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Chinese National Identities and Understanding the Decision for War with India in 1962

Yuhao Du

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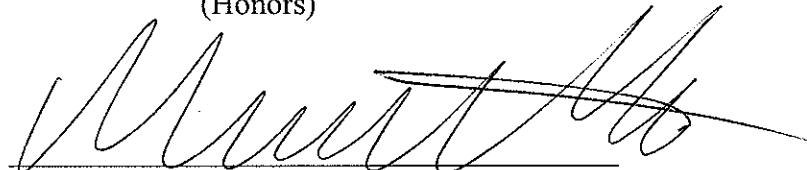
Chinese National Identities and Understanding the Decision for War with India in 1962

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Government Department from
The College of William and Mary

by

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Accepted for Honors
(Honors)



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Williamsburg, VA
April 29, 2015

Abstract

The rise of China (PRC) has dominated scholarly debates in recent days. Since China defined territorial integrity as its “core interest”, it is widely viewed as a sign that China is going to assert its territorial claims with its neighbours (including maritime neighbours such as Philippine). With China’s growing military capabilities, China’s territorial disputes with its many neighbours are becoming one of the leading destabilizing concerns in Asia. However, current scholarship on China’s decision-making in its territorial disputes is too sparse for people outside of the Chinese Politburo to devise strategies to stabilize the region. This thesis aims to understand China’s decision(s) to use force and the decision-making process from a “national identity” perspective. Specifically, this thesis studies Chinese national identities and China’s decision to go to war with India in October 1962. Borrowing largely from Ted Hopf (2002)’s method of studying Soviet identities, this thesis uses discourse analysis to inductively recover Chinese national identities from newspapers, novels and movies. This thesis’ key assumption is that as part of society and public discourse, decision-makers’ understanding of world events should not deviate significantly from national discourses. Therefore, national identities should be a reliable reference point to the decisions-making of “big” national issues, such as defending state sovereignty. The findings of this thesis confirm that assumptions for two reasons: a). findings are in line with existing, authoritative theories on China’s decision for war with India and b). findings are able to provide extra empirical support to inferential statements made by authoritative scholars on this topic.

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Introduction

In the 2014 “Ivory Tower” survey of America's top International Relations (IR) scholars – a collaboration between *Foreign Policy* and the College of William and Mary – “the rising military power of China” ranks second in “the three most important foreign-policy issues the United States will face over the next 10 years.”¹ According to the 2014 annual U.S. Department of Defense report to Congress, senior Chinese officials have identified protecting China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity as China’s “core interest” (Department of Defense 2014:3).² With the crowning Sino-American strategic rivalry in the Asia Pacific and the volatile but highly tensed Chinese territorial disputes in the East and South China Sea, it seems, within the current decade, few IR discussion will garner more attentions than what actions China will take in order to protect her “core interests” (Cheng 2011:229). This thesis seeks to provide some historical and social settings to help answer this question (i.e. China’s strategy in territorial disputes) from a “national identity” perspective. In recent years, scholars of a broad spectrum of social science disciplines have taken an intense interest in the concept of *identity* (Abdelal et al. 2001). Constructivism and social psychology are the two major IR theoretical schools that take identity seriously. Unlike mainstream IR theories realism and liberalism, constructivism views international politics as a “social construction” and rejects realist fundamental assumptions that “national interest is a fixed concept” and “states seek nothing more than survival” (Legro and Moravcsik 1999: 14). The dynamic and evolving nature of “social construction” renders constructivist theories particularly capable of explaining political changes, such as the peaceful collapse of the USSR (Katzenstein 1996: xi). However, the identity scholarship has suffered from a lack of agreement on how to define

¹ For a *Foreign Policy* article presenting a summary of the results of the 2014 survey, see <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/03/top-twenty-five-schools-international-relations/>
For complete results of the 2014 survey, see trip.wm.edu/reports/2014.

² According to Michael D. Swaine, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the first apparent official identification of the oft-espoused concepts of “sovereignty and territorial integrity” as a Chinese “core interest” occurred in April 2004 (Swaine 2010:3).

identity and its causal relations to behaviours (Abdelal et al. 2001: 1). This research proposes to enrich the identity literature by studying the causal relationship between national identity and state's behaviours in the case of China. Ideally, this author would like to treat Chinese national identity as an independent variable and study its effects on China's decision(s) to use force in territorial disputes (since 1949) (as the dependent variable). However, due to constraint of this thesis, I will limit my attempt to using "national identity" to understand one case of China's use of force in territorial dispute, i.e. the 1962 war between India and China in the west sector of the Indo-Chinese border. The literature review (Part I) covers the development of an "analytical framework" intended to resolve the conceptual chaos; it is then followed by the reviews of two books exemplifying how to construct national identities and how "identity" helps to explain foreign policy decisions. Part II of the thesis will introduce the results of "identity recovery" of China roughly one year before the 1962 war. In Part III the author will argue that not only are Chinese national identities in 1961 compatible with most of existing scholarship on China's decision to go to war with India but the "national identity" approach can also offer solid empirical evidence to support its explanations. Hopefully, this thesis can convincingly show that, "national identity" has the potential to be a valuable method for foreign policy analysis.

Identity in IR Theories

With the end of Cold War, scholarly interests in identity in social science have experienced a burst between approximately 1990 and 1993 (see Fig.1).

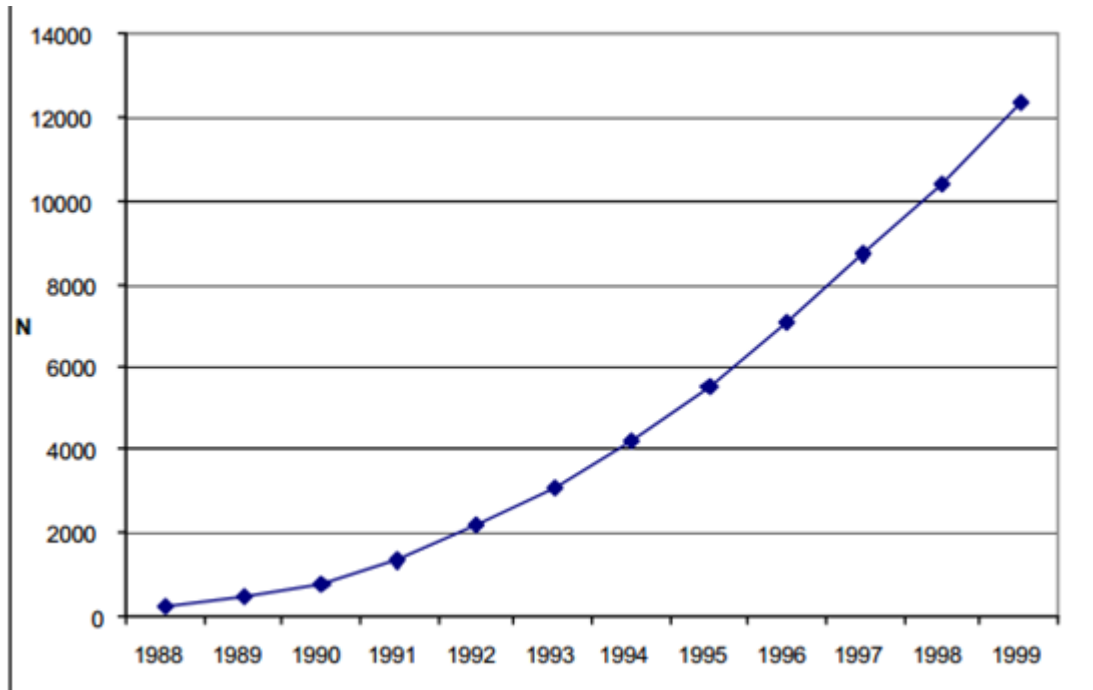


Figure 1. Cumulative sum of “Identity” Articles in social science journals, 1988-1999. Adapted from “Treating Identity As A Variable” by Abdelal et al, 2001. *Presentation Paper*, p. 4.

The end of Cold War marked the revival of constructivist approach because mainstream International Relations (IR) theories at that time – Realism and Liberalism – had difficulty explaining the abrupt but peaceful collapse of only one of the superpowers in the bipolar world (Wendt 1999: 4; John Lewis Gaddis 1992: 18). The mainstream IR theories were then criticized for being so misled by deeply ingrained conceptions about behaviours of great powers that they were slow to grasp the revolutionary potentials of Soviet leaders and the possibility of political changes in general (Lebow and Kappen 1995: 3). Constructivists argue that norms and identities of domestic actors are better indicators of fundamental changes in international politics than military capabilities, for example, in the case of the

collapse of Soviet Union (Koslowski and Kratochwil 1994). There has been a tendency to bring the concept of identity, which was originated from the discipline of psychology and had long been examined by sociologists and anthropologists, back to IR theories.

Various IR schools of thought have addressed the concept of “identity” in their theories but they widely disagree on its importance and explanatory role. *Classical realism* states that international politics is governed by “objective laws which have roots in human nature” (Morgenthau 1948:4) and statesmen think and act in terms of power calculations because of basic human lusts for power. Judging by history tracing back to Thucydides and, particularly, the two “World Wars”, classical realists claim that the best way to understand (or to survive in) politics is by thinking in an anarchic, self-help and Hobbesian state of nature (“every man against every man (XII 8)”) condition. Because there is no bounding and enforceable law and government in the international arena, each state owns no more control than that of his own. However, according to Morgenthau, interests and power are not fixed concepts: “the kind of interest determining political action in a particular period of history depends upon the political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated...The same observations apply to the concept of power. Its content and the manner of its use are determined by the political and cultural environment (Morgenthau 1948:9).” However, Morgenthau leaves it ambiguous how interests are defined by “cultural contexts”.

Structural realists (or neorealists) shifted the foundation of realism from speculation of human nature to a structural and “scientific” account of the international system borrowing heavily from classical economics (Waltz 1979: 76, 89, 92). Structural realists agree with the basic assumptions of classical realism, i.e. self-help, anarchy and balance of power, but structural realists push the priority of security even further up in the list of concerns. If classical realism is ambiguous about the definitions of power and how to obtain it, structural

realists reduce interest(s) of a state primarily to survival and military capabilities due to constraints imposed by the structure of the international system. The “logic” of the anarchic and self-help international system implies that gains, economic or military, are always relative because states constantly feel insecure. Regarding identity, neorealists argue that there is virtually no normative content when it comes to the origins of state interests (Legro and Moravcsik 1999: 22). Because culture and identity are derivatives of the distribution of capabilities to structural realists, identity has little explanatory power *per se* (Katzenstein 1996: 17).

Liberalism disagrees with realism’s assumptions that states are primarily concerned with survival and power. Liberals contend that institutions and norms can generate cooperative behaviours but they conceptualize norms only in terms of their effects on state behaviours.³ IR liberals is interested in questions like, for example, “how to increase transparency and certainty in international regimes or “how to create incentives for cooperation among states”; few liberals go far enough to study the origins of identity (Jepperson et al. 1996: 44; Moravcsik 1997: 525).

Constructivism shares liberalism’s conclusion that cooperation is possible under “anarchy” but constructivism accounts for this outcome from a totally different standpoint. While material (i.e. capabilities) still matters in the international system, a constructivist will argue, how it matters is ultimately mediated by ideas (Holmes 2011:21). Identities of states are constructed by ideas and material capabilities matters by mediation of identities. If Liberalism tends to privileges election and interest group politics as the “transmission belts” in the formation of state interests, constructivism emphasizes the social identity structure of the state (Hopf 2012:19) and socialization in the international arena (Alastair Iain Johnston, 2008). States also acquire identity (or identities) from interactions with other actors (i.e.,

³ Therefore both liberalism and realism are classified as “behaviouralism”.

states) and structure (Reus-Smit and Price 1998: 268).⁴ While realists and liberals assume that structure only imposes constraints on state behaviours (Checkel 1998: 333), constructivists consider the relation between “agent (including state identity)” and “structure” as mutually constitutive; actions of states contribute to making institutions and norms of international structure, and institutions and norms, in turn, contribute to defining, socializing, and influencing states (Hurd 2008: 304). The agent-structure debate is well beyond the purpose of this thesis. Suffice it to say that from a constructivist standpoint, state interests are products of state identity and the “construction” of identity is a dynamic process.

Last but not least, *social psychologists*, who firstly posited the distinction between personal and social identity in the 1980s, offer plenty of non-IR methods and insights that are useful for IR scholars using identity as a variable. Social Identity Theory (SIT) is concerned with social identity and starts from the assumption that this identity derives largely from favourable comparisons that can be made between the “ingroup” and relevant “outgroup” (Brown 2000:747). SIT has made significant achievements in various intergroup phenomena in the domain of politics, such as ingroup bias and determinant of collective action (Ibid. 747,749). There are three variables that influence intergroup differentiation identified by social psychologists: 1) people must be subjectively identified with their ingroup; 2) the situation should permit evaluative intergroup comparisons; 3) the outgroup must be sufficiently comparable (Ibid. 747). Even though technically social psychology is not a traditional IR approach, SIT can be helpful when IR scholars operationalize identity.

Epistemology and Identity as a Variable

Identity is often used by many political scientists as a shorthand label for a varying construction of nation- and statehood (Katzenstein 1996: 6). Alternatively, scholars

⁴ This point of view is held by the so-called “holistic constructivism”, in contrast to “systemic constructivism” whose focus concentrates on international system/structure (see Christian Reus-Smit and Richard Price 1998).

sometimes invoke the term *culture* as a even broader label that denotes “the total knowledge existing within a society, concerned in such a way that each item of knowledge is multiplied by the proportion of individuals who hold it and the ‘leverage’ exercised by each of these individuals” (Johnston 1995: 33). These “labels” share more similarities than differences as far as this thesis is concerned. One of the similarities, and an important one, is that they share an interest in studying collective (or group) identity rather than individual identity. Whereas individual identities are a matter more of psychology, collective identities are comprised of social practices and shared attitudes and beliefs (“social stocks of knowledge”) (Abdelal et al 2006: 701). However, it does not necessarily follow that the concept of “collective identity” implies sense of unity. Individuals usually ascribe different meanings to the same collective identity, which is the reason why understanding the process of identity formation is crucial for identity analysis (Ibid.). In general, there are two directions in the research on “collective identity”: firstly, it concerns with the formation or constitution of identity; second, it concerns with the causal relationship between identity and behaviours. To comply with Abdelal et al’s (2006:3) request that all analysts should clarify their causal models in their research:

In conducting research, scholars must be clear about whether they want to know if identity is causing a person to do a particular thing (an independent variable), or something else is causing a person to adopt a particular identity (a dependent variable). (Abdelal et al 2006:3)

This author states his epistemological position regarding identity as a variable as following: the author regards identity as something measurable and is possible to “cause” a person or a group to do a particular thing but he also recognizes that identity is produced by circumstances and can change in time. To speak in Abdelal et al’s words, this thesis is mainly interested in identity as “an independent variable”, i.e. the process in which identity translates into action(s). Regarding the central epistemological question, i.e. what counts as knowledge,

this author concurs with Friedrich Kratochwil's view (2006:21-24) that knowledge is essentially "relative" (rather than absolute) and situated in a "historicity" which is largely a product of subjective memory (rather than brute facts). Hence, the Popperian scientific method of discovering objective knowledge ("universal laws") through "tests" misunderstands the type of knowledge we need in order to understand politics, which is constituted of both materials and subjective meanings (Checkel 1998:326). This thesis' primary goal is not to establish or examine a particular causal model of identity and political behaviours but to deepen our understanding of politics and the past.

It is unfortunate that the identity literature has been plagued by a major problem, which is diagnosed by some scholars as the lack of analytical clarity or "definitional anarchy" (Abdelal et al. 2009: 17). I will break down this problem into three related components: 1). the lack of clear and agreed-upon definition(s) of identity (Alastair Iain Johnston 1995: 34). Heterogeneity should be encouraged as long as various definitions generate competition which can lead to greater awareness of the theoretical deficiencies in the literature. However, it becomes counterproductive when an inflation of various definitions causes confusions for others to engage in replication and theory testing. 2). the lack of clarity in describing the causal effects of identity as an independent variable. 3). the lack of a standard of how to measure identity. Even though a "unified logic of scientific inference" (Smith 2004: 301) is probably unnecessarily rigorous and epistemologically confining for the identity scholarship in general, an analytical framework that can help close the gaps in conceptual issues and coordination is much welcome (Abdelal et al. 2009: 18). In the review of current literature below, I will first describe the efforts of Abdelal et al. (2009) to develop an "analytical framework" to measure identity. I will then describe and comment on the works of two

distinguished scholars, Ted Hopf and Alastair Iain Johnston, both of whom use “identity”⁵ as an independent variable to explain the state behaviours regarding foreign policies in certain historical periods.

Measuring Identity

Abdelal et al have summed up the problems with current research on identity into two types: conceptual issues and coordination gaps (Abdelal et al. 2009:18). To address these two types of problems, Abdelal et al. have developed an “analytical framework” that 1). captures the assumptions which have already been implicit in most research on identity and 2). allows for integration of future and existing scholarship (Ibid.). Their solution is to define identity along two dimensions – content and contestation. Content describes the meaning of identity, which may take the forms of four nonmutually exclusive types:

- *Constitutive norms*: the normative content of a collective identity specifies its constitutive rules – the practices that define that identity and lead other actors to recognize it.
- *Social purposes*: goals the group attaches to its identity.
- *Relational comparisons*: the part of identity that is composed of comparisons and references to other collective identities from which it is distinguished.
- *Cognitive models*: a worldview or a framework that allows members of a group to make sense of social, political, and economic conditions.

(Abdelal et al. 2009:28-37)

⁵ Alastair Iain Johnston (1995) used the concept of “strategic culture” instead of “identity” in his book but this author believes it is unnecessary to distinguish between “strategic culture” and the use of “identity” in this thesis because they both deal with the “total knowledge” within a society and are both interested in the relation between knowledge and behaviour (See Johnston 1995:33-35).

These four types represent various usages or functions when social scientists treat identity as a variable. *Constitutive norms* are the substances of identity when people think of identity; this type of content is most closely related to the question of “who we are.” *Social purposes* are relevant when identities can lead actors to endow practices with group purposes or interpret the world through lenses defined in part by those purposes (Ibid. 22); this type of content is captured by the pervasive belief within identity scholarship, namely that “who we are influence what we want.” *Relational comparisons* emphasizes the distance between in-groups (“us”) and out-groups (“others”); this type of content corresponds to the social identity theory (SIT) which hypothesizes that even if the same issue is at stake, “similar” relationships tend to be more cooperative than “different” others (Ibid. 24). *Cognitive models* consist of ways of reasoning and affect understandings of temporalities (“past” and “future”) (Ibid. 25); this type of content is epitomized in Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* where Huntington divided the world into the “major civilizations” because they have fundamentally different cultures and understandings of knowledge (Richard Ned Lebow 2008: 474).

The other dimension of the definition of identity is contestation. Content of identities is not fixed but gradually evolving. Individuals are constantly proposing new contents and shaping the meanings of their groups. Contestation here refers to the disagreement within members of a group about the (four types of) contents of their collective identity. It is in this process that we most clearly see the constitutive aspect of identity. Essentially, content of an identity is the product of contestation when scholars extract “identity data” from a group (Abdelal et al. 2009:29). The data ranges from everyday identity contestation taking place in conversation or in written communication to the explicit debates about the meaning of an identity, such as Samuel Huntington’s book *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity*. Sometimes, powerful actors, such as political authorities, can influence the

formation of identity or even impose an “artificial” identity on a group; in world politics, identities of nations and states are formed in constant interaction with each other (Ibid. 28). Usually, researchers measure level of contestation by measuring meanings of identity from both the mass’ and the elite’s perspective.

Methods and Techniques

There are four most widely used methods for measuring identity: surveys, content analysis, discourse analysis and ethnography. Surveys provide the backbone of research on public opinion and political behaviour and it can be adapted to great benefit in identity research as well (Abdelal et al. 2001:14). As general, *surveys* have been straightforward in how they tap in the content of identities. Open-ended survey is often preferred because it allows respondents to present their own description(s) about who they are without being restricted by predetermined, and possibly biased, categories. *Content analysis’s* main function is to provide frequency counts of key words and categories. Content analysis is designed to limit mediation and relies on a coding scheme to ensure reliability among coders of the text. Content analysis has not been used as widely as survey and discourse analysis for the measurement of identity (Ibid. 16).

Discourse analysis is probably the most complex to conduct (or even to understand) among the four methods because it wrestles with the problem, raised by linguistic philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, that “language is not a simple reflection of reality...but constitutive of reality” (Phillips and Hardy 2002:12). Discourse analysis, in its simplest form, can be defined as the “qualitative and interpretive recovery of meaning from the language used to describe and understand social phenomena” (Abdelal et al. 2009: 6). The crucial concern of discourse analysis is “the precarious status of meaning” (Phillips and Hardy 2002:6), which suggests that texts cannot be analyzed if they are stripped from context.

Thus discourse analysis endeavours to uncover how language constructs social phenomena. For example, discourse analysts are interested in how “discourses” of asylum, immigration, humanitarianism make sense of the concept of a “refugee”; they must examine the “social context”, e.g. wars, international treaties, court decisions, to understand the interplay between text, discourse and context (Ibid. 5). Unlike content analysis, discourse analysis usually relies on analyst’s skills and social knowledge to recover meanings from a discourse. Therefore discourse analysis is interpretive and reflexive in nature and is open to reinterpretation. In other words, discourse analysis offers only “tentative validity claims” (Ted Hopf 2002: 23). The strengths and weaknesses of discourse analysis in studying international politics will be considered with Ted Hopf (2002)’s seminal work on Soviet national identities and foreign policies in the next part. *Ethnography* can be understood as discourse analysis in its richest form because ethnography involves the scholar being situated in the social contexts and thus has the advantage of recovering social meanings as experienced (Abdelal et al. 2009: 7). In the following sections, I will briefly describe two authors’ works on linking national identities with foreign policies (one specifically on the use of force in foreign policies). I will focus on their distinct methods to conceptually and empirically construct identity.

Using Discourse Analysis to Construct Soviet Identities

Ted Hopf (2002) takes on a novel and ambitious approach to use discourse analysis to measure (“recover”) Soviet identities in 1955 and 1999. Hopf wants to use Soviet identities to explain the Soviet Union’s relations with foreign states in about the same time (most likely to extend to several years after the start). Hopf believes that the key to the most urgent question in previous research on identity, i.e., the link between state identity and behaviours, lies in the “logic of habit”, which will be expounded later. Hopf begins with rejecting some prevalent assumptions which share the same problem of “theoretical preloading” (Hopf 2002: 11). For example, Hopf rejects the assumption he called “materialism” which claims that identities

merely reflect distribution of material power; Hopf states that materialism might often be true but nevertheless it remains a hypothesis to be empirically verified (Hopf: 3). Hopf also rejects the assumption that group behaviours are driven by “deep-seated motives for identity” (Ibid), such as national and religious identity, on the same ground that the this claim cannot be assumed a priori.

Alternatively, Hopf proposes to construct a habitual, everyday and routine type of identity. Hopf’s central assumption is that “the only motive for the ubiquitous presence and operation of identities is the human desire to understand the social world and the cognitive need for order” (Hopf 2002: 4). The model of how identity works in international politics, with as few a priori assumptions as possible, operates like what the psychological experiment literature states about how individuals behave: what an individual understands himself/herself determines how he/she interprets and uses information (Ibid. 5). Hopf uses the example of “great power identity” to illustrate this process: being a great power is nonsensical unless it is compared with a nongreat power identity. Identities cannot be simply assigned to people but must be understood relationally. The relational aspect of identity is often associated with the logic of “Self and Other”, even though Hopf warns of the danger of “pretheorization” because the relationship between Self and Other is (also) an empirical question (Ibid. 7). In his book, Hopf refers to the relational aspect of identity as “intersubjectivity”, i.e., to understand meanings cross-subjects. Therefore, “logic of habit” essentially means that because defining national interests requires a state to make sense of its external others (i.e., foreign states in this case), this process can only be “recovered” by constructing a national identity through discourse analysis of everyday objects.

Method of Discourse Analysis

Hopf's method of discourse analysis consists of four continuant steps: sampling, contextualization, intertextualization, discourse of identity. The first step, *sampling*, is to select texts from a wide range of daily materials – including leader speeches, textbooks, journals, newspapers and popular novels – that are most widely read and indirectly or “unintentionally” discuss identity. Then discourse analysts will *contextualize* the “raw” texts (i.e., what the text means in terms of identity in a context) and enumerate a list of categories (called “contextualized identities”) which predominate quantitatively in the contexts (e.g., religion, nation, military, etc.) of text of origin. Next, the author will conduct a step called *intertextualization*, which is to compare the contextualized identities' meanings across genres (i.e., newspapers, novels, etc.) and narrow them down to a shorter list of intertextualized identities. Finally, the author will assess how the intertextualized identities relate to each other creating a coherent *discourse of identity*, which means a collection of intertextual identities that consistently appears when Soviet identities are construed and consistently opposes another collection of identities (“counterhegemonic discourse”⁶) (Hopf 2002: 23-38; Hopf 2009: 284-293).

This is an illustration of how Ted Hopf used discourse analysis to recover “modernity” as one of the four national identities of the USSR in 1955: Hopf found in a 1955 journal article which presents gender relations in central Asia as primitive (“sampling”). Hopf then examined a variety of texts and he found that gender was part of a “modernization” project across different contexts; moreover, the continuum of “premodernity” to “modernity” not only manifested in gender but also in religion, ethnicity and so on (“contextualization”). Next, Hopf compared meanings of “modernity” across genres (i.e., newspapers, novels, etc.) and he

⁶ One can relate the “counterhegemonic discourse” to the “contested” dimension of identity in Abdelal et al. (2009).

found that while religion was understood as “premodern” or undesirable in the official context, religion was treated neutrally in novels; the variation in the meanings (or interpretations) of the word “modernity” across genres implied the presence of a “competitor” of the dominant discourse (“intertextualization”). Finally Hopf found a hierarchical understanding among Soviet identity discourses of itself, which Hopf argues would translate into how the USSR apprehended other states (Hopf 2002: 45-55). If one has not read Hopf’s findings about modernity in the 1959 USSR, one cannot speak certainly of the social meanings of “being modern” for that matter. For example, being modern can be embracing technology, sexual emancipation or democratic political institutions but instead, being modern in the context of 1955 USSR was eschewing religious belief, extolling constructions of dams and leaving ethnic identities behind (Ibid. 46).

Using Content Analysis to Construct “Strategic Culture”

Finding the classical rational-choice utility model unsatisfactory to explain how states make strategic choices, Alastair Johnston proposes to use “strategic culture” to explain a state’s strategic choices, defined as “the ways in which states use force for political ends” (Alastair Johnston 1995: 1-3). The strategic-cultural approach rejects ahistorical and acultural explanations of strategic choice by rooting strategic preference deep in history and culture (Ibid. 28). Johnston also rejects an amorphous definition of strategic culture which can subsume anything from technology to ideology because when strategic culture is poorly defined it usually takes on a mechanistically deterministic hue implying that strategic thought leads consistently to one type of behaviour (Johnston 1996: 222). Alternatively, Johnston proposes to study the relationship between strategic culture and military behaviours of Ming China (1368-1644) by constructing a more rigorous conception of strategic culture that is falsifiable. Johnston defines strategic culture as “an integrated system of symbols that acts establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences (Ibid).” To make the concept of

strategic culture falsifiable, Johnston adopts the usage of “a limited, ranked set of grand strategic preference over actions that are consistent across the objects of analysis and persistent over time” (Johnston 1995: 38; Johnston 1996: 223). The preference rankings are extracted from the results of a content analysis of the Chinese texts called the *Seven Military Classics*, which were required readings in the military education system in the Ming Dynasty. The idea is that if preference rankings are not consistent across objects of analysis across time, a single strategic culture cannot be said to be present (Johnston 1996: 224).

Once Johnston has proved the presence of a strategic culture, the next step is to find its correlation with strategic choices made by Chinese statesmen. The key operation here is to consider strategic culture as a constant or a “prism” through which changes of exogenous conditions (i.e., relative capabilities) are interpreted (Johnston 1996: 227). Ideally, a strategic culture should predict state behaviours differently from the determinate structural models (e.g. the traditional *realpolitik* model) because then the case for a cultural explanation will be stronger (if it makes more accurate predictions). However, Johnston states that it is “unfortunate” that the Chinese strategic culture, which he labelled “*parabellum* strategic culture”, does not make predictions unambiguously different from the traditional *realpolitik* model. Nevertheless, he still persists in arguing, and for good reasons, in his conclusion (Johnston 1995) that strategic culture still has a nontrivial “mediation” effect on decision-makers and there is a good chance that this relation can be more clearly demonstrated by cross-national studies of strategic culture, for example, a strategic-cultural explanation of democratic peace (1995: 264).⁷

⁷ For the purpose of this paper, I cannot do enough justice to Johnston’s much more thorough consideration regarding this problem (see Johnston 1995: 248-269).

Part II. Chinese National Identities in 1961

From Identity to Foreign Policies

This thesis intends to use “Chinese national identity” to understand China’s decision to use force. For the purpose of this thesis, the author defines national identity as “a collection of social meanings which constitute the understandings of national self and other states that in turn make up the cognitive structure of that society”. This definition is mainly informed by Ted Hopf’s idea of “constructing foreign policy at home” (Hopf 2009: 37) and is intended to be flexible enough to accommodate the constitutive, purposive, relational and cognitive types of content of identity well. National identity is expected to function as Alastair Iain Johnston’s “prism” metaphor, which states that interests and relative capacities in world politics are given meanings through the prism of national identity.

The “dependent variable” of interest is China (PRC)’s decision to go to war with India in October, 1962. Since 1949, China has had twenty-three unique territorial disputes with her neighbouring countries and China has offered concessions in seventeen of these conflicts(forfeiting claims to over 1.3 million square miles of land) but in the other six disputes China has resorted to force (Fravel 2008: 2-3). Apparently, China’s behaviours do not lend support to offensive realism’s claims that China will exploit its military superiority to bargain hard for the disputed territory or to annex it through force. Historical records show that there is no clear propensity for China to use force or non-violence method to resolve territorial disputes, at least apparently. Thus offensive realism has failed to prove their assumption that all states are functionally the same units and seek to maximize their power (Mearsheimer 2001) without proving that compromising with states weaker than itself is also a way to maximize power. This author will attempt to understand China’s decision to go to

war with India in 1962 by investigating what were the important elements in Chinese national discourse(s) pre-war.

The author chooses to use discourse analysis as a method to measure Chinese national identity because many important aspects of identity cannot be adequately represented without richly interpretive methods probing into the consciousnesses and senses of meanings that identities give to people (Smith 2004: 305). Discourse analysis is based on an interpretivist epistemology and therefore can offer few promise in terms of “validity tests” comparable to “inter-coders reliability” in content analysis. This is, however, not a weakness of discourse analysis and non-positivist approaches in general, for as long as the final results (i.e. national identities) can yield evidence strong enough to convince people that it is able to explain behaviours better than other positivist or non-positivist theories, the theory is proved valid. Therefore it is the quality of evidence that determines the validity of interpretivist theories. The standard to evaluate evidence is thus needed for interpretivists to refute positivists’ charge of “unfalsifiability”. One way such a standard can be achieved is through developing an empirically falsifiable behavioural regularity (or a hypothesis) using a large-n measurement.

Text Selection

The sampled texts include one newspaper (editorials), one novel and two movies. For newspapers, I have selected 112 editorials from the *People’s Daily* in the period between September 1st, 1961 and May 1st 1962. The *People’s Daily* had the highest readership at that time and is regarded as representing the voices of political elites. For novel, I have selected *Red Rock* (1961), co-authored by Yiyang Yang and Guangbin Luo. Though an authoritative ranking of popular novels in 1961 is hard to find, several Chinese sources indicate that *Red Rock* had one of the highest amounts of copies printed (7.1 million). The selection of genres

is based on the author's expectation that (state-owned) newspaper editorials reflect elements of the official discourse while novels and movies reflect elements of the mass discourse, without assuming an opposing or subordinate relationship between the two discourses.⁸

For movies, I have selected *Red Detachment of Women* (1961) and *A Revolutionary Family* (1961). They were the most popular movies in 1961 according to the People's Hundred Flower Award (held in 1962), set up by China Film Association in 1962 and sponsored by *Popular Cinema* (magazine). *Red Rock* tells a story about a group of underground Communists in southwestern China fighting an espionage battle against the Kuomintang secret police. *Red Detachment of Women* tells a story about a housemaid, Wu Qionghua, who escapes the imprisonment of her cruel landlord with the help of the leader of the Red Detachment of Women and joins the troop. *A Revolutionary Family* tells a more complicated story of a woman, Zhou Lian, who comes from an ordinary peasant background and marries a husband who becomes a revolutionary on the eve of the Northern Expedition in 1927. Zhou's husband, who introduces her to revolutionary ideas, is killed by KMT secret police but Zhou is not deterred and decides to carry on his husband's revolutionary pursuits with their son and daughter.

Chinese National Identities in 1961

In this section, I will introduce my findings about Chinese national identities in 1961. I have followed a systematic method (see Appendix) in order to inductively recover identities from the sampled texts. I name the elements that constitute a national identity discourse

⁸ A common question is whether Chinese novels and movies at that time (late 1950s and early 1960s) accurately reflected the mass attitudes due to the state's control of publication and cultural institutions in general. This author recognizes that although creative productions (e.g. mass novels and movies) were severely intervened by the state, because their target audience were the mass and the artists who produced novels and movies (in most cases) thought differently about culture from the officials, it is methodologically feasible to distinguish between the official and mass discourses by genres of texts. For a meticulous study of the interactions among officials, artists, and city residents in the case of post-WWII (particularly 1945-1975) Eastern Europe and various socialist states' attempts to construct a cultural system, see Kunakhovich 2013.

“identity categories” because they represent how people (in this case, Chinese) categorize themselves in political, economic, social and many other ways. Repeating themes and tropes can only be counted as “identity categories” when they signify what Chinese people embody.⁹ In order to make them easier for both comprehension and use for explanation, I have grouped all of the essential identity categories into four main categories (or “discursive formations” as Ted Hopf himself would call them): imperialism, revolution/struggle, socialism and economic construction.

Table 1: Raw Counts

Chinese Identity Categories ¹⁰	Editorials ¹¹	Novel ¹²	Movies
帝国主义 Imperialism	35	#	#
美国/美帝 America/American Imperialism	36	#	
苏联 Soviet Union	11		
社会主义阵营/国家 Socialist Countries	9		
裁军/禁核 Disarmament/Nuclear disarmament	6		
扩军 Military Build-up	7		
战争狂人 Warmonger	3		
侵略/侵略者 Invader	19		
爱好/保卫和平 Peace Lover/Guardian	19		
工人阶级 Proletarian/Worker	11	#	
外国共产党/劳动党 Communist/Labor Party (foreign)	7		
中国人民的朋友 Chinese People's Friends	17		
劳动人民 Working Class	3	#	#
共产主义 Communism	7	#	#
社会主义 Socialism	13		

⁹ For example, in an article that just describes Cambodian people’s fight for national independence (even in a positive tone) “national independence” cannot be coded as a “Chinese identity category” here because it does not signify what Chinese people are (e.g. Chinese people loves/wants national independence). However, “national independence” is indeed a Chinese national identity when an article states that “Chinese people share Cuban people’s goal of protecting national independence (People’s Daily, October 3, 1961).”

¹⁰ I choose to bold the identity categories with more than 10 appearances. However, the number of appearance is not necessarily proportional to significance.

¹¹ *People's Daily*, 1961 Sep. to May 1962, 112 pieces in total

¹² I use “# (number sign)” instead of raw count to indicate the presence of identity categories in novel and movies, because raw count could be difficult and confusing in these cases.

资本主义/资产阶级 Capitalism/Capitalist	13	#	#
解放 Liberation	15		#
革命/斗争 Revolution/Fight/Struggle	35	#	#
分裂 Separate/Split	4		
团结 Unite/Union	23	#	
困难/压迫 Hardship/Oppression	13	#	#
十月革命 October Revolution	4		
民族独立 National Independence	15		
纯洁性 Purity	3		
反修正主义 Anti-Revisionism	5		
反动派 Reactionary	12	#	#
兄弟/同志 Comrade	6	#	
群众/群众路线 Mass/Mass Line	20	#	
矛盾 Contradiction	3		
殖民主义 Colonialism	23		
走狗 Lackey	9		
中立/不结盟 Neutral/Non-Alliance	6		
共同利益/敌人 Mutual Benefit/Enemy	5	#	
蒋介石 Chiang Kai Shek	6	#	
联合国 UN	10		
非洲 Africa	11		
改善生活 Improve Quality of Life	7		
农村经济 Agricultural Economy	15		
人民公社 People's Commune	20		
生产积极性 Productive Enthusiasm	18		
日本帝国主义 Japanese Imperialism	3		
军国主义 Militarism	2		
亚洲 Asia	13		
五年计划 Five Years Plan	5		
社会主义优越性 Socialist Superiority	9		
不干涉内政 Non-intervention of Other Countries' Domestic Politics	7		
古巴 Cuba	2		
生活资料 Livelihood Substances	5		
阴谋 Plots	18		
睦邻 Good-neighbour Policy	3		
毛泽东 Chairman Mao	11	#	#
党的政策 Party Policies	6		

和平共处 Peaceful Coexistence	10		
集体 Collective Body	14	#	#
政治 Politics	3		
传统/经验 Tradition/Experience	7		
爱国主义 Patriotism	6	#	
新中国 New China	0	#	
肯尼迪 John F Kennedy	0	#	
信任 Trust	0	#	
进步的 Progressive	6	#	
旧社会 Old Society	2	#	#
抗战 Anti-Japanese War	1	#	
新中国 New China	3	#	
复杂环境 Complicated Circumstance	0	#	

Imperialism

In a speech delivered by Mao Zedong, Mao described “imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism” as the “three big mountains” that have subjected and suppressed the Chinese people for several decades (Alexander Chow, 2013:101). Even though the establishment of the People’s Republic (PRC) in 1949 marked the overthrow of the “three big mountains”, imperialism was still seen as a major threat throughout the Chinese discourse. In the official/elite discourse, imperialism is often associated with “**invader** (*qin lue zhe*)” and “**colonialism** (*zhi min zhu yi*)” while Chinese people are defined as **peacekeepers** (*bao wei he ping*). Imperialist states are also seen as “colluding (*gou jie*) with each other and **plotting** (*yin mou*) to separate socialist states”. Therefore, “(Southeast Asian people and people from other parts of the world) should strengthen unity, keep fighting and smash imperialism’s plot to invade Asia (People’s Daily, December 30, 1961).”

In the mass discourse, both the novel and movies construct imperialism along similar but more ambiguous lines compared to the official discourse. In *Red Rock*, the storyline was set in the 1948, when the Chinese masses suffered from the corruptive rule under Kuomintang (KMT) supported by “**American imperialism** (*mei di guo zhu yi*)”. The

protagonists, i.e. underground communist “fighters (*zhan shi*)”, endeavoured to overthrow the corruptive KMT regime and established a new regime (*xin zheng quan*) but many of them were arrested, jailed and tortured by KMT secret police or “special agents (*te wu*)”.¹³ In the movie *Red Detachment of Women*, people living in the island of Hainan suffered from the evil landlord, whose tenants liked to call him “*Nan ba tian*” (“Tyrant of the South”). In the movie, feudalism (i.e. the landlord) is portrayed as the main antagonist and the oppressor towards the masses. However, towards the end of the film, (before the final battle between the landlord and the “red detachment of women” led by the communists), the landlord colludes with the KMT troops based in Hainan who help kill dozens of red army force before the KMT troops are annihilated bit by bit. The collusion between the landlord and the KMT represents an evil alliance between feudalism and imperialism. In the movie *A Revolutionary Family*, the screenplay is set in late 1920s China and here the same alliance between the KMT and imperialism repeats. A commonality that all discourses about imperialism in the mass discourse share is its indirect contribution to the sufferings of Chinese mass through its “agent” (i.e. the KMT). Unlike the official discourse, imperialism is not the direct enemy (or enemies) of Chinese people but plays a supportive role in the mass discourse.

Revolution/Struggle

Revolution (*ge ming*) and **struggle** (*dou zheng*) are often used simultaneously in writings. According to the official discourse, revolution is what brought Chinese out of feudal (i.e. the 1911 Xinhai Revolution) and colonial society (i.e. the communist revolution). In the domestic, Chinese under the leadership of the communist party have “ultimately won (*che di sheng li*)” the revolution but “the struggling against imperialism, revisionism, severe natural disasters” (People’s Daily, December 3, 1961) and other kinds of “**hardship** (*kun nan*)” must

¹³ One of the biggest jails in the novel was called “Sino-American Cooperative Organization”, which was a real organization created by the Republic of China and the U.S. together in 1942 and some of the descriptions in the novel about jailing and torturing political prisoners in the Organization are true.

not stop. Particularly, the official discourse encourages a “**revolutionary spirit** (*ge ming qi gai*)” in daily life, such as in economic production: “revolutionary energy is to struggle tenaciously against all kinds of hardship, in every possible way, working hard and pragmatically, never giving up until the goal is reached (People’s Daily, December 2, 1961).” In the international arena, China supports its “**brother** (*xiong di*)” states to fight for “**national independence** (*min zu du li*)” and lead revolutions against imperialists and colonialists.

In the mass discourse, revolution is portrayed as a laudable life aspiration; personal sacrifice for revolution is also glorious and “**progressive** (*jin bu de*)”, which are in line with the official discourse. However, the mass discourse highlights the grievance and even “**revenge** (*bao chou*)” as a key motivation for participating in a revolution. For example, in *Red Rock*, Jiang Jie’s husband is killed by KMT agents (though Jiang Jie insists not to let personal emotions take over her mind). In *Red Detachment of Women*, Wu Qionghua has been imprisoned and beaten (for attempting to escape) by the landlord for years; Wu describes her experiences as “tears soaked in blood (*yan lei pao zhe xie*)”. In *A Revolutionary Family*, the father is beaten to death by KMT agents and the elder son is also executed in front of his mother towards the end of the film.

Unlike the official discourse, the mass discourse is sometimes more tolerant of personal feelings. In *A Revolutionary Family*, the focus is as much, if not less, on revolution as on kinship and family bonds.¹⁴ For example, the female protagonist, Zhou Lian, is by no means a typical heroine who is actively involved in revolution. Zhou does show the good qualities of a revolutionary when towards the end of the film she sacrifices her son’s life for keeping secret for the revolution and the party. In most of the film, Zhou is a traditional housewife who is kept from revolutionary activities by her husband (though she was later

¹⁴ The film was banned in the next year though it won the Best Screenplay in the first Hundred Flowers Awards, an official film award at that time.

able to do some minor, miscellaneous work for the local party branch, such as cooking and doing laundry), who is himself an ardent revolutionist.

Socialism

China officially is a member of the socialist “camp (*zhen ying*)”. “**Socialist superiority** (*she hui zhu yi you yuan xing*)” is embodied in its “**liberation** (*jie fang*)” of the “**working class** (*lao dong ren min*)” from “**capitalist exploitation** (*zi ben jia de bo xue*)” and its liberation of “the great natural world that the **old society** (*jiu she hui*) cannot utilize” (People’s Daily, September 25, 1961). A socialist should realize that “**collective** (*ji ti*)” interests are “identical (*yi zhi*)” with individual interests, and only through “collective production” and expanding the “collective economy” can poverty in the rural area of China be “fundamentally (*gen ben di*)” changed.¹⁵ Internationally, all states belonging to the socialist camp should “**unite** (*tuan jie*)” together and support each other’s struggle for national independence against American imperialism. Socialist states should also treat each other as an independent equal and “brothers”, regardless of their size and power.

In the mass discourse, being a communist is a sign of superiority in almost every aspect. In *Red Rock*, communist party members (especially the senior ones) are distinguished by their bravery, aplomb in front of great danger (e.g. death) and an exceptional sense of detection (which is essential for keeping underground communist network functional then). In *Red Detachment of Women*, Wu Qionghua as a military “rookie” (and not a communist party member then) is full of respect for Hong Changqing who is a communist party member as well as the commander of the red detachment of women. When Wu once made a serious mistake that almost got herself and the whole detachment exposed to the enemy, Hong taught

¹⁵ “Collective economy (*ji ti jing ji*)” is a term often used in the official discourse to refer to the economic sector under public ownership. It is often compared with “household sideline production (*jia ting fu ye*)” which is the economic production for use of individual household. The official discourse asks Chinese to put priority on contributing to “collective economy” because the collective body is more reliable than individuals.

her the difference between “an ordinary fighter (*pu tong zhan shi*)” and “a proletarian pioneer fighter (*wu chan jie ji xian feng zhan shi*)”.

Economic Construction

Economic achievement is one important measure of “socialist superiority”. The “**Five-year Plan** (*wu nian ji hua*)” sets production goals in heavy industrial (e.g. steel) and agricultural production, the fulfilling (especially in advance) of which shows superiority of socialist system. The Chinese officials claimed in 1961 that they had fulfilled the second “Five-year Plan” (1957-1962) in advance, which proved the policies of “Three Red Banners”, i.e. General Line (*zong lu xian*) for socialist construction, the Great Leap Forward (*da yue jin*) and the **people's communes** (*ren min gong she*), successful. However, the official discourse also conceded that “as we obtain great achievements, in our economic aspect, we have met some difficulties and discovered some shortcomings in our work. Between 1959 and 1961, we have encountered serious natural disasters in three consecutive years, which resulted in decrease in agricultural production...the difficulties are temporary (People’s Daily, October 1, 1961).” China was then an economically backwards state, “**economic construction** (*jing ji jian she*)” under socialism was relatively successful in comparison with other non-socialist states. In an editorial criticizing Indian anti-Chinese movement, People’s Daily pointed out that “the Indian government still had not fulfilled their second Five-year Plan” because they had not completely abolished the feudal land system and foreign capital still controlled many India’s important economic sectors (People’s Daily, December 7, 1961).

Agriculture (*nong ye*) was the “basis (*ji chu*) of economy” in 1961 and 1962. The focus of economic construction was on the industry (heavy industry in particular) but in the past two years (from 1962) the state had asked its people to shift material and human resources to support agricultural production (People’s Daily, March 10, 1962). This policy

encouraged workers to move from city to the countryside, in order to “support agricultural battlefield (*zeng yuan nong ye zhan xian*)”. The key was to increase productive efficiency by “mobilizing (*diao dong*)” people’s “**productive enthusiasm** (*sheng chan ji ji xing*)”. In order to mobilize the people, local leaders must follow the “**mass line** (*qun zhong lu xian*)”, which means that leaders should often listen to the mass voices before making plans and leader’s work should reflect the mass’ will (*yi yuan*). Besides increasing human productivity, the other way to enhance efficiency is to be economical in using resources. “**Preserving** (*qin jian*)” is the “fundamental principle (*gen ben fang zhen*)” of socialist economic construction, the path to prosperity and strength (People’s Daily, December 24, 1961).

In the mass discourse, discussion directly related to economic construction is extremely rare.¹⁶ All three sampled texts set their backgrounds pre-1949, that is to say pre-socialist construction era. Most of *Red Rock*’s storyline concentrates on underground communist activities (most of them were set in prisons) and is therefore disconnected from the economic perspective. Both *Red Detachment of Women* and *A Revolutionary Family* besides describing revolution and struggle, leave some amount of space for characters’ daily life but the content is not linked to the official discourse of economic construction, such as the Five-year Plan or collective economy. Even the aspect of economic hardship is absent in the mass discourse. The ability to overcome difficulty is an important merit of a communist. Among the difficulties the main characters have to deal with, such as the constant need to escape arrest from KMT agents, economic difficulties (e.g. lack of food or other basic substances) are not salient.

Table 2: Summary of Identity Categories

¹⁶ Economic construction was not always absent in Chinese films in the 1950s and 1960s. During the Great Leap Forward, there was also a frenetic proliferation of so-called “artistic documentaries (*yi shu xing ji lu pian*)” over all local provinces, a lot of which aimed to describe the economic “miracles” taking place at that time, with real people restaging in “real” events (Yingjin Zhang 2010:131).

	Official Discourse ¹⁷	Mass Discourse
Revolution/ Struggle		
Hardship	The Chinese face all kinds of hardship, e.g. foreign invasion and natural disaster. To overcome hardship is to stage a revolution or to struggle.	Current situations have been poor for ordinary Chinese masses and the masses must struggle against the hardship.
Revenge	/	Revolution and struggle is revenge for the oppression the masses have endured as well as for lost family and friends.
Progressive	Anything that helps progress on the path to socialism (implying a “beginner” status).	To put collective considerations ahead individual considerations; stand up against oppressors.
National Independence	Fully support other nations’ right to fight for national independence from colonizers.	/
Socialism		
Socialist Superiority	Socialism as a political system is superior to capitalism in terms of economic efficiency (because of strong cooperation among workers) and its power to “liberate”.	/
Liberation	Chinese after 1949 were liberated from imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism. Chinese also support “national liberation movement” across the globe.	Chinese masses seek liberation from corruptive rule of the KMT and landlords.
Collective Body	“Collective body” most often refers to the economic unit situated between the state and “individual (<i>ge ti</i>)” (an example of collective body is the “commune (<i>gong she</i>)”). The collective body is more productive (efficient) than individual. Collective economy is a reliable path to prosperity.	Individual interests and considerations should give way to collective interests and considerations. It is glorious to sacrifice (individual well-being) for the collective body (e.g. party and revolution). In <i>Red Detachment of Women</i> , Wu Qionghua realizes that individual power is too weak compared to power of the collective.
Unite	Domestically, people must unite to accomplish socialist goals. Internationally, socialist states must protect their unity as	Unity and discipline are critical for success. Traitors (<i>mai guo zei</i> , which literally means “the thief who sells his country”) are usually selfish,

¹⁷ “/” suggests either absence or very weak presence of that identity in one of the discourse.

	protecting their eyeballs (from imperialist plots).	despicable and hated by the masses.
Brother/Comrade	Brothers (classes, parties, states, etc.) are connected in their common interests and struggles against enemies. Brothers should support each other whenever possible. When there is conflict between brothers, it should be solved by “consultation and negotiation (<i>xie shang</i>)”. Particularly, there are often modifiers before “brothers” or “friends”, such as “Cuba our intimate friend (<i>qin mi de peng you</i>)” and “Chinese are Algerians’ most reliable and faithful friends”.	Trust is precious and also honorable among comrades (<i>tong zhi</i>). Because of trust, comrades do not distinguish between self and others. Even if I sacrifice in the revolution, other comrades will take care of my children as their own.
Imperialism		
American Imperialism	America is seen as the leader of imperialism, keen on invading or intervening in other countries.	<i>Red Rock</i> ’s story tells that American Intelligence Service helped KMT secret police identify and arrest underground communists.
Invader	Invasion is imperialists’ tools and plans to “control” the world. References to colonial history and “neo-colonialism” are often employed.	/
Peacekeeper	Chinese people are dedicated to protecting world peace and executing arm control but imperialist states are “zealous (<i>kuang re</i>)” for arm aggrandizement.	/
Plot	Imperialists are always plotting to overthrow anti-imperialist regimes, through military intervention or funding imperialists’ “lackeys (<i>zou gou</i>)”.	The activities of secret police impose great threats to revolutionaries’ life and freedom.
Economic Construction		
Agriculture	Agriculture is the basis of economy and expanding agricultural production is the priority for the country.	/
Productive Enthusiasm	Productive enthusiasm among people must be mobilized in order to increase productivity.	/

Five-year Plan	Five-year Plan is an important goal for Chinese people. The ability to finish the plan, even ahead of schedule, shows the superiority of socialist system. Therefore Chinese should fight for (finishing) the plan with high passion.	/
Preserving	Preserving is a progressive way of thinking. Preserving is important for increasing efficiency in production.	/
Mass Line	The “mass line” is a method and an “excellent style (<i>you liang zuo feng</i>)” of the Chinese Communist Party. As a method, it requires the party to go into the masses and understand their needs. As a style, it opposes bureaucracy and upholds the idea of “serving the people (<i>wei ren min fu wu</i>)”.	Winning the masses is critical for the revolution to succeed. Revolutionaries must stay in touch with the masses and think from the masses’ perspective.

Part III: National Identities and the 1962 Sino-India War

On 20 October, 1962, Chinese offensive launched in both the western and eastern sectors of the Sino-Indian border (see Map 1). The military balance clearly tilted towards the Chinese and the Indian defense crumbled rapidly. One month later, the triumphant Chinese forces unilaterally ceased fire and withdrew 20 kilometers from what China felt was the line of actual control in November 1959. What prompted Chinese leaders to resort to large-scale armed force against India? How can Chinese national identities help us understand Chinese leaders’ perception of India as such a threat that, quoting from a Chinese PLA general, “without firing (we) could no longer prevent Indian forces from invading (China) (cited in Garver, 2006:113)”?

Events Leading to War

The modern Sino-Indian border of some 2500 miles can be divided into three sectors: the western sector, central sector and eastern sector. The western sector, or Aksai Chin, is on

an elusive, hardly-inhabitable plateau between Tibet and Kashmir. The central sector includes a series of mountain passes in the west of the Indian-Tibetan-Nepal trijunction (Fravel 2008:327). The eastern sector, effectively the India's Arunachal Pradesh state (which Chinese call "zang nan (South Tibet)") today, includes the largest disputed territory (about 90,000 square kilometres).

The majority of the Chinese-Indian border had never been clearly delimited. Moreover, historically the desolate and mountainous frontier was not actively administrated by either India (including British India) or China (including Tibet) (Fravel 2008:326). The border disputes between China and India surfaced in the 1950s, when Chinese and Indian leaders disagreed on basis of their border. India used agreements between British India and Tibet (which was an autonomous province of the Chinese *Qing* dynasty) as the basis for their territorial claims but China rejected the validity of these colonial border agreements (signed between a local government, i.e. Tibet, and a foreign country) (Derek J. Mitchell and Chietig Bajpae 2007:157).

In the first half of 1950s, China maintained a good relationship with India as Chinese viewed India as an important ally in the "anti-imperialist camp". Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai held several talks with Indian Prime Minister Nehru between 1954 and 1960 and but the talks all failed to produce a meaningful agreement. Though archives of talks between Zhou and Nehru are currently unavailable, both Chinese and foreign scholarly studies have indicated that Premier Zhou made some substantial compromises, including accepting the McMahon line¹⁸ in the eastern sector as the basis of a settlement, during discussions in 1956 and 1957 (see Garver 104; Fravel 94; Xu 2009).

¹⁸ McMahon Line is a line defines the border between India and Tibet according to the 1914 Simla Convention between British India and Tibet.

The Tibetan rebellion in March 1959 was a turning point when Chinese-Indian relationship soured. Beijing condemned the Indian government for granting asylum to Dalai Lama (and about ten thousand Tibetan refugees) and not suppressing anti-Chinese activities among the refugee, for example, allowing the Dalai Lama to speak of a “Tibetan government in exile” (Garver 93). As will be discussed later, India’s moves during and after the Tibetan revolt were frequently cited by Chinese political and military elites as evidence of Indian’s “ambition (*ye xin*)” to destabilize or even invade Chinese border.

In 1961, India ordered an increase in the number of posts in the disputed territory with China, a move known as the “Forward Policy”. In September 1962, India had built 43 posts in the west sector and 34 new posts in the eastern sector, some of which even went beyond the McMahon Line (Fravel 184-187). Chinese responded by severe warnings, resuming border patrols and countermeasures, such as establishing blocking posts “in order to prevent further Indian advances” (Xu 2009).

Confrontation further escalated in the east sector when about one hundred Indian soldiers opened fire on a Chinese post near the Thagla Ridge on 10 October, 1962, and Chinese troops responded strongly with force (Garver 118-119). According to the PLA general and historian, Xu Yan¹⁹, Chairman Mao then started to consider the most opportune timing for a “counterattack (*fan ji*)” (Xu 2009).²⁰ The decision for war was approved by the expanded Politburo on 18 October.

Existing Theories on the 1962 War

Because this thesis is concerned with why Chinese went to war with India in 1962, details of the developments and aftermaths of the war are not going to be discussed. The 1962

¹⁹ Garver thinks Xu Yan’s book “*Zhong Yin bianjie zhi zhan lishi zhenxiang* (True history of the Sino-Indian border war),” is the most important Chinese work thus far on the 1962 war (2006:note 7).

²⁰ The Chinese official understanding of the 1962 War is a “self-defensive counterattack war (*zi wei fan ji zhan*)” to drive the aggressors out of Chinese territory (Garver 58).

Sino-Indian War was not systematically studied by Chinese scholars until 1980s. The earliest group of scholars who studied the war was foreigners in the 1970s, represented by Neville Maxwell (1972) and Allen Whiting (1975), whose excellent works are still largely accurate today though the authors then mainly relied on inferences based on Chinese official statements. The more recent works by John Garver (2006) and Taylor Fravel (2008) have utilized newly available Chinese materials to “go inside” the Chinese-decision making process and offers a useful testing for the Whiting-Maxwell thesis (Garver 87).

The Whiting-Maxwell thesis mainly contends that territorial security was the issue at stake in the 1962 War (Whiting 1975:199). “(While) small patrols moving into the unpopulated Himalayan valleys and plateaus posed no immediate threat to the PLA, Chinese perspectives were broader in time and space (Whiting 1972:57).” China’s “broader” considerations at that time included domestic instabilities (i.e. revolt in Xinjiang and economic recession due to the Great Leap Forward) and external threats (i.e. the possibility of Soviet-American collusion with Indian advance) (Ibid.). These considerations fostered Chinese leader to perceive India as a threat to China’s territory. Whiting also argues that Chinese leaders had exaggerated (“miscalculated”) India’s aggressive intent on China’s southwestern territory but he did not provide sufficient evidence to argue for China’s miscalculation (Whiting 1972:168). Garver has tested Whiting’s inferences by referring to some close studies of Indian decision-making process at that time and he concludes that Whiting was mostly right to infer that China had misperceived India’s motives in 1962 (Garver 96-103). Fravel’s study of the 1962 war also reached similar conclusions with Whiting’s, in which he argues that China’s decision to go to war with India is mainly a function of regime insecurity and declining claim strength in the disputed territory (180-183, 194-197).

Chinese contemporary studies on the 1962 war (published in the 1990s), as summed up by Garver (2006: 89-91), insisted that the root cause of the 1962 war was India's desire to undermine Chinese rule and seize Tibet. Huang and Qi (2006) argue that because Chinese leaders considered conflicts were inevitable at that time as India's "Forward Policy" was going to cross China's "red line" sooner or later, and hence it was at China's best interest to "intervene pre-emptively" before India had an upper hand. The PLA general Xu (2009) reads history from the Chinese military perspective that "history has proved that China's self-defensive attack was forced by India's destructive and destabilizing moves at the Indian-Chinese border. The goal of the war was to teach the invader a lesson and to win stability in the long run."²¹

Chinese National Identities and the Decision to Use Force

Existing theories have explained Chinese leaders' decision to use force against India mainly by pointing to China's perception of threat. Whiting stated that even "small patrols moving into the unpopulated Himalayan valleys and plateaus posed no immediate threat to the PLA" but from Peking's perspective India's "small initiatives" signalled bigger threats to territorial security (1972:57). Garver (2006) spent a significant amount of space discussing China's perception, for example, under the subtitles "CCP Leaders Perceptions of Indian 'Expansionism' in 1959" and "The Erroneous Nature of Chinese Perceptions of Indian Policy toward Tibet". While Fravel's works seem to propose a more "objective" argument by replacing "(China's) perception of threat" with "(China's) declining claim strength", rather than using an objective measure of decline (such as the impacts of economic recession or comparison of Chinese-Indian military strength), Fravel used "perceptions", similar with what Whiting and Garver have done, to justify why Chinese "perceived" decline on the eve

²¹ Garver has noted that published Chinese scholarship rarely challenges or criticizes China's decision to go to war (2006:9).

of the 1962 war (2008:194-196). Because perception is very difficult to prove – unless one has a comprehensive and exhaustive record of Chinese decision makers’ “thoughts” (e.g. dairies or private conversations with confidants) – it is hard for authors to defend (or readers to question, since it is almost impossible to prove perceptions) these arguments thoroughly. Most foreign scholars argue that Chinese perception of India was exaggerated or “erroneous” but few address the question why Chinese leaders made an “erroneous” judgement about India’s intent at that time.²²

This thesis’ findings about “national identities” make the decision making process became relatively intelligible. What this author have found out about Chinese national identities prior to the 1962 war offers a relatively accurate “prediction” of what drove Chinese leaders to go to war with India. Imperialism was China’s biggest enemy as a socialist state. Both Chinese official and mass discourse depict imperialist states as always plotting to stimulate troubles in socialist states. Although India was not an imperialist state, India could become a “lackey (*zou gou*, or running dog)” of imperialist states, a tool for imperialist states to invade China.²³ India’s moves during and after the 1959 Tibetan revolt also made Chinese doubt India’s intent on Chinese territory. In his conversation with Khrushchev in October 1959, Mao said to the then Soviet leader “this (allowing Dalai Lama to flee to India) is Nehru’s fault... The Hindus acted in Tibet as if it belonged to them (Memorandum, 1959: 266).” Moreover, since Chinese had already learned about the major CIA programs to support the Tibetan armed resistance between 1957 and 1961, India’s accommodating policy regarding Daiiai Lama had further pushed Chinese leaders to believe India had colluded with the U.S. against China (Garver, 2006:92). Though Chinese leaders were very reluctant to go to war with a post-colonial, anti-imperialist state, because India repeatedly rejected Chinese

²² Many Chinese authors (still) insist that India’s territorial ambition towards Tibet was real.

²³ In the early 1950s, Mao had categorized India as the “third type of countries” which were not led by a communist regime but nevertheless belonged to the “oppressed nations” and therefore shared the goal of fighting imperialism (Qi and Huang 2006).

leaders' proposal to negotiate and settle border disputes peacefully (as China did with Burma, Mongolia and North Korea previously), India was also regarded as untrustworthy as a friend or comrade.

As many scholars have noticed, domestic hardship had played a role in Chinese leaders' decision to go to war with India as China was experiencing one of the worst economic recessions since the founding of the PRC. However, scholars have not been able to build a convincing link between domestic hardship and the decision to go to war. For example, Fravel argues that domestic insecurities created by the Great Leap Forward forced Chinese leaders to "place premium on stability in the frontiers in order to manage more pressing threats at the core (2008:182)." This could be the case but it could also not be, and Fravel has not provided archival evidence to validate his surmise. Again, "Chinese national identities" can help us make better sense of Chinese leaders' decision. From Chinese national identity discourses, we learn that Chinese prided themselves for struggling against hardship. India's "Forward Policy" came out in an unpropitious time for China during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) and when thousands of Chinese minority rebelled and fled across the Sino-Soviet border in Xinjiang (Whiting 1972:58). Chinese leaders, as other scholars have argued, could very likely understand India's belligerent initiatives near Chinese-Indian border as a plan to capitalize on China's domestic hardship (Whiting 1975:168; Fravel 2008:193). As we have seen in Chinese official and mass discourses, struggling against oppressors and hardship (natural or political) was glorious and was what led Chinese to national independence. India's Forward Policy was just another hardship that Chinese should not fear to struggle against, as Mao commented on a PLA intelligence report:

"We fought a war with old Chiang [Kai-shek]. We fought a war with Japan, and with America. With none of these did we fear. And in each case we won. Now the Indians want to fight a war with us. Naturally we don't have fear." (cited in Garver 2006:115)

An affirmative response to defend China's territorial rights to the disputed border was regarded as a fight against foreign oppressor, as General Xu argues, "the counter-attack war's political connotations were more important than its military connotations. The military operation served closely to the needs of 'diplomatic struggle (*wai jiao dou zheng*)' (Xu 2009)."

Last but not least, what has been generally neglected by existing scholarship but has been "recovered" from Chinese national identities is India's changing relationship with the PRC during the 1950s and early 1960s. India and China enjoyed "brotherly" relationship at the Bandung Conference in 1954 and the signing of the "Agreement (with exchange of notes) on trade and intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India (1954)".²⁴ However, with soured Indian-Chinese relationship related to Tibet, Indian Prime Minister's repeated rejections of Chinese proposals for negotiation (without preconditions of Chinese withdrawal from the Aksai Chin region in the west sector) and ignoring China's strong protests published in *People's Daily* tremendously disappointed Chinese leaders. In political psychology, similarity can promote discord as the similar "other" is expected to manifest very little deviation from the "self" (Hopf 2009:306). Following this logic, India's previous cordial relationship with China has made its belligerence towards China appear even more threatening to Chinese leaders. Mao, in March 1962, described the escalated tensions between India and China with a duel metaphor: "You wave a gun, and I'll wave a gun (cited in Garver 2006:108)." As in the novel *Red Rock*, trust is essential between comrades just as betrayal is despicable. In foreign relations, if one state betrays its brother state's trust, the "traitor" will lose its credit soon.

²⁴ In the mid-1950s, there was a popular "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai" (India and China are brothers) in both India and China extolling the cordial relationship between the two countries.

Conclusion

This thesis is an initial attempt to use the “national identity” approach to understand dynamics in international politics, specifically, the decision-making process behind a state’s use of force. This thesis’ findings about Chinese national identities in 1961 are compatible as well as complementary to existing theories explaining China’s decision to go to war with India in 1962. Moreover, the “national identity” approach is able to lend empirical support to hypotheses derived from other theories. While comparing this thesis’ findings with the existing theories, this author finds that perception is often adopted by scholars to understand political leaders’ decision-making process but few existing scholarship studying the 1962 Indo-China war has dug into the sources of perception to start with. For example, domestic hardship or instabilities could be either an obstacle or an incentive to declare war with another country, in a purely analytical sense. However, when it comes to a specific country in a specific time, implication of hardship or instabilities varies. This is why “national identity” can be useful for understanding international relations.

The author is aware that there are many places this initial attempt to use national identity to understand use of force can improve. For example, expanding text selection to include mass-oriented newspapers (e.g. the *People's Liberation Army Daily*) and a greater number of novels and movies can help recover a more comprehensive discourse of China. Also, due to limited knowledge in discourse analysis, this author is not able to provide an analysis on discourse and language with more authority and depth. However, one of my biggest regrets is not able to compare findings about the 1962 war with other five occasions when China resorted to force in a territorial dispute (since 1949). If more findings on national identities are available, one should expect to discover a strong causal network of use of force in the case of China.

Appendix: National Identity Code Rules²⁵

These coding rules lay out an inductive method of interpretive discourse analysis for the recovery of national identity from a sample of newspaper editorials, novels and movies. For the purposes of this method, I define national identity as collective representations of what it means to be a member of a nation. That is, how do Chinese people understand themselves as Chinese? What is China?

Step 1: Document List

My general principles for document selection are to get documents that are widely read and selected in an unbiased manner. I do not want to select documents I think will reveal identity, rather we want to overhear identity. I also want to capture both elite political discourses and mass commonsense, whether these share identity categories or not. Usually, (state-owned) newspaper editorials reflect elite attitudes. Novels and movies usually reflect mass commonsense, not only because they are for the mass consumption but also artists (e.g. directors, screenwriters, etc.) here are supposed to represent a different discourse from the elite.

Newspapers: Choose a newspaper (or two) of highest national circulation. Read all editorials for six months within one year before the event I try to explain, i.e. the 1962 war between China and India. Coders should learn to distinguish whether the newspaper articles represent elites' voice or masses' voice. For example, usually, if it is a state-owned newspaper, editorials tend to represent elite attitudes. Letters to editors or some non-state-owned newspapers usually represent the mass opinions.

Novels: Choose one (or two) of the most popular novels in an official language.

²⁵ The code rules follow the "National Identity Report Code Book" in Hopf and Bentley (forthcoming), with some modifications by the author of this thesis.

Movies: Get a list of most-attended or popular movies in the country by country's directors/producers in an official language. Choose the Top Two.

Step 2: Coding

Read all editorials/novel and watch the movies in the sample and to find the identities of your country. What does it mean to be China or be Chinese? Coders are to be as inductive as possible. The identity coders have found could be one that China aspires to become, or one it is trying to avoid becoming. For example, China aspires to become socialist, and wishes to avoid bureaucratic capitalist. Coders should also record the raw numbers of these identities, so as to gauge their frequency.

E.g.,

“全世界人民坚持团结斗争，一定能够挫败美国为首的帝国主义集团的侵略政策和战争政策，一定能够制止世界大战的爆发。”

Translation: “(If) People all over the world keep uniting together and struggling, (they) must be able to defeat the invasion and war-fighting policies of the imperialist block headed by the U.S., (they) must be able to prevent world war from breaking out.”

Coding: Unite, Struggle, Invasion, War, Imperialist (headed by the U.S.).

Be careful to distinguish coding of identity categories from simply themes or tropes in the discourse. Themes or tropes such as extolling the virtues of hardwork, invocations of the good life, or personal complaints about injustices are not properly speaking identity categories and can be coded as identity categories when you think it makes sense to say, “this category is used by people or leaders to define what it means to be Chinese” or the “Chinese nation embodies the virtues of cultural superiority and the pursuit of social justice” and so on. At this point, previously coded themes and tropes can be reconceptualized as identities.

Step 3: Preparing Tables and Analysis

Work in a Word document or an Excel spreadsheet to put all coded decisions together.

The final part is the construction of the predominant discourse of national identity and its challenger/s. This is also the most theoretical move, though it should be deeply rooted in the inductive discourse analysis.

For an example, in 1955 USSR, Hopf argues that the predominant discourse of Soviet identity features four main elements of the “New Soviet Man”: modernity, class, geography, and ethnicity. In 1999 Russia, Hopf shows that four main discourses, liberal essentialist, xx, xx all compete for predominance. See Hopf (2002: 41,155).

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