong Han-exclusivist vision of Chinese nationhood that was promoted in the early era of the PRC. It is also through this means that the non-Han rule was depicted as 'alien' rule in the 1952 textbooks, which is in accordance with what those Han revolutionaries had believed several decades before the publication of the 1952 textbooks.

The Han-exclusivist narrative which tended to portray the non-Han rule as 'foreign rule' rather than 'Chinese rule', interestingly, is very similar to the views expressed in the 'new Qing history' (as discussed in Chapter Four) which also stressed the distinctive nature of the non-Han rule in comparison to Han dynasties. Indeed, as introduced above, although the 1952 textbooks did to some extent mention that the Manchu rulers copied the Han ruling system, for example, organising the *keju* examination for Han intellectuals, overall the Qing rule was depicted as a conquest dynasty and was portrayed very differently in several ways from other Han dynasties within the 1952 textbooks. First of all, the distinctive racial background of the non-Han rulers was clearly highlighted, and the 1952 textbooks frequently used the words 'the Manchu ruler' (*manzu tongzhi zhe*) and 'Manchu-Qing' (*manqing*) to highlight the distinctive racial background of the Qing regime (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, pp.73-4). In addition, the 1952 textbooks also highlighted the privileged status of the Manchu officials in the Qing government. For example, one lesson stated that 'although the Manchu and the Han were equal in numbers of high-level officials, but the real power was controlled by the Manchu' (ibid., p.54). This lesson also taught students that not only were the highest official positions in different provinces almost all occupied by the Manchu, but the Han people were not allowed to take positions in many significant Qing departments, such as the generals of the Eight Banner army, the Department of Barbarians Affairs (*lifanyuan*), and the Ministry of Rites (*libu*) (ibid.). This way of writing clearly echoes the arguments made by the 'new Qing history' scholars, who denied the assimilationist view and stressed the distinctive Manchu identity

of the Qing rulers, who had tried to maintain the privileged status of the Manchu group in ruling the empire.

Secondly, instead of seeing the Qing conquest of Mongolia, Tibet and Muslim regions in Central Asia as a reunification of these regions into the Chinese motherland, the Qing was clearly depicted as an expanding imperial power in the 1952 textbooks. Consequently, the 1952 textbooks took a neutral stance on the conflicts between the Manchu Qing and other competing powers, such as the Zunghar and Russia, and treated them as equal expansionist powers competing for control of the large regions between them, a view which is similar to that argued by Perdue (2005) fifty years later. A reflection of this view can be seen in the lesson on 'The Expansion of the Qing Empire', where the Zunghar Mongol was portrayed as a powerful regime which conquered the Khalkha Mongol (Outer Mongolia) in the north of the Qing, the Tibetan and the Muslim groups in the Northwest and had threatened the Qing rule in Inner Mongolia (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, pp.47-8). After a detailed introduction on the conflicts between the Qing and the Zunghar Mongol, the lesson clearly claimed that it was after the defeat of the Zunghar Mongol that the Qing gained the large territories which previously were under the control of the Zunghar.

Similarly, introducing Qing confrontation with Russia in the northeast, the 1952 version of textbooks stated that, while Russia was expanding to the east, the Manchu was also expanding north, and this led to confrontation. Here the textbooks again describe the Russia and Manchu Qing as two non-Han powers competing for control of the region. In fact, the Qing was even depicted as a 'coloniser' since it 'defeated the native groups [of the northeast], occupied the local cities [*Yakesa* or *Jaxa*] and plundered the wealth of people there' (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, p.72). This description again echoes the 'new Qing

history' which generally regarded the Qing as an expansionist and colonising dynasty (see Chapter Four).

Finally, when describing the Qing rule the 1952 textbooks also tended to highlight the strategy of 'indirect rule', another point made by the 'new Qing history' scholars as evidence of the imperial and colonising nature of the Qing (also see Chapter Four). The lesson on the 'Ruling Strategy of the Qing' stated clearly at the beginning of the lesson that the Qing 'had to utilise the assistance of the ruling class of all the racial groups to rule the people of these groups' (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, p.53). For example, talking its ruling strategy to the Mongols, the lesson stated that:

'The Qing Dynasty endeavoured to win over the feudal lords of the Mongols, offering noble titles such as "king" and "prince" to them, and intermarrying them with the Qing royal families, and used them to strengthen their rule over the people of the Mongols.' (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, p.55).

In a similar way the 1952 textbooks related how the Qing had used the Uyghur ruling class 'begs' (*boke*, the lesson explained them as landlords) to take the official positions and rule the Uyghur people on behalf of the Manchu officials (*ibid.*, p.56). This narrative clearly echoes what the point made by 'new Qing history' scholars about the imperial nature of the Manchu rule. In fact, in order to highlight this point, the lesson also explicitly stressed the concept of 'division and rule' when introducing the Qing ruling strategy, as it stated:

'Qing was afraid of connection between Mongolian and other brother racial groups, especially the Han, so it prohibited the Mongolian to study the Han language, or use Uyghur language [*huiwen*]. The Qing did also not allow intermarry between the

Mongolian and Han people, and repeatedly forced the Han peasants who emigrated to Mongolia to return to their native place.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, p.55).

Again, this narrative was repeated when the 1952 textbooks discussed the Manchu ruling strategy for the Uyghur group (ibid., p.56). All in all, as the 1952 textbooks adopted a Han exclusivist vision of the Chinese nationhood, Qing was inevitably portrayed as ‘foreign’ rule, which in many ways becomes similar to what the ‘new Qing scholars’ argued several decades later. However, as discussed below, this narrative created tensions in the 1952 textbooks, which were trying to legitimise Chinese rule over the PRC territory, which had basically been inherited from the Qing.

6.2.7 Tensions in the construction of national identity.

The 1952 version of textbooks, although they had adopted a socialist narrative in interpreting Chinese history, had not yet reconceptualised China as a multi-ethnic country encompassing both Han and non-Han groups. Even though socialist ideologies were evident in 1952 version of textbooks, the vision of the Chinese nation constructed therein remained Han ethno-centric and not significantly different from that of the KMT. The narrative that perpetuated racial nationalism that had led to the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911 was continued in textbooks published in the early years of the PRC.

This Han-centric vision created tension as the textbooks were simultaneously trying to legitimise their claim over the territory of the PRC, which was actually based on territory of the Qing founded by Manchu who were still portrayed as illegitimate foreign rulers. As a result, introducing the Manchu’s conquest of southern Xinjiang, the 1952 version of textbooks actually praised the resistance of the Uyghur (called the *Huibu* or ‘Hui tribe’ in the 1952 version of textbooks)

who 'bravely' rebelled under their religious leaders who were massively supported by the Uyghur people (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, p.51). As the lesson introduced:

'After defeated Zunghar, the Qing sent troops to summon the *Huibu* [Uyghur] to surrender but failed to achieve their goals. The religious leaders of Huibu, Big Khwaja Mu [*Da Hezhuomu*] and Little Khwaja Mu [*Xiao Hezhuomu*], called for independence and received response/support [*xiangying*] from hundreds of thousands of *Huibu* people. The Qing Dynasty sent troops to attack the region of south of the Tian Mountain [where the Uyghur resided]. After more than two years of war, the heroic resistance of the *Huibu* people was suppressed in 1760. Troops occupied the north and south of the Tian Mountains and renamed the area to Xinjiang [lit. new territory].'
(PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.3, pp.51-2).

It is clear that the 1952 textbooks not only stressed the colonising nature of the Qing empire through the introduction of the Uyghur resistance against the Qing conquest, but also implied that Xinjiang did not always belong in China, and that the Uyghur people had a right to independence from Manchu rule, just like their Han counterparts during the 1911 revolution. In other words, the 1952 lessons did not celebrate the Qing conquest of Xinjiang as a reunion of the region with the motherland but as a colonising power which suppressed local independence.

While this narrative reflects a Han ethno-centric vision of Chinese nationhood, it clearly created problems for the official claims of sovereignty over these non-Han regions. This inherent tension in the construction of a Chinese nation was found in many parts of the 1952 version of textbooks. For example, while they provided a homogenous vision of Han China, introducing the archaeological sites of human life of the Palaeolithic and Neolithic eras, they claimed '[these sites] were widely

scattered, reaching Xinjiang in the west, Jilin Shandong and Taiwan in the east, the north of Inner Mongolia in the north, and the coast of Guangdong in the south', which nicely matches the PRC border regions and is fully covered by its territory (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol.1, p.3). The lesson even attached a PRC map to show the locations of the sites within the national territory (with few of them located very close to its borders). The sentence and the map were clearly used to demonstrate the multi-ethnic origins of the Chinese people and therefore legitimise the PRC claim to its current territory, but clearly this introduction contradicted the narrative of a homogenous Han vision of China that was dominant in the same textbooks. It would not be until several years later that the new version of textbooks tried to tackle this tension, as examined in the section below.

6.3 Becoming Chinese: non-Han groups in the 1955 history textbooks

Although the editors of the early 1950s textbooks had not yet reconceptualised China as a multi-ethnic state encompassing both Han and non-Han groups, the CCP was aware that the stability and the legitimacy of the newly founded socialist state relied on the completion of at least two main transforming tasks: the transformation of the masses (both Han and non-Han) into socialist citizens, and the transformation of the frontier groups into national subjects of the PRC. To tackle these two tasks, the CCP, like its Soviet 'big brother', carried out the Chinese version of a communist 'civilising project' throughout the 1950s (Harrell, 1996; Hirsch, 2005).

Like its Soviet counterpart, through various political and economic campaigns (for example, the Land Reform in 1951), the CCP tried to make 'class' (*jieji*) an ascribed status with which to label every individual based on their socioeconomic position and relationship to the means of production (Fitzpatrick, 2000a, p.20). To

the CCP, the re-classification of Chinese society was an important part of the Chinese socialist revolution: destroying the old society ruled by capitalists, landlords and bureaucrats and establishing a new ruling class constituted of workers and landless agricultural labourers, and of course with the CCP as the 'vanguard of the proletariat' (Fitzpatrick, 2000b, p.24). Based on the idea of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' (*wuchan jieji zhuanzheng*), the CCP set out to distinguish friend from enemy, so that privileges such as the right to vote or join the party, be educated or even marriage could be granted to proletarians. The Marxist idea of class struggle (*jieji douzheng*) became dominant, especially during periods such as the Great Leap Forward (1958 - 1960) and later the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1976), which witnessed the radicalisation of Chinese socialism.

As with class, nationality (*minzu*) also became an ascribed status in this nation-building project and an important part of the communist civilising project. This involved classifying the Han and non-Han into categories of different *minzu* in accordance with Stalin's criteria of common territory, language, economy, and psychological nature; and also labelling these groups into particular stages in the Marxist notion of the universal progression of history: primitive, slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist modes of production (Harrell, 1996, p.23). By doing so, the CCP hoped to transform all the lands and peoples of the former Qing empire, and bring them into the socialist PRC, a process which Hirsch (2005, p.14) called 'double assimilation': the assimilation of a diverse population into Chinese nationality categories, and simultaneously, the assimilation of those nationally categorised groups into the Chinese socialist state and society.

This was the background to the CCP's implementation of its own version of the 'nationality identification' (*minzu shibie*) project in 1953 - 'the most thoroughgoing definition program in China's history', according to Harrell (1996, p.24). As in the

Soviet Union in the 1920s, this project involved sending many (often Soviet-trained) researchers including ethnographers, sociologists, historians and linguists to all areas of the country where local groups had claimed status as a separate nationality (*minzu*). According to Harrell (1996, p.23), Stalin's criteria were only used ostensibly to evaluate their claims; in fact, in many cases traditional Han folk categories and these groups' own ethnic consciousness were also considered when the identification project was carried out.

In the first few years, nearly 40 nationalities were identified, and by 1987, when the government officially announced the completion of the project, that number had risen to 56, leaving hundreds of thousands of people unidentified (Fan, 2016, p.2094; Harrell, 1996, p.24). As mentioned above, an important part of the identification project was to determine which stages these groups had reached in socialist evolutionary theory. To the CCP, this was important for planning the political struggles and developmental campaigns that would raise the civilisational levels of the various nationalities or *minzu* (Harrell, 1996, p.24). As Harrell (*ibid.*) points out, only after this definitional stage was completed was the CCP able to complete its civilising and nation-building projects, including 'creating autonomous regions, implementing educational and developmental plans, bringing leaders of the peripheral peoples into the Party-state apparatus that carries out the centre's project.'⁴² In general, only with the completion of the identification project, could the CCP fulfil its promise that all *minzu*, equal legally

⁴² For example, according to Harrell (1996, p.24), nationalities judged to be in the late-feudal stage of the landlord economy (which is where most of the Han peasantry were also judged to be) were to undergo the violent class struggles of the Land Reform programme, while those who were judged still at slave stage, or even showed vestiges of the primitive commune, were subjected to a much milder process, involving cooperation of leaders to the state project, and known as Democratic Reform. Autonomous regions were set up if the population of a nationality was more than 22 per cent of the total population of the region (Fan, 2016, p.2094). Moreover, every separate minority nationality would be entitled to have their representatives sit in the People's Representative Congress (*ibid.*)

and morally, would march together on the road to historical progress, that is, to socialism (ibid.).

Moreover, with that task completed, the CCP was now able to construct a multi-ethnic narrative which reconceptualised China as a unified, multinational state (*tongyi duominzu guojia*) with all nationalities or *minzu* working together toward common goals (Harrell, 1996, p.24). This multi-ethnic conception of China was reflected in the first PRC Constitution issued in 1954, which stated that China was a 'unified, multi-national state' and proclaimed 'equity among different nationalities' (*ge minzu pingdeng*).

6.3.1 Non-Han groups becoming Chinese minority nationalities

It was against this background that the 1955 version of textbooks were edited and republished in 1960. From reading its Table of Contents it is clear that this version not only continued the adoption of the Marxist paradigm of history, using social evolution theory to interpret Chinese history and making class struggle the dominant theme, but also embraced a multi-ethnic narrative in interpreting that history. For example, when introducing the non-Han groups during the Han dynasty (202 BCE to 220 CE) the 1952 version of textbooks simply called the lesson *The Hun, Various Kingdoms in the Western Region and the Qiang People* whereas the 1955 version of textbooks adopted the idea of nationality and changed the title of the chapter to *Various Nationality groups in the Frontier Regions During the Two Han Dynasties*. The use of 'nationality' here was a clear sign that this version had started to abandon a Han mono-ethnic vision of China and was rather adopting a multi-ethnic vision and reconceptualising China as consisting of various nationalities. Indeed, consistent with this new multi-ethnic narrative, some of the non-Han groups which had been labelled as 'alien' (*yizu* or *waizu*) in the 1952 version of textbooks were now called 'minority nationalities' (*shaoshu minzu*). For example, one of the questions in the exercise section

following the lesson on nationalities during the two Han dynasties asked students ‘what minority nationalities (*shaoshu minzu*) were there in the south during the East Han dynasty?’ (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.44). The change of label is also a clear evidence that the 1955 version of textbooks now regarded these non-Han groups as Chinese, and China as a multi-ethnic state including both Han and minority nationalities, as the nationality identification project had proclaimed.

The adoption of a multi-ethnic narrative is shown more explicitly in one of the lessons about the Qing dynasty, which was now named *Qing: The Multi-ethnic and Territorially Vast Feudal State* (*Qing: jiangyu guangda de duominzu de fengjian guojia*). The 1955 version of textbooks not only renamed the lesson, but also rewrote its content to reinforce a multi-ethnic narrative. For example, the 1955 version listed more than ten names of minority nationalities living on Qing territory which were probably newly identified in the identification project. After listing their names, the 1955 version of textbooks then claimed that ‘since long ago, the people of various nationalities had developed an intimate and inseparable relationship with the motherland’ (PEP Textbooks, 1955. Vol. 2, p.74).

It is clear from the change of tone of the discussion about Qing history that the CCP had begun to adopt a multi-ethnic narrative to legitimise its claim over most of territories formerly controlled by the Qing empire. As Jones points out:

‘history thus charted the evolution of the nation-state in such a way as to demonstrate incontestable sovereignty over ethnic minority regions, Taiwan, and assorted oil- and mineral-rich atolls in the surrounding seas.’ (Jones, 2005b, p.76).

Indeed, with reference to Taiwan during the Qing, while the 1952 version of textbooks ignored the native groups and solely focused on the story of the Ming loyalist Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga) who was named a ‘national hero’ (*minzu*

yingxiong) for both driving out the Dutch in Taiwan and resisting the Qing occupation (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol. 3, pp.46-7), the 1955 version of textbooks not only started the section about Taiwan with a claim that ‘Taiwan has been our country’s territory since ancient times onwards’, but also in particular mentioned the native groups in Taiwan and named them the ‘High Mountain Nationality’ (*Gaoshan zu*) (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 3, p.75). By introducing the concept of nationalities, and with the narrative of a multi-ethnic China, the 1955 version of textbooks helped to legitimise the PRC’s claims to sovereignty over Taiwan, which was now controlled by the KMT. The change of narrative strategy, according to Jones (2005b, p.76), shows that the CCP had started to realise the problem of simultaneously opposing European imperialism and lauding Chinese expansionism, since the Party had promoted egalitarianism and opposition to imperialism as cornerstones of its ideology. As a result, while the 1952 textbooks still treated many non-Han groups and their lands as Chinese imperial conquests (such as during the Han and Tang dynasties), the 1955 version of the textbooks now sought to prove that these non-Han groups and their lands were not simply Chinese imperial conquests, rather they had been Chinese minority nationalities and Chinese lands since ancient times.

As a result of the adoption of a multi-ethnic vision of China, the 1955 version of textbooks introduced new information about some nationalities such as the Tibetans, Nanzhao, Khitan and Jurchen, including their lifestyles, economic production models and cultural development. It was also observed that the narrative of these lessons introducing these groups now focused more on the groups themselves, rather than their relationship with their Han counterparts. For example, the title of the section on the Khitan was changed from ‘The Development of Khitan and Its Invasion to the South’ in the 1952 textbooks to ‘The Rise of Khitan’ in the 1955 textbooks. Moreover, instead of taking an overwhelmingly assimilationist view like the 1952 version of textbooks, the 1955

versions not only recognised the independent nature of the non-Han groups, but also their influence on the Han, although only to a limited degree. This is illustrated in newly added content in the 1955 version of textbooks which introduced the story of a Han woman who learnt cotton weaving skills from the Li ethnic people on Hainan island during the Yuan dynasty (1271 - 1368 CE) (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.47). In this example, not only the skill of Li people was recognised, but the Han were also represented as learners who benefited from the Li. Although this type of example was a rarity in the 1955 version of textbooks, it nevertheless represented a movement towards a more inclusive and multi-ethnic historical narrative and a new conception of China.

The example also shows that, to reinforce the multi-ethnic vision of China, the 1955 version of textbooks recognised the contribution of these non-Han groups to Chinese development. As a result, instead of focusing exclusively on the antagonism between the Han and the non-Han, the 1955 version of textbooks also provided more information on the communication and exchanges between them. For example, in the lesson on the various nationalities of the Qing dynasty, the 1955 version of textbooks had a section entitled *The Development of Frontier Regions and the Economic Links between People of Various Nationalities* to stress the idea that within the unified country, trade and friendship between different nationalities was greatly developed (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 3, p.74).

The lesson stated that:

‘In a unified country, trade relations among all nationalities were also developed. Businessmen from the inland [Han] transported iron, cloth and tea to frontier, in exchange for the local products and specialties of the people of all nationalities in the border areas. Tibet’s musk, safflower, rhubarb [medical materials], Mongolia’s livestock, fur, Xinjiang’s jade, herbs and lumber in Southwest

China were all sold in the inland market. Beijing, Lanzhou, Xining, Kangding, Yuanling and other cities had become the centre of the economic and cultural exchange of the people of all nationalities.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 3, p.74).

This was very different from the 1952 version of textbooks, which had focused exclusively on the oppression by the Qing of various groups, both Han and non-Han, and the resistance of these groups against the Qing. This new content clearly reflected the political rhetoric of the period which focused on constructing a multi-ethnic China.

6.3.2 Conflicts between Han and non-Han groups downplayed and reinterpreted

Since these non-Han groups were now regarded as Chinese minority nationalities to some degrees, the 1955 version of textbooks now attempted to update the non-Han dynasties as equivalent to Han dynasties, which alone had been regarded as ‘Chinese’ in the 1952 version of textbooks. This change of narrative is clearly reflected in changes of the titles of the lessons about *Struggles between the Northern Song and Liao and Western Xia* in the 1952 version of textbooks which regarded the non-Han regimes as ‘enemy’, to *Relations between Liao, Song, Xia and Jin* in the 1955 version which tended to treat the Han and non-Han polities as equal dynasties. Indeed, the lesson clarified the relations between these regimes in the first sentence of the lesson: ‘Liao [Khitan], Song [Han], Xia [Tangut] and Jin [Jurchen] were kingdoms standing side by side from the 10th to the 13th centuries.’ Baranovitch (2010, pp.93-4) argues that this suggests that these regimes founded by non-Han groups ‘were accepted, at least more than before, as part of Chinese history and not just as external others with whom the Song, as the only Chinese polity, had to deal.’ Moreover, it is noted that

the Liao is now listed before the Song in the title of the lesson, which reflects the correct order of the years when they were founded.

Although the 1955 version of textbooks still discussed the rivalry between the Han and non-Han, the term 'enemy' was abandoned and the conflicts were downplayed since these groups were all regarded as Chinese. As a result, Khitan Liao's 'invasion' (*qinrao*) of Song was replaced with information that the Liao 'went down south' (*nanxia*), and detailed descriptions of the cruelty of the Khitan Liao and Jurchen armies were also simplified (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, pp.35-6). Moreover, the strong language used in the 1952 textbooks to describe the Khitan invasion of the Song (e.g. 'accumulation of hundreds of thousands of skeletons') had now been removed, and instead the 1955 textbooks simply noted that 'many people were killed and injured, and the wealth and livestock around Kaifeng city [the capital city of Song] were almost plundered into empty' (*ibid.*, p.26).

Unlike the 1952 version of textbooks, which had adopted socialist ideologies such as class but only applied them to non-Han 'foreigners' implicitly, the 1955 version of textbooks now clearly used the concept of class to interpret inter-ethnic relations. This reflected the combination and incorporation of a multi-ethnic and socialist narrative during the period. As one particular Chinese theoretical document drafted in the mid-1960s claimed:

'Nationalities and classes are questions that are interrelated. The question of nationalities is in essence a question of classes. [...] This is a Marxist-Leninist principle. It is a principle that we must keep firmly in mind when we examine and deal with the question of nationalities.' (Liu, 1966, p.4-5, cited in Hawkins, 1978, p.150).

Reflecting these notions and propaganda such as 'nationality struggle is a matter of class struggle' (Hawkins, 1983, p.192), the conflicts between these non-Han

regimes and the Han were now reinterpreted in accordance with the concept of class struggle. In the same lesson about the conflicts between the Khitan, Jurchen, Tangut and Song, the 1955 version of textbooks clarified at the beginning of the lesson that:

‘The relationship between these kingdoms was mainly the peaceful, communicative and friendly relations between people [of these kingdoms]. However, due to the conflicting interests between the ruling classes [of these kingdoms], these kingdoms often waged wars against each other.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.55).

It is clear from this statement that by adopting the concept of class, the 1955 version of textbooks highlighted the class differences within each group and blamed the ruling elite for inter-ethnic conflicts. This is different from the 1952 textbooks, which although they also adopted a class narrative, stressed the racial nature of these conflicts to reinforce the rivalry between the Han as ‘us’ and non-Han groups as ‘others’. As Jones (2005b, p.77) also points out, this reinterpretation clearly helped to ‘portray ethnic relations as harmonious and egalitarian’ and ‘emphasise the dominant theme of integration, unity, and friendship between nationalities.’ In this way, the previous wars between Han/China and non-Han/foreigners were now deliberately distorted to create a vision of a socialist multi-ethnic China where *people* of all nationalities enjoyed a harmonious relationship.

6.3.3 The rule of non-Han groups as Chinese rule

Since the non-Han groups were now regarded as Chinese minority nationalities, their rule in history was now portrayed less negatively than in the 1952 version of textbooks. Introducing the Mongol and Manchu rule, the 1952 version of textbooks focused exclusively on how these alien rulers destroyed the Chinese

economy and how the Han groups suffered from their rule. However, this narrative was changed to some degrees in the 1955 version of textbooks. For example, with regard to Mongol rule, at the beginning of the lesson, the 1955 version of textbooks highlight the idea of Yuan as ‘a unitary state with vast territory’ and state that ‘since then Tibet had become part of the territory of the motherland’ (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, pp.46-7). The mention of Tibet here was probably due to the escape of the Dalai Lama to India in 1959, a year before this revised edition of the 1955 version was published, so there was a need to promote the idea that Tibet was part of China territory since the Yuan dynasty. But it is also clear that the 1955 version of textbooks now highlighted the contribution of the Mongols to the unity of the motherland, which helped to reinforce a multi-ethnic concept of China and legitimise Chinese claims to frontier regions, including Tibet. The 1955 version of textbooks now also noted the improved economic production during the Yuan period, although they implied that it was based on the economic efforts of the Southern Song and attributed to the hard work of the labouring people (*laodong renmin*) of Yuan (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.47). As the lesson stated:

‘On the basis of the economic development in the Southern Song dynasty, the labouring people of the Yuan dynasty worked hard, [so that] the production was developed to some degrees. [...] On the basis of the handicraft industry developed in the Song dynasty, the handicraft industry in the Yuan dynasty developed further. At that time, there was developed cotton textile industry.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.48).

After recognising these developments during the Yuan dynasty, the lesson then acknowledged the prosperous development of cities during this time:

‘The territory of the Yuan dynasty was vast and the commerce was developed. *Yuan Dadu* [the capital, approximately now Beijing] had close commercial ties with many cities in northern China and western regions, with densely populated residents and many foreign businessmen living outside the city. Hangzhou was the centre of overseas trade and developed further on the basis of prosperity in the Southern Song dynasty.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.48).

This is strikingly different to the 1952 version of textbooks which not only saw the rule of the Mongols as devastating for the Han and Chinese economy, but also used strong language which was likely to incite hatred towards the Yuan and Mongols, and sympathy and patriotism towards the Han. Moreover, although the discriminatory policy against the Han in the Mongol Yuan dynasty was still discussed in the 1955 version of textbooks, only two paragraphs were used to do this, whereas in the 1952 version of textbooks an entire section was allocated to it (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.48). In fact, in contrast to the content in the 1952 version of the textbooks, which provided detailed information and stressed the extreme suffering experienced of the Han group due to the Yuan discriminatory policies (e.g. the use of female sexual insults directed towards the Han people), the overall narrative in the discussion of the same issue in 1955 textbooks was different:

‘The rulers of the Yuan Dynasty used the Mongols and the people of the colour [people of Central Asia] to rule other peoples, and adopted various drastic measures to prevent the people from revolting. No Han men and Southern men [*nanren*] were allowed to collect and make weapons, raise horses, do hunting, practice martial arts, organise assembly or even a market, and practice

nocturnal passage. The Mongolia army was stationed all over the country to suppress the people.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.48).

Although the text above from the 1955 textbooks still highlighted the discriminatory policies against the Han adopted during the Mongol rule, the language employed did not include any strong words or meanings, as had been stressed in the 1952 textbooks. As a result of these changes, students studying the 1955 version of textbooks would learn that the Han were treated unequally during this period, but the language used was mild and unlikely to incite any strong feelings of hatred against the Mongols, unlike the 1952 version of textbooks which were designed to evoke stronger feelings of patriotism.

The same change also applied to the Manchu rule during the Qing dynasty. The Qing was portrayed as an alien expansionist empire in the 1952 version of textbooks, fiercely resisted by both the Han and other non-Han groups. However, although the 1955 version of textbooks was still reluctant to fully regard the Qing as China, for example, taking a rather neutral stance when discussing the conflict between Manchu Qing and Zunggar Mongol, the Qing’s contribution to national unity and economic development were nevertheless recognised and highlighted, and the previous discussion of the resistance by various groups against Manchu conquest either downplayed⁴³ or completely removed. For example, the 1955 version of textbooks removed the discussion of non-Han groups such as the Uyghur group who fought for independence because this kind of history

⁴³ The previous discussion of the Qing’s strategy of assimilation in southwestern China (*gaitu guiliu*) as ‘forcing the Miao and Dong groups to be ruled directly by the Qing and making it more convenient to enslave and exploit these groups’, and praise for the resistance of these groups (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol. 3, p.56), was now downplayed and the 1955 version of textbooks simply stated that this policy ‘had increasingly weakened the power of local aristocrats (*tusi*) and consolidated the control of these groups by the Qing’ (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.73). The details of ‘literary inquisition’ listed in the 1952 textbooks were now also deleted in the 1955 lesson, leaving only one sentence to claim that ‘the Qing used the “literacy inquisition” many times to suppress anti-Qing thought.’ (ibid., p.76)

threatened the imagination of a historical unity of China, even though it was ruled by the Manchu.⁴⁴ Again, the removal of the Uyghur resistance was probably due to the escape of the Dalai Lama, but it is also clear that the 1955 version of textbooks were ready to legitimise Manchu rule over these groups since the Manchu was one of China's minority nationalities.

As a result of the adoption of a multi-ethnic narrative, the title of the lesson on Manchu rule was changed from *The Expansion of the Qing Empire* in 1952 to *Qing: The Multi-ethnic Feudal Nation/State [guojia] with Vast Territory* in 1955. The abandonment of the term 'empire' and its replacement with 'nation/state' is significant here, as this implied a reconceptualisation of Qing from an expansionist imperial power, as Perdue (2005) argues, to a multi-ethnic nation whose territory would be inherited by the PRC.

The adoption of the concept of class struggle in the 1955 version of textbooks also helped to legitimise non-Han rule in China since the resistance of the Han groups against the non-Han were now portrayed as a class struggle rather than a racial struggle as they were explicitly labelled in the 1952 version of textbooks. As a result, introducing the Han rebellion against the Mongol Yuan ruler, the 1955 version of textbooks not only removed the contents about 'struggles with racial meanings' and 'expelling the barbarians and restoring China' found in the 1952 version of textbooks, but also tended to avoid using vocabulary related to nationalities such as Mongol and Han.⁴⁵ Instead, the 1955 version of textbooks

⁴⁴ The 1955 version of textbooks simply stated that the Qing controlled the region and that the whole area of Xinjiang was included in the Qing territory (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.73). It is interesting to note that while the 1952 textbook explained that this region was renamed 'Xinjiang' [lit. newly territory] after the Qing occupied it, the 1955 version of textbooks adopted the name 'Xinjiang' without explaining the background. This implies that the 1955 version of textbooks sought to provide a more affirmative stance on claims by minority nationalities and their lands as Chinese.

⁴⁵ Only in the last paragraph of the extra reading materials (which suggests it was less important material) the issue of ethnicity was mentioned: 'after the end of Yuan's rule, the Mongol aristocrats withdrew to north of China (*saiwai*) and still kept some influential power' (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.50).

used words and phrases like 'ruler of Yuan', 'peasants' or 'poor people' in discussing the rebellion (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.48-50). In other words, the rebellion which finally led to the fall of the Mongol Yuan dynasty was not now seen as the resistance of the Han (Chinese) against the Mongols, but instead as an uprising of peasants against a ruling class whose nationality was not emphasised. In a similar way, discussing the resistance of the Han against the Manchu invasion, while the 1952 version of textbooks introduced the resistance of various groups mainly led by Ming loyalists, the 1955 version deleted the resistance of the Ming loyalists but focused on the resistance of the peasant armies (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, pp.70-2).⁴⁶ In this way, the racial nature of the resistance was downplayed, and it became purely an issue of class struggle.

6.3.4 Class as shared identity among nationalities

The adoption of a narrative of class, as Baranovitch (2010, pp.92-3) notes, not only helped to redefine racial conflicts as class conflicts, but also to weaken the mutually exclusive ethnic categories and boundaries that prevailed in the textbooks published in the early 1950s. As a result, the previous clear distinction between the Han and non-Han was blurred, and a shared identity among various nationalities was reinforced which facilitated the construction of a concept of *Zhonghua minzu* (the Chinese nation) in the 1955 version of textbooks, although the textbooks did not use the term. Indeed, the 1955 version of textbooks rewrote history to focus on the shared experiences of oppression among the common people of various nationalities.

⁴⁶ The lesson in 1955 version of textbooks used two sections to introduce the anti-Qing resistance lead by two groups of peasant army, but only mentioned in passing that for a while one group of peasant army cooperated with the Ming loyalist. In contrast, in 1952 textbooks, three sections were used to introduce the anti-Qing resistance and the content mainly focused on resistance lead by different groups of Ming loyalists.

This is clearly shown in the rewriting of the story of the Han oppression of the Qiang people during the Eastern Han dynasty. The 1952 textbooks discussed this issue but the narrative was mainly to condemn the Eastern Han for its brutal treatments to the Qiang people. But now the title of the section was changed from 'The War Waged by the Eastern Han towards the Qiang People' to 'The Collaborative Struggle of the People of Qiang and Han against the Eastern Han Dynasty' (*Qiang Han renmin lianhe fankang donghan de douzheng*), and the focus of the overall story has also been turned towards both the Qiang and Han people being cruelly suppressed by the Eastern Han dynasty so that the 'Qiang and Han people collaborated to resist against the Eastern Han dynasty' (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 1, pp.33-4). This new narrative of the conflict clearly echoes the same strategy used the CCP in its early years to define itself as 'Good Han' who collaborated with minority nationalities to fight against their common enemy – the 'Bad Han' i.e. the KMT or the feudal ruling Han dynasties.

The intention to construct a shared identity based on common experiences of suppression was expressed more explicitly in the description of the peasant uprising in the Northern Wei in 523 CE. The 1955 textbooks now used an entire lesson, entitled 'The Great Uprising of People in Northern China', to highlight the theme of class struggle, and the narrative of the lesson highlighted the idea of collaboration between different ethnic groups uniting in class struggle. As the 1955 version of textbooks wrote:

'Since 523, in addition to the Han people, the people of Hun [*Xiongnu*], Di, Tangut [*Qiang*], and the Sarbi [*Xianbei*] all took part in the uprising; this powerfully proved that the people of all nationalities not only cooperated in labouring working in production, but in class struggles they also cooperated to resist their common enemy, for their common fate.' (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, pp.69-70).

It is clear from this that the 1955 version of textbooks conveyed a narrative that crossed ethnic lines between different groups to build up a common identity which was defined by a shared experience of being oppressed, and of resistance. In this way, the concept of class was used to alter the previous 'us vs them' rivalry between the Han and non-Han and enabled the re-construction of a new vision of Chinese identity. This new identity would be both proletarian and multi-ethnic, as proclaimed in the new Constitution.

6.3.5 Tensions in constructing a Chinese nationhood

Compared to the 1952 version of textbooks, it seems that the 1955 version of textbooks were able to incorporate the minority nationalities in a new narrative, and therefore were able to promote a more inclusive and egalitarian vision of China with all nationalities as equal members of the national family, as the first Constitution of PRC proclaimed. Chinese scholars in the 1950s also praised the adoption of an inclusive narrative of the non-Han groups in this new version of the textbooks (Deng, 1956, p.11; Wang, 1956, p.38). One of the scholars also noticed that the 1955 textbooks used a class narrative to highlight the collaboration between non-Han groups and Han 'in fighting against their common enemy' (Deng, 1956, p.11). It is indeed probably true that the adoption of socialist ideologies such as class to some extent helped the textbook editors to present a more equal relationship between the Han and non-Han.

However, examining the content of the 1955 version of textbooks, one can see that there are acute tensions and inconsistencies in this new historical narrative. First of all, on the one hand, the 1955 version of textbooks promoted socialism and egalitarianism, which were in essence ideologies of internationalism (see Chapter Five); on the other hand, the same textbooks still insisted on Chinese exceptionalism, which was nationalist in nature. As Vickers (2009a, p.61) also points out, 'over and above the similarities with Soviet practice, an insistence on

Chinese “racial” exceptionalism remained.’ Indeed, a primordialist conception of the Chinese nation was still evident in the textbooks, which still traced the history of back China back to Peking Man and the Yellow Emperor and other sage kings, still regarding them as ‘our ancestors’, although the textbooks made it clear that the Yellow Emperor and other sage kings were just a legend (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 1, p.6).

Secondly, although the 1955 version of textbooks now regarded non-Han groups as Chinese and started to stress the friendship and communication between various nationalities in history, it still portrayed the non-Han groups as rival groups of the Han, even though the word ‘enemy’ was not used. This shows the persistence of the traditional Han ethno-centric historical narrative which used the rivalry between the Han and non-Han to reinforce national identity and encourage a sense of patriotism. As a result, the attacks of the non-Han groups, though no longer labelled as ‘invasions’, were nevertheless still portrayed as injustices and major non-Han groups such as the Hun, Turks, Khitan, Jurchen and Mongols were introduced primarily in the context of conflict with the Han and positioned as attackers. Not only was their brutality still highlighted, although to a lesser extent, but the treaties signed between the Han and non-Han were also still described as ‘humiliating’ (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.40). Moreover, the resistance of the Han in conflicts with non-Han groups was still highly praised for its patriotic spirit. Indeed, the Han leader such as Yue Fei was still labelled as a ‘national hero’, even though the main facts about his resistance were moved to the extra reading materials section (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.41).

Similarly, while the 1955 version of textbooks now gave more credit to non-Han rule in Chinese history, this positive evaluation was normally only mentioned briefly and in passing in the context of an overall extremely negative evaluation. For example, although the lesson on the Mongol rule mentioned that

improvements were made during the Yuan dynasty, the main theme of the discussion was still about how the Mongol ruling class (and Han landlords) exploited the poor people, including farmers and handicraftsmen who were mostly Han (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.48).

The 1955 version of textbooks also had less space dedicated to the dynasties founded by the non-Han groups such as the Mongol Yuan or Manchu Qing. For example, they used six lessons to introduce the history of the Tang (618 - 907 CE) and had only three on Qing history (1664 - 1911 CE), despite the fact the two dynasties were of about similar length and both are regarded as great periods of Chinese history. In this sense, the 1955 version of textbooks were still rather similar to the 1952 version, and even though minority nationalities were defined as Chinese in the 1955 version of textbooks and treated more inclusively as a result of socialist and multi-ethnic narrative, they were still treated less favourably and regarded as non-Chinese, albeit less explicitly.

Thirdly, although the cultural achievements of the non-Han were now recognised in the 1955 version of textbooks (though in a very limited way), the traditional prejudice and negative evaluation of non-Han groups were still evident. The culture and civilisation of the non-Han were introduced only a few times and were often not treated as integral to the story of Chinese dynasties but rather presented separately. For example, the textbooks used two lessons to introduce the non-Han groups in the Han dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE) and showed the Han as a multi-ethnic regime. However, in the chapter titled *The Culture of Two Han Dynasties*, there was no information about the culture of the non-Han. Instead, their culture was introduced alongside the introduction of the groups themselves as distinct and separate. This implied that the culture of ethnic minority groups was not fully recognised and only positioned as lower and not 'real' in comparison with Han culture.

Moreover, although in the 1955 version of textbooks the non-Han groups were unlikely to be explicitly labelled as backward, the Han were nevertheless portrayed as more advanced. Narratives like 'non-Han groups learned from the Han' were repeated throughout the 1955 version of textbooks and although the non-Han were now represented as class comrades, they were still portrayed as less civilised. An explicit example of this is when the 1955 textbooks discussed the relationship between the Tang and Tibet, where it was still stressed that the Tibetan leader 'loved the advanced culture of Tang' and (therefore) 'sent young Tibetans to study in Tang' (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, pp.12-3). This reflects a continuing ideology of Chinese culturalism which defined the Han/Chinese identity based on the traditional ideology of the 'division between civilised and barbarians' (*huayi zhibian*). Although the adoption of Communist ideology meant that the previous prejudice and discrimination against non-Han groups was to be denounced, and what was promoted now was the idea of 'equality among nationalities', as proclaimed in the Constitution of PRC, in reality, as Harrell (1996, p.25) points out, the Communist ideology had run into an obstacle which rendered it in practice less like its own theory, but more like the Confucian culturalism, 'with culture as the measure of centrality and Han as the actual centre.'

Fan (2016) and Harrell (1996) also note that the Communist ideal of social evolution itself reinforced and reproduced the rhetoric of Confucian culturalism. Indeed, the categorisation of nationalities into different levels of a lineal-hierarchical structure of social evolution inevitably placed non-Han groups in an unequal situation, since very often the Han were categorised at higher levels than most non-Han groups. As a result, the inequality was reproduced under Communism, and was now supported by the 'scientific evidence' provided by the social scientists sent by the CCP. This, would now be taught to Chinese schoolchildren as objective facts, just like 'the periodic table of the elements or the order of planets around the sun' (Harrell, 1996, p.26). As Harrell (*ibid.*) points

out, this fits in neatly with the continuing Han prejudice against peripheral peoples. In this sense, the Communist project worked well with the Confucian civilising project, both reinforcing the assumption that the Han were more civilised and were therefore the model for the non-Han groups to follow (ibid.).

Moreover, like the 1952 version of textbooks which highlighted the backwardness of the non-Han to legitimise the rule of the Han or the CCP, the 1955 version of textbooks also highlighted the idea of how advanced the Han were, especially when discussing Han expansion and rule. In fact, it seems that the 1955 version of textbooks were more explicit than the 1952 textbooks on this point. For example, when discussing the Qin (221 - 206 BCE) conquest of the Yue people in the south, the 1955 version of textbooks now clearly claimed that 'the Yue people received the technology of using iron tools for farming from migration of the Qin and since then the Yue people had gradually moved forward [*jinbu*]' (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 1, p.33). Similarly, when introducing the Shu (221 - 263 CE, one of the Three Kingdoms) conquest of various minority nationalities in the southwest, the lesson stressed that:

'under the rule of Shu, various nationalities in the southwest had more contacts with the Han nationality; they worked together and exchanged their products and had improved the level of productivity [of these nationalities]' (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p.57).

In this way, the civilising project was used in the 1955 version of textbooks to justify the expansion of the Han/Chinese regimes and their rule to non-Han groups. Therefore, the Communist civilising project, although theoretically very different from the Confucian project and without a particular civilising centre, nevertheless became very similar to it as each promoted a sense of Han superiority and were carried out based on the assumption that the ways of the

Han were better or more modern, although the Communist project was less explicit about this and the assumption was more implicit than the Confucian one (Harrell, 1996, p.26). The non-Han minorities, unless they act like the Han 'who are educated, Hanophone, cultural', would be treated unequally since they were still regarded as 'backward' in their social evolution and in need of learning from the Han (ibid.). In this way, despite its promotion of the idea of 'equality among nationalities' (*minzu pingdeng*), the Communist project was seen by some scholars as one which will ultimately lead to assimilation (Dreyer 1976, p.261-2; Heberer 1989, p.130, cited in Harrell, 1996, p.27). After all, according to socialist theory, all nationalities, and even the nation itself, would all disappear with the arrival of the Communist utopia.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined two versions of history textbooks published in the early years of the PRC. In the 1952 version of textbooks, although the socialist narrative was already adopted to interpret Chinese history, the previous KMT approach of a Han ethno-centric exclusivist vision of nationhood was still dominant, regarding the non-Han groups as 'others' or 'non-Chinese'. After 1952, and learning from the Soviet 'big brother', the CCP launched a series of projects of nation-building, such as the 'nationalities identification', to incorporate the non-Han groups into the Chinese nation. Thereafter, a new conceptualisation of the Chinese nation was adopted in the 1955 version of textbooks, which now generally regarded non-Han groups as Chinese minority nationalities. This new positioning of the non-Han groups was clearly part of the Chinese modern nation construction strategy to incorporate non-Han groups into a new Chinese nationalist narrative which reinforced the idea of China as a multi-ethnic country.

However, there were still competing narratives in the textbooks, not only between the socialist idea of equality among nationalities and the continuity of previous

prejudice of Confucian culturalism, but also between the socialist idea of identity based on the internationalist concept of class and a continuing notion of a primordialist concept of identity primarily based on the nationalist ethno-cultural identity of the Han. As a result, while the Han still remained the essential national subject, the non-Han groups, now dubbed minority nationalities, were still treated unequally and unfavourably in the 1955 version of textbooks and portrayed as the culturally and technologically inferior objects of a Han civilising mission.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1976), which saw the radicalisation of socialist ideology, minority nationalities, history curriculum and textbooks publication were all seriously influenced. Scholars such as Bass (1998) argue that minority nationalities generally experienced brutal suppression and all expressions of ethnic identity, including culture, religious activities, local festivals and even use of native language in teaching materials in schools were attacked and condemned in the name of 'destroying the feudal'. Extreme Marxist beliefs dominated, and it was asserted that there were no differences between different nationalities worth mentioning; the only important distinction between groups was that of class. As Bass notes:

'anything that could be labelled "nationality" became the focus of attack on the grounds that ethnic characteristics emphasised differences between nationalities and created tension between them which was contrary to the concept of communism.' (Bass, 1998, p.20).

According to Jones (2005b, p.78-9), during the early years of the Cultural Revolution the Ministry of Education ceased to function and schools and colleges were closed down or transformed into sites of political slogan-mongering. The history curriculum was banned as it was regarded as 'a stew of feudalism, capitalism and revisionism' (*feng, zi, xiu da zahui*) (Jones, 2005b, p.79; RICT,

2010, pp.269-79). History classes were only reintroduced in the 1970s (during the latter stages of the Cultural Revolution), but the curriculum and textbooks were still decentralised. Although it is difficult to know exactly what was taught in schools during this period, scholars have found that local versions of textbooks from the period generally focused on instances of class struggle such as peasant uprisings, and attacks on Confucianism. The issue of minority nationalities was certainly not treated seriously. It was only at the end of 1970s (a couple of years after the end of the Cultural Revolution) that the CCP started to reissue nationwide unitary history textbooks. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7. Modernising and Transforming China: Ethnic Minority Groups in Chinese History Textbooks between 1976 to 1989

7.1 Introduction

Chairman Mao died in 1976, and this signalled the end of the ten-year Cultural Revolution. Deng Xiaoping, who was first re-appointed as vice-premier with responsibility for education, began to assume the supreme leadership in late 1978. Deng is widely perceived as a reformer. In 1978 he instituted the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP which came to be seen as a turning point in the ideological domain and national development strategy. From then, China entered in the 'Reform and Opening' era, and the regime's agenda, encapsulated in the slogan of the 'four modernisations' (i.e. modernisation of industry, agriculture, science-technology and national defense), eschewed the radical pursuit of egalitarian social goals that had marked the Mao era.

It seemed in the new era that pragmatism would take precedence over ideology, and this was famously summarised in Deng's dictum, 'it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, as long as it catches the mouse' (Jones, 2005b, p.83). Although the 'four cardinal principles' (Marxism, dictatorship of the proletariat, leadership by the CCP and the socialist road) were still enshrined in the constitution as official ideology, economics had come to be regarded as rather more urgent than political indoctrination and became the new emphasis of China's development strategy (ibid.). Economic development, as seen by the CCP, could only be achieved by high quality human resources. Therefore, the CCP started to re-emphasise education as a means to create experts and mass-

produce productive labour (Bass, 1998).⁴⁷ As a part of the efforts to re-establish a selective education system to cater for the needs of economic development, in 1977 the CCP reinstated the competitive national university entrance examination (*gaokao*), which had been abolished during the Cultural Revolution. Nine years of compulsory education was also legislated for in 1986 to upgrade the skills of the Chinese masses. It is clear that the aims of education were now to be largely economically orientated and related to productivity and the growth of the nation. These aims were expressed in Deng's other famous dictum from 1983: 'education should face modernisation, the world, and the future' (Jones, 2005b; Wang, 2003, p.10).

Meanwhile, apart from rehabilitating the devastated economy, the CCP also had the difficult task of restoring the damaged loyalty of non-Han groups, whose self-image had been seriously damaged during the Cultural Revolution. With the decreasing deployment of crude or overt political indoctrination in the reform era, the CCP also started to relax constraints on the cultural expression of minority nationalities and to emphasise the principle of equality among nationalities. The liberal wing of the new leadership in the 1980s, under Hu Yaobang (1915 - 1989), who was appointed as the head of the government (though still closely monitored by the 'super leader' Deng), believed that tolerance of minority nationalities and recognition of their specific demands would not only rebuild the loyalty of the non-Han groups to the Party, but would also facilitate the cultural development of these groups, eventually helping the non-Han to achieve their modernisation goal

⁴⁷ This is reflected in a series of conferences and policies which all addressed the importance of the link between education and economic development. Some examples are as follows. In 1979, the First National Planning Conference on Education Science after the Cultural Revolution highlighted that education was the foundation to achieve the Four Modernisations (Lofstedt, 1986, p.153). In 1982, the Twelfth National Congress, listed education as a strategic national priority (alongside agriculture, energy resources, transport and science), for China's programme for economic and social development (Su, 1983, p.5). In 1985, the Central Government issued the policy of 'Decision on Reform of Education System' which aimed at bringing systematic changes to the structure of education in order to cater to the anticipated growth due to economic reforms (Potts, 2003, p.23; Yang, 2009, p.15).

(Bass, 1998; Hawkings, 1983).⁴⁸ As a result, the government issued a series of policies and laws to guarantee the rights of minority nationalities to claim their distinctive cultural identities and pursue their diverse needs (Bass, 1998). In 1984, an important law was enacted: The Law of Nationalities and Regional Autonomy (*minzu quyue zizhi fa*), which intended to protect minority nationalities' rights to cultural autonomy. Therefore, in many ways, the non-Han groups' culture and their special needs were acknowledged and respected, and it appeared that many policies and practices towards these groups reflected a spirit of multiculturalism.

While some education reform measures adopted across inland China were now also implemented in non-Han regions, one of the most important tasks for the recovery and reform of the Chinese education system after the Cultural Revolution was to edit and publish a new version of the textbooks. In 1977, Deng highlighted the crucial role of textbooks and demanded the standardising and unifying of textbook content for schools across China (RICT, 2010, p.287; Shi & Fang, 2012, p.273). Following his order, the Education Ministry produced new syllabuses in 1977 and a new version of history textbooks for junior middle school students was published in 1978. The Education Ministry continued to revise the content of the textbooks and published another two versions in 1981 and 1986. The content of these successive versions was rather similar. The 1978 and 1981 versions of textbooks were based on the same syllabus published in 1978, so there were only very minor changes between the two versions of textbooks (Shi & Fang, 2012, p.304, 308). Although the 1986 version history textbooks were based on a new syllabus published in the same year, their structure and contents were still based on the previous versions, basically simply removing some of the

⁴⁸ Hu Yaobang visited Tibet in 1980 and during his visit, he learned that Tibetan cultures had been particularly destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. After his visit, Hu required not only genuine autonomy for Tibet but also respect for ethnic minority cultures such as religious beliefs.

1981 content (RICT, 2010, p.356; Shi & Fang, 2012, p.316). In other words, the 1981 and 1986 textbooks were simply updated versions of the 1978 version of textbooks.

Therefore, this chapter will analyse these three textbook versions together. It will focus on comparing the differences in portrayal of non-Han groups in the three textbooks, compared with the textbooks published in the previous period (1952 and 1955 versions). By doing so, it will show how the shift of the political ideology of the central government in Beijing from socialist political indoctrination to the pursuit of economic development affected the content of the textbooks, and in particular the portrayal of minority nationalities. It will also examine the minor differences between the three versions during this period, as these subtle changes reveal much about how the regime continually revised the historical narrative in its efforts to further the incorporation of non-Han groups into a new vision of China, in the context of a decreasing emphasis on egalitarian socialism.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. In the first section, I will analyse how the decreasing socialist ideology in history textbooks after the end of Cultural Revolution affected the portrayal of non-Han groups. As textbooks published in previous periods tended to use a class struggle narrative to interpret inter-ethnic conflict, this section will analyse how the textbooks published in the reform era dealt with such issues. The second section will discuss what new narrative strategies were adopted in textbooks to integrate non-Han groups into the national historical narrative, and what this means for understanding the construction of Chinese nationhood. The penultimate section will focus on the tensions and contradictions involved in representing non-Han groups in relation to this new concept of China.

7.2 Ideological change and the portrayal of non-Han groups in the 1978, 1981 and 1986 textbooks

7.2.1 The continuing socialist narrative in the 1978 version of textbooks

When the 1978 version of textbooks were prepared and published, Deng had not yet consolidated his leadership in the central government and the ‘two whatevers’ of Mao’s appointed successor Hua Guofeng (1921 - 2008) was still regarded as the guiding ideology.⁴⁹ Senior party leaders were still focused on eliminating the influence of so-called ‘left extremists’ represented by the Gang of Four (*si ren bang*), and consolidating party control after the Cultural Revolution. As a result, partly due to the tight schedule, and partly because new or reformed interpretations of the past had not been agreed on, the 1978 version of textbooks generally retained the basic historical narrative of those published before the Cultural Revolution (Jones, 2005b, p.81). The most urgent work was to ‘correct the mistaken historical views promoted by the Gang of Four, especially abandon the historical writing centred around the ‘history of struggles between the Confucians and Legalists (*rufa zhizheng*)’ (RICT, 2010, p.288).

According to Jones (2005b, p.81), the 1978 history curriculum guideline still heavily focused on teaching of socialist ideologies such as historical materialist laws and the revolutionary tradition of China. Indeed, the 1978 guideline still claimed that historical writing should focus on the idea that ‘it is people who created history’ and ‘class struggles were the engine for historical development’ (RICT, 2010, p.295). ‘History textbooks’, as the guideline required, ‘should use class struggle as the main clue of historical development’ (*ibid.*, p.309). Some Chinese scholars of this period, such as Chen (1981, p.27), also commented that

⁴⁹ The ‘two whatevers’ (*liangge fanshi*) refers to the statement ‘we will resolutely uphold whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao made, and unswervingly follow whatever instructions Chairman Mao gave’ (Jones, 2005b, p.95).

the main task of the new history textbooks was to 'repudiate the history of struggles between Confucians and Legalists as promoted by the Gang of Four' and to 'restore a Marxist historical viewpoint', that is: 'insisting on using class struggles as the main thread for narrating Chinese history.' As a result, not only was the periodisation of socialist evolution still used to divide Chinese ancient history into 'primitive', 'slavery' and 'feudal' stages, but class struggle remained the dominant theme in the 1978 version of textbooks.⁵⁰ As in the 1950s textbooks, almost all the introduction of Chinese dynasties in the 1978 version of textbooks end with a lesson focusing on peasant uprisings, portrayed as the cause of dynastic collapse and the engine of historical progress.

Issues related to non-Han groups were also interpreted with reference to the principles of historical materialism. In fact, compared to the 1955 version of textbooks, the 1978 series went even further in adopting socialist ideologies. For example, introducing some non-Han groups such as the Mongols, the 1955 version simply described them as 'living a nomadic lifestyle' (PEP Textbooks, 1955, Vol. 2, p. 44), while the 1978 version clearly labelled them as in the 'slavery stage of social development' (*nuli zhi*) (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p. 66).⁵¹ Ethnic conflicts were also interpreted through the lens of class struggle. As a result, terms like 'aristocrats' (*guizu*) were continually used to identify those who launched wars against Han regimes. What was new in the 1978 edition was that

⁵⁰ For example, the textbooks used 45 pages to introduce the history of the Qin and Han dynasty and 13 pages were attributed to peasant uprisings which took place during this period of history. Peasant uprisings were also highly praised in the 1978 version of textbooks. For example, introducing the peasant uprising in the end of Qin dynasty (209 BCE), the lesson commented: 'This uprising heavily struck at the landlord class. Their [the leaders of the uprising] revolutionary initiative shines with indelible brilliance in Chinese history' (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 1, p.57).

⁵¹ The 1978 textbooks even provided more evidences to support claims about the social development stages of the non-Han groups and therefore justified the idea of 'social evolution model'. For instance, in the case of Mongol, after the lesson introduced that Mongol was in the 'slavery stage', it continued to say that the Mongol aristocrats owned a lot of herds and slaves and they forced slaves to work for them (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.66). In contrast, the 1955 version of textbooks did not mention the concept of the 'slavery stage' when the Mongol group was introduced, nor was the issue of slavery discussed.

the Han ruling class was also portrayed as involved in attacks by non-Han groups against the Han regime. For example, when the 1978 textbook introduced the invasion of the Manchus and the resistance of the Han peasant army in the end of Ming dynasty, it pointed out that ‘the landlord class of both Manchu and Han collaborated to attack the peasant army fiercely’ (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.17, p.109). This sentence clearly attempted to stress the class nature of the conflict, therefore presenting conflict between the Manchus and Han as class-based. This is strikingly different from the 1952 and 1955 versions of textbooks, as the former highlighted cooperation of the peasant army and the Ming loyalists, and therefore portrayed the fall of the Ming dynasty to the Manchus as a foreign invasion of China, and the latter did not mention the involvement of the Han ruling class in this conflict.

The rule of non-Han groups such as the Khitan Liao (907 - 1125 CE) and the Mongol Yuan (1206 - 1368 CE) were now also interpreted as rule by a ruling class of mixed nationalities. For instance, introducing the Khitan Liao regime, the 1978 version claimed that ‘the Liao became a feudal regime which was mainly controlled by Khitan aristocrats, but the regime also included a lot of big Han landlords’ (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.49). Similarly, racial oppression such as the discrimination policies practised in the Mongol Yuan dynasty was now also interpreted as class oppression (*jieji yapo*), as the 1978 version clarified:

‘Han landlords also took official positions and occupied a lot of land. The poor people of Mongol ethnicity also went bankrupt and even became slaves. The Yuan rulers and landlords of various nationalities colluded closely together to suppress the people of all nationalities, and the class contradiction [*jieji maodun*] between peasants and landlords was remained the main contradiction of the Yuan dynasty.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.72).

This account was very different from that in the 1952 and 1955 versions of textbooks, which focused on the racial nature of the oppression. It is clear from these examples that the 1978 version continued or even selectively intensified the focus on class struggle in interpreting inter-ethnic relations, for the purpose of reducing boundaries between nationalities and constructing a shared identity based on class.

7.2.2 Conflict between Han and non-Han in the context of decreasing socialist narratives in the 1981 and 1986 versions of textbooks

As Deng increasingly consolidated his leadership and Party ideology shifted further away from inculcating revolutionary enthusiasm, the 1981 and 1986 revisions to the 1978 texts revealed a tendency to progressively mute discussion of class struggle. By 1986, not only had a number of peasant uprisings vanished from the narrative, but the remaining coverage of these episodes was greatly simplified; for example, while the 1978 version of textbooks used a whole lesson to introduce the peasant uprisings at the end of Yuan dynasty, the 1986 version of textbooks reduced the content to only one section. Moreover, laudatory comments on leaders of peasant uprisings (such as Li Zicheng, leader of the peasant rebellion at the end of the Ming dynasty) were also removed in 1986. As Jones (2005b, p.85) notes, ‘historical materialist laws were downplayed and communism was pushed into the background.’

This increasing dilution of socialist messages also had an effect on how non-Han groups and inter-ethnic relations were portrayed. As the 1980 Teaching Outline stated, ‘ethnic struggles [*douzheng*] cannot be simply interpreted as class struggles’ (RICT, 2010, p.289). This statement is clearly in opposite to the claim that ‘nationalities and classes are questions that are interrelated’, which was made in the Mao period (as discussed in Chapter Six). As a result, previous descriptions which highlighted the mixed rule of both non-Han and Han, such as

the Khitan aristocrats and Han landlords discussed above, were now removed in the 1981 and 1986 versions. Similarly, introducing the conflict between the Jurchen Jin (1115 - 1234 CE) and the Southern Song (1127 - 1279 CE), while the 1978 version used the term 'Jurchen aristocrats' to stress the class nature of the conflicts, the forces were described as the 'army of Jin' in the 1981 textbooks, with reference to the name of the regime founded by the Jurchen people (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.75).⁵² Although these examples are rather subtle, it is clear that textbooks published in 1980s were moving away from orthodox socialism, and that this was reflected in their portrayal of minority nationalities.

As discussed in the previous section, textbooks published in 1978 still highlighted the class nature of inter-ethnic conflicts and non-Han rule as the reason for eschewing discussions of racial antagonism, but how would the editors of the textbooks published in the 1980s deal with these issues in the context of decreasing socialist narratives within textbooks? The example discussed above shows that textbooks published in the 1980s now tended to downplay the issue of ethnicity in introducing ethnic tensions; in this example, the name of the ethnic group 'Jurchen' was replaced by its regime name 'Jin' which does not stress its ethnic background. This 'de-ethnicisation' in discussing conflicts between Han and non-Han groups suggests that the dilution of socialist messages was accompanied by a continuing reluctance on the part of editors to highlight the racial nature of the conflicts in a way that might undermine the impression of inter-ethnic unity. This trend is more widely evident, for example, with respect to the Mongol Yuan regime, while the 1978 version emphasised that 'aristocrats and bureaucrats of ethnic Mongol, Han and other ethnic groups' comprised the Yuan

⁵² The 1978 version states: 'the struggle of the people of Southern Song struck at the Southern Song regime, prevented the southern advance of the *Jurchen aristocrats*, and enabled the economy in the south to develop' (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.62). The 1981 version kept the whole sentence almost intact but only replaced the words *Jurchen aristocrats* by the words 'army of Jin' (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.75).

ruling class (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.71), the 1981 version simply identified the ruling class as 'aristocrats, bureaucrats and big landlords', with terms of ethnicity or nationality all deliberately removed (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.84).

Moreover, by changing the languages used in the discussions, the 1986 textbooks also deliberately tone down the resistance of the Han against the invasion of non-Han groups, which also act to downplay the conflicts between these groups. For example, while the 1978 and 1981 versions lauded the Song army which 'bravely fought against, killed and captured more than half of (the Liao army [Khitan])', the 1986 version simply stated that 'the Song army fought and defeated the Liao army', removing all judgmental adverbs (PEP Textbooks, 1986, Vol. 2, p.12). Similarly, when introducing the Han hero Yue Fei who led the resistance against the Jin (Jurchen), the 1981 version stated that 'Yue Fei's army achieved *splendid results* in battle [*huihuang zhanguo*] in the war against the Jin' (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.79), while the 1986 version simply stated that 'Yue Fei's army won victory many times in the war against the Jin' (PEP Textbooks, 1986, Vol. 2, p.22). Such subtle linguistic changes show that, against the backdrop of a declining emphasis on socialism, textbooks sought to adopt a neutral stance regarding conflicts between Han and non-Han to avoid promoting antagonism between nationalities.

Such changes show that, with the removal of much of the language of class struggle, editors had to find new means of downplaying the ethnic dimension of past conflicts and at the same time incorporating the non-Han into a new non-class-based historical narrative. It seems that their new strategy involved reconceptualising China as a unitary and multi-ethnic state throughout its history. This new narrative enabled editors from the reform era onwards to reinterpret past conflicts between the Han and non-Han groups as 'a quarrel between

brothers, and a scuffle in the family' (Baranovitch, 2010, p.100). As a result, Yue Fei, who was highly praised in previous textbooks and called a 'national hero' for his leading role in anti-Jurchen resistance, was now simply regarded as 'the anti-Jin general' (*kangjin jiangling*) in textbooks published during the reform era (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.59). Similarly, the peace treaty that the Southern Song was forced to sign with the Jin after their conflict was no longer referred to as a 'humiliating treaty' in textbooks published during the reform era. The following sections provide more analyses on how the adoption of this new narrative of a 'historical multi-ethnic China' in the reform era changed the portrayal of non-Han groups and their relationship with the Han in the textbooks published in the new era.

7.3 Embracing a multi-ethnic narrative in 1978, 1981 and 1986 textbooks

Although the 1955 version of the textbooks had already initiated this approach of promoting a multi-ethnic vision of the Chinese nationhood, it was only during the reform era that this idea of a multi-ethnic China came to feature prominently. At this time there was a boom in minority nationality studies, including their cultures and histories, which provided a scholarly reason for the shift from the official 'minorities' policy of the 1980s during the reform era (Wang, 2000, p.28). These changes culminated in a talk given by Fei Xiaotong, the eminent ethnographer and vice-chair of the Chinese National People's Congress in Hong Kong in 1988. In his talk, Fei proposed the conception of a Chinese nationhood characterised by a 'pattern of diversity in unity' (*zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju*), which was subsequently invoked as a guiding principle within official policies and academic papers on ethnic relations. Although Fei stressed the 'oneness' (*yiti*) of the Chinese people and the core (*hexin*) status of the Han, he emphasised China's

multi-ethnic origins and called for more research in this area (Fei, 2013, p.4, 8, 32).

As a result, the history textbooks published after the Cultural Revolution evidenced a shift in the discourse on ethnicity which, according to Baranovitch (2010, p.97), reflected a well-planned project that involved the most senior editors at PEP. The rationale for reform was twofold: first, 'China has been a multi-national state since antiquity [*zigu yilai*]'; and second, 'all the ethnic groups in China are, and have always been, Chinese, despite the fact that each of them is a different nationality' (ibid., pp.97-8). According to Baranovitch (2010, p.98), the two notions were originally taken from an influential article written in 1961 by the Marxist Uyghur historian Jian Bozan (1898 - 1968) - *A Preliminary Opinion on a Number of Historical Issues*. In this article, Jian claims:

'Our country has been a multi-national state since antiquity. Besides the Han nationality, there are also many other nationalities. As a nationality, each of them is a nationality, but as members of a multi-national state they are all Chinese. [...] When we write Chinese history, we should be aware of not separating the history of the Han from the history of other ethnicities in China.' (Jian, 1961; cited in fragments in Wang [2000, p.219, 223]).

Jian's idea of historical multi-ethnic China is a typical example of nationalist historical writing which tends to project the present into the past to legitimise the nation-state as it exists today. As a result, this concept of a historical multi-ethnic China ignores the fact that China was and meant different things in different historical periods (as discussed in Chapter Four), and inevitably suppressed many uncomfortable historical events and facts that challenged this new narrative (ibid.). Needless to say, it also ignores the fact the idea of China as a multi-ethnic state was a rather recent development from the mid-eighteenth century, when the

Manchu Qing experienced a massive expansion through a series military conquest. Nevertheless, it seems that textbooks published in 1978, 1981 and 1986 were ready to ignore all these uncomfortably historical and historiographical complexities and began to reimagine all the non-Han groups that in the past had inhabited the territory that was China at the present as Chinese (ibid., p.100). According to Baranovitch (ibid.), although the claim that non-Han regions and their native non-Han populations had been ‘inseparable parts of our motherland since antiquity’ was not totally new, it was only since the reform era that this claim was ‘fully and systematically incorporated into Chinese history textbooks as part of a new, coherent, multi-ethnic master narrative of Chinese history.’

7.3.1 Reimagining traditional Han dynasties as multi-ethnic

As a result of this new narrative, not only were the multi-ethnic features of dynasties such as the Qing, which had already been depicted as multi-ethnic in the 1955 version of textbooks, were continually highlighted in the 1978, 1981 and 1986 versions, but traditional Han Chinese dynasties such as the Qin (221 - 206 BCE), Tang (618 - 907 CE), and Ming (1368 - 1644 CE) were now all re-imagined explicitly as multi-ethnic. For instance, the title of the lesson about the Qin was changed from *The Centralised and Unified Feudal State* [guojia] - Qin’ in the 1955 version to *The Unified, Multi-ethnic and Centralised Feudal State - Qin* in the 1978 version (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 1, p.46). The addition of the term ‘multi-ethnic’ (*duo minzu de*) in the title shows clearly the attempt of the 1978 version to reconceptualise Qin as a multi-ethnic state, like the PRC. In accordance with this new conception of China, while the lesson about the Qin in the 1955 version did not mention the issue of ethnicity at all, the first section of the relevant chapter in the 1978 version was called the *Beginning of Formation of the Unified, Multi-ethnic and Centralised Feudal State*, and in particular claimed that the unification of the Qin ‘fulfilled the common will of people of various nationalities’ (ibid., p.47).

Accordingly, under this new narrative of a multi-ethnic Qin dynasty, the 'Yue people' (*Yue ren*) which were conquered by the Qin, were now called 'Yue nationality' (*Yue zu*) and were clearly labelled as 'ancient minority nationality in the south of our country' (ibid., p.48). The same lesson in the 1986 version of textbooks also changed the title of the last section from *The Territory of Qin* in 1981 version to *The Development of Minority Nationalities in Frontier Region and the Territory of Qin*, despite the fact that the content of the section had not changed significantly (PEP Textbooks, 1986, Vol. 1, p.47).

The Qin is often regarded by Chinese textbooks (and indeed Communist historiography) as the first unified Chinese state and therefore is often regarded as a prototype of the modern-day Chinese nation-state. Therefore, the change of narrative on introducing the Qin dynasty reflects a significant change in Chinese historical narratives in the 1978, 1981 and 1986 versions of textbooks.

The adoption of the new inclusive and multi-ethnic narrative is reflected more clearly in the introduction of the Tang dynasty (618 - 907 CE), which is traditionally depicted as a prosperous and powerful period of Chinese history and a period with frequent contacts with non-Han groups such as Tibetans, Nanzhao, Turks, Uyghur and Mohe. Here, textbooks editors faced a problem; how to define these non-Han groups and their regimes and their relations with the Tang, and whether they should be included in the historical narrative as part of the national self. While the 1952 version of textbooks clearly depicted the Tang dynasty as an exclusive (though expansive at the same time) Han regime and depicted its relationship with these non-Han regimes as foreign relations, the 1955 version were rather ambiguous about the relationship. However, in the reform period, the textbooks explicitly portrayed these non-Han regimes as part of the Tang, even though they were not. For example, the 1978 version changed the title of the

lesson on non-Han groups to *The Regional Development of Minority Nationalities during Tang* and made the following statement in opening paragraph:

‘Within the unitary, vast and multi-ethnic country [Tang], the link between different nationalities was strengthened; the frontier regions of minority nationalities were further developed; and different nationalities all contributed enormously to the development of motherland.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.14).

It is clear from this statement that by reinterpreting and distorting these independent non-Han groups as Tang-era ‘minority nationalities’, textbooks editors now regarded historical China as ‘everything that existed in the past on the territory that is China today’ (Baranovitch, 2010, p.98). In other words, they projected a vision of the multi-ethnic PRC backwards to the Tang dynasty. Indeed, facing the difficult question of what exactly constituted China at each given point in history, textbooks editors in the 1980s often referred back to Communist historians such as Fan Wenlan who claimed that ‘The historical territory of China includes both the dynasties of the Central Plains and the states that minorities established independently’ (Fan, 1950, cited Wang, 2000, p.224). In the words of historian Jian Bozan:

‘Do not treat all the nationalities that are not Han as foreign peoples (*waiguoren*). [We] have to acknowledge that all the ancient nationalities that ever lived and were active within the present-day territory of China (*jinri Zhongguo lingtu yinei*)’ were all Chinese, no matter what relations they had at that time with the dynasties of the Central Plains.’ (Jian, 1997, p.63).

As a result, the Tang state was now depicted as a typical multi-ethnic state which included various minority nationalities and their lands, just like the PRC. The 1981

version of textbooks contained a map of the Tang state, showing its territory covering all the territories of the groups mentioned above,⁵³ and the general introduction of the Tang also start to embrace an inclusive and multi-ethnic narrative: for example introducing the Tang capital Chang'an as a cosmopolitan city, the 1978 included a sentence which stressed that 'There were different minority nationalities in Chang'an who came from different parts of the country, including Tibetan, Turk, Uyghur, Khitan, Nanzhao and various nationalities from the Western Region [*Xiyu*]' (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.16). The 1981 version further stated that people of these non-Han groups were appointed to official positions in the Tang court or local administrative bodies (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.8), thus reinterpreting Tang as a multi-ethnic state. From these examples, as Baranovitch (2010, p.99) notes, it is apparent that in the reform era 'the notion that everything that existed in the past on the territory of present-day China should be regarded as Chinese became central to the historical narrative in school textbooks.' In this way, this inclusive and multi-ethnic historical narrative had become a central component in the Chinese nation-building project in the 1980s.

7.3.2 Introduction to non-Han groups under this multi-ethnic narrative

Under this new narrative, non-Han groups were also introduced with more information and were treated more equally than in previous textbooks. According to Jones (2005b, p.87), approximately five percent of total history class hours were now specifically allocated to the introduction of minority or local histories. Therefore, compared to previous textbooks, the culture of non-Han groups, their heroes and their contributions to Chinese history, all received more attention.

⁵³ As a result, the territory of the Tang looks even larger than the current territory of the PRC (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.24). It should also be noted that the textbook chose to show the territory of the Tang in its most expansive period which only lasted for a relatively short period.

These changes were made to demonstrate an inclusive and multi-ethnic narrative of the nation, which in the reform era could be used to inspire a newly defined sense of patriotism. As one of the senior editors of PEP history textbooks claimed:

‘In the history teaching of old China, the majority of the patriots and national heroes were of the Han people and there were very few or almost no minority ones. This kind of patriotic education is not complete. The patriotic education that we want to practice today with students is that which would make them love wholeheartedly the unified, multinational, socialist motherland. To reach this goal, [we] have to speak about the history of the nationalities. By speaking about the brilliant history of the nationalities, their heroes and inventions, and by speaking about the contribution that the various nationalities made in every regard to the creation of the great motherland, [we] make the students understand that the unified, multi-national, flourishing motherland of today did not come easily. Thereby, they will love the motherland even more deeply.’
(Wang 2000, p.202).

As a result, the post-Cultural Revolution textbooks now not only highlighted the distinctiveness of the culture and lifestyle of the non-Han groups,⁵⁴ but also for the first time discussed the culture of non-Han groups alongside that of the Han. Previously, the culture of non-Han groups was often introduced separately and generally not included in chapters on the cultural development of Chinese dynasties. However, in the chapter on *Cultures of the Three Kingdoms, Two Jin Dynasties and the Southern and Northern Dynasties*, while the 1955 version of

⁵⁴ For instance, introducing the conflicts between the Qiang and the Eastern Han dynasty, for the first time the 1978 version of textbooks particularly mentioned that ‘the customs, habits, language of the Qiang were different from the Han’ (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 1, p.78). Although the 1978 version did not provide any specific examples about the culture of Qiang people, it nevertheless highlighted the idea that the Qiang had their own distinctive culture.

textbooks did not discuss any non-Han culture even though the Northern Dynasty was founded and ruled by a non-Han group (*Sarbi/Xianbei*) and this was generally regarded a period when non-Han groups co-existed with the Han in northern China, the post-Cultural Revolution textbooks devoted a section to the folksongs of non-Han groups, which were characterised as ‘reflected the lifestyle and emotion of the nomadic nationalities’ (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 1, p.115). The lesson not only quoted a particular folksong of the Sarbi, but also explained the meaning of the folksong to students. In this way, these versions not only told students about the cultural achievements of these groups and therefore showed multiculturalism, but also attempted to reinforce a multi-ethnic vision of China.

Heroes of non-Han groups, although still introduced with less information than Han heroes, received more attention in the post-Cultural Revolution textbooks than before. The most distinctive example is the Mongol leader Genghis Khan (1162 - 1227 CE) who, in the 1978 version of textbooks, was called an ‘outstanding leader’ (*jiechu lingxiu*), and information was given on his rise to power and unification of the Mongol people (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.66). The 1981 version went further by adding information about the year he died and the location of his tomb in Inner Mongolia of the PRC (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.78). In this way, the lesson implied that he was a Chinese hero. This is strikingly different from the 1952 version, which generally depicted the Mongols as non-Chinese and even the enemies of the Han Chinese. The changing depiction of Genghis Khan signals a trend to praise non-Han heroes and portray them as Chinese ‘great men’ under the new inclusive and multi-ethnic narrative,⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Other non-Han heroes also received some degrees of attention. While the 1955 version of textbooks did not include any portraits of non-Han heroes, the 1978 version included the portrait of the Kangxi emperor of Manchu Qing (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.114) and the 1981 version added the portrait of Nurhachi, the founding father of the Qing dynasty (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.124). In addition, in the Question Section following the lesson about the Jurchen Jin history (1115 - 1234 CE), the 1986 version added the name of the Jurchen group leader Aguda (1068 - 1123 CE) and asked students to answer who he was (PEP Textbooks, 1986, Vol. 2, p.19). This shows that the 1986 version now regarded the information about the Jurchen leader as ‘knowledge’ that students should remember.

so long as they could be portrayed as contributing to glory of China (and national unification). On the other hand, non-Han figures who resisted the Han Chinese expansion received no attention, notwithstanding the new emphasis on multi-ethnic inclusivity.

7.3.3 Non-Han rule as Chinese rule and the non-Han as defenders of Chinese national unity in the post-Cultural Revolution textbooks

Under this new ideological dispensation, earlier negative portrayals of non-Han rule, which had been used to inspire a sense of patriotism, were largely removed. For example, when introducing the rule of the Jurchen Jin in northern China, the 1952 and 1955 versions of textbooks generally regarded this period as alien rule and evaluated the Jin rule very negatively, emphasising how Jurchen rulers destroyed the Chinese economy and oppressed the Han Chinese. However, while the 1978 version of the textbooks did not mention this issue at all, the 1981 and 1986 versions not only reintroduced Jin rule to provide a more inclusive conception of China during this period, but also completely changed the tone and represented the Jin rule in a very positive way:

‘Along with the development of the economy in the south [i.e. the Song], Jin had also implemented some measures to restore agricultural production in the north. During the reign of Jin Shizong Emperor, the government advocated opening up wasteland, using the Yellow River’s old riverbed to carry out farming and recruiting farmers to cultivate. In areas where there was a crop failure, the government reduced their tax. In this way, the economy in the north had been restored and developed.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.75).

Moreover, although the three versions still discussed the oppressive ethnic policies of the Mongol Yuan dynasty, the focus on these was greatly reduced. While the 1978 version still used the phrase 'ethnic oppression policy' (*minzu yapo zhengce*) (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.71), the 1981 and 1986 versions changed the phrase to 'ethnic division policy' (*minzu fenhua zhengce*) (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.85; PEP Textbooks, 1986, Vol. 2, p.35), toning down tensions between the Han and non-Han which were seen as unhelpful for projecting the vision of a multi-ethnic China. In fact, examples of the Han experiences of suffering due to discriminatory Mongol policies, which were detailed in the 1952 textbooks and to some degree simplified in the 1955 textbooks, were completely absent from the 1978, 1981 and 1986 textbooks.

While the negative messages about the Mongol rulers were largely removed from the post-Cultural Revolution textbooks, new information was introduced focusing on the contribution of the Mongols to the unification of 'our country' (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.66). The Mongol defeat of the Southern Song had been described as foreign occupation and a national disaster in previous textbooks, but the relevant lesson now claimed that the '[Mongol] Yuan united China', and 'the unification of the Yuan had enhanced the development of our country as a unitary and multi-ethnic state and helped ethnic fusion [*minzu ronghe*]' (ibid.). The lesson now also added a new section to introduce the establishment of national administrative systems by the Yuan, for example, the provinces system, which covered not only the regions of 'China proper', but also Tibet and Xinjiang.

This newly added content clearly shows that a completely new narrative had been adopted to not only recognise the contribution of the Mongols to the development of China, but also to reinforce the idea of national unity incorporating both Tibet and Xinjiang. Clearly this new way of interpreting non-Han rule helps to reconstruct an imagination of a historical multi-ethnic China, which in turn helps

to justify Chinese control over its vast frontier regions, such as Tibet and Xinjiang, which were gained through the expansion of these previous 'alien' rulers. Indeed, talking about Tibet during the Yuan dynasty, the lesson now stressed that the Yuan central government 'appointed officials in Tibet, sent garrisons, made household registers, and practiced effective rule' (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, pp.67-8).⁵⁶ In this way, by reinterpreting the non-Han rule as Chinese rule, these textbooks attempted to reinforce the legitimacy of PRC claims to sovereignty over Tibet.

To present a more positive image of Manchu rule in the Qing dynasty, while the 1978 and 1981 versions of textbooks still continued an abbreviated version of the previous anti-Qing narrative, elaborating on the oppressive nature of the Qing and the extent of Han (and non-Han) resistance, the 1986 version deleted this whole lesson. In other words, until 1986 the 'alien' nature of the Qing was not discussed at all and the Manchu rule was now also fully justified as Chinese rule. More interestingly, in contrast to the 1952 and 1955 versions of textbooks, which depicted the Manchus as invaders and alien rulers, textbooks now clearly depicted the Qing as defenders of national unity, by virtue of their role in cracking down on internal secessionists and defeating outside colonisers. Indeed, the conflicts between the Qing and Zunggar Mongols, which were previously depicted as competition between two expansionist powers, were now reinterpreted as Qing efforts to struggle with the 'secessionist power of the Zunggar aristocrats' (*zhungaer guizu fenlie shili*) who 'colluded with Tsarist Russia' and 'waged wars against the Qing central government' (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.119-21).⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Examining History Curriculum Guidelines published in the 1980s, Jones (2005b, p.85) also found that the content about 'the peaceful liberation of Tibet' in modern Chinese history was given prominence, whereas the same content was not mentioned at all in the 1978 Outline.

⁵⁷ In addition, examining the content about this conflict, it is observed that the Zunggar leader Geerdan was now portrayed very negatively, i.e. he was labelled as 'reactionary aristocrat' (*fandong guizu*) who 'crucially ruled'

The use of 'secessionist power' and 'central government' here is notable, clearly showing an attempt to redefine the nature of the conflict as a Qing effort for national unification. Indeed, now not only the title of the section was called 'Pacifying the Rebellion of the Zunggar Reactionary Aristocrats' (*pingding zhungaer fandong guizu de panluan*), but the title of the lesson was also changed to *The Struggles of the Qing for Consolidating the Unification of [a] Multi-ethnic Country*.

Similarly, the Uyghur (*Huibu*) resistance against the Qing conquest, which was highly praised in the 1952 version of textbooks but removed from the 1955 version, was reintroduced but reinterpreted in the 1978-86 versions as a 'rebellion [*panluan*] of the Uyghur reactionary aristocrats' which was 'pacified' (*pingding*) by the Qing (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, pp.121-2). Again, opposite narratives were adopted in the introduction: while the Uyghur leaders of the resistance were described in the 1952 version as 'heroes' supported by Uyghur people who fought 'bravely' for independence, now the Uyghur leaders were portrayed very negatively, as someone who were condemned by the Uyghur people. As the lesson claimed:

'After pacifying the rebellion of the Zunggar aristocrats, the Uyghur reactionary aristocrats Big Khwaja Mu [*Da Hezhuomu*] and Little Khwaja Mu [*Xiao Hezhuomu*] rebelled as well. In 1758, Emperor Qianlong sent troops to repression. Uyghur people bitterly hated [*tonghen*] the exploitation of the Big and Little Khwaja Mu's so they actively supported the war against rebellion.' (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.121).

(*canbao tongzhi*) various nationalities including the Uyghur, Kazak, and Mongol, whereas the Qing were portrayed positively as actively supported by these nationalities (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, pp.119-21).

This opposite narrative of the issue shows that under this new conception of China, not only were the non-Han rules portrayed as Chinese rule within the textbooks published in the reform era, but clashes between non-Han groups were also reinterpreted as an effort by the Chinese central government to fight for national unity. It should be noted that in justifying Qing's suppression of both rebellions, the textbooks now have deliberately added the role of foreign colonisers into the narratives, the Russians in the case of the Zunggar rebellion and the British when the Uyghur rebelled (ibid., pp.119-23). When introducing the Zunggar rebellion, the lesson repeated four times that the Zunggar Mongols were incited by the Russian Tsar who had 'schemed' (*yinmou*) to 'invade' (*qinlue*) China (ibid.). This narrative was also applied to the Uyghur rebellion, and when another Uyghur rebellion was described during the Qing rule, it was claimed that:

'In 1820s, the grandson of Big Khwaja Mu, Zhanggeer, rebelled again. When he was young, he was in collusion with the British colonists in Afghanistan. The British colonist tried to utilise him as a tool to invade Xinjiang. [...] The British sent spies as advisers to Zhanggeer and provided him with new weapons to help him organising the rebels.' (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.121-2).

It is clear from this statement that foreign imperialist powers were now being described as the new 'evil others' to help the textbook editors establish a new narrative of 'them' versus 'us' (i.e. China), which now included both the Han and the previous 'others' (i.e. non-Han minorities). In this way, by rewriting the historical inter-ethnic conflicts, the textbook editors of the reform era tried to reconstruct a multi-ethnic narrative to embody all non-Han groups into this new inclusive concept of China.

Overall, as discussed in the previous sections, it is clear that textbooks published after the Cultural Revolution evidenced significant change in their discussion of

ethnicity, largely due to a comprehensive reconstruction of the concept of China as a multi-ethnic state, and an effort to project backwards into the past a vision of the multi-ethnic PRC. However, while the non-Han were generally portrayed more positively and non-Han rule was reinterpreted as Chinese rule under this seemingly inclusive and multi-ethnic narrative, there were increasing tensions between this new embrace of diversity and an increasing focus on the nation itself.

7.4 Tensions and competing narratives in constructing the Chinese nationhood in the post-Cultural Revolution textbooks

7.4.1 The turn to patriotism and nationalism in textbooks published in the 1980s

Alongside the dilution of socialist messages in the early reform period came an increasing effort to promote patriotism and nationalism. Scholars such as Jones (2005b, p.85) have also found that History Curriculum Outlines published in the 1980s had evidenced 'continued repudiation of revolution and the promotion of patriotism and national self-confidence through nurturing pride in China's past glories.' Indeed, she found that while 'the masses' had been removed from the 'to love' list in the Curriculum Guideline in the 1980s, 'the motherland' was placed at the top of the list.⁵⁸ This suggests that the CCP began to use patriotism and nationalism to fill the ideological vacuum left by the decline of socialism. As a result, following the Propaganda Ministry Opinion issued in 1983 on strengthening patriotism through formal and informal history education, history as

⁵⁸ Previously, the 'to love' referred to 'love the CCP, revolutionary proletarian exemplars, the masses, and the motherland (Jones, 2005b, p.81).

a school subject received a further status boost to inspire a sense of love to the motherland among students (ibid., p.84).

As a result of this turn to patriotism and nationalism, textbooks published in the reform period increasingly devoted space to past glories, achievements, and great men who had contributed to China's former pre-eminence (Jones, 2005b, p.85; RICT, 2010, p.306). For example, Confucius, who was the object of various 'anti-' campaigns during the Cultural Revolution and was still being portrayed in the 1978 version of textbooks as a reactionary ideologue whose negative influence had obstructed social and economic development, was partially rehabilitated as a 'thinker' and 'educator' in the 1981 and 1986 versions (Jones, 2005b, p.82).

Similarly, textbooks in the reform period devoted much space to introducing the glorious periods of Chinese history such as the Han (206 BCE - 220 CE) and Tang dynasties (618 - 907 CE). For example, the 1978 version of textbooks used three pages to introduce the 'stable', 'glorious' and 'powerful' Tang under the rule of Emperor Tang Taizong, who was now also highly praised for his ruling strategy (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, pp.8-10). This is very different from the previous period, when Great Men were generally not discussed in detail since historical writings during that period all adhered to the idea of 'abandoning the history of the ruling class'. Moreover, the 'Four Great Inventions' of China, which refers to typography, the compass, gunpowder and paper-making, also received more attention in these textbooks published in the reform period, since they were 'the important symbol for our country to be recognised as an ancient civilisation in the world [*shijie wenming guguo*]' (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.93). Clearly, all these new narratives were used to inspire a sense of pride about the motherland among students.

7.4.2 The wholeness of the nation versus the multi-ethnic feature of the nation in the post-Cultural Revolution textbooks

Although patriotism and nationalism were promoted as a ‘timeless, class- and ethnicity-transcending, unifying force’ in textbooks published in the reform period (Jones, 2005b, p.85), they nevertheless created tensions for the newly adopted inclusive and multi-ethnic conception of China which had also been particularly promoted in the same textbooks. Clearly, non-Han groups now received more attention than in previous textbooks, and in many ways, China had been reconceptualised as an ancient multi-ethnic state. However, it is also apparent that in the same textbooks the idea of national unity featured much more prominently, which suggests a message of one-nationhood and in many ways conflicts with the multi-ethnic narrative adopted in the same textbooks.

When introducing the history of China’s origins, the early reform-era textbooks all included a new statement to stress that the ancestors of the various nationalities had all already existed within the ‘territory of the motherland’ several thousand years ago (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 1, p.6), thus projecting an image of multi-ethnic China back into pre-history. However, the same textbooks also used the phrase ‘the ancestors of the *Zhonghua minzu*’ (the Chinese nation) to trace a sense of collective identity into pre-modern history (ibid., p.1). In fact, these textbooks also were the first to introduce the term *Zhonghua minzu*, which clearly represented an effort to reinforce the idea of ‘wholeness’ of the Chinese nation. This focus on the Chinese nation as a ‘single entity’ was inevitably in tension with the narrative of multiple origins described above.

Indeed, the textbooks published in the Reform era emphasised ‘national unity’ more prominently than previous textbooks. For example, in the 1955 version of textbooks, the word ‘unification’ only appeared in the title of the lesson about the Qin dynasty, but in the reform-era textbooks the word appears in several more

lesson titles (e.g. the unification of Western Jin, of Sui, of Yuan and of Qing). However, while this involved legitimising non-Han rule as Chinese rule and reinterpreting inter-ethnic conflicts as wars against rebellion, it nevertheless limited the ways in which non-Han groups could be described. Since very often these non-Han groups inhabited frontier regions, they were considered symbolically important to the idea of 'national unity'. As a result, in these textbooks non-Han groups were often introduced in the context of being under central rule or contributing to national unity – both being helpful to reinforce the idea of national unity and stressing the idea of the wholeness of the nation. For example, the 1978, 1981 and 1986 versions of textbooks all featured a new section introducing Tibet during the Qing dynasty. Titled *The Consolidation of the Qing rule in Tibet (Qingchao jiaqiang dui xizang de tongzhi)*, this focused exclusively on legitimating Qing rule, describing the granting of official titles to the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama and establishing a 'Minister Resident in Tibet' (*zhu zang dachen*) to represent the Central government there (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.122). Moreover, the lesson particularly stressed that future generations of Dalai and Panchen Lamas must be canonised by the Central government. It is clear that the introduction of Qing Tibet was intended to reinforce the idea of central rule in frontier non-Han regions and legitimise the Chinese claim of sovereignty there.

Similarly, in the same lesson, the 1981 version of textbooks also added a new paragraph to introduce the story of the Torghut Mongols (*Tuerhute*) to highlight the theme of national unity:

'Torghut is a branch of Mongolia in the west of China. In the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, Torghut moved westward to nomadic areas in the lower Volga River and was controlled and oppressed by the Tsar Russia. In 1770, under the leadership of their

leader of Wobaxi [Ubashi], they decided to return to the motherland so they launched an armed uprising [against the Russia]. After a year of hardship and trek, in the second year, they returned to the motherland and were warmly received by Qianlong Emperor. The return of Torghut to the motherland has composed a glorious chapter on the consolidation and development of our country as a multi-ethnic state.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.138).

Clearly, although the term ‘multi-ethnic’ was used, this paragraph was primarily used to promote the idea of national unity, in this case the unity of population. The independent history of the Torghut Mongols was nevertheless ignored.⁵⁹

In fact, even the textbooks themselves struggled to deal with the tension between the focus on central rule and the promotion of the independent history of the non-Han groups (under the new multi-ethnic narrative), and therefore had to re-adjust their content to resolve the tension. This is shown clearly in the changes in structure of the lesson on non-Han groups during the Tang dynasty. The textbooks published since 1978 all regarded non-Han groups as Chinese minority nationalities, and to stress the central role of the Tang in these non-Han regions. The 1978 version of textbooks changed the titles of several sections from the names of non-Han groups in the 1955 version to names of the Tang’s governing bodies in the respective regions (i.e. *The Establishment of the Protectorate of the Western Regions and Northern Regions*) (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.15-20). The 1978 version also used a lot of space to introduce details of Tang governance in these regions, including the year when the governing bodies were set up, the

⁵⁹ Perdue (2005, pp.292-9) discussed the complexities involved in this ‘return’ of Torghut Mongols. For example, not only some Manchu officials suspected the loyalty of the Torghut Mongols and were rather hostile to them, but the groups were also divided and relocated separately, partly for the reason to weaken their power. Moreover, Qing officials also forced many of them to take up farming for the reason to prevent them from increasing their numbers (ibid., p.298). According to Perdue (ibid.), many of the men had turned to banditry and the women to prostitution.

areas under Tang governance and the appointment of officials by the Tang to those governing bodies (ibid.). Non-Han groups were only introduced as sub-issues under these sections. However, only three years later in the 1981 textbooks, not only was the content about the Tang's central rule in these regions simplified, but the introduction of non-Han groups also became independent sections, showing a shift to focus more on the history of these groups (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, pp.17-20). This shift was continued in the 1986 version which now evidenced not only a continuing simplification of the content about the governing bodies established by the Tang, but also a continuing restructuring of the lesson which now made the establishing of one of the governing bodies a sub-issue under the section about the Turks (PEP Textbooks, 1986, Vol. 1, pp.125-7). The opposite way of structuring the lesson in later versions of textbooks shows clearly an attempt made by textbook editors to downplay the theme of central rule and focus more on the independent status of the non-Han groups. This change clearly contradicts the efforts made by the editors in the same textbooks to highlight the theme of national unity and central rule in the frontier regions, although in this case it appears that the multi-ethnic narrative was superior.

Like the theme of national unity, the related theme of 'ethnic fusion/melding' or 'ethnic amalgamation' (*minzu ronghe*) also featured more prominently in early reform-era texts. For example, the title of the lesson on the Northern Wei (386 - 534 CE), a period when northern China was ruled by the Sarbi group, was changed from *The Reform of the Northern Wei and People's Great Uprising* in the 1955 version of textbooks to *The Great Fusion [da ronghe] of Various Nationalities in the Yellow River Basin during the Northern Dynasty* in the 1978 version (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.105). The change of the title clearly shows a shifting focus from class struggle to ethnic fusion, which is seen as helpful in reinforcing the collective identity of the *Zhonghua minzu*. This idea of

ethnic fusion was highlighted again in the lesson about the Yuan dynasty. After introducing the unification of the Yuan, these early reform-era versions all stressed that this had enhanced the process of ethnic fusion, on which they elaborated as follows:

‘Those of the Khitan and Jurchen nationalities who moved to the Yellow River Basin had interacted with the people of Han nationality for a long period, and they had been continually fused together. So, by the time of the Yuan dynasty, there was almost no difference between them and the Han nationality. Therefore, they were called “people of Han”. Since the Tang and the Song dynasty, especially in the thirteenth century, some Muslim Persians and Arabs came over and settled down in our country, and were known as the ‘people of Huihui’ [*huihui ren*]. They had cohabited and inter-married with the Han nationality, Mongols and Uyghurs etc., and then gradually a new nationality was formed - the Hui nationality.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.67).

Here, although the introduction of ethnic fusion in the Yuan dynasty seems compatible with the concept of multi-ethnic China, by also using these other cases to link the idea of national unification and ethnic fusion together, these textbooks implied a positive evaluation of the idea of ethnic fusion, by the same token implying encouragement of assimilation and promotion of a collective identity above those of separate ‘nationalities’.

It seems here that the focus of the narrative on ‘ethnic fusion’ had replaced that of ‘class struggle’ and represented an important strategy for the editors in the reform era for strengthening the links between various nationalities and consolidating a shared national identity within the textbooks. As introduced in Chapter Five, in the late 1930s both the KMT and CCP had promoted the idea of

'ethnic fusion' to justify the sinification of the non-Han groups and promotion of collective Chinese identity against the backdrop of the Japanese invasion. As will be discussed in the next Chapter, when nationalism became the absolutely dominant ideology in the 1990s, the concept of ethnic fusion was particularly promoted in the textbooks published then to encourage the assimilation of non-Han groups into the Han. In this way, the promotion of ethnic fusion (as a result of focusing on the wholeness of the nation) became an obstacle to the concept of multi-ethnic nationhood.

7.4.3 The continuing privileged status of the Han versus the idea of 'equality among nationalities' in the post-Cultural Revolution textbooks

The increasing promotion of nationalism had not only directly challenged the vision of multi-ethnic China in textbooks published in the reform era, but also weakened the idea of 'equality among nationalities' (as an important element of the multi-ethnic narrative) by encouraging a Han ethnocentric vision of Chinese history. Although non-Han groups were increasingly treated more equally in the textbooks published during the reform period, the Han were nevertheless still privileged and Chinese history was still written from the perspective of the Han, as is shown in the following examples.

First of all, although 1978, 1981 and 1986 versions of textbooks now all promoted an idea of a multi-ethnic origin of China, in these textbooks the Yellow Emperor was now reinstated as the common ancestor of the *Huaxia* (whereas in the 1955 version of textbooks he was simply regarded as 'an outstanding leader' of a tribe alliance in the Yellow River Basin). The lesson explained in a footnote that the *Huaxia* nationality was the antecedent of the Han nationality. So clearly, the new information about the Yellow Emperor implies that these textbooks now not only show an increasing emphasis on a primordialist concept of the Chinese nation,

but also promote the privileged status of the Han, since ancestral narratives of no other nationalities were featured, not even that of Chiyou, the mystical figure who was introduced in the 1952 version of textbooks as the common ancestor of the Miao nationality and who competed with the Yellow Emperor (PEP Textbooks, 1952, Vol. 1, p.4). The heightened status of the Yellow Emperor as the Han's 'common ancestor' clearly shows a contradiction with the multi-ethnic concept of Chinese nationhood which was also being promoted.

Secondly, although conflicts between Han and non-Han had been continually downplayed in the 1978, 1981 and 1986 textbooks, these textbooks still used these conflicts to inspire a sense of patriotism, especially in the context of rising nationalism in the reform period. Indeed, on the one hand, these textbooks now tended to use muted language to discuss the conflict between non-Han groups and the Han. On the other hand, non-Han groups such as the Khitan and Jurchen were continually portrayed as the enemy of Han while the Han resistance and leaders such as Yue Fei were still highly praised for their 'braveness, loyalty and willingness to sacrifice for the country' (although he was no longer labelled as a national hero) (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.57). The same narrative can be found in almost all coverage of conflicts between the Han and non-Han groups in the 1978, 1981 and 1986 versions of textbooks. The 1981 version even featured a separate section called *Yue Fei's Resistance Against the Jin*, showing that this issue was accorded more importance than in the 1978 version (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.70). In this way, although textbooks published in the early reform period tended to downplay conflict between Han and non-Han for the purpose of promoting a multi-ethnic concept of China, in a rather contradictory way they still depicted the non-Han as enemies and used their conflicts to stimulate a sense of patriotism.

This sort of contradiction is especially apparent in the coverage of the Mongol conflict with the Southern Song. As already noted, early reform textbooks tended to praise the Mongols for their contribution to unifying China, but Mongol unification was achieved by defeating the Southern Song. However, in the same lesson, the 'brave resistance' of the people and army of the Southern Song was continually highlighted, and the Han hero Wen Tianxiang (1236 - 1283) was particularly praised for his loyalty and willingness to sacrifice for the Southern Song (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.66). Moreover, the 1981 version also added a question to ask students to retell Wen's story, probably to reinforce a sense of patriotism (PEP Textbooks, 1981, Vol. 2, p.81). However, in the same Question Section, the lesson also asked students to talk about the significance of the unification of the Mongol Yuan (ibid., p.82). Clearly, these textbooks were sending rather conflicting messages to students: if the Mongol Yuan's unification of China should be appreciated, then Wen's resistance against the Yuan became an obstacle and not something to be praised.

Finally, although the culture of non-Han groups was increasingly introduced to celebrate the spirit of multiculturalism, the same textbooks continually and repeatedly highlighted the idea of the Han as more 'advanced' and tended to pay more attention to the idea of the non-Han learning from the Han. This was probably because socialist ideology was in decline and textbook editors were seeking new ways to legitimise Chinese rule over minority nationalities. Traditional Confucian culturalism was therefore re-emphasised to reinforce the superiority of the Han and legitimise their expansion and rule over non-Han groups and regions. As a result, when introducing the Qin (221 - 206 BCE) conquest of the Yue people, while the 1955 version of textbooks only implied the idea of the Yue benefiting from learning from the Han, the 1978 version now explicitly pointed out that the people of Yue nationality 'gradually learned advanced production technologies' of the Han nationality, which enhanced local

development (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 1, p.48). In a similar way, to legitimise Tang rule in the non-Han regions, the early reform-era versions also repeatedly highlighted the idea of the non-Han learning from the Han in almost every mention of the non-Han groups during the Tang dynasty. For example, introducing the Uyghur group (*Huihe* or *Huihu*) during the Tang dynasty, the 1978 version of textbooks added a paragraph to tell students that the Uyghur people liked the poems and essays of the Han (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.18). It then introduced a Uyghur poet and provided one of his poems which stated that ‘the Han people had (always) been my/our teachers since ancient times’ (*gulai hanren wei wushi*) (ibid.). Although the lesson claimed that the poem showed the ‘deep and thick’ (*shenhou*) relationship between the people of various nationalities in the Western Region and the Han nationality, this paragraph nevertheless helped to reinforce the idea of ‘non-Han learning from the Han’.

Moreover, it seems that the 1978, 1981 and 1986 versions of textbooks now started to stress the ‘assimilationist’ view (see Chapter Four) and reinforced the idea that to rule the Han/Chinese, the non-Han conquerors had to adopt Han ways or be assimilated by the Han. As a result, when the non-Han rule were introduced in these three versions of textbooks, for example, the Khitan Liao, the Western Xia and the Manchu Qing, the claim of ‘non-Han learning from Han’ were repeated told in all three versions of textbooks. For example, textbooks published in the early reform era not only retained the narrative of the Khitan people learning about various issues, such as farming, weaving and ironworking, from the Han people, but also added a statement which claimed that the Khitan leader Abaoji ‘had increasingly accepted the feudal culture of the Han nationality’ and ‘appointed Han intellectuals to design feudal legislations [for the Khitan state]’ (PEP Textbooks, 1978, Vol. 2, p.47). In other words, although the non-Han rule were now seen as Chinese rule, their legitimacy was justified by their assimilation to the Han.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined three versions of history textbooks published during the period after the Cultural Revolution (1976) and before the Tiananmen protests (1989). It establishes that due to ideological shifts and changes to the national development strategy in the reform era, textbooks published in this period adopted a very different narrative from that of those published in the Socialist period (1949 - 1976), and took a significantly different approach to constructing Chinese nationhood. As a result of this newly inclusive and multi-ethnic narrative, non-Han groups were portrayed very differently, being increasingly regarded as Chinese minority nationalities and their cultures and independent history also being increasingly recognised and discussed.

Meanwhile, however, the turn to nationalism in the 1980s, as part of the Party's efforts to fill the ideological vacuum left by the steady abandonment of socialism, was associated with a heightened focus in textbooks on the idea of national unity and a sense of the wholeness of the Chinese nation. As a result, not only was the Han ethno-centric vision of the Chinese history still dominant in these textbooks, but a new discourse on ethnicity focused on fostering 'unity among the nationalities' and 'a sense of belonging and loyalty to the Chinese state among China's minority nationalities' (Baranovitch, 2010, p.101). This led to a rising tension in the multi-ethnic vision of the Chinese nation. Competing narratives therefore were still evident in textbooks published in the reform era and students in the 1980s still received contradictory messages from them.

Baranovitch (2010, p.101) claims that since no new factual data was presented in the textbooks published in the reform period, ideology clearly constituted the major driving force behind the revision of texts and the changing portrayal of non-

Han groups. However, from the mid to late 1980s, as 'Reform and Opening' accelerated, China experienced 'a potent mixture of economic growth, social problems, and criticism of corruption, cronyism, and the progress and scope of reform from both liberals and conservatives' (Jones, 2005b, p.86). Meanwhile, there were also serious theoretical debates on China's political future which not only challenged the orthodox Marxism-Leninism-Mao thought and the leadership of the CCP, but also inspired a reflection on Chinese identity as represented in the quasi-historical documentary *Heshang* (River Elegy) broadcast in 1988 (ibid.). This mixture of uncertainty and anxiety finally culminated in the massive protests in and around Tiananmen Square and elsewhere in 1989 and the CCP's harsh response. Meanwhile, in the ideological domain, the Party also reacted quickly to condemn over-Westernisation and relied on nationalism as its absolutely dominant ruling ideology. The impact of this ideological change after 1989 inevitably also led to changes in historical writing in school textbooks and in particular in the portrayal of non-Han groups, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 8. Patriotism and ‘Inter-ethnic Solidarity’: Minority Ethnic Groups in textbooks published after 1989

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed that the Communist Party embarked on an ideological turn after the end of Cultural Revolution and textbooks published during the 1980s saw a continuing decrease in socialist ideologies. The establishment of the national goals of Four Modernisations helped China to improve economically during the 1980s, but did not really fill the ideological vacuum left by the decline of socialism. According to Zhao (2004, p.211), ‘except for a few unreconstructed party members and the odd intellectual writing about socialism with Chinese characteristics [...] hardly anyone in China believed in Communism, or was interested in it.’

The disconnect between socialist rhetoric and increasingly non-socialist reality shows the failure of the CCP to deliver a long-term vision to the Chinese people, which had increasingly threatened the leadership of the Party as the state’s ‘spiritual pillars’ (*jingshen zhizhu*) (Zhao, 2004). Meanwhile, the Reform and Opening policy also imported Western liberal thoughts into China in the 1980s and this contributed to the growing political climate in China which challenged the authoritarian rule of the CCP.

By the end of the 1980s, market-oriented reforms had also produced an increasing gap between the rich and poor in China. This rising inequality, combined with popular resentment at growing corruption, ‘spiralling inflation, wage stagnation, and abolition of subsidies’ had caused widespread dissatisfaction with the Party (Jones, 2005b, p.88). This all contributed to social instability in the late 1980s, culminating in the anti-government demonstrations in

Tiananmen Square in 1989, initiated by students but later joined by thousands of dissatisfied workers (Hughes, 2006; Zhao, 2004). Although the CCP managed to suppress the protests and succeed in avoiding the collapse of its regime, unlike its counterparts in Eastern Europe, it nevertheless realised its complete failure to 'curb bourgeois liberalism and strengthen public morality' and sensed the danger of losing ruling legitimacy under the context of declining socialist ideologies (Jones, 2005b, p.88). It was against this background that patriotism (*aiguo zhuyi*) was chosen and heavily promoted by the CCP in order to regain ideological control and re-establish its legitimacy. As Vickers (2009a, p.62) points out, along with the move to pursue more sweeping market-oriented reforms after 1989, the Party made 'a definitive decision to deploy patriotism rather than socialism as the key plank of the Party's new ideological platform.'

Since then, although the CCP has still ostensibly claimed itself to be a socialist party, it has increasingly turned to reasserting its patriotic credentials as 'China's past, present, and future saviour', saving the nation from feudalism, imperialism, Japan, and the Nationalists, the USSR and USA, the bourgeoisie, and now, from China's youth, who had, it was asserted, 'tasted only the sweet fruits of modernisation and not the hard years of bitter struggle, and were thus too easily led astray by the pernicious influences of decadent Western culture' (Jones, 2005b, p.88). This strategy, according to Zhao (2004), was to build on China's tradition of state-led nationalism, identifying China with the Party-state. By doing so, the Party hoped to make people be loyal to the CCP and support its rule. In other words, the CCP was not now seeking to justify its rule primarily on its role in leading the Chinese people to reach the ultimate destination of a socialist utopia, but its role in leading the Chinese people to overcome the peculiar challenges posed by the 'national situation' (*guoqing*) including:

‘the unique vastness and diversity of the population, relative “backwardness”, an overriding need for stability to ensure continued economic growth, and the imperative of preserving national unity in the face of various threats.’ (Vickers, 2009a, pp.61-2).

Clearly, after the Tiananmen protests, the Party had also realised that what was taught in schools was failing to prevent the ‘poisonous foreign weeds’ (*ducao*) that were taking root in young minds (Jones, 2005b, p.88). Therefore, the promotion of patriotism after 1989 involved an intensified focus on ideological education and promotion of patriotic values in Chinese national education system. This was referred as the Patriotic Education (PE, *aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu*) campaign in official discourse which, according to Zhao (2004, p.238), was a ‘state-led systematic engineered project’ to promote patriotism. Zhao (*ibid.*, p.214) also points out that although patriotism had previously been used in conjunction with other political doctrines by the CCP, it had never been ‘singled out as a spiritual crutch for the communist regime.’ The campaign was an intensive undertaking by the CCP from 1991 to 1994, and thereafter patriotism has become one of the fundamental, intrinsic and core values propagated through the Chinese education system (Bass, 1998; Hu & Guo, 2000; Zhao, 2004).⁶⁰

According to Jones (2005b, p.89), although several other directives on moral education were issued by the CCP government between 1989 and 1990,⁶¹ the

⁶⁰ It should be noted that this campaign extended well beyond the classroom, and intersected at many points with popular discourse in the media, literature, film and the arts (Vickers, 2009a, p.62). Museums, memorials and tourist attractions were also been assigned a key role in the dissemination of the patriotic message (*ibid.*). Although the younger generation was especially targeted, the campaign was intended for all Chinese citizens, irrespective of ethnicity or class. Zhao (2004) notes that during the early- and mid-1990s, campaigns of patriotic education were conducted on university campuses, in the People’s Liberation Army and in government work units.

⁶¹ For instance, on the 20th March 1990, the Ministry of Education issued a directive called ‘Using the 150th Anniversary of the Opium War to Carry Out Patriotic Education for Primary and Secondary School Students’. On the 13th April of the same year, the Ministry issued another directive called ‘Opinions on Further Strengthening Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools,’ which warned the danger of domestic and foreign reactionaries to

most comprehensive guideline for PE was promulgated in August 1991 as a response from the central educational department to a letter written by the then Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin, who was appointed as the CCP leader during the Tiananmen crisis. In the letter, Jiang particularly called for greater attention to be paid to modern Chinese history as a means to make students to understand China's national conditions, and therefore develop the right attitudes to the Party's role in leading the Chinese people (Jiang, 1991). It is clear from Jiang's letter that history education was singled out to inculcate patriotic values. Although Jiang referred mainly to contemporary and modern Chinese history to emphasise the 'history of our Party's struggle, so that [China's youth and children] know how difficult it has been to establish the people's state power of today', ancient Chinese history was also highlighted as it could teach students the 'Chinese magnificent culture of more 5,000 years' which is useful to raise 'national self-respect and self-confidence' to counter the influence of 'Western spiritual pollution' (ibid.).

The 1980s also saw an increasing separatist feeling among some non-Han groups, particularly in Tibet and Xinjiang, probably mainly due to their suffering experiences during the Cultural Revolution, and there were mass protests in both Tibet and Xinjiang in the 1980s and 1990s which were also suppressed by the government. Sensing the threat of '*minzu fenlie*' (national/ethnic secessionism) in these regions, the CCP adopted an overriding ideology to manage Chinese inter-ethnic relationship: *minzu tuanjie* ('inter-ethnic solidarity' or 'unity among nationalities'). Although *minzu tuanjie* had always been used as an official rhetoric to regulate ethnic relationships in China, its use has gained popularity since

'corrode' (*fushi*) the youth and stressed the 'strategically important status' of patriotic education in school moral education.

1990s. As Bulag (2002) claimed, *minzu tuanjie* has become an ideological framework that was used to define Chinese-minority relationship.

Moreover, there had been increasing critiques from Chinese scholars in the 1980s who demanded for new history textbooks to cater the needs of economic development in the reform era. Indeed, in a relatively liberal political environment in the 1980s, many Chinese scholars started to criticise textbooks in the 1980s as 'out-of-date' and even urged to remove Mao's writings in textbooks as well as contents about Marxist historical materialism (i.e. class narratives and the socialist developmental model) (Cheng, 1988, p.21; Zhang, p.31; Zhao, p.17). What were required by these scholars were textbooks which would have more pedagogic considerations and can be used to develop students' various skills and abilities that are required for economic development.

It was against this background that the 1992 and 2001 textbooks were published, and the portrayal of non-Han groups underwent significant changes to echo the intensive promotion of patriotism and *minzu tuanjie*. While the 1992 version of the history textbooks was edited based on the 1988 History Curriculum Guideline and its main edit had almost been completed before the start of Patriotic Education campaign in 1991 (RICT, 2010), the 2001 versions can be seen as the first published after the campaign and their editing work was done directly under the guidance of the Patriotic Education. Moreover, there were also changes in editorship, with different chief editors overseeing these two versions of the textbooks.⁶² Therefore, although both versions were published after the Tiananmen protests (1989), in terms of content, there were huge differences

⁶² Wang Hongzhi was the leading chief editor of the 1992 PEP history textbooks. Although she remained director of the committee charged with drafting the 2001 version of the PEP history texts, by her own account she was by this time increasingly withdrawing from direct oversight of textbook compilation (Wang 2000, p.18). Indeed, although she is listed as the director of the committee with overall responsibility for the 2001 History textbooks as well as one of twelve editors charged with writing the volumes on Chinese Ancient History, the chief editorship of the latter was transferred to two other editors.

between them and so this chapter will analyse them separately to highlight the effect of changing dominant political ideology.

8.2 Unity in Diversity: non-Han groups in the 1992 version of textbooks

According to RICT (2010, p.423), the 1992 version had the 'largest reform' in content comparing to previous textbooks, because it was edited based on the 1988 Outline which was the first issued after the Compulsory Education Law. However, despite the significant changes in emphasis and subject matter, the 1992 version largely continued the trend of the 1980s to construct a multi-ethnic concept of historical China. Partly due to the influence of more tolerant and liberal political atmosphere of the 1980s, and partly to the decreasing socialist ideologies in textbooks, the 1992 version embraced the spirit of multiculturalism to replace socialist ideologies such as class to incorporate the non-Han groups in its multi-ethnic nation construction and to legitimise Chinese rule. As a result, the non-Han were treated more equally in the 1992 version, and Chinese nationhood as defined in the 1992 version became more inclusive.

8.2.1 Promoting multicultural spirit: non-Han groups and their cultures

Although textbooks published in the 1980s had already started to include more information about non-Han groups, this information was still generally very short and simple, normally only about one paragraph long. However, partly because the 1992 version are generally longer than previous versions,⁶³ and certainly because of the rising multi-cultural spirit in the 1980s,⁶⁴ the 1992 version of

⁶³ For example, the 1986 textbooks used about 247 pages to introduce the ancient Chinese history up to the Opium War, whereas the 1992 textbooks used 406 pages to cover the same period, not to mention that the page-size of the 1992 version doubles the 1986 version (though the 1992 textbooks also include more pictures and photos).

⁶⁴ It is also noteworthy that Wang Hongzhi, one of the two chief editors of the 1992 textbooks and a former student of Uyghur historian Jian Bozan, already published several articles in the 1980s on the issue of the representation of non-Han groups in textbooks. An examination of her academic publications shows that her research interests in historical studies are also mainly about re-interpreting the role of non-Han groups in Chinese history. Thus, it is likely

textbooks included much more detail about the non-Han groups, though some of the information was provided as extra reading material. Taking the Hun group as an example, both the 1986 and 1992 version introduced the Hun briefly in the lesson on the Qin dynasty (221 - 206 BCE), but when the Hun were reintroduced in the lesson on Han dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE) as a major rival group to the Han, the 1986 textbooks did not provide any further information about them while 1992 version added a whole new lesson on the Hun (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 1, pp.102-3). In this lesson, much more information on the Hun was now incorporated, including a story of its leader Modu Chanyu and the history of a Han-Hun conflict in which the Han were defeated (*baideng zhiwei*) (ibid.). The lesson also included two new sections: one on inter-ethnic marriage between the Han and Hun and another on the cultural communication between the two groups (ibid., p.106-7). In fact, like the Hun, almost all non-Han groups had received more coverage in the 1992 textbooks than in previous textbooks.

Compared to textbooks published in the 1980s, the 1992 version of textbooks generally included more information about the culture of the non-Han which previous versions tended to either ignore or introduce separately. This clearly reflected the multicultural spirit and reinforced the idea of multi-ethnic nature of the Chinese dynasties. For example, introducing the cultural achievements during the Sui (581 - 618 CE) and Tang (618 - 907 CE) dynasties, while the 1986 version did not mention the cultural achievements of the non-Han (although the Tang was portrayed as a multi-ethnic empire), the 1992 version now included such information. For instance, introducing the medical progress during this period, after introducing a Han medical expert (Sun Simiao) and his book, the 1992 version added a short paragraph saying that 'medical studies had also

that her personal academic views also contributed to a more favourable interpretation of non-Han groups in the 1992 textbooks.

developed in minority nationality regions' and then provided an example of a Tibetan medical expert and claimed that his medical writing had laid the foundation for Tibetan medical studies (*zang yi xue*) (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.49). This is different from previous textbooks where only the Han medical expert was introduced. In other cases, the 1992 textbooks also highlighted the ethnic background of some cultural figures. For example, the 1992 textbooks included a painter from the Tang dynasty and told students clearly that his ethnic background was Bohai (*ibid.*, p.61).

To further reflect the multicultural spirit and reinforce the multi-ethnic nature of the Tang, the 1992 version also introduced the idea that one of most popular sports during the Tang was polo, which according to the lesson, was imported from Tibet (*ibid.*, p.67). Since the 1986 textbooks did not mention any of this, it is clear that by including the non-Han cultures, the 1992 version had attempted to construct a multi-ethnic image of the Tang China. Similarly, the 1992 textbooks now also told students that the music of the Tang absorbed (*xishou*) music styles from various nationalities of the Western Region (*xiyu*) (*ibid.*, p.64). Along with the introduction of the influence of non-Han groups to the Tang culture, the lesson asked students to think 'why the arts of our country flourished (*baihua zhengyan*, 'hundreds of flowers blooming at the same time') during the Sui and Tang period' (*ibid.*, p.66). It seems that the lesson wanted students to conclude that Chinese culture was so well-developed during the Sui and Tang because it absorbed or was influenced by cultures of various non-Han groups. In this way, the spirit of multiculturalism was promoted in the 1992 version as a way of incorporating the non-Han and constructing a multi-ethnic image of Tang China.

8.2.2 More equal ethnic relationship between the Han and non-Han

The examples above regarding the influence of the non-Han groups on Tang cultures also show that the non-Han groups were treated more equally at this

time, as the 1992 textbooks stressed the influence of the non-Han groups on Han culture. Indeed, under the influence of multiculturalism during the 1980s, the idea of ethnic equality was clearly stressed in the 1992 version. For example, introducing Tang's defeat of the Turk group, like the previous textbooks, the 1992 version stated that the Emperor Tang Taizong appointed Turk official positions in the Tang court. Next to this passage, the lesson now quoted the Emperor who claimed that 'There has always been more favoured attitude towards the Chinese and discrimination against barbarian groups, but I treated them the same' (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.24). Here the Tang Emperor was represented as a ruler who promoted the idea of ethnic equality, just like the Communist government of the PRC in the 1990s. The lesson then stated:

'Due to his enlightened [*kaiming*] policies on ethnic issues, the Emperor Tang Taizong had won the loyalty and respects from various nationalities. Various nationalities in the north respectfully called him the "Khan of Heaven" [*tian kehan*].' (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.24).

This statement, together with the quote from the Emperor, clearly delivered the message that the Tang rule was legitimised by practicing non-discriminative policies towards non-Han groups. Although it is clear that this new content was designed to facilitate the legitimisation of the Han rule over the non-Han, it nevertheless explicitly encouraged a more equal ethnic relationship and a more multi-ethnic vision of Chinese nationhood during the Tang dynasty.

In accordance with the idea of ethnic equality, the 1992 version of textbooks now tended to highlight the idea of mutual influence between the Han and non-Han. Non-Han groups were generally portrayed as learners from the Han in previous versions, and the influence of the non-Han was only rarely recognised, but in the 1992 version many more examples were included to stress the idea of mutual

influence. Apart from the two examples about Tang culture discussed above – for example, introducing the Hun group during the Han dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE) – the 1992 version also added a new section, *The Cultural Exchange between Han and Hun*, to stress the idea of mutual influence between the two groups. After a brief summary of what the Hun learnt from the Han, the text claimed that:

‘The Han people also learned a lot of things from the Hun. Mules, which later became an important animal power in the Central Plain, came from the Hun region. The Hun’s musical instruments, songs and dances also gradually spread to the Han region. The *hujia* [lit. barbarians’ flute] was from the Huns. Sports such as wrestling and horse racing, which later became popular in our country, were originally customary among the Huns.’ (PEP 1992, Vol. 1, p.107).

This narrative of mutual influence was repeatedly presented throughout the 1992 version of textbooks. It clearly indicates that the status of the non-Han was improved, and they were treated more equally now.

The improved status of the non-Han groups and the promotion of the idea of ethnic equality is also reflected in the introduction of non-Han heroes in the 1992 version. Indeed, unlike previous textbooks which did not generally provide detailed introduction of the non-Han heroes, the 1992 version now not only used honourable titles such as ‘outstanding leader’, ‘famous politicians’, ‘heroes’, ‘outstanding talents’ and even ‘national hero’ (in the case of Wobaxi, the leader of Torghut Mongol who led the group to return to the Qing), but also used one or two paragraphs to tell students about these non-Han leaders in a very similar way to how the Han leaders were introduced. This often includes stories to stress their strong personalities, which basically all shared a similar story-line of how they had overcome various difficulties since childhood to become leaders of their groups. For example, a passage on the Jurchen leader Wanyan Aguda (1068 –

1123 CE) featured two paragraphs of backstory, elaborating on his military skills, ambition and strategic astuteness, as well as his bravery in the face of insults from the ruling Liao Emperor – all portrayed as contributing to his eventual defeat of the Liao. As the lesson outlined:

‘Wanyan Aguda liked to play with a bow and arrow since his childhood and when he was young, he was good at archery and was physically strong. He had great ambition and was very strategic. One day, the Emperor Liao Tianzuo came to the Songhua River to hold a banquet, and he summoned all the Jurchen leaders. During the dinner, the emperor ordered them to sing and dance [for the emperor]. When it was Aguda’s turn, he refused to perform and showed his dissatisfaction with Liao rule. Later, he devoted himself to the development of agriculture, raising horses, and preparing to rebel against Liao.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, pp.83-4).

Clearly, as the above example shows, the non-Han leaders were regarded by the 1992 version of textbooks as role models for students, which shows that the status of the non-Han groups was improved, and these groups were also treated more equally in the 1992 version. The positive evaluation of the non-Han heroes in the 1992 textbooks was also noticed by Chinese scholars such as Lu (1997, p.6) and Sun and Xing (1993, p.22).

8.2.3 Justifying the non-Han in inter-ethnic conflicts

It was under the spirit of multiculturalism and adoption of more equal ethnic relationship that inter-ethnic conflicts were reinterpreted in the 1992 version textbooks. In earlier versions the non-Han were generally portrayed negatively in discussions of inter-ethnic conflicts and portrayed as the enemy of the Han or China. However, in the 1992 version, the non-Han were not always depicted as

the negative side of the conflicts. Instead, the 1992 version took a rather neutral stance in discussing conflicts between Han and non-Han; for example, talking about the Mongol and Ming conflicts, the lesson in the 1992 textbooks added the following paragraph:

‘Mongolians were nomads and herded horses, cattle, sheep and camels. Most of their daily necessities such as cloth, grain and iron pots depended on supplies from the inland [Han region]. Because the two sides [Mongol and Ming] fought year after year, the Ming dynasty banned the markets where they used to trade. Mongolians could not get iron pots so they struggled even to cook meat. Mongolian cavalries [therefore] went down to the south to rob things, especially pots. The Ming army [also] attacked Mongolia, mainly to rob horses [but] also set fire to pastures.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.172).

The above paragraph proves that the 1992 textbooks had adopted a new narrative when discussing the Han and non-Han conflicts – a narrative which tended to treat them more equally. Indeed, the lesson now not only provided reasons to explain why the Mongols robbed the Han (in a manner that reduced their negative image), but further acknowledged that the Han also robbed the Mongols and ransacked their wealth. In other words, the Han were also portrayed negatively in inter-ethnic conflicts. This new narrative is clearly very different from narratives in previous textbooks which tended to depict the Han as always righteous in conflicts and non-Han as bandits by nature.

In fact, introducing the Ming and Mongol conflict (around the 16th century), the 1992 version even blamed the Han for causing the conflict. In the following paragraph of the lesson, the lesson continued to state that, while the Mongol leaders sought to trade with the Ming and sent many missionaries to the Ming for

negotiation, the Ming had killed them and therefore the Mongol leader had to use military power to force the Ming to change its attitudes and the Mongol finally won the 'peaceful market for trade at Ming-Mongol borders' (ibid., p.173). In this example, the Han was blamed for causing the conflicts whereas the Mongol was seen as contributing to communication between the two groups. This kind of narrative is also very different from previous textbooks which generally blamed the non-Han for causing the war.

In other cases, the 1992 version tried to justify non-Han attacks on the Han and praised the non-Han in inter-ethnic conflicts. This was again very different from previous textbooks which generally portrayed the non-Han negatively in inter-ethnic conflicts. For example, introducing the conflict between Ming and Manchu in the late 16th century, previous textbooks condemned the Manchu for attacking the Ming, occupying the Ming territory and exploiting the former Ming subjects in north-eastern China (PEP Textbooks, 1986, Vol. 2, p.67), but the 1992 version reinterpreted the conflict as Manchu's 'resistance against ethnic oppression of the Ming' (*fankang mingchao de minzu yapu*) and condemned the Ming for initiating the war (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, pp.173-4). The lesson told students that the Ming bullied the Jurchen, forcing them to pay tribute and even 'catching and killing' Jurchen people (ibid., p.173). In accordance with this new narrative, the 1992 version added a new section to introduce a battle between the Ming and Manchu (the battle of Saerxu) in which the Manchu were depicted positively for their strategies in the battle whereas the Ming army was portrayed negatively for its arrogance and lack of strategy which finally lead to its defeat. The lesson even praised the Manchu victory as 'one of the famous battles in Chinese war history' (ibid., p.175). This is the first time in all published PEP history textbooks that the non-Han were praised so highly for defeating the Han. Scholars such as Lu (1997, p.6) also noticed this new narrative that was adopted in the 1992 textbooks, which positively evaluated the non-Han in conflicts with

the Han. This new way of interpreting inter-ethnic conflicts clearly reflected that the 1992 version now took a neutral stance to conflicts between the Han and non-Han, which itself was the result of the adoption of the spirit of multiculturalism and the idea of ethnic equality in the 1992 version of textbooks.

8.2.4 Recognising the non-Han features of the non-Han rule

Reflecting the spirit of multiculturalism and multi-ethnic nation construction, the non-Han rule such as the Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing were further legitimised in the 1992 version of textbooks. For example, when previous textbooks introduced famous late Ming intellectuals such as Gu Yanwu and Wang Fuzhi (introduced in Chapter Four), their involvement in the anti-Qing or anti-Manchu movements were often highlighted as one of their major activities. However, to further legitimise the Manchu rule, the 1992 version now did not mention this issue at all, but simply described them as anti-authoritarian theorists (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, pp.192-3).

Moreover, the introduction of the non-Han rule in the 1992 version now generally focused on the prosperity of China under their rule, which also contributed to legitimising their rule and so the non-Han rule was now presented rather like other great Han Chinese dynasties such as the Han or Tang dynasties. For example, the lesson on Mongol rule included sections entitled 'The Yuan Emperor Paying Attention to Agriculture,' 'New Developments in the Textile and Porcelain Industries,' 'The World-renowned Yuan Capital,' '[The Development of] Water Transportation' and 'The Prosperous Development of the Quanzhou Port and the Frequent Contacts between China and Foreign Countries.' This clearly provided an opposite image of the Mongol rule to textbooks published in the 1950s which focused almost exclusively on how the Mongols damaged and destroyed the Chinese economy.

More importantly, the 1992 version now also recognised the non-Han feature of the non-Han dynasties such as the Mongol Yuan. This was different from textbooks published in the 1980s which tended to downplay the issue of ethnicity in introducing non-Han rule. For example, in the lesson about Yuan rule, the 1992 version included a picture of an official seal with scripts on it (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.119). The lesson explained that the scripts were in the Mongolian language (Phags-pa alphabet) and created by Basiba (Drogon Chogyal Phagpa, a Tibetan monk and Yuan official), implying that the Mongolian language was used as the official language during the Yuan. Later, when Marco Polo was introduced, the lesson stated that he understood Mongolian (and could therefore communicate with the ruling class), but made no mention of whether or not he also knew Chinese or the language of the Han (ibid., p.121). These examples show that the 1992 version now not only tended to legitimise the Mongol rule, but also tended to recognise that the Mongol rulers of the Yuan had maintained their distinctive ethnic identity.

The 1992 version also tended to highlight the multi-cultural features of the non-Han dynasties. For example, introducing the Yuan's capital (*Yuan Dadu*, on the site of present-day Beijing), the 1992 version added a passage which states that there were Buddhist temples, Daoist temples, Islamic mosques and Christian churches in the city, along with artists from various ethnic backgrounds (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.118). In the lesson about the cultural achievements of the Yuan dynasty, the 1992 version particularly stressed the regime's religious tolerance and highlights the popularity of various faiths. As the lesson stated:

‘The Yuan rulers implemented tolerant policies towards various religions, [so] religions such as Buddhism, Daoism, Islam and Christianity were all popular. The most popular one is Buddhism. Lamaism which spread from Tibet was a branch of Buddhism. It

was well respected by the Mongolian rulers so it was very powerful [during the Yuan].’ (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.148).

The lesson even showed a picture of a white tower in present-day Beijing which, according to the lesson, has the style of Tibetan Buddhism [*zangchuan fojiao*]. This is different from previous textbooks which only focused on the themes of unification, ethnic merging and central rule of frontier regions such as Tibet and Xinjiang in introducing Mongol rule. The new way of representing the Yuan in the 1992 version clearly reflected the more tolerant and multicultural atmosphere in the 1980s. As a result, in the 1992 version, the Yuan was represented rather like a multi-ethnic empire ruled by a non-Han group – a new narrative that is in line with the argument made by the ‘new Qing history’ scholars and is very different from the traditional master narrative of inevitable assimilation to the Han.

8.2.5 The most inclusive Chinese nationhood defined in PRC history textbooks

The representation of the Mongol Yuan discussed above also shows that the 1992 version had now developed a less Han-essentialist understanding about China. Comparing to textbooks published in the 1980s which had already started to adopt a more inclusive conception of the Chinese nationhood, the 1992 version now went further and the image of China there represented was the most inclusive so far. This is shown in a formal statement of inclusion of the parallel dynasties such as the Khitan Liao (907 - 1125 CE), Tangut Western Xia (1038 - 1227 CE) and Jurchen Jin (1115 - 1234 CE) in the writing of official dynastic histories during the Yuan dynasty:

‘The Yuan government organised writing the ‘History of Liao’ [*liaoshi*], ‘History of Song’ [*Songshi*] and ‘History of Jin’ [*jinshi*] and treated the Liao and Jin equally as the dynasty of the Han

nationality [*Hanzu wangchao*, i.e. the Song]. This rightly reflected the historical situation then.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.133).

The statement shows that the 1992 version were more explicit about recognising the non-Han regimes as Chinese regimes, and therefore including the non-Han in the Chinese official historical narrative. Reflecting the same principle, in the lessons discussing the economic developments of the period, the situation in the Liao, Western Xia and Jin states was also discussed along with that in the Song (PEP 1992, Vol. 2, pp.123-49), whereas in previous textbooks the domestic affairs of ‘minority’ states had been almost entirely ignored. As a result, students studying the 1992 version would hopefully regard the non-Han regimes as ‘more Chinese’ than did previous generations.

Indeed, by adopting a more inclusive and multi-cultural concept of Chinese nationhood, the 1992 version now defined China in a more flexible way. Versions from the 1950s clearly defined China as Han, and therefore used ‘China’ and ‘Han’ interchangeably. Although later textbooks had already moved to re-conceptualise China more inclusively, textbooks still often treated China as equivalent to Han and therefore promoted an essentialised idea of Han China. However, in the 1992 version this essentialist understanding of China became blurred, since on some occasions the textbooks now used China and names of non-Han groups interchangeably (maybe by intension). For example, when introducing the invention of gunpowder during the Song and Yuan dynasty, the 1992 version stated that the gunpowder was known as ‘Chinese snow’ (*zhongguo xue*) by the Arabic people, and the weapons as ‘Khitan shotguns’ (*qidan huoqiang*) and ‘Khitan rockets’ (*qidan huojian*) (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.125-126). The lesson did not explain why they were called Khitan shotguns and rockets, but students studying the lesson may have got the idea that Khitan represented China during the period. This is different from previous textbooks which would

only depict the Khitan either as an enemy of China or simply one of China's minority nationalities.

This more inclusive and flexible concept of Chinese nationhood in the 1992 version is reflected more clearly in the introduction of some new non-Han regimes which were never mentioned in all previous textbooks, probably because they were not considered as Chinese. So, for the first time in all published textbooks, after introducing the defeat of the Khitan Liao by the Jurchen Jin, the lesson introduced some defeated Khitan nobles who fled to Xinjiang and Central Asia and founded a regime called Western Liao (*xiliao*) (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.84). In extra reading materials, the lesson provided more information about this regime and that there were Khitan, Han, Uyghur and some nationalities from Central Asia in the Western Liao. It also explicitly claimed that 'historians in the Central Plain had always regarded the Western Liao as a dynasty similar to the Song, Liao and Western Xia', and thus as Chinese (*ibid.*, p.85).

In explaining such changes, the chief editor of the 1992 textbooks, Wang Hongzhi, criticised in her writings how 'minority' regimes had previously been featured only because of their links with the dynasties of the Central Plain (Wang, 2000, p.203). In contrast, she argued that any state that had ever governed territory falling within (or even partly within) the present-day boundaries of China should be regarded as 'Chinese'. The criterion to select non-Han groups to be introduced in the textbooks, therefore, should be whether these groups were historically significant, not their links with the Central Plain.

Based on the same principle, the 1992 version also introduced the Western Uyghur (*xizhou huihu*), the Black Khan Dynasty (*heihan wangchao*) in Central Asia and others (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.91-2), stating that these regimes regarded themselves as part of China, but also acknowledging their non-Han features; for example, telling students that the authors of some famous books of

the Black Khan Dynasty were Muslim. The introduction of these regimes founded by non-Han clearly indicates a less Han-centric vision China under the influence of more tolerant and liberal atmosphere.

8.2.6 Tensions in constructing Chinese nationhood

It is clear from the discussion above that, compared with the previous textbooks, the 1992 textbooks seemed to embrace a more multicultural spirit. This was also observed by Chinese scholars in the 1990s, who all appreciated the inclusiveness of the 1992 textbooks and their efforts in constructing multi-ethnic nationhood (Lu, 1997; Sun & Xing, 1993; Zhang, 1990; Zhang, 2009). For example, Sun and Xing (1993, p.23) noticed that the 1992 textbooks had not only adopted updated findings from historical research conducted in China in the 1980s into non-Han groups and their regimes (such as the Western Liao), but had also absorbed findings from foreign research, such as studies of the conflicts between the Han and Hun groups. However, despite the adoption of the most inclusive concept of the Chinese nationhood so far, Chinese history in the 1992 textbooks was still written from the perspective of the Han, and non-Han groups were still basically represented as complementary to the Han. This shows the continuing tension between two competing visions of Chinese nationhood: a Han-centred and a multi-ethnic vision. This tension is shown in various ways in the 1992 version of textbooks.

First of all, although the 1992 version of textbooks included more information about the non-Han, their independent histories were still not the focus of the textbooks and they were generally only introduced when there were links between them and the Central regime (whether founded by Han or non-Han). For example, Tibet was only introduced three times across the 1992 textbooks, during discussion of the Tang, Yuan and Qing dynasties. These were the either when Tibet had links with the Central regime (in the case of Tang) or when Tibet was

under the governance of the Central regime (in the case of the others). In all other historical periods in the 1992 version of textbooks, Tibet just disappeared. What students would learn from the 1992 version was still the idea that Tibet has been an indivisible part of the motherland since ancient times.

In fact, despite the argument made by the chief editor of the 1992 textbooks that non-Han dynasties such as the Western Liao, Black Khan Dynasty, and Western Uyghur should be introduced in textbooks for their own sake rather than on the basis of their links with the Central Plain or the Han, it is evident that the 1992 textbooks nevertheless still highlighted the Han or Chinese influences on these dynasties. For example, introducing the Western Liao, the 1992 textbooks claimed:

‘There were Khitan, Han, Uyghur and some Central Asian nationalities living in the Western Liao dynasty. The Han people brought many advanced production technologies into Central Asia. [...] Some Buddhist temples and Buddha statues in the Western Liao dynasty had the style of the Central Plain culture. According to history books, Yelv Dashi [the emperor of the Western Liao] only wore Chinese silk clothes. When a princess of the Western Liao got married, she insisted on dressing up following the tradition of Han girls. The Western Liao dynasty brought the cultural of the Central Plain to Central Asia, and absorbed and merged it with the local culture. This had contributed to the development of the brilliant Central Asian culture.’ (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, pp.84-5)

Secondly, although the 1992 version had tended to recognise the cultural achievements of the non-Han and had introduced a lot more information about their cultures, their cultural achievements were still introduced relatively briefly compared to the Han and very often as complementary to Han culture. Often their

cultural achievements were only introduced in extra reading materials, which indicates a lesser importance and something that students are not required to remember. For example, the Tibetan medical expert was only mentioned very briefly (one sentence) in extra reading materials in the section on the Chinese medical expert ('The King of Medicine Sun Simiao').

Moreover, as introduced previously, the 1992 version now tended to highlight the mutual influence between the Han and non-Han, and therefore treated them more equally in terms of cultural development. However, the idea of the non-Han learning from the Han was still repeatedly promoted across the 1992 version and particularly evident in discussion of non-Han rule in the 1992 version. For example, introducing the rise of the Khitan group in the north, the 1992 version now added a message which stated that Khitan leaders relied on Han intellectuals (*hanzu wenren*) to rule, something that is reinforced in the extra reading material which even introduced that the Khitan leader constructed Confucian temples and paid tribute to the temple (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, pp.77-8). In another case introducing the Sarbi rule in northern China (i.e. the Northern Wei), the lesson added a paragraph to tell students that the Sarbi Emperor Xiaowen had a Han grandmother who helped the young emperor to rule (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 1, p.255). Clearly, the two stories reflect the assimilationist view that the non-Han could only rule the Han by learning from or becoming the Han. Chinese culturalism was thus still evident in the 1992 version and the non-Han were still represented as relative 'backward' to the Han.

Finally, although in some cases the 1992 version had tended to take a neutral stance in introducing inter-ethnic conflicts, very often the non-Han were still portrayed as enemies of the Han, and Han resistance against the non-Han was still highly praised for inspiring patriotism. Probably under the influence of the promotion of patriotism from 1989, the 1992 version actually added more

information to highlight the resistance of the Han against the non-Han. For example, introducing the conflict between the Jurchen Jin and Southern Song, the 1992 version now added personal stories of several anti-Jin heroes to highlight their patriotic spirit (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, pp.87-9). For the anti-Jin general Yue Fei whose story was already highlighted in previous textbooks, the 1992 version now added a portrait showing him wearing a suit of armour and a handwriting of calligraphy by him which reads 'returning the rivers and mountains [to the Song]' (*huan wo heshan*) (ibid., p.89). The message delivered here clearly has strong meanings of patriotism, but this is problematic since the Jurchen Jin was now regarded as Chinese in the more inclusive concept of China. Indeed, while the Han leaders of resistance against the non-Han (such as Wen Tianxiang) were all highly praised in the 1992 version, their enemies (the non-Han leaders such as Genghis Khan) were also praised for their achievements of defeating or conquering China or the Han. This clearly shows the continued contradictions embedded in the 1992 version which tended to incorporate the non-Han and create a more inclusive and multi-ethnic image of China, but on the other hand still adopted a Han-centred understanding of the Chinese nationhood and regarded the non-Han as enemies of China.

In a similar way, although it was previously discussed that the non-Han rule was further legitimised in the 1992 version by downplaying the Han resistance to their rule (for example, not mentioning the late Ming thinkers' involvement in anti-Qing movements), when introducing the Manchu rule, the 1992 version reintroduced a section on the resistance of the Han which had been removed in the 1986 textbooks. In the section, the lesson not only introduced a Ming loyalist general who refused to surrender to the Qing, but also reintroduced the Qing policy of forcing the Han to shave their hair (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.183-184). The lesson said that this policy was fiercely resisted by the people of south, for example, in one of the cities (*Jiangyin*), all the people of the city sacrificed their

lives in the fight against the Qing army. Although the chief editor of the 1992 textbooks particularly wrote that this issue was introduced based on the principle of 'equality among nationalities', the narrative of this story still reminds us of the strategy adopted by the 1911 revolutionaries who evoked the same story to inspire anti-Manchu sentiments. This story actually only appeared in the 1952 version of the PEP textbooks in which China was still defined as a Han nation-state and non-Han groups such as the Manchu were still regarded as non-Chinese and enemy of China. The reintroduction of this story in the 1992 version clearly signalled the tension of promoting a Han-defined patriotism and the effort to incorporate the non-Han and reconceptualise China as a multi-ethnic nation.

Moreover, while the Manchu suppression of the Han was reintroduced in the name of 'equality among nationalities' in the 1992 textbooks, discussions of the Eastern Han dynasty's suppression of the Qiang people (and the Han people), which had been introduced in history textbooks published since 1952, disappeared from the textbooks for the first time. This seems to suggest that textbook editors, while determined to promote the spirit of ethnic equality, had become increasingly reluctant to discuss issues about the Han suppression of non-Han, as such issues might promote antagonism between ethnic groups in the context of reducing socialist narratives in the 1992 textbooks. Such issues were now becoming sensitive as dissatisfaction and resistance against Chinese rule had been rising in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

8.3 Unity over diversity: non-Han groups in the 2001 version of textbooks

8.3.1 Promoting patriotism

The Patriotic Education (PE) campaign of the 1990s and a continuing shift of the dominant political ideology from socialism to patriotism (or, to put it another way,

official nationalism) led the Central government in Beijing in the mid-1990s to issue a series of important policy documents to impose patriotic education across the country (Zhao, 2004). This reached a climax in a document issued by the CCP Central Committee titled *Outline for Conducting Patriotic Education* in 1994, which was intended as a comprehensive guide to the principles, key content, aims and methods for patriotic education in all contexts, primarily targeting youth. Since then, ideas of patriotism and Chinese nationalism have permeated the entire national education system, from kindergarten to university.

If the editors of the 1992 version were not ready to completely integrate all the ideas of the Patriotic Education into textbooks, the 2001 textbook editors were fully aware of the requirements from the government to promote patriotism. Indeed, analysing the Table of Contents of the 2001 version, one can immediately see the differences from previous versions of textbooks: socialist content was further reduced (e.g. terms such as 'slavery' and 'feudal' had all disappeared now), and the linear development of the nation itself became the only dominant theme. The 2001 version now reintroduced periodisation to divide Chinese history. While textbooks published before 1992 divided Chinese history based on the socialist idea of social evolution, the 2001 version adopted stages such as 'the origin of Chinese civilisation' (*zhonghua wenming de qi yuan*), 'the birth of the country and social reform' (*guojia de dansheng he shehui de biange*) and 'the foundation of a unitary country' (*tongyi guojia de jianli*) (more details see Table 8.1 on next page). Clearly, the titles present the linear development of the Chinese nation, experiencing not only prosperous periods but also periods of unification and division and finally ending in a unitary multi-ethnic state which became the foundation for the establishment of modern China. In so doing, the 2001 version were not trying to fit China into the socialist model of social evolution, but focusing on the evolution of the Chinese nation itself. This shows the shift away from socialist ideologies to nationalism.

Table 8.1 Periodisation in the 2001 version

| 2001 Textbooks | Unit | Name of units | Dynasties included |
|----------------|--------|--|---|
| Year 7 (1) | Unit 1 | The Origin of Chinese Civilisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-civilisation era |
| | Unit 2 | The Birth of the Country and Social Reform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Xia dynasty • The Shang dynasty • The Zhou dynasty • The Spring and Autumn period • The Warring States period |
| | Unit 3 | The Foundation of a Unitary Country | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Qin dynasty • The Han dynasty |
| | Unit 4 | Divided Regimes and Ethnic Merging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Three Kingdoms • The Western and Eastern Jin • The Southern and Northern dynasty [Sarbi] |
| Year 7 (2) | Unit 1 | The Prosperous and Open Society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sui dynasty • The Tang dynasty |
| | Unit 2 | Moving the Economic Centre to the South and the Development of Ethnic Relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Liao [Khitan], Song, Xia [Tangut] and Jin [Jurchen] regimes • The Yuan dynasty [Mongol] |
| | Unit 3 | The Consolidation of the Unitary Multi-ethnic Country and Social Crisis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ming dynasty • The Qing dynasty [Manchu] |

The overwhelming focus on the nation is to instil a sense of national identity, and this is also explicit in the 2001 textbooks. Like the 1992 version, the 2001 version also had an introduction lesson to tell students about the purpose of learning history, but unlike the earlier version which promoted both socialism and patriotism, the 2001 version focused solely on constructing an image of the Chinese nation by providing students with information which was probably seen as defining elements of China and Chinese identity. For example, in a paragraph about 'history knowledge known by peers (*tong ling ren*)' (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 1, p.1), the lesson mentioned the following information:

1. 'Our great motherland has more than 5,000 years of history of civilisation';
2. 'Foreign friends call China as "country of silk" [*siguo*];
3. 'China is the famous "country of china" [*ciqi*] in the world';
4. 'The Peking Man already knew how to use fire';
5. 'It is said that during the period of the Yellow Emperor, Chinese people could already produce carriages and boats';
6. 'The Great Wall has become the World Heritage'.

It is clear that these messages reinforce an identity of being Chinese defined by these core elements mentioned above. As socialism was no longer at the core of the officially defined national identity, common ancestry and cultures or civilisation seem to have become the core to Chinese identity.

Indeed, as urged by the Guideline, and also observed by scholars such as Vickers:

'the considerable dilution of Marxist ideology in school history textbooks has allowed a broadening of the thematic coverage of

the texts, and in particular a much fuller and more positive treatment of many aspects of traditional Chinese culture.’ (Vickers, 2009a, p.65).

Bass (2006, p.55) and Zhao (2004, p.219) also point out that the teaching goals of the PE campaign were achieved particularly through instruction on China’s unique ‘long history, flourishing culture, and glorious tradition’, so that students could learn the ‘idea of the country’ (*guojia guannian*) through the cultivation of strong national consciousness. This not only allowed the Party to reposition itself as the heir and custodian of the 5,000 years of glorious Chinese civilisation (Vickers, 2009b), but also helped it to continually reconceptualise Chinese nationhood from a vision based on socialist high culture to a primordialist and ethno-cultural vision. Consequently, there was a renewed interest in themes such as common ancestry (i.e. the Yellow Emperor) in official and public discourse.

This led to a significant change of the introduction about the Yellow Emperor who was only regarded as ‘a leader of a tribe alliance’ and was only introduced briefly in a section in the 1992 version of textbooks (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 1, p.17). However, the 2001 version used a whole lesson to introduce him, and clearly identified him as ‘The Ancestor of Huaxia (*huaxia zhizu*)’, which is actually the title of the lesson (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 1, p.12). In the 2001 version, the lesson also included a new section which introduced contribution of the Yellow Emperor to the development of the Chinese civilisation (*zhonghua wenming*), including various inventions which, according to the lesson, laid the foundations to the lives of later generations (*ibid.*, p.13). That is why, as the lesson explains, that the Yellow Emperor is also regarded as the ‘first ancestor of civilisation’ (*renwen chuzu*). In this way, the Yellow Emperor was not only represented as racial symbol of the Chinese nation, but also a cultural symbol. Obviously, compared to the 1992 version, the status of the Yellow Emperor was much

improved, and this was obviously the result of the promotion of the ethno-cultural concept of the Chinese nation after the Patriotic Education campaign.

To reinforce the symbolic meaning of the Yellow Emperor when imagining a primordialist understanding of Chinese nationhood, in the Introduction section of the lesson, the 2001 version used a photo of the annual ceremony to commemorate the Yellow Emperor during the Qingming festival, a traditional Han festival at which people pay tribute to their ancestors. Alongside this image, the lesson stated:

‘Between the ancient capital Xi’an and the holy land of revolution Yan’an, there is the County of The Yellow Emperor’s Mausoleum [*huangling xian*] which has the mausoleum of the Yellow Emperor, the first ancestor of the Huaxia nationality. Every year during the Qingming Festival, people from all over the country and overseas go there to pay tribute to the Yellow Emperor and to express their admiration for him. On the eve of the Anti-Japanese War in 1937, Mao Zedong and Zhu De sent delegates to pay respect to [*saomu*, cleaning the grave] the Yellow Emperor and wrote an essay entitled “Worship of the Yellow Emperor”, in which they praised the ancestor of *Zhonghua minzu* as “wise, great and established the East”. Why is the Yellow Emperor respected by posterity? What is his outstanding contribution to *Zhonghua minzu*? When you have learned this lesson, you will understand why.’ (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 1, p.12).

The mention of the Chinese political leaders in the statement above clearly helped to remind students of the important status of the Yellow Emperor, even though the idea of paying tribute to ancestors contravenes socialist atheism and was not encouraged in Mao’s era. This reflected a continuing tension faced by

the CCP from the pre-PRC period in the construction of Chinese national identity: should it be based on international and revolutionary ideologies or an imagined blood-link or genealogy? (as discussed in Chapter Five). It is interesting to note from the statement that the essay written by Mao and Zhu was published in 1937 – just around the time of the full-scale invasion of China by Japan, and a turning-point when the CCP started to abandon its socialist idea of ‘self-determination’ and embrace a homogeneous and ethno-cultural vision of Chinese nationhood (discussed in Chapter Five), something rather like that espoused by its political rival, the KMT. Moreover, although the lesson explained in a footnote that *Huaxia* was the predecessor of the Han and the ‘main stem’ (*zhugan*) of *Zhonghua minzu*, the interchangeable usage of the words *Huaxia* and *Zhonghua minzu* in this statement clearly implies a Han ethnocentric construction of Chinese nationhood in the 2001 textbooks.

8.3.2 Inter-ethnic solidarity and constructing the united and multi-ethnic state

The promotion of patriotism and the highlight of the idea of the ‘nation’ in the 1990s inevitably also brought changes to inter-ethnic relationship and how the non-Han groups were defined and treated in the new political environment. As mentioned in the Introduction section of this chapter, now the CCP took *minzu tuanjie* (inter-ethnic solidarity) as the ideological framework to define inter-ethnic relationship in China. Under this framework, the previous promotion of ‘multipleness’ of China was now replaced by the focus on ‘oneness’. As a result, the previous more tolerant attitudes towards distinctive ethnic identities had increasingly become subordinate to the theme of national unity. In other words, the previous celebration of diversity had now become the second to the overwhelming emphasis on the homogeneity of the nation i.e. the ‘one China principle’.

Clearly, the 2001 editors still wanted to instil students a concept of multi-ethnic China; this is reflected in the names of the Units in Table 8.1, as the term 'ethnic' (*minzu*) appeared three times, suggesting that ethnicity was still an important theme. Some information about non-Han groups was newly introduced in the 2001 version, and after the lesson on the ethnic relationship in the Tang dynasty, the 2001 version editors even encouraged students to do a survey to see if they have classmates who are from minority ethnic background and asked students to learn and respect their customs and habits (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.27). Moreover, the 2001 version now also added content about the Manchu Qing emperors' tolerant and multicultural policies towards non-Han groups and praised their policies as 'insightful' (*zhuoshi yuanjian*) and 'benefiting the unity of the nation' (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.114). This new content clearly shows that the 2001 version still stressed the issue of ethnicity and hoped to promote a multi-ethnic vision of the Chinese nation.

However, since the 2001 version now focused more on the idea of national unity and inter-ethnic solidarity, certain themes were highlighted. First, links between different ethnic groups and the Central regime in different historical periods were further stressed in the 2001 version. This especially applied to groups (and their regions) where separatist sentiment had been strong in the 1980s and 1990s; for example, Tibet, Xinjiang and Taiwan. For example, Tibet became the first group introduced in the lesson on ethnic relations in the Tang dynasty whereas in all previous textbooks it was always the last one to be introduced (among several groups). The 2001 version also added a practical activity to have students put on a short historical drama about the inter-ethnic marriage between the Tang princess Wencheng and Tibetan leader Songzanganbu (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.44). The purpose of this new activity, as claimed by the lesson, is to reinforce 'an emotional understanding of generations of friendship between the Han and Tibetans' (*ibid.*). Clearly, the forced peace-making marriage between

Tang and Tibet had now become evidence of deep historical links between the two groups, which would help to legitimise the PRC's modern-day claim on the sovereignty of Tibet. However, departing from the spirit of the 1992 textbooks which generally promoted the idea of mutual learning between Han and non-Han groups (e.g. the Han and Hun groups), one will find that evidence of this historical link between Han and Tibet in 2001 textbooks was now centred around the Han bringing advanced technologies to Tibet and helped the latter to develop. This is shown clearly in a Tibetan folk song introduced in this lesson of activity:

'Princess Wencheng, who came from the area of Han nationality,
Brought about 3,800 kinds of grain,
Which laid a solid foundation for the *Tubo* [Tibet] grain depot;
Princess Wencheng, who came from the area of Han nationality,
Brought about 5,500 craftsmen of all kinds of crafts,
Which opened the door for the development of *Tubo* [Tibet]
technology;
Princess Wencheng, who came from the area of Han nationality,
Brought about 5,500 kinds of live stocks,
Which yielded cheese and butter in *Xizang* [Tibet] from year to year.'

(PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.4)

Interestingly, in the same folk song, the lesson used two names for Tibet – *Tubo*, which is usually used as the ancient name of Tibet (including most regions of the Tibetan Plateau), and *Xizang* as the modern name (normally only referring to the area of the Tibetan Autonomous Region) which was only introduced during the

Qing dynasty. Obviously, Tibetan people would not call their region Xizang during the Tang dynasty – 1,000 years before the name was introduced. The purpose of this mixed usage of the ancient and modern names for Tibet in this traditional Tibetan folk song is clearly to establish a link between ancient Tibet and modern Tibet, so as to legitimise Chinese control over Tibet in the contemporary.

The story of inter-ethnic marriage (or peace-making marriage) also helped to reinforce an understanding of the sentimental bond between the Han and non-Han groups, which helped students to imagine all the nationalities of China as one 'big family'. Vickers (2009a, p.73) analysed the textbooks on Thought and Politics for Year 9 for Chinese students and found that this representation of the Chinese nation as a family is a key theme in the discussion on ethnic relations in China. According to him, the textbooks reinforced the idea that 'People of every nationality form a close family relationship (*qinyuan guanxi*) in which I am in you, and you are in me (*ni zhong your wo, wo zhong you ni*)' (ibid.). This family metaphor and the implications of the bond of blood were also further highlighted in the 2001 version. For example, compared to the 1992 version, both cases of inter-ethnic marriage between the Han and non-Han were treated as more important in the 2001 version, and apart from two cases when the 1992 version used the particular term 'one family' (*yijia*) to discuss the Han-Hun and Tibet-Tang relationships after introducing inter-ethnic marriage, the 2001 version added a case to reinforce this concept of 'Han and non-Han as being one family' (*zhongwai yijia*) in the discussion of ethnic relationships in the Qing dynasty, which was quoted from the text produced by the Qing to celebrate the construction of the Buddhist temple in Chengde/Jehol (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.110).

Associated with the metaphor of family and stories of inter-ethnic marriage is the idea of 'ethnic fusion/merging' (*minzu ronghe*) which had already become an

increasingly important theme in defining inter-ethnic relations throughout previous textbooks. Clearly, this term not only helped to instil the idea that China and Chinese culture developed through a constant mixture of different ethnic cultures, but also the idea of a homogenising vision of China and Chinese culture since previous diversified groups and cultures had continually come together and become similar to each other. In the 2001 version, not only previous discussion of ethnic merging remained, but this theme was treated more importantly. For example, the 2001 version kept the introduction of the ethnic merging during the Yuan dynasty intact, but now it became an independent section whereas in the 1992 version it was introduced as part of a section on Yuan's governance (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.69). Similarly, in the lesson on the Northern Wei, while the 1992 version used its first section to introduce the independent history of the Sarbi group (its place of origin) and its leader, in 2001 this was replaced by a section called *The Unification of the North and Ethnic Fusion* (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.114). In this section, the lesson outlined:

‘At that time, the people of all nationalities in the Yellow River Valley had lived together for a long time. Their daily contacts and frequent exchanges led them to be influenced by each other in their technologies of production and customs. Ethnic fusion had become a trend.’ (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 1, p.114).

Following this statement, the lesson then provided several examples (and two pictures) to illustrate how the nomadic groups and the Han influenced and become similar to each other. The emphasis on ethnic merging in the Northern Wei in the 2001 version shows that what had been promoted under the new framework of inter-ethnic solidarity was the idea of ‘becoming one’ in the discussion of ethnic issues.

Moreover, examining the contents of the rest of the lesson on Northern Wei history, one would find that this 'one' actually equals the Han. Indeed, after outlining for students lengthy examples of how the Sarbi learned from the Han (e.g. moving the capital to the Han region, adopting the Han language, dress, surnames, rituals, and bureaucratic and legislation system etc.), the lesson then concluded that these had all advanced 'ethnic fusion' (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 1, p.115).

Finally, to reflect the theme of national unity, the 2001 version now had more information legitimising central rule over frontier regions, especially those sensitive ones in the PRC, such as Xinjiang and Tibet (and Taiwan). For example, introducing the governance of the Han dynasty in the Western Region (*xiyu*), the 2001 version added a sentence which claims 'Xinjiang had become an inseparable part of our country' (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 1, p.83). In another case talking about setting up governing bodies in the Western Region by the Tang, it is noted that the name of the region changed from 'western Turkic regions' (*xitujue diqu*) in the 1992 version to 'Xinjiang region' in the 2001 version (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.22). Again, the region was not called Xinjiang during the Tang era, so the change of the name here clearly shows the attempt made by textbook editors to establish a link between the past and present so that to legitimise the current Chinese control of the region.

This effort to legitimise Chinese rule over these sensitive regions is shown most clearly in another activity which asks students to organise a historical quiz on the topic: 'Xinjiang, Tibet and Taiwan Have Been Chinese Territory Since Ancient Times' (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.132). From this title it is clear that the purpose of this activity is to legitimise the Chinese control over these regions under the theme of patriotism. Indeed, the lesson started with a poem named 'I Love My Motherland' (*wo ai wo de zuguo*) in which the author used emotional

languages to express his or her enthusiastic love for ‘every single grass, wood, flower, stone, brick and tile’ of the motherland, despite the fact that the motherland had been tortured by various disasters such as ‘gales, hails, frosts, snows, conflagration, and heavy rain’ – possible metaphors for the humiliations caused by imperialist powers in the last century (ibid.). Clearly, behind the theme of ‘loving the motherland’ is in fact an attempt to instil in students a blind sense that all of these regions have always been Chinese territory. Indeed, the lesson explicitly pointed out that the purpose of this lesson is to ‘strengthen students’ historical identity in relation to the territory and sovereignty of the motherland’ (ibid.). As a result, a crucial element of the knowledge to be tested in the quiz consisted of the dates when these regions came under the governance of the central regime, rather than anything which could encourage students to critically think about the real and controversial historical relations between these regions and the central authority. Moreover, while the lesson was designed to legitimise Chinese sovereignty over these regions, notably absent here was any reference to the local inhabitants, their cultures, customs or any aspects of their history unrelated to their ties to China. In this way, the issue of ethnicity was downplayed or suppressed by the dominant theme of national unity in the 2001 version of textbooks.

8.3.3 Reduction on introduction of the non-Han groups

The overwhelming promotion of the ‘oneness’ of China inevitably led to decreasing representation of ‘multipleness’ of China in the textbooks. As a result, while themes for instilling a homogeneous conception of the Chinese nationhood were highlighted in the 2001 version, discussion of some independent histories of non-Han groups introduced in the 1992 version were now deleted or shortened. What remained was information about the links or relationship between the non-Han groups and the Han. The previous effort to highlight the multi-ethnic feature

of some Chinese dynasties were also no longer highlighted. As a result, the 2001 version of textbooks now downplayed the issue of ethnicity in the discussion of some Chinese dynasties such as Qin and Ming and represented these as pure Han dynasties. For example, when introducing the Qin dynasty, although the 2001 version still kept the rhetoric that 'Qin is the first unified and multi-ethnic state in our country's history', the previous introduction of the Hun group and the Yue group in the 1992 version were now removed from the lesson and the Qin was portrayed as a pure Han state (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 1, p.59). In fact, students studying the 2001 version would not be aware of the existence of the Yue group in Chinese history, since the lesson on Qin history is usually the only place the Yue group is introduced to students. Similarly, the discussion of the Mongol during the Ming dynasty was now also removed and the Ming dynasty portrayed as purely Han.

Even the multi-ethnic feature of the Tang dynasty, often introduced to highlight the multi-ethnic nature of China in history as a proto-model of the PRC, was also downplayed in the 2001 version. Although it still used one lesson to introduce various non-Han groups and ethnic relationships during the Tang dynasty, in the lessons on the cultural development of the Tang dynasty, the previous discussion about non-Han cultures were generally removed in the 2001 version (for example, the Tibetan medical expert and the popularity of polo which Tang imported from Tibet).

In fact, the culture of the non-Han groups was generally not introduced in the 2001 version. For example, the folk songs of the Sarbi group, which was introduced as the only cultural achievement of the non-Han groups during the Northern dynasty (ruled by the Sarbi group), was deleted as well. As a result, although the 2001 version used two lessons to introduce the cultural development of the period when many non-Han groups co-existed with the Han in northern

China, nothing about their cultures were discussed. All the discussion was about Han culture. Similarly, the non-Han heroes discussed in earlier versions now either disappeared or were introduced with less information, and the names of group leaders of the Sarbi, Turk, Mohe and Uyghur disappeared. Others such as the leaders of the Khitan, Jurchen and Tangut now only had their names mentioned in the text. For example, any mention of the Jurchen leader, whose brave and strategic character was praised and was established as a role model for students, disappeared from the 2001 textbooks. The only exception was Genghis Khan, who was probably too important to ignore.

Compared to the 1992 version, while the content about mutual influence between the Han and non-Han was reduced, the content about the non-Han learning from the Han remained or was further highlighted in the 2001 version. Indeed, while the introduction of non-Han culture and heroes were substantially removed in the 2001 version, the same books increased details and examples about the non-Han learning from the Han. For example, the 2001 version added a paragraph to highlight the abilities and personality of the Han minister of the Qianqin regime (250 - 294 CE, founded by the Di group) who, according to the 2001 version, 'helped the Di ruler to accept the advanced culture of Han' (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 1, p.110). The grandmother of the Sarbi Emperor was now also introduced as 'Empress Dowager of Civilisation' (*wenming taihou*) to highlight her influence over the Sarbi emperor who later became 'the loyal promoter of Han culture' (*hanzu wenhua de zhongshi tuiguangzhe*) (ibid., 114). In fact, the whole introduction about the Sarbi Emperor Xiaowen was now about how he promoted reforms of Hanification or sinicisation, whereas in previous textbooks, his reforms on other issues (such as tax reform and land reform) were also introduced. Moreover, the lesson now added a question to ask students why the most Sarbi emperors were given the name 'Xiao' (filial piety) (such as Emperor Xiao-wen)? Students would learn the answer from the text of the lesson that it was because

the Sarbi Emperor encouraged people to learn Han rituals, respect Confucius, rule the country with the idea of 'filial piety' (ibid., p.115). It seems that now the Sarbi emperor was represented an exemplar of sinicisation.

8.3.4 Downplaying inter-ethnic conflicts in the 2001 version of textbooks

As 2001 textbooks were now focusing on promoting the idea of inter-ethnic solidarity and national unity, it is predictable that the conflicts between the Han and non-Han were largely downplayed. Not only some inter-ethnic conflicts were completely removed from the textbooks,⁶⁵ but other conflicts, which were often used to inspire a sense of patriotism, were also downplayed, with a lot of detail removed in the 2001 version. For example, while the 1992 version used almost a whole lesson to introduce the conflict between the Jurchen Jin and Southern Song, in the 2001 version the content was reduced to about one section (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, pp.52-4). What was removed was details of several instances of Han resistance to the Jin invasion and the stories of several Han heroes who played a leading role in the conflicts. This left only the resistance led by the Han hero Yue Fei. However, even the introduction of Yue Fei was simplified; for example, his handwriting ('returning the mountains and rivers') was removed and the previous positive comments that 'Yue Fei had won respect from the mass people for his insistence on struggles for justice' was deleted (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.90). Clearly, not only was the inter-ethnic conflict itself toned down now, but the role of the Han hero in the conflict was also downplayed now under the dominant theme of inter-ethnic solidarity. Another possible reason for the reduction of emphasis on inter-ethnic conflict is that the 2001 version now could

⁶⁵ For example, the conflict between the Jurchen Jin and the Northern Song and between the Ming and Mongol, which were all introduced in the 1992 textbooks were now removed.

not use narratives of class struggle to interpret the conflict, and so textbooks editors now had to avoid the issue to serve the aim of inter-ethnic solidarity.

However, it is noted that many of the inter-ethnic conflicts removed were those where the Han were defeated. The defeat of the Han by the Hun (*baideng zhi wei*) and the defeat of the Ming by the Mongol (*tumu zhi bian*) all disappeared in the 2001 version, as was the Battle of Saerxu. This suggests that the textbooks were now reluctant to discuss the humiliation of the Han at the hands of the non-Han. Instead, in the few examples wherein inter-ethnic conflicts were still introduced with details in the 2001 textbooks, the Han were generally portrayed as strategic and brave. Taking the conflict between the Han and the Hun as an example, the lesson not only retained the detailed description of the battle in which the Han strategically defeated the Hun, but also used one paragraph to introduce the two Han generals who were praised as having 'won honours (*gongxun*)' (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 1, p.79). The lesson even kept a picture of the tomb of one of the Han generals, so as to celebrate and memorialise his heroic achievement. This presentation of the conflict clearly still reflected a Han-centric historical narrative which defined the Hun as non-Chinese or the enemy.

This reflected the inherent tension of nation construction in the 2001 version textbooks. Although this version had tried to define the relationship between the Han and non-Han under the ideological framework of inter-ethnic solidarity and therefore had tried to downplay the issue of inter-ethnic conflict generally, the non-Han were still portrayed as enemies and invaders. In contrast, the Han defeats of the non-Han were still celebrated as glories, with their heroes in leading the resistance being depicted as strategic and brave.

Moreover, the patriotic spirit of Han generals such as Yue Fei and Wen Tianxiang were still highly praised in the 2001 version. This reflects that under the framework of inter-ethnic solidarity, the 2001 version still were unable to resolve

the tension between its Han-centric historical narrative and its attempt to incorporate the non-Han into a multi-ethnic vision of China. Indeed, while the 2001 version tried to portray the non-Han in history as Chinese and therefore justify PRC rule over its multi-ethnic population and their territories, Han heroes in resisting the non-Han invasion was still praised as role models for their patriotic spirit. As a result, the 2001 version still delivered conflicting messages to students under the rhetoric of inter-ethnic solidarity and national unity: while Genghis Khan was introduced as a Chinese great man and was praised for his contribution of unifying China, the anti-Mongol general Wen Tianxiang was also highly praised in the 2001 version and to promote the value of patriotism. In fact, Wen even received more attention than previous textbooks. Apart from the introduction about him in the text, the lesson now also asked students to collect stories about him and share with classmates (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.70). In the Free Reading Card of the lesson, the temple to memorise him (Wen Tianxiang Ci) was also introduced to students to praise his loyalty to the nation (ibid., p.71).

8.3.5 Downplaying the non-Han and multi-ethnic feature of the non-Han rule

Like the 1992 version, non-Han rule was also legitimised under the framework of inter-ethnic solidarity and these periods were portrayed as prosperous periods of Chinese history, with their territory much extended and economies further developed. In the case of the Manchu rule in the Qing, the previous introduction of the Qing policy of shaving heads was removed to reduce the tension between different ethnic groups and to further legitimise Manchu rule.

However, apart from the content which highlighted the theme of ethnic fusion/merging (in the case of the Yuan dynasty) and the patriotic behaviour of the non-Han to support the central regime (in the case of the Qing), the issue of ethnicity was generally not mentioned in the 2001 version. In other words, there

was again a sort of 'de-ethnicity' in which the non-Han features and multi-ethnic nature of the two non-Han dynasties were downplayed or even removed. As a result, when introducing the Mongol rule, the previous introduction about the official seal with Mongol script and the information about Marco Polo speaking the Mongol language disappeared from the 2001 version, and the introduction of Genghis Khan as 'outstanding politician and militarist of *Mongol nationality*' in the 1992 version was also removed (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.109). Similarly, the introductions to the popularity of various religions and the multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan nature of the Yuan capital Dadu also disappeared in the 2001 textbooks. Students studying the lesson on the Mongol and Manchu rule would only develop a minimum level of understanding of how non-Han rule was different from the previous Han dynasties. In fact, even the discussion about ethnic division policies in the Yuan dynasty – which was labelled with a star in the 1992 textbooks, meaning that students had to know it – also disappeared from the 2001 version.

Even in the lessons on the economic and cultural achievements of the Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing, the non-Han feature and the multi-ethnic nature of the two dynasties were not mentioned and the two non-Han rule dynasties were now represented rather as typical Han dynasties. For example, talking about the prosperous economic development during the Qing, while the 1992 version in particular discussed the goods from various nationalities (for example, furs from Mongolia) that were all found in the market in Beijing (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 3, p.17), this multi-ethnic description of the trade network was now replaced by an introduction of trade network established by Han businessmen (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.117). This example shows that the 2001 textbooks now turned back to a rather Han-centric historical narrative to portray non-Han ruling dynasties. In this way, although the 2001 version were trying to instil in students

a multi-ethnic understanding of China through history education, what students would learn was still a Han-centred exclusivist vision of Chinese nationhood.

8.3.6 Becoming exclusive again: Chinese nationhood defined in the 2001 textbooks

In contrast to the 1992 version which tried to reconceptualise China as more multi-ethnic and multi-cultural and therefore had constructed an inclusive vision of Chinese nationhood, the 2001 version had abandoned this and adopted a more exclusive definition of the Chinese nationhood which was centred around the Han vision.

Indeed, although it seems that non-Han dynasties such as the Khitan Liao, Tangut Western Xia and Jurchen Jin were now generally regarded as Chinese dynasties and thus were treated more equally in the discussion of their conflicts with the Han dynasties,⁶⁶ they were now excluded from the national historical narratives in other ways in the 2001 textbooks. This abandonment of a more inclusive and multi-cultural historical narrative is shown clearly in the example of the lesson on the economic and social development of China during the period when the Khitan Liao dynasty, Jurchen Jin dynasty, Tangut Western Xia and the Han Northern and Southern Song dynasties co-existed. The 1992 version adopted an inclusive narrative to introduce the economic development of all the Han and non-Han dynasties during this period, but the 2001 version now focused exclusively on the introduction of the economic development and social life of the Han regime i.e. the Song. This is even shown in the change of the titles of the lessons: while the 1992 version used the title 'Social and Economic Situation in the Five Dynasties, Liao, Song, Xia and Jin' (PEP Textbooks, 1992, Vol. 2, p.95, 101), including all

⁶⁶ For example, the 2001 version introduced the foundation of the Khitan first, and the Northern Song second, which reflected the correct time sequence of when these regimes were founded, whereas in the 1992 version, the Northern Song was introduced first (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.117).

the regimes founded by Han and non-Han, the 2001 version used the title 'The Social Customs of the Song Dynasty' and 'Moving the Economic Centre to the South' which means the Song since the Song were forced to move to southern China by the Jurchen who occupied northern China during the period (PEP Textbooks, 2001, Vol. 2, p.56, 61). In these two lessons, the economic and social development of the non-Han and their customs all disappeared in the 2001 version. Finally, in the lesson on the cultural achievements of this period, the previous discussion of the cultural achievement of the non-Han was also generally removed; what remained was all about Han cultural achievements.

The change of the discussion on these non-Han groups clearly reflected a movement towards a more exclusive Han-centred vision of China in the context of a turn to nationalism in China after the Tiananmen protests. As a result, the previous more flexible definition of Chineseness was also abandoned. The anecdote about the 'Khitan shotguns and rockets' was removed, and the newly introduced regimes of the non-Han groups (such as the Western Liao and the Black Khan Dynasty etc.) all disappeared from the lesson and so they were now not defined as part of Chinese history, even though the 1992 version in particular claimed that the Chinese historians generally regarded them as Chinese dynasties. This removal of regimes such as the Western Liao also shows a U-turn from the 1992 textbooks, which had deliberately included these regimes in order to promote the independent history of non-Han groups (irrespective of whether they had developed links with the Central regime). Indeed, Chinese scholars who researched the representation of minority ethnic groups in the same version of the PEP history textbooks had also drawn similar conclusions. For example, Wang (2017, pp.54-5) also found that there was a lack of 'systematic introduction' of the independent history of minority ethnic groups in the PEP history textbooks and 'knowledge' about non-Han groups was still selected based

on the values of the 'mainstream culture' (*zhuliu wenhua*), although she did not make it explicit that the 'mainstream' referred to the Han group.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, despite the official claims of China as a unified and multi-ethnic state, textbooks published in 2000s adopted a narrower and Han-exclusive concept of Chinese nationhood. This shows that after one hundred years since the late Qing, the tensions and competing visions of Chinese nationhood which lead to the division between the early Chinese modernist nationalists (i.e. the reformists and the revolutionaries) were still evident in the Chinese nation construction project under the leadership of CCP.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the two versions of textbooks published after the 1989 Tiananmen protests which stimulated a turn of political environment in the Chinese society. While there were already signs of intensive promotion of patriotism in the 1992 version, this version continued the trend of the 1980s to promote a more plural and inclusive conception of Chinese nationhood. As a result, not only the non-Han groups and their cultures were introduced with more details, but a more equal ethnic relationship was promoted as well. The 1992 version had attempted to adopt the spirit of multiculturalism as a strategy to incorporate the non-Han groups in constructing a multi-ethnic image of the Chinese nation.

However, as the CCP had increasingly promoted a state-centred patriotism as its key legitimacy strategy in the 1990s, the previous inclusive and multi-ethnic understanding of national identity was replaced by a more homogeneous and totalising vision of the national identity. As a result, the previous multicultural representation of Chinese nationhood defined in the 1992 version had been

abandoned and a more Han-centred exclusivist conception of the Chinese nation has been delivered to students in 2001 version to promote messages of national unity and inter-ethnic solidarity. In many ways, despite the declaration of 'China as a multi-ethnic state', the assumption of an equivalence between 'Chinese' and 'Han' has resumed in Chinese mainstream history textbooks published in 2000s.

Bulag (2002) points out that this state-defined and Han-centric 'inter-ethnic solidarity' (*minzu tuanjie*) does not necessarily lead to strong social cohesion and genuine equal relations between ethnic groups in China. Under the rhetoric of national unity, the promotion of the oneness of the Chinese nation which is largely defined by the Han culture and history would inevitably lead to the suppression of its multiplicity. In other words, inter-ethnic solidarity has been promoted at the expense of distinctive identity of non-Han groups whose demands for equality, cultural dignity, and autonomy would be perceived as 'futile, and jeopardising' to the Chinese nation (ibid.). Therefore, although in theory *minzu tuanjie* aimed to establish a harmonised relationship between ethnic groups, in reality it helped the state to establish a unified and even homogenised nation and legitimised a hegemonic power relationship between the Han-dominated state and non-Han groups (ibid.). In this way, as Bulag (2002, p.16) claimed, *minzu tuanjie* could be understood to be a form of official nationalism, 'which initially recognises diversity, seeks to defuse the centrifugal tendency of that diversity by imposing a uniform culture'.

Zhao (2004, p.247) also points out that the overwhelming domination of national unity and inter-ethnic solidarity in defining the Chinese national identity and inter-ethnic relations in China might actually disintegrate the multi-ethnic state since ethnic difference was suppressed by an image of a 'common, hegemonic order of the Chinese nation-state'. Indeed, when non-Han Chinese do not accept and embrace this Han version of 'Chineseness', they would ironically turn to

strengthen their ethnic identity as a form of resistance to the dominant Han vision of nationhood, which would inevitably challenge and threaten the unity and legitimacy of the Chinese nation.⁶⁷ This point will be further elaborated in the Conclusion chapter.

⁶⁷ In fact, since 1990s, ethno-nationalism has become evident as a result of shrinking space for their culture and identity in China (He and Guo, 2000; Zhao, 2004).

Chapter 9. Conclusion

Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.

George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

9.1 Findings of this thesis

This thesis has examined the portrayal of minority ethnic groups (or non-Han groups) in history textbooks published since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Although the use of history education to shape people's minds and cultivate the loyalty of citizens is a general practice across the world, as I have shown through my analysis, the situation in China reminds us of Orwell's 'Ministry of Truth' and the party mantra, quoted above from Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Jones, 2005b, p.65). Indeed, the findings of this thesis suggest that, through careful editing and even complete rewriting of the national history in school textbooks, the Chinese Communist Party has used the 'past' to try to control people's concept of the nation. The intent has been both to legitimise the party's authority and maintain its power in a changing political context, and to justify its nation-building project and corroborate its claim to sovereignty over the current PRC territory and population. Although Orwell did not focus on the role of education in this controlling process, education and history have been intertwined in China to promote ideological conformity and state-sanctioned identities (ibid., p.66), and history education has been assigned an important role in justifying Chinese rule, not least to non-Han groups whose loyalty has been seen as strategically important to the stability and development of the country.

This thesis also found that, due to the changing nature of the dominant political ideology, the conception of Chinese nationhood has been defined differently in successive versions of history textbooks published since 1949. Minority ethnic

groups in particular have been portrayed in changing or even contradictory ways in these textbooks. In the history textbooks of the 1950s, the Chinese nation was largely defined as a Han nation-state, and other ethnic groups were generally represented as non-Chinese who had historically been threats to or enemies of the Han/Chinese. The 1960's textbooks evidenced the beginning of an effort by editors to incorporate non-Han groups into the Chinese self in the historical narrative. However, although these texts posited a shared identity among the Han and non-Han, based on the socialist idea of class (*jieji*), the non-Han were still portrayed rather negatively, with their periods of rule described as a disaster for both China and the Han.

It was not until the reform era from the late 1970s that Chinese nationhood was systematically reconceptualised in history textbooks as more inclusive and multi-ethnic. As a result, not only was more non-Han history introduced in the textbooks published during this period, including their cultures, heroes etc., but non-Han rule was also portrayed much more positively and conflicts with the Han downplayed. This portrayal continued in textbooks published in the early 1990s. However, as the CCP began to use nationalism to replace socialism as its legitimating ideology, Chinese nationhood as defined in history textbooks published in the 2000s again became overwhelmingly dominated by a Han ethnocentric vision of the nation. As a result, the independent histories of the non-Han were largely reduced in history textbooks, and these groups were also generally depicted in a very narrow way as patriots who contributed to the unity of the motherland.

This thesis has also shown that, although non-Han groups were portrayed very differently in history textbooks to match shifting political ideologies, what remained unchanged throughout PRC history was the representation of the backwardness of the non-Han in relation to the Han who were always portrayed

as advanced. This shows that the CCP continued to promote the traditional form of Chinese culturalism to legitimise continuing discrimination against the non-Han and justify continuing assimilation or sinicisation. Like the Confucian civilising project practised in history, this CCP version of the civilising project also helped the party to legitimise its rule to the non-Han groups themselves.

This thesis has also revealed that, despite the changes of dominant political ideology, there have always been tensions and competing narratives in portraying the non-Han groups. Indeed, all the textbooks examined in this thesis (maybe to a lesser extent the 1952 version) on the one hand attempted to adopt a multi-ethnic narrative to incorporate the non-Han in the Chinese historical self; on the other hand still maintained a Han-centric narrative which largely defines the non-Han as non-Chinese others.

This contradiction in the portrayal of non-Han groups is largely attributable to the Chinese state being an empire masquerading as a nation. As I have shown in my review of the development of Chinese identity in Chapters Four and Five, the modern Chinese state was generated from the Qing empire, founded by non-Han 'conquerors'. While the early Chinese nationalists were basically motivated by the ideology of Han nationalism and therefore defined their mission as 'liberating' the Han from the 'alien' rule of the Manchu, at the same time they insisted on the right to inherit the geographical empire which was the result of imperialist expansion by the non-Han 'alien' groups. As a result, all major political powers in China since then have faced a fundamental dilemma: they have continually attempted to legitimise the Chinese control over its vast non-Han frontier regions and populations by pursuing a nation-building project defined by a Han-ethnocentric ideology. In other words, all these political powers, whether KMT or CCP, have tried to construct an ethnically homogeneous nation from a multi-ethnic empire. It is this dilemma that has manifested in the school textbooks published in the

PRC, and as shown in this thesis, has led to the problems of representing minority ethnic groups in the Chinese education system.

9.2 Discussion: nation construction and ethnic identity

Scholars such as Vickers (2015, pp.68-71) have rightly pointed out that the portrayal of non-Han groups as backward or savage and the urge to civilise them in China is 'neither new nor primarily traceable to Western influences', but has precedents in China's own imperial past. However, what distinguishes the CCP from its Confucian predecessors is that while non-Han were discriminated against in pre-modern times as a way of defining the Chinese identity (*huayi zhi bian*, or 'distinguishing the civilised and the barbarians'), in the PRC the representation of the non-Han has become a political issue closely related to the modern Chinese nation-building programme. As Fan notes:

'the construction of the identity of the new Chinese nation must be manifested through absorbing the specific ethnic identities that Chinese civilisation had traditionally excluded.' (Fan, 2016, p.2015).

As this thesis has shown, by depicting the non-Han as 'always being Chinese since immemorial times' and as 'grateful recipients of benefits bestowed by the "advanced" Han' (Vickers, 2015, p.68), Chinese rule is legitimised and the non-Han are reconceptualised as Chinese minority ethnic groups which are an inseparable part of China.

What also distinguishes the CCP from its Confucian predecessors is that it now possesses the resources and governmental apparatus necessary to pursue its civilising project. Indeed, practices such as preferential quotas for minority students in the national college entrance examinations, central government

subsidies for education in frontier regions and the pursuit of assimilation through sending non-Han children to study in inland regions, which were all piloted in some form during the Qing era, were now very widely implemented in China under CCP rule (Rowe, 1994, p.446). For example, the number of students enrolled in the inland schools or classes for students from Xinjiang (mainly Uyghur) reached almost 10,000 in 2015, ten times the figure in 2000 when the programme was launched (Xinjiang Class, 2015). In the last few years, it has also been reported that bilingual education in Xinjiang, which mainly refers to teaching the non-Han in Mandarin, has now been extended to kindergarten level and it was reported that more than 92% of ethnic minority children in Xinjiang were in bilingual kindergartens (Minzuban, 2013). The central government in Beijing is also intending to provide 15 years of free education for children in Xinjiang, where Muslim Uyghurs are the dominant inhabitants, compared to only nine years in most parts of the country (China Daily, 2013, p.8). All these educational interventions are clearly designed to help the CCP to achieve its civilising mission.

But with such an investment of educational resources and governmental apparatus, will the CCP finally be successful in 'civilising' the non-Han groups and really assimilating or sinicising them? By implementing strict control of the 'knowledge' delivered to students through the education system, will the non-Han students finally all discard their distinctive ethnic identity and fully embrace the national identity, which largely reflects the Han vision of the nation as reflected in history textbooks? Of course, modern public education systems have been designed as vehicles to transmit and impose shared national identities that constitute the glue of societies (see Chapter Two). While in many cases schools have helped to achieve this goal, in others they have also failed. As Vickers (2005, p.10) points out, teaching students to sing the *Marseillaise* or making them study the history of the French Revolution did not transform Vietnamese into

Frenchmen, and learning about the Magna Carta and the 1832 Reform Act did not turn Malays or Chinese into Britons. It would therefore follow that learning the Han culture, history and even the Han language would not necessarily lead all non-Han students to fully identify with a vision of Chinese nationhood rooted in Han culture. As Vickers (*ibid.*) also notes, 'where political socialisation merely involves a clumsy top-down imposition of obviously alien histories and values, it is unlikely to succeed.' In any case, drawing on the example of Singapore, Han (2015, p.247) shows that the internet offers young people new opportunities to access many sources of knowledge, which has complicated the task of the state in using curricula and textbooks as vehicles for state propaganda.

Kumar et al (2015, p.16) also argue that the efforts of States to control the 'secondary socialisation' of citizens (i.e. schooling) may fail because students are also under great influence from their home and family where 'primary socialisation' takes place and where the control of states is far weaker. As they note, 'the effectiveness of propaganda is strongest when it is able to tap into the lived experience or folk memory of a population' (*ibid.*). In other words, this is a negotiated process; 'people need reasons for believing the things the state wants them to believe' (*ibid.*). Taking the myths of common ancestry as an example, many non-Han groups in China such as the Mongols and Tibetans have their own myths of ancestry and students of these groups probably have already been told these myths in their early childhood by their parents or grandparents. It is doubtful how much credit these non-Han students would give to the claim that all Chinese are offspring of the Yellow Emperor. Indeed, primordialists such as van den Berghe (1995, p.360) have also made the claim that certain factors are necessary for the myth of common ancestry to seem plausible to members of a given community; for instance, members of an ethnic group need to be sufficiently alike in physical appearance and culture, and they have to have lived together and inter-married for at least three or four generations for the myth to have developed

a substantial measure of biological truth. Although the similarities in skin colours among some (but not all) Chinese ethnic groups may make it easier for the government to peddle the myths of common ancestry, non-Han groups would not be easily persuaded, not only because of the myths of their own ancestry mentioned above, but also because some groups such as the Uyghur have a different appearance and religions which would make the government propaganda less convincing.

Therefore, Kumar et al (2015, p.16) conclude that 'campaigns of state-led identity formation that ignore this, and become detached from the experience or interests of their populations, are doomed.' For example, the striking emergence of a sense of Taiwanese identity since the 1980s demonstrates clearly the failure of the KMT to impose its ideology of Chinese nationalism (Vickers, 2009a, p.21). The rejection of the introduction of Moral and National Education (MNE) as a compulsory school subject in Hong Kong in 2012 and following that the emergence of a strong Hong Kong identity, especially among the younger generation, also show clearly the resistance of local residents to the imposition of the Communist version of a totalising and homogenising national identity (Morris & Vickers, 2015).

On the mainland, discussing the relationship between historical writing and indoctrination of national identity, Jones (2005b, p.94) has also rightly pointed out that:

'Although history production has been restricted directly by government control mechanisms and indirectly by self-censorship, and the standardised, examination-centered national curriculum has often ensured considerable homogeneity across syllabi, textbooks, and classroom teaching, this does not necessarily mean that the Chinese regime has persuaded its citizens to subscribe

lack, stock, and barrel to the state-sanctioned vision of Chineseness.’

As she also notes, it is one thing for the state to produce official historical narratives and discourse on national identity, but quite another for these narratives and discourse to be accepted, despite the fact that the same version of official national history is recapitulated at all stages of the Chinese education system (ibid.). In fact, very often the official historical narratives are resisted by non-Han groups precisely because they are state-sponsored, as happened in the Soviet bloc (Wertsch, 2000). While some resistance may take radical forms, as shown by the eruption of open dissent and protests in independence-seeking minority regions such as Tibet and Xinjiang, others may take less-violent forms, such as the decisions made by minority parents to send their children to Buddhist temples or so-called ‘illegal religion study centres’ in Xinjiang rather than the state school system (Hansen, 1999; Yi, 2009; Yan & Whitty, 2016). These forms of resistance all illustrate clearly that some members of the non-Han groups have chosen to reject the official concept of Chinese national identity and the Han vision of the nation.

Researching Chinese education for minority ethnic groups in southwestern China, Hansen (1999, p.161) also made the claim that ‘one result of an education directed at achieving cultural homogenisation may well [...] be fragmentation and increasing focus on ethnic identity.’ Thus the downplaying of minorities’ cultural and historical differences and the overwhelming focus on a unified Chinese national identity based primarily on the Han culture and history could lead to the strengthening of those distinctive ethnic identities. This was not only the case in the failed attempt by the Qing to sinicise the Naxi in Yunnan in southwestern China (Rowe, 1994, p.445), but also when Uyghur students studying in inland boarding schools developed their ways of maintaining their distinctive ethnic

identity, such as practising handshaking among peers and rejecting Han students in the canteen which serves halal food (Chen, 2008).

Vickers (2015, p.70) also points out that one dilemma that most colonisers will eventually encounter is that their civilising project will enable their colonised subjects to develop the ability to challenge the colonisers. Just like the Han elites who quickly picked up the idea of nationalism from the Western imperialist powers (and Japan) and developed their anti-colonialist nationalist movements at the beginning of the twentieth century, the minority ethnic groups within China may also be inspired by the construction of a Han-centred primordialist understanding of national identity and begin to construct their own distinctive ethnic identity. Duara (1995, p.9) has also noted that while the nation state could employ the mass media to facilitate the nation-building project, the same technology also enables minority ethnic groups to mobilise and to circulate nationalist ideas which all contribute to the construction of alternative representations of the nation.

This is not to say that the CCP rule in Tibet or Xinjiang or any other non-Han regions should be seen as inherently illegitimate and the non-Han groups should seek their independence from the Han rule. As Vickers (2015, p.73) has argued, the break-up of empires such as the Hapsburg, South Asian and Soviet may cause as many problems as it solves. He further argues that the civilising projects carried out by the CCP or other imperial powers should not all be valued negatively (*ibid.*). There are certainly positive effects of either the Confucian or the Communist civilising project, similar to how the Han Chinese elites benefited from learning from the West more than a hundred years ago. But policy-makers in China should be clear that portraying minority ethnic groups as subordinate and complementary to the Han in the official discourse, such as school history textbooks, is certainly not helpful in legitimising Chinese rule of the non-Han groups. What they might achieve is to strengthen the bias among the Han

Chinese against non-Han groups and increase the resistance of the non-Han to Han discrimination. The key to attaining legitimacy, however, relies on the ability of the CCP to 'offer a reasonable measure of dignity and equity to all major groups' and to encourage these groups 'to become active participants in debates over the meaning of civilised modernity' in Chinese society (ibid.).

9.3 Changes for Future?

In recent years, learning from their Western counterparts, it has become popular among Chinese academics to use the ideas of multiculturalism and multicultural education to locate their social and educational interventions to help improve the situation of the non-Han in China. While there may be potential benefits to promoting multiculturalism in China, scholars such as Sen (2006) point out that the promotion of multiculturalism may possibly end up encouraging what he calls plural monoculturalism which by categorising people into discrete and exclusive 'communities' defined on religious or ethnic lines actually institutionalises, rigidifies and reinforces the very divisions that the policy is ostensibly intended to ameliorate.

Inter-culturalism and inter-cultural education, as the contemporary and updated versions of multiculturalism and multicultural education, have been promoted by scholars such as Gundara (2000), Bash and Coulby (2016) and by UNESCO (2006) as a way to reduce both inequalities and conflicts between ethnic groups. Unlike some versions of multiculturalism, inter-culturalism not only seeks to protect minority ethnic groups' rights and cultures, but it also highlights the idea of community cohesion and a vision of a shared society that encourages interactive dialogue between all ethnic groups (Cantle, 2012, p. 88). Promoting the idea of 'learning through and about the differences that exist within societies

and between different societies' (ICIS, 2012), inter-cultural education is therefore seen as particularly helpful for fostering respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, between ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups, and between nations.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to envisage these changes happening in schools on any significant scale in the absence of wider changes in Chinese society. Many scholars studying education have argued that schools do not compensate for society, and any genuine changes in the education system require change in the broader social structure and national political environment (Apple, 2004, p.39; Whitty, 1985, p.90). Vickers (2009b, p.31) also points out that reforms to education cannot proceed in isolation from political and social reforms and education should not be seen as some sort of magic bullet for solving all social problems. Thus, simply changing the portrayal of minority ethnic groups in school textbooks will not necessarily lead to a general improvement of the status of these groups in Chinese society, if broader issues of social inequalities among ethnic groups and discrimination against minority ethnic groups continue and are avoided from public discussion. Clearly, schools are just one among many vehicles, albeit a very important one, for the state to inculcate particular political values and visions of nationhood. Other factors such as the mass media certainly also have the same function and also play important roles in the propaganda mechanism in China.

Moreover, if some non-Han groups reject the official historical narratives and discourses on the Chinese nation, it is mainly among the Han population (including many democracy activists and dissidents) that the Han-centric narratives and the negative portrayal of minority ethnic groups have been accepted. As Jones (2005b, p.94) has also noted, most Han Chinese seem to genuinely believe that Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, and even Taiwan and other

recently gained territories are not Chinese conquests, but eternal and indivisible parts of the motherland, even though many of them do not always regard the non-Han groups as fully Chinese and even tend to adopt racist attitudes towards them (Leibold, 2010). Although it has sometimes been asserted by Chinese politicians that racism itself is a Western concept (Dikötter, 1992), scholars such as Law (2012) claim that institutional racism is widely practised in China. As demonstrated in the school textbooks examined in this thesis, the narrative of the 'great Han chauvinism' (*da Hanzu zhuyi*), which heavily promotes Han cultural assimilation or sinicisation, has been institutionalised in the national school curriculum.

In addition, many Han Chinese remain unaware of the chauvinist nature of their sentiment towards minority ethnic groups precisely because of the repeated official rhetoric that the Chinese (or the Han) are an innocent race who have never fought an unjust war or invaded another country, but have rather been the victims of foreign imperialists (Jones, 2005b, p.94; Vickers, 2005b, p.17). As shown in this thesis, the Chinese conquests of non-Han regions are generally not discussed in the textbooks, and the non-Han expansions (such as the Mongol and Manchu) are portrayed as a reunion of the motherland in recent textbooks. Chinese students studying history textbooks (which often represent their only chance to systematically study the history of the non-Han) would not learn that China itself has been a threatening and destroying power to many non-Han groups in history.

What does not help many Han people's blindness towards China's own history is that students in China tend to uncritically accept knowledge delivered by teachers or textbooks, which prevents them from seeking or understanding alternative viewpoints, much less accepting them (Ogden, 2002). As Rowena He (2015) describes from her experience of dealing with Chinese elite students studying

abroad, many of them show heightened chauvinist sentiments and would not think critically about issues related to minority ethnic groups in China. In fact, she reports that many Chinese students have shown particularly acute hypersensitivity to Western media criticism of PRC policies on minorities.

Therefore, a better way to improve ethnic relations in China and genuinely contribute to the construction of a united and multi-ethnic China would rely on educating the Han to enable them to realise the unequal status of the minority groups in China and their concerns and everyday suffering. Citing Osterhammel (2006), Vickers (2015, p.73) points out that the most successful civilising missions are not those directed at colonial 'others', but internally directed movements of 'self-civilisation', such as British abolitionism or South African national reconciliation, which are 'often embarked upon in response to active challenges from oppressed peoples.' The long-term stability of the Chinese state in its current form may thus depend not on assimilating the non-Han into the Han, but on:

'bring[ing] Chinese public opinion to a more profound and nuanced understanding of China's relationship with imperialism, and of conditions in its own restless borderlands – not just in Tibet and Xinjiang, but also in Taiwan, Hong Kong and elsewhere [...] such an understanding is the essential precondition for reforms to both education and governance that might make possible truly civilised inter-ethnic relations.' (Vickers, 2015, p.74).

Other scholars such as He Baogang (2014) have also noted 'Chinese linguistic imperialism' and the importance of teaching Han more about the languages and cultures of minority ethnic groups. In relation to this thesis, the notion of 'Chinese historical imperialism' should also be abandoned, as new perspectives on Chinese history are needed to challenge and change the predominant Han exclusivist conception of historical China.

Promoting the idea of 'rescuing history from nations', Duara (1995, p.16) has suggested the possibility of an alternative history which 'emphasizes the dynamic, multiple, and contested nature of historical identities.' He has shown that rival visions of history, both indigenous and Western, can all challenge the evolutionary, teleological and nationalist histories which mobilise particular representations of nation against other representations, and he introduced the concept of bifurcating linear history to allow dispersed meanings of the past to be exposed.

By viewing Chinese history from the perspectives of the marginalised non-Han groups, the 'new Qing history' has challenged the Han-centric or Sino-centric narrative of historical writing in recent years (see Chapter Four). This requires substantial changes in both methods of research and theories put forward in examining Chinese history and called for investigations which would release repressed voices and marginalised narratives (Rawski, 1992). Clearly, the 'new Qing history' allows a totally new understanding of Chinese history which would be very different from the current Han exclusivist historiography.

The adoption of the 'new Qing history' in the current school history curriculum would not only encourage the introduction of the independent history of the non-Han groups in school textbooks (either national or local), but also promote a more balanced and neutral stance in discussing conflicts between the Han and non-Han. This means that Han heroes in conflicts with the non-Han such as Yue Fei should no longer be used to inspire a sense of patriotism, and students should be told that the Han were not simply victims of non-Han invasion, but also a conquering power that invaded and occupied others. The 'chaotic' period of Chinese history (very often featuring many non-Han groups entering the Central Plain) should also be introduced as equally important to those unifying periods such as Han or Tang dynasties, and the non-Han feature of Chinese dynasties

should also be stressed. For example, while the Han grandmother of the Northern Wei Sarbi Emperor is highlighted in textbooks (as shown in the 1992 and 2001 textbooks discussed in Chapter Eight), students should also be told about the Sarbi mother (and grandmother indeed) of the great Tang Taizong Emperor. All these would certainly be helpful for students to gain an understanding of a more equal and complex ethnic relationships in the nation's history.

On a more substantial level, history education should not teach students an essentialist understanding of national identity, which tends to see Chineseness as something given or fixed. What they should learn is to understand the constructive nature of national identity and sub-identities and to avoid a totalising and homogenising vision of the nation, but to think critically about what China is and what it means to different groups of people in different historical periods. After studying history, they should also be aware of the evolutionary and teleological nature of the nationalist historical narrative and develop historical understanding which would enable them to view national history from different perspectives.

In other words, what students should learn through history education is a sense of historical understanding rather than a sense of collective memories which tend to simplify histories. Currently, as Wertsch notes: they see historical events from a single committed perspective; they are impatient with ambiguities of any kind; and they reduce historical events to mythic archetypes (Wertsch, 2008, p.145). In the words of Peter Novick:

‘to understand something historically is to be aware of its complexity, to have sufficient detachment to see it from multiple perspectives, to accept the ambiguities, including moral ambiguities, of protagonists’ motives and behaviour’ (Novick, 1999, p.3; cited in Wertsch, 2008, p.145).

To help students to develop historical understanding, not only should textbooks abandon one dominant narrative and encourage different narratives, but students should also be encouraged to learn how historians reach their conclusions, understand the nature of scholarly debate with its opposing arguments, and learn the proper use of historical sources (Hinrichs, 1992, p.49).

Clearly, this also involves much more than simply changing the content of textbooks. As Vickers (2006, p.19) has pointed out, 'when it comes to history education, the content is only half of the story.' According to him, what is equally significant is the way in which decisions are reached over content selection, and how the content is presented to students. As he further notes, 'historical knowledge can be presented as an authorised version beyond criticism, or as a living tradition of debate over the past, whose findings are always provisional and open to revision' (ibid.). In other words, students should learn to view history 'as critical craft rather than a body of received knowledge' (ibid., p.15).

These are epistemological and pedagogical questions about the nature of history itself, about the kind of knowledge that historical knowledge is, and about the kind of attitude towards history that students are encouraged to adopt. However, they are also political questions. As this thesis has shown, political factors have played a powerful role in determining what and how history is taught to students in China. Although in recent years there has been an oft stated desire among Chinese education officials and teachers to use history education to foster amongst students the critical and analytical skills deemed essential for technological progress and success in the global knowledge economy, history education in China has continued to be used as a primary tool to inspire patriotic devotion to the nation and loyalty to the Communist party (Jones, 2005b, p.61; Vickers, 2009a, p.80). Indeed, history education is among the most important tools for the party to indoctrinate patriotism and is therefore at the core of the party's

legitimizing strategy. As a result, it is difficult to see how party leaders would allow the use of history education to cultivate active and constructive citizens in China. As Bakken (2000, p.96). notes:

‘much of what has been called pedagogy in China has been less preoccupied with methods of creative learning than it has been directed towards finding methods of effective control.’

Vickers (2009a, p.81) was probably right to claim that, as long as China remains wedded to the current political system, it is hard to see how there can be significant change in the way in which teaching materials represent relations between the individual and the state. Similarly, as long as the party (and the Han group) continually feels a fundamental insecurity underlying the construction of the Chinese national identity, it is also difficult to foresee any significant change in school textbooks in representing a primordialist and Han ethno-centric vision of the Chinese nation and the non-Han groups as complementary and subordinate to the Han. In other words, the Chinese nation will for the foreseeable future be represented as a Han nation, and the non-Han will be continually represented unfavourably in school textbooks.

Appendixes

Appendix 1. Major non-Han groups discussed in this thesis

| Group name | Chinese name | Regime name |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Hun | Xiongnu | |
| Tibet | Zang | Tubo |
| Khitan | Qidan | Liao |
| Tangut | Qiang, Dangxiang | Xixia, or Western Xia |
| Jurchen | Nvzhen | Jin |
| Mongol | Menggu | Yuan |
| Manchu | Manzu | Qing |
| Turk | Tujue | |
| Uyghur | Weiwuer, Huibu, Huihu, Huihe | |
| Sarbi | Xianbei | Beiwei, or Northern Wei |
| Torghut | Tuerhute | |

Appendix 2. Periodisation of Chinese History (official historiography)

| Historical Materialist Stages of Development | Era/Dynasty | Historical Period |
|---|--|--|
| Primitive Communism | Primitive, tribal society (matriarchal, patriarchal) | Ancient History 1.7m B.C. - 1840 |
| Slave Society, 2100 - 476 B.C. | Xia, Shang, Zhou | |
| Feudal Society, 475 B.C. - 1840 (Since this accounts for most of China's recorded history, the curriculum normally divides feudal society into five stages shown at right.) | 1. Warring States, Qin, Western Han, Eastern Han; 2. Three Kingdoms, Western Jin, Eastern Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties; 3. Sui, Tang; 4. Five Dynasties, Liao, Song, Xixia, Jin, Yuan; 5. Ming, Qing (up to 1840) | |
| Semifeudal, semicolonial, Bureaucratic capitalist, 1840 - 1949 | Qing (post-1840) | Modern History 1840 - 1919 |
| | Republic of China 1911 - 1927 (Warlordism) | Contemporary History 1919 - |
| | Nanjing Government 1927-1949 (Nationalist Party) | |
| Socialist 1949 - | People's Republic of China | |

(source: Jones, 2005b, p.75)

Appendix 3. Chinese dynasties with major non-Han groups and important figures mentioned in textbooks

| Dynasties | | Year | Major non-Han groups | Important figures |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Xia | | 2070 - 1600 BCE (appr.) | | |
| Shang | | 1600 - 1046 BCE | | |
| Zhou | | 1046 - 476 BCE | | |
| Warring States | | 475 - 221 BCE | Rong | |
| Qin | | 221 - 207 BCE | Hun, Yue | |
| Han | Western Han | 206 BCE - 23 | Hun | Modu Chanyu |
| | Eastern Han | | Tangut | Yuan Hao |
| Three Kingdoms (Wei, Shu, Wu) | | 220 - 280 | | |
| Jin | | 265 - 420 | Di | |
| Northern Dynasties | Northern Wei | 386 - 534 | Sarbi | Emperor Xiaowen, Empress dowager Feng (Feng Taihou) |
| | Dongwei, Beiqi, Xiwei, Beizhou | 534 - 581 | | |
| Southern Dynasties | Song, Qi, Liang, Chen | 420 - 589 | | |
| Sui | | 581 - 618 | | |

| Dynasties | | Year | Major non-Han groups | Important figures |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Tang | | 618 - 907 | Turk, Uyghur, Mohe, Nanzhao | Tang Taizong Emperor |
| Five Dynasties | | 907 - 979 | | |
| Liao | | 916 - 1125 | Khitan | Abaoji, Yelvchucai |
| Song | Northern Song | 960 - 1127 | | Yue Fei |
| | Southern Song | 1127 - 1279 | | |
| Xixia | | 1038 - 1227 | Tangut | Yuan Hao |
| Jin | | 1115 - 1234 | Jurchen | Wanyan Aguda |
| Yuan | | 1271 - 1368 | Mongol | Genghis Khan |
| Ming | | 1368 - 1644 | Mongol | |
| Qing | Early and Middle Qing | 1644 - 1840 | Manchu, Mongol, Uyghur, Tibetan | Emperor Kangxi, Emperor Qianlong, Wobaxi/Ubashi, Panchen Lama |
| | Late Qing | 1840 - 1911 | Manchu | Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Sun Yat-sen, Zhang Taiyan, Liu Shipei, Zou Rong |
| Republic of China | | 1912 - 1949 | | Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-Shek, Mao Zedong, Li Dazhao |
| People's Republic of China | | 1949 - | | Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, Jiang Zemin |

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