

Master's thesis

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Chinese Nationalism and Regime Legitimacy

A comparative case-study analysis of China's
reaction to the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize

Master's thesis in Political Science

Trondheim, spring 2013

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Introduction

In 2010, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Peace Prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo. The prize caused a major set-back to the Sino-Norwegian relationship, and angered the Chinese government immensely. Liu Xiaobo was imprisoned for actions which subvert the Chinese state, and he has been an important figure in raising the voice of human rights issues and the need for democratization in China. In this thesis I will explore which factors contributed to this reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize and if the reaction itself was a case of top-down nationalism.¹ The research question of this thesis is therefore; *was China's reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize the result of top-down Chinese nationalism?* The leading literature on Chinese nationalism discusses two dynamics which affect nationalism, namely top-down and bottom-up dynamics. As a consequence of this literature, which will be explored in more detail below, two hypotheses can be presented when exploring the research question. The main hypothesis being; *the reaction from China to the Nobel Peace Prize was a case of top-down nationalism and the reaction to the Peace Prize was a result of the challenge it presented to the legitimacy of the CCP-rule in China.* The competing hypothesis therefore being: *The reaction from China was a case of bottom-up nationalism.*

This dissertation will therefore focus upon the causal relationship between China's reaction regarding issues like the Nobel Peace Prize and Chinese nationalism. This relationship will be investigated through comparative case studies, where examples of China's reaction to external incidents and internal pressures are presented, with both bottom-up and top-down dynamics. The focus point of this thesis is therefore to identify how and why China reacts to events like the Nobel Peace Prize². This will contribute to the understanding of when and how such reactions occur. The importance of this research is to identify what triggers this kind of response from the world's second largest economy, and give Norway and others a better understanding of how and when China is provoked to take action. This thesis will thus investigate the relationship between Chinese nationalism and regime legitimacy. The most important question this thesis will try to answer is therefore: was the reaction from China to the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 a case of top-down nationalism, and was this the result of the threat the prize represented to regime legitimacy?

¹ Top-down nationalism will be defined as nationalism originated in the CCP and used as a tool for the CCP in legitimizing their rule. It will be further explored below.

² In this thesis I have focused upon cases which either threaten the CCP-rule and legitimacy or threaten territorial sovereignty.

This thesis will have the following structure. First, the theoretical framework will be presented, relying on three authors well known for their works on nationalism, Benedict Anderson (1983), Ernest Gellner (1983) and E.J. Hobsbawm (1983, 1990). In this section the terms nation, state and nationalism will be explored and defined, in addition to exploring the concept of regime legitimacy through the work of David Beetham (1991). Then the literature on Chinese nationalism will be introduced. Because of the limits of this thesis, I have chosen to focus upon pragmatic nationalism and the role of economics. In addition, the role of the people and the CCP³ in Chinese nationalism will be examined, which includes exploring elite myth-making, top-down and bottom-up nationalism.

Third, the methodological design will be presented. Two methods were used, namely content analysis with complementary interviews. The next chapter explores two concepts important for the context of this thesis, namely the term ‘face’ in Chinese nationalism and the term ‘Nobel Complex’.

Fourth, the empirical data material will be presented. The main case will be presented first. This will include an account of the Chinese reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, and what implications this had for the Sino-Norwegian relationship. Following the main case, the comparative cases are introduced. Four cases are examined, to test the primary and secondary hypotheses. All of the cases are from the 2000s, and they include the controversy over the Chinese ‘bullet train’, the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands with Japan, the territorial dispute over Scarborough Shoal and the Carrefour-protests in 2008 in addition to the controversy over the Dalai Lama visiting France in 2009.

The final chapter will analyze the empirical material and summarize the findings from the comparative case studies. The economic development in the last three decades has contributed to China being the second largest economy in the world. In addition to this development, Chinese nationalism has also notably changed in 2000s. The last chapter will explore how the reaction from China was a case of top-down nationalism, as the Peace Prize itself represented a challenge to the CCP rule by questioning the rule of law in China and thus challenging regime legitimacy. Lastly, the implications of the results for Norwegian foreign policy decisions will be discussed.

³ In this thesis the abbreviation CCP will be used when referring to the Chinese Communist Party.

Literature Review

When discussing Chinese nationalism it is important to have a clear framework. This section will be based on the works of three authors renowned for their writings about nations and nationalism; Benedict Anderson and his *Imagined Communities* (1983), Ernest Gellner and his *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) and E.J. Hobsbawm's *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1990) and *The Invention of Tradition* (1983)⁴. It will present the leading literature of nationalism and define the terms nation and state used in this paper. It will also define the concept nationalism and explore regime legitimacy through the work of David Beetham (1991).

State and nation

Some theorists have claimed that the nation is inevitably connected to the state, while others have claimed that the state and nation are two separate things. According to Ernest Gellner,

The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state. It is more debatable whether the normative idea of the nation, in its modern sense, did not presuppose the prior existence of the state (1983: 6).

According to Gellner, who uses Max Weber's definition of the state⁵ to supplement his own, "The 'state' is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order" (Gellner 1983: 4). This is the classical definition of state, and this is the definition which will be used in this thesis. But when defining the term state, one also has to define the term nation. In his exploration of the origins of nationalism, Gellner also examines the term nation thoroughly. According to Gellner,

[1]Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating... [2]Two men are of the same nation if and only if they *recognize* each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, *nations maketh man* (1983: 7, emphasis his).

According to his definition of culture, or the shared system of ideas, signs and associations, it is what connects two men to be of the same nation, but they can only be from the same nation if they recognize each other's shared culture. Gellner also argues that the problem of nationalism is not exclusively connected to the state, and that it does not arise for each and every state. On the contrary, it arises only for *some* states. His book, *Nations and Nationalism*, is an exploration in which states the issue of nationalism rises (Gellner 1983: 5).

⁴ Which Hobsbawm edited together with Terence Ranger.

⁵ "Max Weber's celebrated definition of it, as that agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence" (Gellner 1983: 3)

Another leading author on the subject, Benedict Anderson, defines nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (1983: 6). As Anderson continues to write

The nation is imagined as *limited*, because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations...It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm (1983: 7, emphasis his).

This also coincides with Hobsbawm’s exploration of the concept nation, as he writes; “the equation nation = state = people, and especially sovereign people, undoubtedly linked nation to territory, since structure and definition of states were now essentially territorial” (1990: 19).

The terms nation and state will thus be used in accordance with the definitions of Anderson, Gellner and Hobsbawm, presented above. The nation is an imagined political community, which is based on the same culture. The nation must be recognized as one nation by those who belong to it, and it is characteristically limited and sovereign. It is limited through the borders of the nation, which best can be described as the sovereign territory – the actual areas belonging to the nation. The population of a nation is the people who share the same culture and who recognizes this shared culture within the borders of the sovereign territory. The state is thus the institutions which enforce order and therefore enforces the law.

Defining nationalism

Gellner (1983) begins his book with a chapter dedicated to define the term nationalism. The first sentence in his book states the following: “Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent” (1983: 1). The nation-state is central in the emergence of nationalism, and politics and nation goes hand in hand. As Gellner continues in his book; “Nationalism as a sentiment... can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment” (1983: 1, emphasis his).

In his article “Chinese Nationalism and Its International Orientations”, Suisheng Zhao has some useful distinctions of nation and nationalism. He holds that the nation-state is a modern phenomenon, as it emerged with the nation-state system of Europe (2000: 3). Thus nationalism is also a modern phenomenon, as nationalism is connected to the nation-state, either as an expression of the nation-state or as a challenge to it (Zhao 2000: 3). Zhao contrasts tradition and modernity, similar to the way Gellner does in his book (1983: 46).

Hobsbawm, in a similar way, writes that “the basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it *is* its modernity” (1990: 14, emphasis added).

According to Benedict Anderson, “the ‘end of the era of nationalism’, so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time” (1983: 3). He presents nationalism as three paradoxes. First the paradox between what historians believe to be the modernity of nations vs. the belief of the nationalists that the nation is ancient. Secondly, the paradox between the socio-cultural concept of nationality, that everyone can, should and will ‘have’ a nationality vs. the concreteness of the term nationality, that makes for example the ‘Greek’ nationality unique in its characteristics. The duality of the two, the fact that the nationality is universal, and that everyone should be able to claim a nationality is contrasted to the uniqueness of the term nationality, and the particularity of one’s nationality such as the ‘Greek’. The last paradox is between the political power of nationalism vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence (Anderson 1983: 5). By this he makes the argument that unlike other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers (1983: 5). The individual characteristics of each example of nationalism therefore make it difficult to create a grand theory for nationalism. This is supported by Zhao, who argues that the development of nationalism is closely tied to the particular features of the state and because of this, nationalism must be seen in connection to the nation-state (2000: 3).

Nationalism is thus a unique term, connected to modern history as it only emerged with the existence of the nation-state. The definition used in this paper will therefore be that nationalism is (primarily) a political principle where the political and national unit should be congruent; it is a modern phenomenon, and consequently it is connected to the nation-state.

Regime legitimization

The primary hypothesis of this thesis indicates that the Nobel Peace Prize threatened the legitimacy of CCP-rule, and that the reaction from China can be viewed as a case of top-down nationalism. Therefore it is important with an exploration of regime legitimization – and how states respond when this is threatened. David Beetham explores, in his book *The Legitimation of Power*, the normative structure of legitimacy (1991). According to Beetham, legitimacy has three dimensions: conformity to rules, justifiability of rules in terms of shared beliefs, and legitimacy through expressed consent (1991: 20). Beetham holds that these “three components contribute to legitimacy, though the extent to which they are realised in a given context will be a matter of degree” (1991: 19). The three dimensions can thus be fulfilled at

different levels or, as Beetham puts it, to a certain degree (1991: 19). The first dimension is connected to the principle of the state, which in this thesis is defined as the institutions that enforces order. Securing legitimacy through the enforcement of order will also secure conformity to rules. This leads to the second dimension, that the laws are justifiable through shared beliefs. If the laws lack justifiability, legitimacy will thus fail – and conformity to laws will no longer be a principle that the people want to uphold. The third dimension, legitimacy through expressed consent includes not that the people should believe in legitimacy, but that the specific actions they use to express it, is a source of legitimization (Beetham 1991: 91).

According to Bruce Gilley, there are six main sources of legitimacy in post-Tiananmen Square China; “(a) economic growth and development, (b) stability and governance, (c) political and civil rights, (d) international prestige and nationalism, (e) cultural or historical dispositions to trust the national state, and (f) social, cultural, and economic rights” (2008: 271). Gilley argues that d, e and f are important sources of regime legitimacy in China today, more so compared to other states in his analysis (2008: 271). Legitimacy can decline in two ways; performance crisis or value crisis (Gilley 2008: 272). This would imply that a performance crisis in legitimacy for the CCP would include a decline in growth and a slowdown in the economic development. Value change on the other hand implies that the regime no longer has the support of the people because the value system previously shared has disappeared. The regime does not represent the values of the people. The standard which the regime has measured itself does no longer apply (Gilley 2008: 272). When legitimization is threatened or in crisis, states may respond in three ways:

- (a) They may replace legitimacy with a greater emphasis on coercion or inducements for particular groups, thus moving from a common good basis of rule to a clientelistic basis; (b) they may reconfigure the basis of legitimacy, attempting either to reassert the old value orientations that support current performance or to define new value orientations with which the regime is more likely to be congruent; or (c) they may improve their performance consistent with new social demands (Gilley 2008: 273-274).

The legitimization crisis can thus be caused by both external and internal threats, which will be explored further in the case studies.

Contemporary Chinese Nationalism

In this chapter, the books of Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism* (2004) and Yongnian Zheng's *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China* (1999) will be used to explore contemporary Chinese nationalism, its origins and the development of Chinese nationalism since 1989. Since the 1980s a China has been on the rise, expanding both in economic capabilities and military capabilities. With China's increasing power, and the talk of a "China threat" by many Western commentators⁶, a new factor has been deemed important for their foreign policy decisions, namely nationalism. Chinese nationalism has been the topic for a broad range of scholarly articles in the last three decades. "Several [of these scholars] have noted the potential for Chinese nationalism to interact with China's growing relative power in a destabilizing way" (Downs and Saunders 1999: 115). The literature on Chinese nationalism is extensive, and is comprised of several different views of how nationalism will effect foreign policy decisions, how it can lead to a more aggressive China and how it can affect the economic development. The literature presented below, will focus upon three aspects; the role of economics, the role of the CCP and the people and the origins of Chinese nationalism.

Pragmatic nationalism and the role of economics

The literature on contemporary Chinese Nationalism can be divided into two groupings according to how Chinese Nationalism affects Chinese foreign policy (in addition to the origins of nationalism which will be explored below). Examples of authors who represent the side that sees Chinese Nationalism as contributing to a more aggressive China, is Bernstein and Munro (1997), Samuel P. Huntington (1996) and James Lilley (1996).⁷ Examples of authors argues that Chinese nationalism is not contributing to a more aggressive foreign policy (yet) are Allen Whiting (1995), Erica S. Downs, Philip C. Saunders (1999), Michael Oksenberg (1986) and Suisheng Zhao (2000). A third grouping can also be presented, which the latter group can be associated with. This grouping can be named open nationalism (confident/internationalist nationalism). Michael Oksenberg defines confident nationalism as following; "It is a patient and moderate nationalism rooted in confidence that over time China can regain its former greatness through economic growth, based on the import of foreign technology and ideas" (1986: 505). Another author which can be placed in this grouping is

⁶ The concept "China threat" and the debate regarding this issue was instigated by two *Foreign Affairs* articles published in 1997; Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro's "The Coming Conflict with America" and Robert Ross's "Beijing as a Conservative Power" (1997).

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), James R. Lilley, "Nationalism Bites Back," *New York Times* (1996, 24th of October), and Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, "The Coming Conflict with America" *Foreign Affairs* (1997)

Chen Zhimin. In his article “Nationalism, Internationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy”, he explores Chinese nationalism and how it affects foreign policy decisions. According to Zhimin,

During the past two decades, Chinese nationalism has taken on the face of positive nationalism. It is nationalist in the sense that it aims to realize the key unsettled national missions: economic development, nation-state building, political unity and independence, and the greatness of China. It is positive because it has adopted an internationally oriented strategy, emphasizing international cooperation and integration into the global economy (2005: 53).

According to Suisheng Zhao, who in his article tries to explore whether there is a direct link between Chinese nationalism and international aggression through examining different orientations of nationalism, Chinese nationalism is pragmatic. Zhao defines pragmatic nationalism as “whatever approach that makes China strong” (2000: 9). He continues with that pragmatic nationalists see the lack of economic modernization as the cause of why China became an easy target for foreign imperialism (2000: 9). This has been the dominant line of thinking since the late 1980s.⁸ According to Yongnian Zheng, the CCP, during the construction of a new policy in the 1980s, found patriotism an important instrument for regime legitimization replacing class struggle as an argument. The CCP therefore focused primarily on three issues; economic development, political stability, and national unification (1999: 91). Zhimin also supports this argument. As he writes

The CCP leadership understood that the CCP could still claim its political legitimacy by appealing to its past credentials...However, it could not just rely on that. To sustain and consolidate its political legitimacy, the CCP had to deliver what the Chinese people desired: economic development, political stability and national unity. These three elements...formed the core agenda of official nationalism, which they called patriotism. Among the three, economic development was placed as the top priority (Zhimin 2005: 49).

The focus of Chinese nationalism, when originated in or from the CCP is therefore to make China strong, especially economically but also militarily. Even though this is the focus of pragmatic nationalism, the CCP has been somewhat inconsistent. The CCP tries to legitimate their rule through two incompatible directions. The first emphasizes nationalist goals and highlights the party’s success in building China into a powerful state; the second emphasizes economic goals and claims that the political stability provided by CCP rule is necessary for continued economic growth (Downs and Saunders 1999: 118). The CCP tries to legitimize their rule both through emphasizing the rise of China and through emphasizing the economic growth of the Chinese economy. “The CCP’s challenge is to... manipulate foreign and

⁸ Zhao also explores two other types of Chinese nationalism in his article, nativism and antitraditionalism, for further exploration and definitions see Suisheng Zhao (2000); “Chinese Nationalism and Its International Orientations”.

domestic perceptions so that the contradictions between a legitimation strategy based on nationalism and one based on economic performance do not become unmanageable” (Downs and Saunders 1999: 121). The regime uses nationalism when trying to legitimize their rule, in other words they will blame foreigners when the economy is declining, and praise the regime and its stability when the economy is doing better (Downs and Saunders 1999). The argument presented by Downs and Saunders (1999) is that economics is a central factor when the CCP decides how, when and if they are going to use nationalism as a way to legitimize their rule. This implicates that when the economy is growing, the CCP also will assume a more positive view towards foreigners and vice versa. This is also in accordance with the argument of both Zhao (2000) regarding pragmatic nationalism and Oksenberg’s argument of a confident Chinese nationalism (1986). This argument does not leave much room for bottom up nationalistic venting. Yinan He (2007) presents the argument that this is a part of the Communist Party’s myth-making process, where they use history as “a key aspect of new nationalist propaganda” (2007: 6). This propaganda was also used to blame Japan in times of economic problems in the 1990s. “Such an obvious bias could not be understood as simply a negotiation tactic because not just high-ranking Chinese officials directly involved in economic negotiations with Japan but also ordinary Chinese shared this view” (He 2007: 11).⁹

One example where economic legitimization has been preferred over nationalistic legitimization is regarding the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute with Japan (and Taiwan). Erica S. Downs and Phillip C. Saunders discuss the flare ups of the 1990s in their article “Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands”, and they conclude that nationalism “loses” to economic cooperation when it comes to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. They claim that further economic development is more important for the CCP than nationalist credentials. In each case, the CCP begins with creating a nationalist flare up by promoting anti-Japanese sentiments and nationalist feelings among the public (Downs and Saunders 1999: 126). But when right-winged Japanese protest groups made claim to the islands, the CCP was forced to choose between nationalism and further economic development with Japan (Downs and Saunders 1999: 126). In each case they turn their focus to prevent further nationalist build up and promote economic development, this lead to strong public criticism and had a harmful effect on the regime’s legitimacy. Downs and Saunders see this as an argument that nationalism ultimately loses to economic development (1999: 126). Both flare

⁹ Important to note that the relationship with Japan is greatly affected by Japan’s imperialism in the 19th and 20th century, and therefore reactions against Japan may be affected more by this than reactions against other countries. See also the section about myth-making in Chinese nationalism.

ups in the 90s had both internal and external stimulus which created the pressure for the government to respond strongly to the dispute with Japan. But in each case, the CCP chooses to curb the nationalist protest in fear of harming the economic ties with Japan. In the case studies, there will be presented similar dynamics, where the CCP both oppresses but also supports nationalist protests. In the recent flare up (especially in 2010 and 2012) it can be argued that the CCP has given nationalism more room to vent, and that nationalist sentiments are allowed more public space.¹⁰ Another example where nationalist sentiments have been granted room is regarding the discussion to use Japanese technology for the new Chinese 'bullet train' (He 2007, Gries 2005). These two incidents will be explored further as comparative cases later in this thesis.

The role of the CCP and the people

In this thesis, the relationship between the CCP and the people is important, and especially how this relationship manifests itself when it comes to nationalism. According to Gries the dominant Western understanding of Chinese nationalism in general is that "the Communist Party has constructed Chinese nationalism as a tool to legitimize its rule. With communism in crisis, proponents of this view argue, [that] Party elite foment nationalism to maintain power" (2004: 18). There is no room for public emotional venting, and if this occurs in protests or demonstrations, Western commentators hold that it is a result of planned propaganda from the CCP. One example of such views presented itself during the Belgrade bombing protests¹¹, where "the Western media repeatedly hammered home the argument that the Beijing elite were manipulating protestors to its own ends" (Gries 2004: 128). According to James Kynge, who paints a top-down picture of the protests, "Beijing has succeeded in concerting popular outrage at NATO's bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade into a swelling tide of nationalism" (Kynge 1999). Such an argument does not leave any room for bottom-up nationalism, or any spontaneous outburst of emotions from the public. According to Gries, this view that many Western commentators hold "says more about ourselves...than it does about what actually happened in China in May 1999" (Gries 2004: 128). But this is just one side of the story, and nationalism is *not* just one-sided. According to Gries, it is a "complex

¹⁰ Two hypotheses can be presented to explain this change: (1) China is less economically dependent to Japan now, compared to the 1990s and therefore more anti-Japanese protests are allowed. (2) China has increased its military capabilities, compared to the 1990s, therefore nationalistic legitimization is more important than economic legitimization for the CCP today, and they can therefore allow more nationalistic public venting. It is not in the scope of this thesis to explore this further, but it is important to make the distinction.

¹¹ The bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade by US guided-missiles created major controversy. This led to massive nationalist protests in several major cities in China, for an in depth account, see Peter Hays Gries (2004) *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics and Diplomacy*, pp.13-18

interplay of top-down and bottom-up pressures” (Gries 2004: 129). Even though Gries claims that most Westerners argue that Chinese nationalism is top down, one may see a shift in Chinese nationalism from top-down nationalism to bottom up nationalist venting more clearly in recent years, especially how it presents itself through mass demonstrations in China, which in recent years has been allowed to develop compared to the 1990s. The anger displayed after the Belgrade bombing and regarding heated issues such as the territorial disputes with Japan, is a part of the nationalistic myth-making process instigated by the CCP in the 1980s. This was a part of using patriotism as a way of legitimizing the party rule when communism no longer could be used.

Myth-making in Chinese nationalism

In Chinese nationalism, Yinan He underlines the importance of nationalistic myth-making as a part of top-down nationalism which again contributes to the interconnectedness between the people and the party. In her article “History, Chinese Nationalism and the Emerging Sino – Japanese Conflict”, she explores this factor as a contributor to nationalistic sentiments and top-down and bottom-up nationalism (2007). According to He, the myth-making process started with the centralized school systems and the education-reforms of the 1980s and 1990s (2007). She argues “...that the visceral nationalist sentiment has deep roots in the decades of centralized school education and official propaganda in China that [this] implanted pernicious myths in the national collective memory” (He 2007: 2). The myth-making process is especially important to the Sino-Japanese relationship. The war atrocities committed by Japan during WWII and during earlier incidents of imperialism, is an important part of the myth-making process and used by the elite to construct nationalistic myths. The fact that Japan never officially apologized for the war atrocities committed, contributed to the complication of the relationship.¹² During the 1980s a shift in the Party’s policy was displayed. The shift from burying the war atrocities to now using them as nationalist propaganda was a direct answer to the disputes inside the Party after Deng’s reformation policies was put in to effect (He 2007: 6). “Gradually, patriotism replaced communism to become the ideological foundation of the CCP’s regime legitimacy” (He 2007: 6). Conservative voices inside the Party were not happy with the modernization policies of Deng and therefore patriotism – and elite myth-making – was used to settle the unruly voices. By using patriotism as a force to drive nationalism, the CCP started to use war atrocities committed by Japan as motivation for nationalistic sentiments. The use of patriotism can be labeled ‘official nationalism’ according

¹² During the 1970s the CCP tried to bury former atrocities committed by Japan as a step towards normalizing the relationship, for further exploration on this subject see He (2007: 5-7)

to He, and it is a part of the elite myth-making process inside the CCP (2007: 6). During the 1980s a series of patriotic education acts was instituted by the CCP as a part of building patriotic nationalism among the people.¹³ Central to the new education acts was that they moved away from the focus upon class struggle and rather focused on the suffering of the Chinese people during foreign invasion and the superiority of the Chinese state during such suffering. By focusing on past humiliation, these education acts place Japan as the number one foreign enemy (He 2007: 7). One example where such myths present themselves, and where Japan is the ultimate threat (together with the United States) is the ‘say no’ sensation that swept over China in 1996. “The ‘say no’ sensation involved a complex interplay between Party and popular actors. The Chinese State sought to use ‘say no’ nationalists, but ‘say no’ authors also used the Chinese State” (Gries 2004: 125). The ‘say no’ sensation is a series of books published in 1996 and 1997, with strong nationalist sentiments regarding Japan in addition to displaying anti-Americanism (Gries 2004: 122, 125). The ‘say no’ sensation is defined by Zhao as an example of nativism, and that this kind of nationalism uses “confrontation with foreign powers to rouse emotional, nationalist reactions by tapping the deep rooted feeling of Chinese cultural superiority and resentment of foreign efforts to... humiliate China in an attempt to rally the Chinese people against any foreign infiltration” (2000: 13).

The dynamic between the CCP and popular nationalist movements is more important in today’s China, and according to Zhimin, “although the government can still exert overall control of the nationalism discourse, it cannot monopolize it anymore” (2005: 52). This myth-making process, as described by He, shows that the patriotic propaganda issued by the CCP in the 1980s now manifests itself through the anger publicly shown by the Chinese people regarding issues such as the territorial dispute with Japan or other incidents concerning disputes over territory or where the Chinese people feel they have been wronged in some way. This complex relationship between the party and the people can be described as top-down and bottom-up nationalism, two expressions which will be explored below.

Top-down nationalism – the elite approach

Top-down nationalism is nationalism which has originated inside the CCP and the elite. Yongnian Zheng argues that one has to ‘dig in’ to the origins of Chinese nationalism to understand it (1999). As Downs and Saunders comment; “Chinese nationalism emerged from

¹³ In addition to the educational reforms, several war-museums were built displaying the actions and effects of the atrocities committed by the Japanese during the war (He 2007).

the shock of extensive contacts with the West in the nineteenth century, which challenged both the traditional Confucian cultural world view and China's territorial integrity and national unity" (1999: 118). Zheng states that "a Chinese approach to China's new nationalism requires discovering China's nationalism in China rather than in the West, and to "dig out" Chinese internal forces of nationalism" (1999: 10). Zheng continues to write that "this does not mean that different Western approaches cannot be used to understand China's new nationalism. Rather, it means that these Western approaches cannot be used to "construct" or imagine a Chinese nationalism" (1999: 10).

When examining top-down nationalism in China, one needs to look at historical developments as well. As Zhimin argues

Historically, nationalism in the PRC was primarily a top-down construction of the CCP. It is an undeniable fact that strong nationalistic feelings existed among the Chinese people throughout the PRC's history. However, before the mid-1990s it was the CCP that monopolized the discourses of nationalism and patriotism in China. The CCP was able to decide the direction, content and intensity of Chinese nationalism, and then to mobilize the people. The CCP could appeal to nationalism whenever it so wished, and dismiss it whenever it needed to shift its policy (2005: 49-50).

According to E.J. Hobsbawm the elite or "the states and regimes had every reason to reinforce, if they could, state patriotism with the sentiments and symbols of 'imagined community', wherever and however they originated, and to concentrate them upon themselves" (Hobsbawm 1990: 91). Hobsbawm uses the concept of Anderson, 'imagined community', to describe how the elite should use the culture of the nation to reinforce their legitimacy. Western theorists have explained nationalism as a product of the nation's desire to become state. But John Fitzgerald, who first presented "state nationalism", argues that China has developed rendering a different dynamic, and that China is a state in the search of its nation (Fitzgerald 1995: 57, Gries 2004: 117-118). As Fitzgerald writes, "The state which *is* China has, I believe, no given nation" (Fitzgerald 1995: 57, emphasis added).

According to Zhao, when culturalism fell in the 19th century, "the Chinese political elite...deemed it necessary to promote nationalism as a new force for unity" (2000: 28). When communism and the planned economy failed, the CCP needed another way to legitimize its rule. As explored earlier, this was done by using patriotism in addition to the shift from a planned economy to a market economy. James Reilly has a classical description of top-down nationalism, as the CCP use it today;

Chinese leaders exploit public anger to such events in order to gain diplomatic leverage. Propaganda and selective media reports feed nationalist sentiment, which allow diplomats to claim that a certain action has hurt the feelings of the Chinese people and should be reversed.

This calibrated strategy is a key tool in Beijing's use of public opinion in its foreign policy (2012: 124).

This can also be seen in connection to elite myth-making as presented above. This strategy will be further explored in the case studies. The use of the term top-down nationalism in this thesis will therefore be in accordance with the exploration above.

Bottom-up nationalism – the mass approach

But even though it can be argued that Chinese nationalism originated in the elites and thus is a tool used by the CCP only, Chinese nationalism also has roots in the masses. As argued by Gries (2004) this is often overlooked when studying contemporary Chinese nationalism. According to Hobsbawm,

...it would be a mistake to see these exercises as pure manipulation from above. They were, indeed, most successful when they could build on already present unofficial nationalist sentiments...or, more likely, in nationalism among the middle and lower middle classes (1990: 92).

It was the arrival of Marxism which introduced popular nationalism arguments to China (Gries 2004: 117). The Boxer-rebellion of 1898-1901 was described by the founder of the Chinese Communist Party as a bottom-up mass phenomenon (Gries 2004: 117). Later, after the "liberation" of 1949 the PRC highlighted the anti-imperialist uprisings of "the century of humiliation" as mass nationalism (Gries 2004: 117). The Party used the heroic description of the rebellion against the imperialist in a way that made the Party and the people infused into one heroic entity (Gries 2004: 117). Previously the Party had a strong control over nationalistic discourse, but in the 1990s, one could witness new developments regarding nationalism in China. The masses mobilized, and a new form of nationalism appeared which struggled with the official discourse of patriotism (Zhimin 2005: 50). Today the masses both support and challenge the regime's legitimacy, and the party both suppresses and responds to challenges to its nationalist credentials (Gries 2004: 119). Previously, the CCP have reacted with oppression to popular nationalism. For example, as previously mentioned, in both incidents of the flare ups regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute in 1990 and 1996 (Downs and Saunders 1999). But according to Zheng, the 90s also left room for more public nationalistic venting.

Since the early 1990's the regime has allowed the rise of nationalistic voices among different social and political groups despite its strict control over other aspects of political discussion. Chinese intellectuals have gained relative freedom to express their opinions on China's domestic reform and international affairs (1999: 19).

It has been important for the CCP to stay in charge of nationalism, and use it as a tool to their advantage. But the way nationalism is developing in China suggests that nationalism, more so than before, challenges the rule of the Party. Thus it can be argued that the party is losing its hegemony over nationalism in today's China (Gries 2004: 121). And as He writes, "during the two Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputes in the 1990s, Beijing had to go out of its way to stop students and social activists from staging open protests against Japan" (2007: 9). This is also supported by Jean Pierre Cabestan in his article "The Many Facets of Chinese Nationalism", who argues that since the incident of Tiananmen Square in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, nationalism as a concept has gradually reclaimed its place in the CCP's discourse. And by this "clearing the way for the expression among the intellectual elites of a 'new nationalism', more populist and autonomous, which, since the mid-1990s, has gone beyond the bounds of the nationalism set by the Party" (2005: 7).

Both Gries and Cabestan use the 1999 Belgrade-bombing protests as a mark for change in Chinese nationalistic discourse. Cabestan notes that the demonstrations regarding the Belgrade bombing in May 1999 marks a turning point for nationalism in China, "and in relations between the state and society" (Cabestan 2005: 10). According to Gries, the protest started out as a government supported protest, but the foundation was more bottom-up nationalism. At first the popular nationalists supported the CCP, but after a while this shifted and popular nationalists started to make demands of the CCP instead of supporting the party (2004: 129). The protesters started to challenge the regime, and the CCP no longer had full control over the demonstrations. In addition the protests turned rather violent, as the burning of the American consulate in Chengdu shows (Gries 2004: 14).

It is important to note that Chinese outside of China also responded the same way nationalists residing in China did, regarding the Belgrade bombing in 1999. As Gries argues, they were not influenced by the CCP and also had access to international media coverage of the incidents that caused nationalist uproar (2004: 20). As mentioned earlier the development of Chinese nationalism may suggest a higher tolerance of public emotional venting compared to before. Examples are the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute with Japan which has unraveled in the last couple of years as an issue that can stir up emotions in the Chinese public. In addition the cases of the Japanese Bullet Train and Carrefour-protests also caused internet activism and demonstrations, forcing the CCP to broaden their bidding when deciding which Bullet train technology to choose and clamping down on some of the protests regarding the Carrefour-incident.

As the elaboration of top-down and bottom-up nationalism show, it can be argued that in recent years there has been an opening for nationalistic public venting that was not present before. In the case studies, examples of what can both be regarded as top-down and bottom-up nationalism will be presented, which will shed light on the primary and competing hypotheses.

Methodological design and data material

Political scientists have three main methods of collecting the data they need to test hypotheses: interviewing, document analysis and observation (Johnson and Reynolds 2008: 266). The use of documents is central to most research studies, but they are often used as background data which is used in addition to data generated from for example interview or observation. But in some research, document analysis is the only method used, and in that case the document analysis is the empiric base (Tjora 2012: 163). Interviewing often provides a more comprehensive and complicated understanding of phenomena than other forms of research designs, and it provides researchers with a rich variety of perspectives (Johnson and Reynolds 2008: 343). In this thesis, the research method is primarily document analysis, with complementary interviews to add greater depth. The primary research method has been content analysis of newspaper articles and other resources available for the representation of my main case, China's reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize, and the comparative cases. In addition to the content analysis I have conducted interviews by phone or e-mail with persons who have knowledge of the issue. Below the two methods will be explored, in addition to how the two methods were used specifically for this dissertation.

Since I have chosen one specific case or incident (China's reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize) to investigate and compare it with four cases involving three other countries; Japan, the Philippines and France, this can be called a comparative case-study analysis. The four cases are used to illustrate China's reaction towards external incidents and internal pressures, and if these reactions are the result of nationalism. In addition the cases will explore top-down and bottom-up dynamics. This will create the foundation of which the research question can be examined. In addition this will produce a set of indicators for what constitutes Chinese nationalism, which will be helpful when testing the two hypotheses presented in the introduction.

Content Analysis

The main method used in this paper is content analysis. By analyzing different documents that already exist one may generate information about cases which have been produced at different times and places, and with different purposes (Tjora 2012: 162). Political scientists turn to the written record when the political phenomena that interest them cannot be measured through personal interviews, with questionnaires, or by direct observation (Johnson and Reynolds 2008: 266). In this paper the political phenomena that are going to be investigated is China's reaction to internal and external incidents which represent a threat to the territorial

sovereignty of China and a threat to the legitimacy of the CCP-rule, and if the dynamics presented are examples of top-down or bottom-up nationalism. The main case is China's reaction towards Norway after the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Liu Xiaobo.

The documents used can either be case-specific or they can be wide-ranging like for example laws or political documents. The documents collected for this dissertation are all case-specific. The documents can be collected from the media, or they can be documents from previous research (Tjora 2012: 163). In this thesis both documents from the media and documents written for research, such as scholarly articles, have been used as sources. There are several advantages with using documents as the primary research method. First of all it allows one to access subjects that are either difficult to research directly, personally to contact, that belong to the past or are geographically distant (Johnson and Reynolds 2008: 291). In this dissertation some of the cases were both distant in time, but also distant geographically, and it was therefore most efficient to use the written record as the main source for the empiric material. The main disadvantage is that the documents used may be biased. "Not only may the record be incomplete or selectively preserved, but it also may be inaccurate or falsified, either inadvertently or on purpose" (Johnson and Reynolds 2008: 292).

The first step in content analysis is to select the sample of materials to include in the analysis (Johnson and Reynolds 2008: 282). In this paper the sample is newspaper articles from the respective countries, and on the topic of China's reaction towards several heated disputes.¹⁴ The main source has been the media, and newspaper articles – in addition to articles from political science journals, periodicals on the specific cases, government documents and statistics issued by the countries involved in the case studies. The main purpose of the material was to gather factual information, where other sources would not provide the material needed. But, as mentioned, these sources may be biased, and must be used with caution. The materials used in this paper are collected from newspaper or media broadcasters that are deemed reliable (like for example NRK, Aftenposten, The New York Times, BBC and The Guardian). Other online sources are international news agencies like Reuters and the official Chinese news agency Xinhua. Something to note when using Chinese newspapers and news agencies is that such official papers and agencies (when named official broadcaster) are presenters for the CCP, and thus they will not necessarily report incidents or demonstrations that may hurt the regime. The sources have been sorted by the specific case and according to

¹⁴ The media used are not neutral in these disputes, and they are used to describe the cases in addition to supply the view point of the differing parties in the disputes.

which country the article is about, and of course by what issue it concerns. This use of the material is consistent with what Johnson and Reynolds define as content analysis, using excerpts, quotations or examples from the written record to test the relationship (2008: 282).

Complementary interview by phone or e-mail

In addition to the content analysis it was necessary to conduct interviews either by phone or by e-mail. “Interviewing is an excellent form of data collection, particularly in exploratory studies or when thoughts and behavior can be described or expressed only by those who are deeply involved in political processes” (Johnson and Reynolds 2008: 343). This was to get additional information that was not available in any newspaper articles or in other documents available, to get more recent information than what was accessible or to confirm information.

One methodological problem for this paper was getting access to the right people. As Johnson and Reynolds write “sometimes getting access to influential people is difficult. They may want further information about the purpose of the research or need to be convinced of the professionalism of the researcher” (2008: 341), or in other cases, where they only grant interviews to researchers favorable to their political position. Because of the sensitivity of the subject for the Norwegian government, several of the people I contacted declined to take part in interviews concerning China’s reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize. As several persons declined to be interviewed, another option was used – interviewing by e-mail. This ensured both that the informants could answer in writing, which to many was preferable and that I could get the information needed. Preferably all interviews should have been done face to face, but because of the time frame, distance and the limited resources available to me the interviews were either done by phone or by e-mail. The findings of the interviews were used to support the information found in the content analysis. The informants are anonymized, but when I have received replies from Norwegian governmental institutions by e-mail I have identified the specific ministry, as all e-mail correspondence with the Norwegian Ministries is official information and are archived.

Defining “*face*” and “*The Nobel Complex*”

The concept ‘face’ is important in Chinese culture, and will be used in this thesis to explain the reaction from the Chinese regarding the Nobel Peace Prize. In addition the term “the Nobel complex” will be explained for the purpose of exploring the background of China’s reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010.

The concept face – *lian* and *mianzi*

In Chinese Culture, the term “losing face” is well known, but for Westerners the term is more difficult to understand. What is face? According to Gries, who wants to redefine the term face, “it is a cultural universal. It is not uniquely “Oriental”, but applies to all humanity – including Westerners...Face captures the interplay of self and society in the process of constructing personhood” (2004: 23). Chinese *face* is referred to in two ways, or it can be understood at two levels: *lian* and *mianzi*. The former is defined as “decency” or “good moral reputation” and the latter as an “extra reputation” achieved through social accomplishments (Gries 2004: 26). It is the latter definition that will be used here.

Henning Kristoffersen defines in his book *Det Nye Kina*, *mianzi* as your social face and *lian* as your moral face (Kristoffersen 2010: 36). To describe the difference between these two terms, one may say that they describe two separate parts of life. *Mianzi* is your social face, which is affected by your social capital, while *lian* is your ethical face or the ethical dimension of your behavior (Kristoffersen 2010: 36). The difference between the two is that you can afford to lose *mianzi* once in a while, because you can always “win it back”, but if you lose *lian* it will be much harder to reclaim (Kristoffersen 2010: 36).

Chinese Face and nationalism- losing and gaining face

Chinese *face* can also help capture the interplay of reason and passion central to nationalism (Gries 2004: 23). Nationalism, with its passions and emotions, can be set in connection to ‘losing’ or ‘gaining’ face in China.

The idea of face can help us overcome the reason vs. emotion dualism that hobbles the studies of nationalist motivation. People are emotionally attached to the self-image they present to the world. If a person’s face is assaulted, his or her feelings are hurt. But face also provides people with real power. He who “loses face” loses status and the ability to pursue material goals... Both passion and reason are intimately intertwined in nationalist politics (Gries 2004: 89).

According to Gries, “face as a universal human concern can help us overcome the opposition of reason and passion common in social science” (Gries 2004: 24), which can also be seen in connection to “the complex duality shown above between reason vs. emotion in nationalist

motivation, contributing to a more nuanced explanation of human impulses” (Gries 2004: 24). Face is also connected to national identities. It can help us to understand how national identities are reshaped through international encounters, thus being a part of international relations, but it can also be a part of understanding the complex motivations that drive nationalists (Gries 2004: 24). As international relations theorist Robert Jervis put it; “but good will, prestige and saving face are often not ephemeral goals pursued by politicians courting domestic support or foolish statesmen unappreciative of the vital role of power. Rather these are aspects of a state’s image that greatly contribute to its pursuit of other goals...saving face can contribute to later success” (Jervis 1970: 7-8).

Face in Chinese culture is important for private persons but also for the government. For the government it is both important to save or gain face towards the public but also to the rest of the world. It is both internal and foreign policy in one. “The face-game” is a battle over the zero-sum resource of social status. Face is thus fundamentally political, involving a contest over power” (Gries 2004: 26). For example, face is very important for political parties and it is a constant struggle to gain face in front of the public (Gries 2004: 26). Through these efforts from the government you can also see the connection to nationalism. The elite responds to popular nationalism by seeking to gain *face* for China, in other words the CCP tries to legitimize their rule through promoting China and Chinese culture abroad, and by this promotion of China the elite is ‘answering’ to popular nationalist demands. For instance, it has previously started active campaigns to promote Chinese culture in other countries (Gries 2004: 120). “By promoting Chinese Culture and upholding China’s dignity, the Party made claim to nationalist legitimacy. Such actions demonstrate the Party’s belief that crude repression is not enough: the Party must gain *face* for China before “international society” to earn the support of nationalist audience at home” (Gries 2004: 121). Face, as mentioned, is both important for the CCP in relations to the public but also China’s image in the world (Gries 2004: 120). As Jervis puts it “the image of a state is a major factor in determining other states’ policies toward it and the states therefore have good reason to try to project desired images” (Jervis 1970: 6). This is why one may connect the term face to the reaction from China regarding the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. It may have contributed to what the Chinese considered as losing face towards the international community, when the Nobel Committee chose a Chinese “criminal” as the award-winner, and thus claiming that the imprisonment of Liu Xiaobo was wrong – criticizing the way the CCP “runs” China and thus losing face in front of its own people.

“Nobel Prize complex”

When the Nobel-committee awarded the Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo in 2010, it was not the first time the Chinese felt offended by a Nobel Prize and the Nobel Institute. Gries argues that Chinese nationalists often feel angered by being denied international confirmation, and that this is best symbolized by their “Nobel Prize complex” (2004: 67). The Nobel Prize complex is a resentment that Chinese achievements have been denied their rightful confirmation by the West (Gries 2004: 67). This resentment is manifested through the bitterness many Chinese writers have expressed that their work has not been recognized by the Nobel institution. Likewise many Chinese economists have felt that China has deserved a Nobel Prize because of their “economic miracle” at the end of the 20th century and in the beginning of the 21st (Gries 2004: 67).

When the Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to Gao Xingjian in 2000, many thought that it meant the end of the Chinese ‘Nobel Prize complex’. But rumors and accusations of politicizations began to circulate on both sides of East-West ideological divide and throughout the Chinese community, both on mainland China but also among Chinese living abroad (Lovell 2006: 1). The Prize was given to Gao Xingjian while he was living in Paris, and he had dissociated himself from China and had shown little interest in being published in China since he left the country in 1987 (Lovell 2006: 1). This caused mixed feelings among the Chinese. Gao himself was not well known in China, in one sense very similar to the knowledge of Liu Xiaobo in 2010, and many were rather ambivalent to the fact that an exile writer won the Nobel Prize in literature (Lovell 2006: 1). But the fact that the works of Gao, which were mentioned in the Nobel-committee’s commendation, were all works where he more explicitly conveyed his feelings towards the Chinese nation-state and where he takes a dissident’s stance towards China, infuriated Chinese nationalists (Lovell 2006: 1-2, Gries 2004: 67). The Chinese nationalists saw it as another Western insult, and they felt that the recognition should go to a mainland Chinese (Gries 2004: 67). Even more similar to the Nobel Peace Prize of 2010, Chinese nationalists argued that the Scandinavians were using Gao to bash China on human rights issues (Gries 2004: 67).¹⁵

The lack of Chinese Nobel Prize winners has angered the Chinese, and the desire for Western recognition of Chinese face claims is important for the Chinese government and the Chinese nationalists. According to Gries, inaction can be just as offensive as action (2004: 67). In

¹⁵ The difference between the Nobel Peace Prize and the Nobel Prizes in Literature, Physics, Economics etc. is that the former is awarded in Norway by the Norwegian Nobel Committee, and the latter Nobel Prizes are awarded by different Swedish institutions like for example the Royal Swedish Academy.

2012 the wait was over, the Chinese writer Mo Yan won the Nobel Prize in literature. The Prize, unlike former Chinese (dissident) Prize winners, was embraced by the CCP. As the New York Times writes;

China erupted into something close to a national celebration. The state-run CCTV interrupted its prime-time broadcast to announce the news; the nationalistic Global Times tabloid posted a “special coverage” page on its Web site; and in a glowing account, the state-run People’s Daily prominently wrote that the prize was “a comfort, a certification and also an affirmation — but even more so, it is a new starting point (2012).

Mo Yan was the first mainland Chinese to receive a Nobel Prize, and it marked a shift in the Nobel Prize history as the first award given to a writer embraced by a communist government (New York Times 2012). Mo Yan has been controversial both before and after he received the Nobel Prize in literature, and has been characterized by several authors and literature critics as ‘too friendly’ with the CCP. According to the Guardian, both Salman Rushdie and fellow Nobel laureate Herta Müller have criticized Mo Yan openly. After Mo Yan’s refusal to sign a petition calling for the release of the imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo, Salman Rushdie referred to Mo Yan as a “patsy of the regime”, and Müller characterized his win of the Nobel Prize in literature as “a slap in the face for all those working for democracy and human rights” (The Guardian 2013). It seems like even though his work is full of criticism of party officials, when asked directly by der Spiegel:

In your books, you harshly criticize party officials, but your political statements, like the one you just made, are mild. How do you explain this contradiction? Mo: There is no contradiction with my political opinion when I harshly criticize party officials in my books. I have emphasized repeatedly that I am writing on behalf of the people, not the party. I detest corrupt officials (2013).

According to the New York Times, “The award will probably act as a huge boost to China’s national psyche, which has long suffered from a sense that its cultural accomplishments, at least in the eyes of the West, are overshadowed by its economic prowess” (New York Times 2012). As Gries has argued, the Chinese nationalists have been outraged by the lack of acknowledgement from the Western world. This Prize was therefore embraced and praised by the CCP. This commendation from the CCP stood in stark contrast to the feelings conveyed less than two years before when the Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo won the Nobel Peace Prize. The difference between the two winners could not have been more obvious, even though they are both from China. The difference in reactions towards the two prize winners also weakens China’s previous criticism of the Nobel Prize, and also China’s efforts to create a Confucius Peace Prize, which award ceremony was held the day before the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 (The Guardian 2010).

Case

In this chapter the main case of this thesis will be explored. The reaction from the Chinese government will be presented, in addition to the effects this had on the Sino-Norwegian relationship. This will shed light on the research question presented in the introduction; *was the reaction from China regarding the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 a result of top-down nationalism?*

The Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 and China's reaction

The reaction from the Chinese Communist Party (the CCP) did present itself shortly after the Nobel Committee presented its award winner on the 8th of October 2010. According to the Norwegian newspaper Verdens Gang, a Chinese official had stated only a week before the announcement that giving the award to Liu Xiaobo would be very inappropriate. Liu Xiaobo¹⁶ is a Chinese dissident who is convicted and imprisoned for subverting the Chinese state (China Daily 2010a). He participated in the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in 1989, and has voiced his criticism to the CCP on a number of occasions and he has worked towards a democratization of China (VG 2010a). This can imply that the Nobel Peace Prize threatened the CCP-legitimacy, as it questioned the rule of law in China.

According to Verdens Gang, the Chinese warned the Nobel committee that the consequences of giving the Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo, would be severe (VG 2010a). And the Chinese did react. The reaction included a boycott of Norwegian salmon, cancelling trips for Chinese tourists to Norway and that the dialog for a new free trade agreement was put on hold. The Norwegian government tried to express that the Nobel committee was an independent committee with no official ties to the Norwegian government and the cabinet, but this was hard for the Chinese to understand, as the leader of the Nobel committee was the former Prime Minister of Norway. As the China Daily writes after the winner was announced,

The Nobel Committee has always claimed independence from the Norwegian government and parliament, and that no one can intervene in its decision-making, but the current chairman is Thorbjorn Jagland, a former Norwegian foreign minister and prime minister and now secretary-general of the Council of Europe...Which explains why the choice of Peace Laureates during and after the Cold War has usually been in tune with US global strategy (China Daily 2010a).

According to the NRK, most of the Chinese newspapers did not mention the peace prize (2011a), and CCN reported that the CCP censored all news (both in print and television) mentioning the Nobel Peace Prize or Liu Xiaobo (2010). China Daily (which is written in

¹⁶ Liu Xiaobo is the first person to receive a Nobel Prize of any kind while residing in China.

English) had some coverage of the prize. It had headlines such as “‘Most Nations’ oppose peace prize to Liu” and “Award goes against Peace” (2010a and 2010b). China Daily also quoted a public official stating, that “I deem it reasonable and understandable for some [Chinese] departments to cast doubt on normal bilateral exchange and cooperation with Norway” (2010c). After the winner was announced in October, the Chinese government lobbied other nations to boycott the award ceremony in December. “The Chinese diplomatic mission in Oslo wrote to every diplomatic mission in Norway urging them not to “do anything against Chinese interests, and Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai publicly warned that countries attending the ceremony would “have to bear the consequences” (Reilly 2012: 128). This was also highlighted by the China Daily, which wrote that “most nations do not support the Nobel Committee’s “wrong decision”. Any move by the committee will not change the fact that Liu committed crimes... More than 100 nations and international organizations have expressed their support for China’s stance” (2010b). The pressure from Beijing did work to some extent, several countries did not attend the ceremony¹⁷ and some countries may have toned down the significance of the Peace Prize (Reilly 2012: 128). According to Reilly, 68 % of the countries, who were invited, attended the ceremony, this compared to the ceremony in 2009, where all countries sent representatives (2012: 128). In addition, the British Prime Minister David Cameron declined to issue a statement regarding the Peace Prize. Two days later he travelled to Beijing where he oversaw the signing of bilateral trade deals worth approximately \$2.7 billion (Reilly 2012: 128). Below a description of the development of the Sino-Norwegian relationship will follow, in addition to an exploration of the reactions from China since 2010.

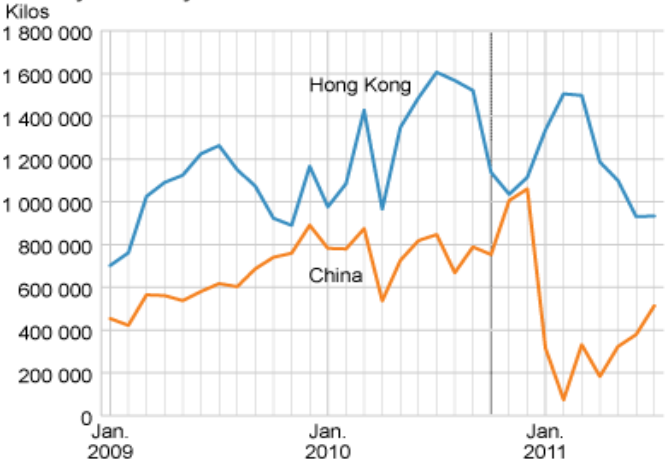
First and foremost it was the economic relationship between Norway and China that was affected by the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. Even though trading between the two countries is developing positively, the result of the Peace Prize was that it became harder for Norwegian companies to do well in China. According to Statistics Norway there was no Nobel effect on the total amount of bilateral trade and both imports and exports have increased from January to July 2011. But “the influence of already established long-term contracts is however unknown, and no finite conclusions about the real effect can be drawn before a considerably longer time period has passed” (SSB 2011). However, according to the official Norwegian site in China, the development in 2012 was not exclusively positive. In the first 6 months of

¹⁷ Examples were Russia, Colombia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the Philippines and Vietnam,(The New York Times 2010)

2012, the bilateral trade between Norway and China decreased with 0.85 % compared to the same period in 2011. Norwegian export in the same period shows a decrease of 17.7 % compared to 2011 (Norway – the official site in China 2012). One may contribute this decrease in Norwegian export as a side-effect of the Nobel Peace Prize, but as Statistics Norway has argued, one may not know for sure that this is the cause (SSB 2011).

Norwegian salmon was subjected to different sanctions by the Chinese government after the award. Primarily Norwegian salmon was subjected to tougher scrutiny and stricter control including being held back in customs because of new veterinary regulations, as a consequence the market share of Norwegian salmon went down after the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Liu Xiaobo. This affected Norwegian salmon exports to China immensely. The numbers from Statistics Norway clearly show a rapid decrease in salmon exports to China between December of 2010 and February 2011. The graph below shows the change in Norwegian salmon exports from January 2009 to July 2011, which describes a fall of nearly 90 %! The orange line clearly shows that around December 2010, Norwegian salmon export to China drops significantly, and continues to drop to below 200 000 kilos in January 2011. According to the CEO of a large Norwegian salmon company who the author has interviewed, the reaction from China came over night, and there was no explanation for the new regulations.

Figure 5. Export of whole salmon (HS 03021201) to China.
January 2009-July 2011. Kilos



*Graph showing export of Norwegian salmon to China and Hong Kong (SSB 2011)

One thing to note is that the graph for Hong Kong increases in the same time period, this may imply that some of the salmon may have been rerouted through Hong Kong as solution to the new veterinary directions regarding Norwegian salmon. This is supported by the CEO interviewed, as they [the company] solved the problem of the new veterinary guidelines by rerouting their salmon through Vietnam, and then selling it to China. This was managed by

the company's Chinese business partners in Shanghai, and by exporting the salmon to Vietnam first and then shipping it to China they could avoid the tougher inspections from the Chinese government. But it is worth noting that the increase in salmon exports to Hong Kong only increases with approximately 500 000 kilos between December 2010 and February 2011, but the drop in exports to China is about 800 000 kilos (from a little over 1 000 000 kilos to below 200 000 in February 2011). The Norwegian salmon lost some of its market share to other countries, but some of the loss has been replaced by fish from Norwegian companies with farms in other countries, such as Scotland. "Nevertheless, it is evident that the fish farming industry has been hit hard, and is still dealing with the after effects. Many people will probably claim that this is a direct consequence of the Nobel Prize" (SSB 2011).

Another effect was the new veterinary guidelines and prolonged time in quarantine, which lead to increased difficulties in distributing the salmon in to the Chinese market. It could possibly lead to that the salmon no longer was fresh when it went out to the Chinese market (NRK 2011c). This is supported by the CEO of the Norwegian company Lerøy Seafood. According to NRK he stated that 2011 has been difficult for the company, as they have spent several years developing their business in China. Now they have to look to other markets to avoid losses (NRK 2011c). The CEO interviewed for this thesis also stated that at the annual China Fisheries and Seafood Expo in 2011, government officials came in and removed all of the Norwegian salmon from the stands (no other fish from Norwegian companies were removed), but in 2012 everything was back to normal. The Norwegian companies which got their salmon removed from their stands got no explanation for why the fish was removed. This may imply that the Chinese government wanted to remove what was deemed 'most important' to Norway, as it can be argued that Norwegian salmon is a product that has been the focus point of marketing in Asia. Other incidents regarding what one may call 'cultural symbols' is for example when the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra had to cancel their concert tour in China, as they never received the official invitation they needed from the Chinese government, and when Kjell Magne Bondevik (former Prime Minister of Norway) was denied visa, as the only one of the 30 persons attending the World Council of Churches convention in Nanjing (BT 2012, Aftenposten 2012b).

Another sanction, which was reported by the Norwegian media, was that some provinces in China recommended Chinese tourists *not* to travel to Norway. Norway as a destination should not be promoted and Chinese travel agencies have also been instructed not to sell any trips to Norway. Two charter flights planned for landing at Evenes was cancelled (NRK 2012). In

addition to the advice and restrictions on travels to Norway, ‘Hurtigrutens’ add campaigns in China were banned. The two charter flights that were destined to land on Evenes Airport in the autumn of 2012, were supposed to be filled with 500 tourists who were boarding Hurtigruten.

The aggregated effect on Chinese tourism to Norway was small. Numbers from Innovation Norway shows a decline in Chinese tourist travelling to Oslo (measured in the number of overnight stays at hotels etc.) in 2011, with an approximately decrease of 38 % (Oslo By 2013). For Norway in general, the total number of overnight stays was unchanged from 2010 to 2011 (Innovasjon Norge 2013). It may seem like the overall number of overnight stays in Norway was not affected by the sanctions. Innovation Norway confirms that there has been an increase in the overall numbers of Chinese overnight stays in the time-period 2009 to 2012, with a percentage growth of 81 % (from 51 729 to 93 530 overnight stays). In addition, the restrictions on selling and promoting trips to Norway are no longer in effect.¹⁸ This may imply that the restrictions first presented were a mere scare-tactic from the Chinese government, trying to ‘bully’ the Norwegian government into apologizing for the ‘wrongful’ decision from the Nobel committee. This is a typical tactic from the Chinese government, as they threaten to use sanctions on areas (such as salmon or Chinese tourism to Norway) which are at low costs for them (Reilly 2012). This will also be further explored in the comparative case studies below. But as with the sanctions against salmon exports, one may not know what the development would have been without the restrictions on Chinese tourism to Norway.

Another effect of the Nobel Peace Prize was that the ongoing negotiations for a free trade agreement between Norway and China was immediately suspended (NRK 2011b). Norway was very close to signing an agreement with China, lowering the custom duties for Norwegian export to China. This would have been a great accomplishment, and would have had a great impact on Norwegian bilateral trade with China. When NRK asked about the development of these negotiations in 2011, they received a reply from the Ministry of Trade and Industry that so little was happening that there was no point in commenting it (2011b). The Ministry of Trade and Industry confirms that there are no negotiations regarding a free trade agreement at the present time.¹⁹

But when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Liu Xiaobo, it did not seem to worry the minister of Trade and Industry. According to Trond Giske, who stated on the 18th of October

¹⁸ E-mail correspondence with Innovation Norway, 2nd of May 2013

¹⁹ E-mail correspondence with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, 25th of March 2013.

2010 that he was not worried about the Nobel Peace Prize affecting the free trade negotiations between Norway and China. He also stated that the agreement was too important for both Norway and China to let it be affected by the Nobel Prize. Giske was hopeful and stated that there was an optimistic tone between the two countries in negotiations, and that it was in both countries' interests to come to an agreement (VG 2010b). This implies that Giske believes that Norwegian exports to China are very important for the Chinese as well, and thus they will not risk it by using trade-sanctions against Norway. But as the last two and a half years have shown, the Chinese has not let the free trade negotiation stop them from issuing sanctions against Norway.²⁰ Even though Trond Giske was positive immediately after the winner was announced, despite the fact that the Chinese already had raised their voices in dissatisfactions, he later stated that the award had severed all talks on the political level. In addition Giske commented that

At the political level, there is no contact what so ever. There is no movement in the negotiations regarding a free trade agreement with China, where we hoped to be the first European country that they had such an agreement with. But through the power of the economic progress in China, we have still had an increase in bilateral trade, despite that there has been no contact on the political level. At the same time, we do not know what opportunities that have been lost due to the Nobel Peace Prize (Trond Giske quoted in Aftenposten 2012a, translation mine).

This statement may imply that Trond Giske believes that the Nobel controversy has been costly for Norwegian trade, and that bilateral trade with China would have increased even more, if it had not been for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Norwegian Foreign minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, stated the following to Aftenposten;

The current reality is that there is little political contact. This suggests that we, on the Norwegian side, have less access, and that our influence is minimal. Generally, there is an increase in the bilateral trade in 2011 as well, but the current situation limits our ability to be present for Norwegian business and companies in China. That is the reality (Aftenposten 2011, translation mine).

In an open letter to the Chinese government, published in the Norwegian newspaper Dagens Næringsliv, Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, argued for appeasement between the two countries. According to Støre, the Chinese have claimed that the prize was an intrusion with their principle of non-interference with internal issues and that the prize was a political attempt to contribute to regime-change in China. If the Chinese viewed the prize as an attempt to contribute to regime change in China, this implies that the prize itself was a threat to regime legitimacy. In addition, as presented above, Liu has been convicted of actions which

²⁰ Trond Giske was not present at the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony in 2010 (Aftenposten 2012a).

subvert the state, thus giving the Peace Prize to him not only implies a threat to regime legitimacy but also questions the rule of law and the Chinese judicial system.

Jonas Gahr Støre continues to emphasize the Nobel committee's independence from the Norwegian government, and that their statements must not be interpreted as Norwegian foreign policy (2011: 3). He continues to stress that the Nobel Committee is an independent committee, which the Norwegian government has no control over (Støre 2011: 3).²¹ The reply from the Chinese government came faster than anticipated, after three days a reply from the Chinese government was published in *Dagens Næringsliv*, which stated that

China attaches great importance to the relations between China and Norway, and has made great efforts to develop the relations. The current Sino-Norwegian relations is in difficulty because the Norwegian Nobel Committee granted last year's Nobel Peace Prize to a Chinese criminal serving jail term in China, and the Norwegian Government supported this wrong decision. This constitutes contempt for China's judiciary independence and interference in China's internal affairs, thus causing great damages to the bilateral relations. We expect that the Norwegian side will make tangible efforts to restore and develop the bilateral relations (*Dagens Næringsliv* 2011).

The statement shows that it is the decision from the Norwegian government not to publicly dismiss the award that has angered the Chinese, in addition to the award itself. It seems like it will be difficult to mend the relationship without a public statement with an apology, as it seems like they still believe that the Nobel Peace Prize was an official declaration from the Norwegian government, and that giving the prize to Liu Xiaobo was an official foreign policy move by the Norwegian government. It can be argued that the Chinese (The CCP) feels that at least the Norwegian government should have made it clear that they do not endorse the decision by the Nobel Committee. It is important to note that the reaction described above, is the reaction from the Chinese Communist Party and the ruling elite in China.

In November of 2012, the first meeting on a higher political level was achieved between the Norwegian Prime Minister and the Premier of the People's Republic of China, Wen Jiabao. This was the first meeting at such a high political level, since the Nobel Peace Prize was given to Liu Xiaobo in 2010. The meeting took place at the Asian-European Meeting (ASEM) in Vientiane, Laos, in November 2012. Jens Stoltenberg was cautious of being too positive after the meeting, stating that he did not want to speculate in what the meeting [ASEM] had to say for the future relationship, but that it was a significant action that Norway was invited to such

²¹ For the complete letter, see *Dagens Næringsliv* (2011, 11th of October); «Norge-Kina – En kronikk», p. 3 or *Regjeringen* (2011).

an important meeting [ASEM]²² (E24 2012). Also in January 2013, it seemed like the two countries were trying to mend fences. Many observers had argued that it was a possibility that Norway would use their place in the Arctic-council as leverage against China in the ongoing conflict when China applied to become an observer. One such author was Fareed Zakaria (2012). According to Zakaria, China had overstepped when they tried to force Norway to “do its bidding”, and would now have to secure Norway’s vote to gain access to the Arctic Council. Zakaria thus argues that China’s ‘bullying’ has its limits (Zakaria 2012). But Norway chose not to use the ongoing dispute as leverage in this issue, and the Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide brushed these allegations aside²³ at the signing of the Arctic Council Host Country agreement in Tromsø (The Barents Observer 2013).

At the present time there is still very little contact between the two governments, even though the development in the last couple of months has implied that the relationship has thawed a bit. The Ministry of Trade and Industry states that there is no political contact between Norway and China, and that the negotiation for a free trade agreement still is not resumed. This means that two and a half years after the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Liu Xiaobo, there is still very little contact between the two governments.²⁴ According to the former Chinese ambassador to Sweden, “Oslo is attempting to create a favorable atmosphere to improve ties...But it does not mean that Oslo has corrected its mistake. Whether bilateral ties improve depends on how Oslo deals with its wrong decision in Liu's case” (China Daily 2013).

²² As cited by E24: “Jeg vil ikke spekulere på hva dette har å si for framtiden, men det har en verdi i seg selv at vi er invitert inn i en så viktig møteplass” (2012)

²³ On the 27th of May 2013, Espen Barth Eide stated to Dagbladet that Norway would never apologize for the Nobel Peace Prize, and that Norway had chosen not to use its place in the Arctic Council as leverage in the dispute, but that did not imply that Norway was apologetic for the Nobel Committee’s choice (Dagbladet 2013).

²⁴ E-mail correspondence with the Ministry of Trade and Industry on the 25th of March 2013.

Comparative cases

The comparative cases presented below are used to analyze and to contextualize China's reaction towards threats of territorial sovereignty and threats to regime legitimacy. The cases are also used to explore the development of Chinese nationalism, and as examples of both top-down and bottom-up nationalism, this to explore this thesis's two hypotheses, the main hypothesis being: *the reaction from China regarding the Nobel Peace Prize is a case of top-down nationalism and the reaction to the Peace Prize was a result of the challenge it presented to the legitimacy of the CCP-rule in China.* The competing hypothesis being: *The reaction from China was a case of bottom-up nationalism.*

The Beijing-Shanghai Railway – ‘the Bullet Train incident’

One well known example of bottom up Chinese nationalism is the incident regarding the ‘Bullet train’. When the Chinese Government (The Ministry of Railways) started planning to use a technology developed by a Japanese company for their bullet train, controversy broke out. China had long debated which technology would be best suited for a high-speed railway (He 2007: 19). The contenders were the Japanese ‘shinkansen’, the German ‘maglev’ and the French ‘TGV’ (He 2007: 19). In 2003 it seemed like the government was leaning towards choosing the Japanese ‘shinkansen’ (He 2007: 19). When the ‘shinkansen’ appeared to be the leading contender in the bid for this \$15 billion project, this spiked major controversy. Within ten days from when the Hong Kong media reported that Japan might win the project, more than 80,000 Chinese netizens had signed an online petition opposing the choice of the ‘shinkansen’, because of Japan's failure to come to terms with its past (He 2007). “The negotiations between Beijing and Tokyo are fraught in any case, because of Japan's invasion of the mainland in the 1930s, making China wary about public reaction to the choice of the shinkansen” (Financial Times 2003). The Chinese people still had not forgotten the war atrocities which Japan was accountable for during WWII.

A website devoted to chronicling Japanese wrongs against China, hosted by the China Patriotic Foundation, said yesterday it had gathered a petition with 82,752 signatures opposing the choice of the shinkansen. Lu Yunfei, an official of the association, said that Mitsubishi, the Japanese conglomerate whose companies are involved with the shinkansen, ‘is the main sponsor of Japan's rightwing groups’. ‘We should not subcontract this project to the Japanese,’ said Mr. Lu (Financial Times 2003).

Public pressure compelled the Chinese government to reconsider the political consequences of its decision (He 2007: 19-20). This incident shows that public opinion, and nationalist sentiments do matter for the Chinese government, and that the people both support but also challenges the regime and its legitimacy. As presented in the literature review, one of the

three dimensions in regime legitimacy entails legitimacy through expressed consent, and it is the actions by the people that contribute to legitimacy. In this case, one may argue that regime legitimacy and party-rule was somewhat threatened as the people clearly expressed their dissatisfaction with the government's decision making process.

According to Yinan He, "Beijing made it clear that, besides the technical and financial aspects, the political factor was also important in decision-making. 'Politics is not an absolute factor, but it definitely cannot be excluded', said a high-ranking Chinese official participating in the project" (2007: 20). The Chinese government is balancing listening to public opinion and making decisions about foreign policy regarding Japan. According to the Taipei Times, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei expressed to a visiting Japanese Diet delegation that Beijing found it difficult to use the Japanese technology in the construction of the new high speed railway, because of the worsening bilateral relationship (Chen 2004). Wu stated that "we are facing high anti-Japan sentiment in China. If our government adopts the shinkansen technique in the railway project, the people would have [negative] opinions" (Chen 2004). As well, when Japanese Transport Minister Ogi travelled to China to meet with Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, she received a cold shoulder, and did not get the chance to meet with the Prime Minister or any other senior officials from the Railways Ministry (He 2007: 20, Financial Times 2003).

This counts as evidence that public opinion matter for the Chinese government, and that they take public opinion seriously. According to He, "the thriving economic cooperation between the two countries will be jeopardized if Chinese popular nationalism continues to simmer" (2007: 19). But the reaction from the public regarding the 'Bullet train' was also affected by other incidents, which caused anti-Japanese sentiments and an increase in anti-Japanese protests.²⁵ It culminated with the online petition, where the netizens demanded that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs take a tougher stand towards Japan (Gries 2005: 831). The petition forced the Ministry of Railways to broaden the bidding and include several other alternatives for the technology, including French and German companies. In 2004 the bidding was awarded to two German companies, a French company and a Japanese company, which would contribute with advanced technology but the core technology would be produced by Chinese companies. The bidding included the production of 200 bullet trains (Xinhua 2010)²⁶.

²⁵ This includes the discovering of a WWII bomb which harmed a Chinese construction worker and the alleged orgy of Chinese prostitutes and Japanese business men in China (Gries 2005).

²⁶ This article is originally in Chinese and 'Google Translate' has been used to translate the article to get the information needed.

The Bullet Train incident is a case of growing popular nationalism, and according to He it is an example of how the Chinese public's emotions about the war history can interfere with the government's economic diplomacy regarding Japan (He 2007: 19). He goes as far as arguing that the netizens censor the CCP, and that they will call treason if the CCP takes a soft line towards Japan. One example of this was the launch of "a new thinking on Japan" in 2002, where two scholars (Ma Licheng and Shi Yinhong) spoke out against the growing anti-Japanese sentiments. They were both attacked by angry netizens who called them 'traitors' (He 2007: 22).

A second argument presented by the opponents of using Japanese shinkansen technology for the high-speed railway between Beijing and Shanghai was that if the project was granted to such a large industrial conglomerate as Mitsubishi, who were also big players in the Japanese defense industry, it would greatly boost Japanese military power and eventually threaten Chinese national security (He 2007: 19). This is an example of a classic realist relative gains argument. According to this argument, one state will cease cooperating with another state, if the relative gains of the other exceed that of its own (Grieco 1988: 487). This argument implies that the relative gains states achieve today can be used in tomorrow's war, and thus today's friend can be tomorrow's enemy. This suggests that states have to pay attention, when cooperating with other states, to the gains achieved of partners (Grieco 1988: 487). Beijing may therefore have feared that the relative gains of Japan and the Japanese defense industry would be greater than the relative gains of the 'bullet train' project, and thus it would not be in China's interest to use Japanese technology. This argument is also connected to the fear of Japanese re-militarization. The balance of power between the two countries is ambiguous, and

Thus, popular nationalism has become a double-edged sword for Beijing: while the rising nationalist sentiment may to some extent facilitate social mobilization and solidify popular allegiance to the state, anti-foreign nationalism can undermine Beijing's diplomacy to Western countries aimed at securing a stable inflow of foreign investment and technology as well as cultivating China's image as a peaceful and responsible player in the international community (He 2007: 22).

These examples imply that Beijing and the CCP need to balance anti-foreign nationalist sentiments with their wish to reassure and be a part of the international community. The historical myths created by the CCP in the 1980s are now contributing to a growing anti-foreign nationalism which affects the CCP's decision-making process.

Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands Dispute – the flare ups of 2010 and 2012

Another issue that have caused anti-Japanese demonstrations, sparked nationalist sentiments and even the boycott of Japanese merchandise, is the ongoing dispute over the islands called

Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese.²⁷ There have been several incidents regarding the islands going back more than a decade²⁸, sparking the tension between the two countries.

In September of 2010 the dispute escalated again, when the Japanese detained a Chinese fishing boat captain and held him in custody for more than two weeks. The background for the detention was that a Chinese boat had travelled into the disputed region, and when the Japanese coast guard had confronted it, the captain had rammed the boat into the Japanese coast guard vessels (Reilly 2012: 129). This led to that the Chinese government chose to use economic sanctions to try and coerce Japan to fold in the dispute and let the captain go. The result was that Beijing blocked shipments of rare earth minerals to Japan (Glaser 2012). “Beijing’s action alarmed Tokyo and was a major factor in the decision of the Japanese government to release the captain” (Glaser 2012). James Reilly notes that “as China’s frustration over the captain’s ongoing detention rose, on September 21 Japanese companies reported to Tokyo that Chinese customs officials had blocked all shipments of Rare Earth Elements (REE) to Japan” (2012: 129). The sanctions led to that the captain was released from detention three days later, but the blockade of rare earth elements did not cease. The blockade lasted around two months, and it was not until November 20th that the Japanese government announced that the shipment of rare earth minerals had resumed (Reilly 2012: 129). Even though it was not stated that the Chinese used the blockade as an instrument for bargaining with Japan, Reilly argues that it seems “likely that central authorities informally instructed local customs officials to delay REE exports to Japan until the dispute was resolved” (2012: 129). The Philippines, France and Norway were also subjected to economic sanctions.

In addition to the economic sanctions, mass-demonstrations broke out on mainland China. The government did not stop the demonstrations immediately, as they did in the 1990s. The Christian Science Monitor stated that tensions flared up again between the 15 and the 17th of October 2010, “with massive nationalistic protests in both countries erupting Saturday and carrying into Monday. Anti-Japanese demonstrators in China appear to be supported by the government, potentially signaling a new decision in Beijing to allow groups to exploit the island tiff” (The Christian Science Monitor 2010). This may be interpreted as a shift in the former stance of the government *not* to allow anti-Japanese demonstrations, as argued by

²⁷ For a map over the disputed areas, see appendix (map 1).

²⁸ For a more in-depth account of the dispute in 1990 and 1996, see Downs and Saunders’ article “Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands” (1999).

Downs and Saunders (1999) as the CCP, only a month before, did not seem too keen to allow such demonstrations (The Christian Science Monitor 2010).

The latest flare up of the dispute started in April of 2012 when nationalist Tokyo governor, Shintaro Ishihara, offered to buy the islands, with the intentions of developing them (BBC 2012a). This would definitely change the status quo of the dispute, as this affects international law on the area. This forced the Japanese government to buy the islands themselves, to prevent any development on the islands, which would have angered the Chinese immensely and changed the current situation (BBC 2012a). The decision of the Japanese government to buy the islands from a private business man contributed to an escalation of the dispute in September 2012 (BBC 2012a). On the 14th of September, China sent six surveillance ships to Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and by that raising the tension between the two countries to its highest level since 2010 (Reuters 2012). The flare up of 2012 is different from previous breakouts of the dispute because it was not instigated by activist boarding the islands, or by something that happened near the islands (as in 2010 and in previous flare ups), which in many ways can be seen as out of both governments' control.

The conflict also had economic ramifications in 2012. But instead of the government issuing economic sanction, this time the Chinese public was quick to boycott Japanese merchandise and Japanese companies, causing sales to plunge. For example the sales of German cars increased, while the sale of Japanese cars decreased (China Daily 2012). According to a survey presented by the Japan Times, two-thirds of Chinese boycotted Japanese products, in addition the survey also conveyed that "almost all Chinese feel anti-Japan sentiment has intensified in the world's second-largest economy since the government purchased three of the Senkaku islets in September" (The Japan Times 2013). In addition, "more than 65 percent of both the Japanese and Chinese respondents said they have not felt like visiting the other country since Japan in mid-September effectively nationalized the Senkaku islet chain claimed by Beijing in the East China Sea, according to the survey" (The Japan Times 2013). The mass-boycott of Japanese goods was a new factor, and it showed the deep anti-Japanese sentiments which were present in the Chinese public. This can be connected to the elite myth-making process as argued by He (2007). This is a different response from the reaction regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute in 2010, and the reaction Norway and the Philippines received, which were more sanctions from the government itself, and not from the public.

In addition to the economic boycott, mass-demonstrations broke out again in 2012. Through the weekend of the 14th to the 16th of September 2012 these demonstrations became rather

violent. Thousands of Chinese attacked the Japanese embassy in Beijing, hurling rocks, eggs and bottles, and protests also broke out in other Chinese cities because of the dispute over the islands. In addition Japanese media reported that Japanese establishments in China were being attacked, such as restaurants and other businesses (Reuters 2012). The anti-Japanese sentiments that presented themselves during the weekend demanded that the “Japanese devils” should get out and that “For the respect of the motherland, we must go to war with Japan” (Reuters 2012). Previously some demonstrations had been allowed, but they ended before they became too violent as in this weekend in September. One major exception was the protests regarding the Belgrade-bombing in 1999, which was rather violent. Especially in the flare ups in the 90s, demonstrations were shut down before they evolved into mass-demonstrations. One factor that may have affected this was the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989, which was still close in the government’s memory in the 90s, and that they did not want another protest that could turn anti-government and anti-communist on their hands. The attack on the Japanese embassy in Beijing in 2012 resembles the demonstrations regarding the Belgrade bombing in 1999, where the American consulate in Chengdu was attacked (Gries 2004: 14). In addition to the demonstrations regarding the Belgrade bombing in 1999, there were anti-Japanese demonstrations in 2004, regarding a football match between Japan and China which spiked nationalist feelings among the Chinese spectators (The New York Times 2004)²⁹, but both the demonstrations in 2004 and demonstrations regarding the island-dispute in 2010 did not turn violent. In 2010 the demonstrations were instigated by student-activists groups and supported by the CCP (the Christian Science Monitor 2010), and in the case of 2004 the spectators at the football match did express their anger towards Japan, but not in a violent way (The New York Times 2004). This may imply that the CCP is opening up for more nationalistic venting in the 2000s and that the CCP is trying to find a balance between allowing anti-Japanese demonstrations to flourish, and controlling that demonstrations does not turn and become anti-government or anti-party. Downs and Saunders (1999) concluded that nationalism lost to economic legitimization in the 1990s, but as this exploration shows this might have changed in the 2000s.

Both escalations of the dispute regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands can be viewed as an infringement on what China’s regards as their sovereign territory. Thus the reaction from the CCP can be interpreted as a reaction to the threat this represented towards the legitimacy of

²⁹ For further exploration of this incident see “In Soccer Loss, a Glimpse of China’s Rising Ire at Japan”, *The New York Times* (August 9th 2004).

party-rule. Supporting the demonstrations is an indicator of this, as this show that the CCP relies on not losing face in front of its own people, thus by both supporting some public demonstrations and using economic sanctions can be seen as an answer to the threat this dispute presented both regime legitimacy and territorial sovereignty.

France, the Dalai Lama and the Carrefour boycott

A third case, which involves both bottom-up nationalism and sanctions from the Chinese government are the cases regarding the Carrefour boycott of 2008 and the visit of the Dalai Lama to France in 2009. The controversy started when a pro-Tibet protester attacked a Chinese Paralympics athlete in a wheelchair carrying the Olympic torch through the streets of Paris (USA Today 2008). This led to a spark in nationalistic protest against the French retailer Carrefour, blaming the store chain for supporting the Tibet-movement (US Today 2008). In addition to the attack on the Chinese Paralympics athlete, the French cosmetic brand L’Oreal was blamed for supporting a Dalai Lama tour in Australia (France24 2008)³⁰. Adding to the upheaval caused by the attack on Jin Jing, the declaring of Dalai Lama as an honorary citizen by the Paris City Council caused even more controversy (The New York Times 2008). A campaign to boycott French firms in China gathered support, with thousands of text messages sent out to encourage Chinese citizens not to shop at the French supermarket chain Carrefour. Other companies which were targeted included the luxury goods firm LVMH, and as mentioned earlier the cosmetics company L’Oréal (France24 2008). According to the BBC and their China analyst, Shirong Chen, “nationalist sentiment is running very high in the country at the moment. France is bearing the brunt, he says, after pro-Tibet protesters tried to grab the torch from Paralympic fencer Jin Jing” (2008). According to The New York Times, “The picture drawn by the disabled young woman in the wheelchair defending the torch against the protesters was a strong symbol for the Chinese defiance in the face of Western antipathy to China’s Olympic aspirations” (2008). This caused nationalists to come together and they insisted on a boycott of the French retailer Carrefour. But the boycott was not appreciated by the Chinese government.

They tried hard to dampen the anti-French zealotry. In recent days, government ministers have gone on television reminding people that the 40,000 employees at the nation’s 112 Carrefour stores are Chinese. Newspaper editorials have hinted that bygones might as well be bygones, urging citizens to heartily embrace foreign friends, about 1.5 million of whom will be arriving in Beijing in August for the Summer Games (The New York Times 2008).

³⁰ L’Oréal, has come under fire because its subsidiary, the Body Shop, promoted a tour of Australia by the Dalai Lama in 2007 (France24 2008).

This shows resemblance of the ‘course’ the Chinese government gave the Chinese public on how to be ‘good’ spectators before the Beijing Olympic, this to avoid an incident similar to what happened during a soccer-match between Japan and China in 2004 (The New York Times 2004). The government took its precautions before the 2008 Beijing Olympics by sending spectators to civilizing-courses, and teaching them how to be a good audience. “Leaving nothing to chance, officials have organized lessons in cheering, queuing and sportsmanship for home spectators, many of whom have little experience of such events” (The Philippine Daily Inquirer Online 2008).

In addition to the government’s reminders to welcome foreign friends, they also introduced censor of text messages that campaigned the boycott. “Typing the word “Carrefour” into search engines returned blank pages explaining that such results “do not conform to relevant law and policy” (The New York Times 2008). The reaction from people asked about the boycott by The New York Times were mixed, “a handful of older people said they had not heard of the boycott campaign, but others, clearly taken aback by a reporter’s questions, insisted they had only purchased a few low-cost necessities” (2008). It is clear that some of the people interviewed would not support the retailer openly.

As with the Japanese Bullet Train incident in 2003, it was again the netizens who took action. The protests happened despite both governments effort to calm down anti-French sentiments. “The French President sent a letter of apology to the Chinese athlete, saying that the attempt of grabbing the torch did not reflect the feelings of the French people” (US Today 2008). The letter of apology was also covered by the official Chinese news agency, Xinhua³¹ (2008).³² Even though the French President tried to calm down the anti-French sentiments growing in China, President Sarkozy refused to rule out a boycott of the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics (France24 2008). This caused even more tension between the two countries and added intensity to already angered Chinese netizens. Many Chinese people were already skeptic to the West, after the Olympic torch had been followed around Europe with anti-Chinese protests.

The nationalist boycott did affect Carrefour, and the official state news agency, Xinhua, quoted Carrefour media manager Chen Bo saying. “We estimate that sales over the May Day

³¹ This article is originally in Chinese and ‘Google Translate’ has been used to translate the article to get the information needed.

³² It is worth noting this, as previously the CCP has deliberately not published apologies from the American President regarding the Belgrade bombing in 1999. Chinese media was censored and instructed not to publish the apology. For further detail see Peter Hays Gries’ *China’s New Nationalism – Pride, Politics and Diplomacy* (2004: 98).

holiday will decrease 20 percent from previous years” (Reuters 2008). France24 reported that “several French newspapers carried anxious headlines on Tuesday, fearing that French economic interests in China were ‘under threat’ because of the boycott” (2008). The nationalist uproar was not supported by the Chinese government (like some of the protests which appeared in 2010 and 2012 regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute). The fact that the government suppressed these nationalist sentiments is rather interesting, comparing the government’s reaction to protest against the Japanese ‘bullet train’ technology. By suppressing the protests, the government let the public know that the Beijing Olympics was too important, and that the incident with the disabled Paralympics athlete was not important enough to risk catching the world’s attention in the wrong way right before the Beijing Olympics. The protest regarding France was more of a nationalist venting starting from the bottom, going upwards, using the internet and mobile phones to spread information. Nationalism presented in this context shows again the Chinese public’s reaction towards either government plans or events happening in the West – like pro-Tibet protests. The reaction was not from the government but from the Chinese people themselves, and again it started with internet activists on chat rooms and discussion forums. The increased use of internet activism also suggests that the CCP no longer has as much control over the information inflow in addition to how fast information can spread. One post on an internet forum can reach a huge amount of people, and therefore planning demonstrations is much easier now, compared to the 90s.

In addition to the controversy in 2008 which led to demonstrations, France also experienced reactions from the government regarding an official visit from the Dalai Lama in 2009. It was announced that President Sarkozy would receive the Dalai Lama in an official meeting. This caused the Chinese to react, and threats were presented. “Economic and diplomatic relations between China and France began deteriorating...after President Nicholas Sarkozy met the Dalai Lama in spite of threats from Chinese authorities should they do so” (The Mail & Guardian Online 2011). After the meeting was held between the French President and the Dalai Lama, two Chinese Trade delegations cancelled their trips to France, an order of 150 Airbus planes was put on hold and the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao left France out of his travel itinerary during his European tour (The Mail & Guardian Online 2011, Reilly 2012: 126). When Jiabao was asked to comment on his itinerary, he was quoted saying: “I looked at a map of Europe on the plane. My trip goes around France. We all know why” (The Mail & Guardian Online 2011, China Daily 2009b). After the meeting between the French President

and the Dalai Lama was held, the deputy Foreign Minister He Yafei stated that the meeting had “severely undermined China’s core interest, gravely hurt the feelings of the Chinese people and sabotaged the political basis of China-France and China-EU relations” (China Daily 2009a). The words of He Yafei is a typical official reaction from the Chinese government, as one may note it clearly puts the emphasis on the Chinese people’s feelings. This implies that the CCP feel that receiving the Dalai Lama undermines the legitimacy of their regime, as he represents Tibet – a disputed part of Chinese territory. Receiving the Dalai Lama thus implies a threat to what China views as their sovereign territory.

A study conducted by Andreas Fuchs and Niels-Hendrik Klann (2010) support this finding, as they discover a negative trade effect when governments receive the Dalai Lama on official visits. They present the hypothesis that countries who receive the Dalai Lama are economically punished by China through a reduction of their exports to the country (2010: 4). The result of Fuchs and Klann suggest that the ‘Dalai Lama Effect’ decreases within two years after the meeting took place. And that “as a consequence of a political leader’s reception of the Dalai Lama in the current or previous period, exports to China are found to decrease by 8.1% or 16.9%, depending on the estimation technique used” (2010: 26). As the exploration of the main case suggests, this decrease in trade can also be applicable to other cases, not just cases involving the Dalai Lama.

Philippines and Scarborough Reef

The last case involves a territorial dispute between China and the Philippines. This dispute has been characterized by economic sanctions from the Chinese government. China has many unsettled disputes with their neighbors regarding territory on the mainland and remote islands, in addition to maritime boundaries and disputes over economic exclusive zones. One of these disputes is the disagreement regarding the Scarborough Reef (called Hyangyan Island in China) with the Philippines³³. A rise in tension over the dispute began on the 8th of April 2012, when the Philippine Navy apprehended several Chinese fishermen in the area (The Wall Street Journal 2012). This angered China and later in April the official news agency Xinhua stated that “China on Monday urged a Philippine...ship to immediately leave the waters of Huangyan Island in the South China Sea, which China claims to be an integral part of its territory” (2012). The Foreign Ministry spokesman, Liu Wimin continued with “The two sides will continue to maintain communication on the issue via diplomatic channels”, and according to Xinhua News Agency, this was Liu noting that the main cause of the disputes

³³ For a map over the disputed areas, see appendix (map 2).

was the Philippines' infringement on China's sovereignty (2012). This incident led to an increase in tension between the two countries, and the Philippines were punished by the Chinese government in several ways. During the standoff, Philippine fruits were delayed in customs causing them to rot similar to the way Norwegian salmon was held back in customs and Chinese tourists were discouraged to travel to the Philippines, both which will be explored in more detail below.

The first reaction came towards the Philippine fruit industry. Even though Chinese officials claimed that the delaying of Philippine fruits in Chinese customs had nothing to do with the dispute over Scarborough Reef, it is a fact that Philippine fruits were held for a longer time than normal in customs, up until the point where they have rot (Wall Street Journal 2012). According to Chinese officials, the Philippine fruits no longer upheld the quarantine requirements presented by the Chinese government. In May 2012, Xinhua reported that China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine ordered tougher inspection and in some cases quarantine of fruit imports from the Philippines (Wall Street Journal 2012). It is China's right to enforce stricter quarantine control, but this was especially devastating for banana exports from the Philippines. The bananas exported to China represented over half of total banana exports from the Philippines and Philippine fruit exporters have incurred losses of around 1.44 billion pesos (\$33.6 million) during the dispute (The Philippine Daily Inquirer Online 2012, Wall Street Journal 2012). According to the Philippine Daily Inquirer Online, "if the Philippines lost the China banana market, it would trigger the economic downfall of the banana industry. The Scarborough shoal issue might be viewed as a political one but it could have a devastating effect on the trading relations between the country and China" (2012). It is important to note that the Chinese government has downplayed the connection between the dispute and the tougher enforcements of quarantine rules in Chinese customs (ABS-CBN News 2012). As Reilly notes, "Beijing carefully calculated its sanctions to exert domestic political pressure on the Philippine government. Agriculture makes up one-fifth of the Philippine economy and employs one-third of the population" (2012: 129). It is a low cost sanction to impose for China, but it can cause great losses for Philippine agriculture.

It was not just the fruit industry that was affected by the dispute between China and the Philippines, Philippine tourism has also been affected by the increase in tension between the two countries. "China is the fourth-largest source of tourists to the Philippines. According to the Philippines Department of Tourism, more than 96,000 Chinese visited the country in the

first three months of the year, up 78% from the year-earlier period” (Wall Street Journal 2012). Chinese tour groups have cancelled tours, and Chinese Airlines are cancelling flights to the Philippines as a result of the number of trips cancelled (Wall Street Journal 2012). The BBC notes that this was caused by a warning from governmental officials in China, discouraging people not to visit the Philippines (BBC 2012b). According to the BBC, “a staff member of the state-owned China Travel Service told them that all tours to the Philippines had been suspended indefinitely because of an order from China’s National Tourism Administrations (CNTA). This was because of “strong anti-China sentiments” appearing in the Philippines according to the CNTA” (2012b). It may seem like the Chinese government was establishing some kind of fear amongst Chinese travelling to the Philippines. According to the BBC, “an agent...at one of China’s biggest online travel agencies, said that clients were being warned against travel to the Manila “for their own safety” (2012b). In response to the reports of a planned anti-China demonstration, the Chinese government also issued a warning before a planned demonstration, for Chinese living in the Philippines. The demonstration in Manila was reported to gather around a thousand people in a protest against China and the dispute over Scarborough Shoal. The Chinese Embassy advised the Chinese to stay off the streets “and avoid conflict with locals” (BBC 2012c). The demonstration was held, peacefully, on the 11th of May outside the Chinese consular in Manila, with no more than 300 people attending. This was far less than the estimated 1000 reported beforehand (SINA English 2012). The protest in Manila was characterized by the Chinese media as a small scale protest. But the Chinese media also reported of an even smaller protest outside the Philippine Embassy in Beijing, where a small number of people had united in protest over the dispute (NetEase 2012, Phoenix 2012)³⁴. The CCP sent out an official message to the Philippines later in May 2012, urging Manila not to “further damage bilateral relations” (BBC 2012c).³⁵

The reaction from the Chinese government was very similar to the reaction that Norway received after the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, both the delaying of fruits and the warnings Chinese travelers received not to visit the Philippines. It is worth noting that the warnings regarding tourism to Norway was more limited in scope, and was not brought on by anti-China demonstrations in Norway. Even though this dispute was a catalyst for some public venting in the Philippines, it was not nearly as much public anger in China, as mentioned

³⁴ These articles are originally in Chinese and ‘Google Translate’ has been used to translate the articles to get the information needed.

³⁵ But the Philippines also threatened with boycott. A Philippine governor called for boycotts of Chinese goods (Global Nation 2012).

above (reported by the Chinese media), compared to the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute or the Japanese 'bullet train'. As with the case of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Island dispute, this case also challenges, what China holds, as their sovereign territory. It is therefore important for the CCP to show both its people but also the Philippines that they are ready to defend their territory, and thus save face in front of the Chinese people and at the same time securing regime legitimacy. The reaction from the CCP regarding the dispute over Scarborough Shoal implies that they want to be proactive in case of public demonstrations. By using economic sanctions, but not stating that they are connected to the dispute, the CCP ensure that they can be flexible, but also showing the Chinese people that they have reacted to the infringement of Chinese sovereign territory, and thus avoiding criticism from the masses and securing the legitimacy of the regime. This is similar to the way economic sanctions have been used in the other disputes as well, by reacting, the CCP can show the Chinese people (if they call for a though response) that they have responded .

Findings and conclusions

All the cases presented in this thesis explore threats to the legitimacy of the CCP-rule and threats to the territorial sovereignty of China. In this chapter I will argue that the Nobel Peace Prize represented a threat to CCP-legitimacy, which implies that the reaction from China was a case of top-down nationalism, as the CCP responded to this threat of legitimacy and losing of face towards the international community and its own people, with sanctions to punish Norway's wrong doings and deter others from behaving the same way. As a consequence of this, the Nobel Peace Prize presented a threat to the principle of the Chinese nation-state. In the following section I will identify how this was a threat to regime legitimacy, and how the reaction can be connected to nationalism, and why this was not a case of bottom-up nationalism. In addition this chapter will explore what implications this has for the research question of this thesis: *was the reaction from China regarding the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 a case of top-down nationalism?*

In the comparative case studies and the literature review I have presented the development of Chinese nationalism and how this evolution has reformed the role of the CCP and the people in Chinese nationalism. As the evidence from the empirical data suggests, we have seen some notable changes in recent years when it comes to Chinese nationalism. The opening up for more public venting in issues regarding territorial disputes with Japan shows that the public has more room to express their nationalistic feelings and that the opening up for more nationalistic venting is a consequence of the sentiments present in the people, and therefore allowing more public demonstrations is a necessity for CCP-legitimacy. In addition the use of internet forums and text messages increases the ability for the people to spread nationalistic messages to larger groups of people. In the cases presented, the CCP have reacted with different instruments and both supported and oppressed the mass-demonstrations and public emotional venting in addition to use economic and diplomatic sanctions. The cases explored represent incidents which either threatens regime legitimacy, the CCP-rule or the territorial sovereignty of China.

The findings in the empirical data material support my primary hypothesis, *the reaction from China regarding the Nobel Peace Prize is a case of top-down nationalism and the reaction to the Peace Prize was a result of the challenge it presented to the legitimacy of CCP-rule in China*. The result of the comparative case-study analysis indicates that China's reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 was a result of the threat the prize represented to the CCP-rule, as the prize questioned the rule of law in China and the Chinese judicial system. Furthermore

and as presented previously, regime legitimacy consists of three dimensions, which all have to be fulfilled to some degree, to secure legitimacy. The two first dimensions deal with the issue of rules and the justifiability of rules (Beetham 1991). As the Peace Prize was given to an imprisoned criminal, convicted of subverting the state, this indicates that the CCP legitimacy was threatened, and that the rule of law, upheld by the CCP, was endangered. This is supported by the description of China's response in the comparative cases, which are examples of China's reaction towards threats regarding territorial sovereignty and threats to party-legitimization. In the cases of the Philippines, the incidents regarding the Dalai Lama and the embargo of Rare Earth Minerals to Japan can all be viewed as top-down dynamics, which originated in the CCP, as an answer to the threat these cases represented to regime legitimacy or to the territorial sovereignty of China. As shown in the comparative case-study analysis, China reacts with economic and diplomatic sanctions when regime legitimacy and territorial sovereignty are threatened – this can imply that the CCP uses such actions to ensure that the legitimacy of the regime is maintained in addition to reflecting a strong image to others. They also ensure that if or when the Chinese people demand that the CCP takes action, the CCP have something to show for. Below a discussion of which factors that contributed to this conclusion is presented.

My competing hypothesis, that *the reaction from China was a case of bottom-up nationalism*, has found no support in the comparative case studies, as there has been no reports of public venting or mass-demonstrations regarding the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. The CCP has thus reacted to the prize itself, and not to bottom-up nationalist dynamics presented by the people. However, the results from the comparative case studies do imply that there has been more room for public nationalist venting in the 2000s, and both in the cases of France, Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the Bullet train-incident, the public has expressed their feelings. In the cases regarding Japan, some of the public venting can be contributed to the myth-making process which the CCP used in the 1980s. This has, as argued by He (2007), caused strong anti-Japanese sentiments which may interfere with government decisions. In the case of the Carrefour-protests, that appeared without support from the government (the demonstrations in 2010 and 2012 regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu flare ups had some government support, as shown in the case studies), and the CCP oppressed these demonstrations which can imply that they were afraid of trouble in front of the Beijing Olympics. In addition the relationship between China and France is of a different nature than the relationship between Japan and China, both regarding war-history, but also that France

and China may have an underlying strategic relationship as both opposed the Iraq-invasion, in addition France has tried to end the EU arms-sale embargo of weapons to China (The Diplomat 2012). The case of the Carrefour-boycott also implies that the CCP may experience problems in controlling entry of information from overseas, as this incident, which happened in Paris, caused so much controversy in China in addition to unwanted public protests.

Key findings - China's reaction to threats: regime-legitimacy and territorial sovereignty

In the empirical data material China has used several different instruments as answers to threats to regime legitimacy or threats to territorial sovereignty. In addition there has been a change in how the CCP behaves towards public protests and demonstrations. Each of the cases represents a threat to the sovereignty of the territorial boundaries of the Chinese nation-state, and threats to the three dimensions of legitimacy presented by Beetham (1991). The cases regarding Japan³⁶, Philippines and France (the Dalai Lama and the Carrefour protest³⁷) infringe on what China sees as their sovereign territory, an important principle of what has been defined as the nation by Gellner and Anderson (1983, 1983). It is important to note that there is a difference to threats to the nationalistic conception of China and concrete threats to territorial sovereignty. The two territorial disputes presented in this thesis, infringes on what China sees as its sovereign territory, and defending an infringement on one's territory is not necessarily connected to nationalism. In the cases of the Philippines and Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, the reaction from the CCP and from the people imply that the response is not just an answer to threats to territorial integrity – as the example of protests, boycott of Japanese goods and the use of economic sanctions show, but also implies an infringement of the nationalistic conception of China. It can be argued that the two disputes is a part of what Chinese nationalists view as an integral part of Chinese territory, and thus that China defends these territories is important, as it threatens the unity of China. The reaction, especially in the case of Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute regarding the response from the public, show that Chinese nationalists view strong actions towards Japan as important, which also can be seen in connection to the elite myth-making

³⁶ The Bullet train case is the only case that does not involve what one may call external factors, as the reaction came from the people (not provoked by an external incident) and was instigated by the discussion of using Japanese Bullet-train technology for the Beijing-Shanghai railway. I have included this case because it is an important example of how the Chinese people display their dissatisfaction *and* how they are heard, and how the myth-making process in the 1980s now challenges the CCP in the decision-making process. This also challenges regime legitimacy in how the people express their absence of consent, which is one of the three dimensions of legitimization presented by Beetham (1991: 18-19).

³⁷ As the Carrefour protests were a response to several external factors, both the attack on the Paralympic athlete but also the supporting of an official tour of the Dalai Lama, it can be argued that the protests were both a reaction towards losing face, but also a reaction to threats towards territorial sovereignty that the Dalai Lama represents.

process of the 1980s. In addition Chinese nationalists may see territorial sovereignty as an important part of the state's responsibility, to defend such sovereign territories. Challenges to this conception, by challenging the territorial sovereignty of China, and the reaction from China, can thus imply that these two cases are connected to nationalism. It is important to separate between threats to the nationalistic conception of China and infringement of sovereignty over territories; even though they may overlap somewhat they are not the same. China has several territorial disputes with other countries that do not gather the same reaction as the two cases presented above did.³⁸

The cases of the Dalai Lama and Liu Xiaobo implies that the CCP reacts similarly to incidents which both interferes with internal affairs (such as the rule of law) and territorial disputes, like the one Dalai Lama represents. Liu Xiaobo represents a threat to the CCP-rule as he voices the need for democratization in China, and the Dalai Lama represents a threat to the sovereign territory of China, by representing Tibet. As a consequence this shows that the CCP uses similar instruments towards governments which receive the Dalai Lama on official visits, or as in the case of Liu Xiaobo, as the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize acknowledges his effort in trying to democratize China. The Nobel Peace Prize represented a threat to regime legitimacy but also questioned the institutions which enforce order and the rule of law in China, as the Peace Prize was given to a Chinese criminal, consequently an important principle of the Chinese state was threatened – the enforcement of order. As Gilley argued, a regime can react in different ways when legitimacy is threatened (2008: 273-274), and in the cases presented the CCP has responded with both oppressing demonstrations, supported demonstrations, and used economic and diplomatic sanctions towards countries which represent these threats.

The result from the empirical data material implies that there has been an opening up for more public demonstrations and protests in the 2000s. In the cases presented, there is a mixture of reactions from both the people and the CCP, and both have instigated protests during the 2000s in several of the cases. This is supported by the demonstrations regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute (which to some extent was supported by the CCP), the boycott of Japanese merchandise regarding the same dispute in 2012 and the demonstrations and boycott of Carrefour (which were oppressed by the CCP). In addition the Bullet train case shows that information can now spread fast, and expressing nationalist feelings is easier compared to

³⁸ This includes territorial disputes, maritime boundaries and exclusive economic zones with for example Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan etc.

before. Even though there was no sign of bottom-up nationalism regarding the Nobel Peace Prize, the comparative case studies still indicate a change in the relationship between the CCP and the people, through the opening up for more public protest and that the Chinese people both support and challenge the CCP (as in the cases of the Bullet Train and Carrefour demonstrations).

But together with the opening up for more public venting, another instrument, which according to James Reilly (2012) previously never used by China, also emerged, namely the use of economic sanctions. One may note that the opening up for more public venting happens at the same time as the use of economic sanctions. In the cases presented several different economic sanctions have been issued. In the main case, regarding Norway, bilateral trade was harmed, especially export of Norwegian salmon suffered as the Chinese government issued new veterinary guidelines and imposed tougher scrutiny in custom control. Philippine fruit suffered similar scrutiny during the dispute over Scarborough Shoal. The result also included the embargo of Rare Earth Minerals to Japan. In addition Chinese tourism to Norway and the Philippines were reduced by government imposed sanctions.

Previously, economic development has been deemed too important for China to risk it by imposing economic sanctions, but as the result of the comparative case studies implies, economic sanctions are now used as a factor in promoting sovereignty claims, and defending Chinese symbols, culture and the CCP. According to Fuchs and Klann, “by exerting economic pressure on these countries, the Chinese administration seeks to suppress any notion potentially challenging the territorial integrity of China and intends to strengthen the stability of its Communist regime” (2010: 7). But it is important for China not just to get their message across using economic sanctions, but also to legitimize and stabilize the regime. “Any economic punishment mechanism will only prevail as long as the expected political gains from stabilizing the regime outweigh the losses from trade diversion” (Fuchs and Klann 2010: 7). This is also supported by the fact that China only imposes economic sanctions on areas which are at a low cost for them, such as Norwegian salmon, Philippine fruits or Chinese tourism.

In addition to the use of sanctions the CCP rally support and exploits public anger in events like the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute, by using propaganda and selective media reports, the CCP fire up under the people’s nationalist sentiment, which in turn the Chinese diplomats can use to claim that a certain action has hurt the feelings of the Chinese people (Reilly 2012: 124).

For example in the case of the Dalai Lama visiting France, the Chinese people's feelings were used as an argument. According to the China Daily, as presented in the case studies, the deputy Foreign Minister He Yafei stated that the meeting had "severely undermined China's core interest, gravely hurt the feelings of the Chinese people and sabotaged the political basis of China-France and China-EU relations" (China Daily 2009a). The words of He Yafei clearly put the Chinese people's feelings in the equation. This is in accordance with what is termed top-down nationalism in this thesis, and is also consistent with the media coverage presented in the case studies regarding China's reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. The China Daily had several articles which showed how the Nobel Peace Prize had wronged the Chinese people, and that the prize itself was unjust, after first blocking all news regarding the Nobel Peace Prize. This implies that the CCP used the media rally support, and thus deflecting the threat the Nobel Peace Prize represented.

Both the use of sanctions and the opening up for more public nationalistic venting may imply the current position China has in the economic system. The most important change from the 1990s (and earlier) is that China was more dependent on foreign investment and trade compared to the current situation. China has in recent years, moved away from their previous standpoint that economic sanctions are "an immoral punishment for innocent, vulnerable populations" (Reilly 2012: 122), to now using economic sanctions to their own advantage. This change is especially obvious in the case of Japan (but also the Philippines, Norway and France) where the CCP in the 1990s clamped down on protests and did not impose economic sanctions, but in the 2000s protests were allowed on several occasions, the CCP let the public voices be heard regarding the Bullet train debate, the CCP imposed (covert) trade sanctions on Japan during the 2010 flare up of the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute and the Chinese public boycotted Japanese merchandise. According to Reilly "Beijing chooses to use informal measures, not directly linked to an official response and cannot be directly linked to the specific issue...This ensures flexibility for the CCP, and it also minimizes diplomatic controversy, since it is not an official policy response" (Reilly 2012: 123), as shown in the cases of both the Philippines and Japan, where China's actions was not officially connected to the two disputes. But as the cases of Norway and France show, China does not always use covert sanctions. As the statement of Wen Jiabao demonstrates, when asked why he did not visit France on his European tour, the CCP, on some occasions, is not afraid to connect actions to certain disputes or issues. In addition to ensuring flexibility, the CCP can, if needed, show that they have reacted and taken action. If the public demands action, the CCP has

something to show for, as they in the cases of France and the Dalai Lama, Norway, Japan and the Philippines already have taken measures regarding the issues, even though the sanctions were mostly covert. This can imply that the reactions from China are an answer to the change presented, regarding Chinese nationalism, with the opening up for more public demonstrations. The CCP may change its policy regarding economic sanctions to answer to the demands of the people, as the people can for instance demand a tougher response towards Japan. In addition the change regarding economic sanctions can also be seen in connection to China's economic development, and that the sanctions presented in this case-study analysis are all at a low cost for China (with the exception of the Rare Earth Minerals embargo – which had unwanted side effects for China).³⁹

In addition to the economic sanctions imposed on Norway, diplomatic sanctions did also occur. By cancelling all high-level ministerial meetings, China sent out a message of the severity of the dispute between Norway and China. No meetings were conducted between December of 2010 and November of 2012, which is almost 2 years without contact between the two governments. In addition, several cultural symbols which can be said to represent Norway were sanctioned, as shown in the case studies with the Bergen Philharmonics not receiving an official invitation from the Chinese government and the removal of Norwegian Salmon from the stands at the annual China Fisheries and Seafood Expo in 2011. China also warned countries from attending the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, and that attending the ceremony would have consequences, which may have contributed to that some countries downplayed the significance of the Prize, as explored in the case studies. In addition to this, the CCP imposed diplomatic sanctions in the case regarding the Dalai Lama (Wen Jiabao left France out of his travel itinerary) and in the case of the Bullet Train (Transport Minister Ogi did not get to meet the Prime Minister or any other high ranking official in the Railway Ministry when visiting Beijing).

The implications from the results of the comparative case studies for this thesis's research question are therefore that China's reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize, both through diplomatic sanctions and economic sanctions, points toward that it was a case of top-down nationalism. The key finding of this comparative case study analysis is that China reacts with both top-down and bottom-up nationalism to threats to regime legitimacy and territorial sovereignty. The common denominator for all the cases is that they threaten the

³⁹ The Rare Earth embargo also effected shipments of the minerals to the rest of the world, and the US, EU and Japan later filed a WTO complaint against China (Reilly 2012: 129).

Chinese nation-state, either through threatening territorial sovereignty or threatening legitimization of the CCP-rule. This by challenging principles of the state through questioning the judicial system and rule of law or as in the case of the Bullet-train, the people's dissatisfaction with the government's decision-making process. This supports this thesis's primary hypothesis that the reaction from China to the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 was a case of top down nationalism and that the prize represented a threat to regime legitimacy. The actions from China to the Nobel Prize can be seen as trying to deflect this threat to legitimacy, through mirroring an image of strong China and a strong CCP through the use of economic and diplomatic sanctions towards Norway.

Conclusion

The findings in this thesis suggest that there has been a change in Chinese nationalism in the 2000s. First and foremost the opening up for more public venting has contributed to that the public will both challenge and support the CCP. The CCP is no longer in sole control of the nationalist discourse, as the case of the ‘bullet train’ and Carrefour-demonstrations suggest, and they may be challenged more now, by the public, compared to before. The research question this thesis started out with, **was China’s reaction to the Nobel Peace Prize the result of top-down Chinese nationalism?** Two hypotheses were presented in the introduction. The main hypothesis being; *the reaction from China to the Nobel Peace Prize is a case of top-down nationalism and the reaction to the Peace Prize was a result of the challenge it presented to the legitimacy of the CCP-rule in China.* The competing hypothesis is: *The reaction from China was a case of bottom-up nationalism.* The empirical evidence presented supports my primary hypothesis, and there is no evidence in the case studies that the reaction from China was a case of bottom-up nationalism. This thesis has argued that that by giving the Peace Prize to a jailed criminal, the Nobel committee has challenged the rule of law in China and therefore they have challenged the legitimacy of the CCP. The Nobel Peace Prize also threatened the three dimensions of legitimization, and especially the legitimization derived from rules and the justifiability of these rules (Beetham 1991).

In the literature review several authors have argued that economic development is most important for the CCP, and by developing a prosperous economy they legitimize their rule. As a consequence nationalistic credentials fall short to legitimize the party rule. This has clearly changed in the 2000s with China’s economic boom, which has led to several changes in the nationalistic discourse, as presented in this thesis. The findings of this thesis suggest a more tolerant CCP in allowing more demonstrations and in some cases even supporting them. But as the case of Carrefour shows, this is a balance between allowing demonstrations and clamping down before they go ‘too far’ (in the opinion of the CCP) and threaten regime legitimacy, thus nationalistic sentiments can both support and threaten the CCP-rule. In addition, economic sanctions are now used as an instrument to display the CCP’s dissatisfaction over issues regarding territorial sovereignty and threats to regime legitimization. This indicates that the CCP is less dependent on economic legitimization (which argued by Downs and Saunders was the more important when legitimizing the CCP-rule in the 90s), and therefore the findings in the comparative case studies presented above (both the use of economic sanctions and the opening up for demonstrations) show that

nationalistic discourse is deemed more important in the party-legitimization process compared to previous policy of the CCP. But how is the reaction from China regarding the Nobel Peace Prize connected to nationalism?

First, it caused the CCP to lose face, both towards the international community and towards its own people. As presented earlier, it has been argued that China has a ‘Nobel Prize Complex’ (Lovell 2006, Gries 2004). When a Chinese person has won a Nobel Prize it has been people who do not support the regime which has received it⁴⁰, as in the case of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, and this has infuriated the Chinese, as the prizes (with both Gao in 2000 and Liu in 2010) are used to put focus on human rights issues in China. In addition to losing face towards the international community, it also caused the CCP to lose face towards its own people. As a result of this, China’s reaction can be contributed to face claims, as a strong reaction would ensure that *if* there had been bottom up nationalistic venting, the CCP could show that they had reacted to the Peace Prize. In addition, the media-coverage of the prize (or the lack of coverage) supports this, as the CCP first blocked all news about the prize, but later used the media to demonstrate how wrong the decisions of the Nobel Committee was and the wrong-doings of Norway in not denouncing the prize, in addition to demonstrate how many countries and organizations which supported China’s position. This is accordance with top-down dynamics, as presented in this thesis. By giving the prize to a criminal (in the words of the CCP), the Nobel committee undermined the rule of law, and thus the legitimacy of the CCP

Consequently, the Nobel Peace Prize was an infringement on the principle of enforcement of order and the legitimacy of Chinese laws. Thus, giving the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo threatened the principle of the nation-state by delegitimizing the rule of law in China. This is also supported by Beetham’s three dimensions of legitimacy, which emphasizes the importance of legitimization through rules and the justification of rules. The Nobel Peace Prize thus endangered these two dimensions as it threatened the rule of law and the Chinese judicial system.

This thesis has focused upon the relationship between regime legitimization, sovereignty and Chinese nationalism. As defined previously, the state is the institutions which enforce order – ergo when the Nobel committee gave the Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo (a criminal in the words of the CCP) the Nobel committee undermined the principle of the state. By awarding the Prize

⁴⁰ Examples are the Dalai Lama in 1989, Gao in 2000 and Liu Xiaobo in 2010.

to a criminal sentenced to a long punishment in prison (for subverting the state), the Nobel Committee questioned the legitimacy of the rule of law and the Chinese judicial system. Therefore the conclusion of this thesis is that the results from the empirical data material and the theoretical framework imply that the reaction from China was an answer to the threat the Nobel Peace Prize represented to regime legitimacy, and that the reaction can imply that the CCP used this incident to defend its legitimacy through using sanctions – setting an example that the decision from the Nobel Committee was wrongful. The instruments presented in the case studies may represent a deflection from the threat to legitimacy represented by the prize, by presenting China as a strong power, which Norway does not want to cross. Therefore it can be argued that this is in accordance with the nationalistic conception of China – reflecting a strong China and a strong CCP to the outside world. By giving the Peace Prize to a criminal, the Nobel Committee threatened the nationalistic conception of China, through putting the spotlight on the Chinese judicial system and the practice of law.

The results of this thesis show how China reacts to threats to territorial sovereignty and how the CCP reacts to threats to party-legitimacy. The results offer an explanation of why China react the way they do when these incidents happen. This can have implications for Norway foreign policy decisions. As the Peace Prize itself was not an official foreign policy move, the Norwegian government has had little control over who the Nobel committee awards the prize to, but this thesis show that, *if* bilateral trade and a good relationship with China and the CCP is important (maybe at the cost of human rights issues?), Norway should be careful voicing criticism that threatens regime legitimacy or the sovereignty of Chinese territory. As the comparative case-study analysis show, China is not afraid of using economic or diplomatic sanctions if such events occur.

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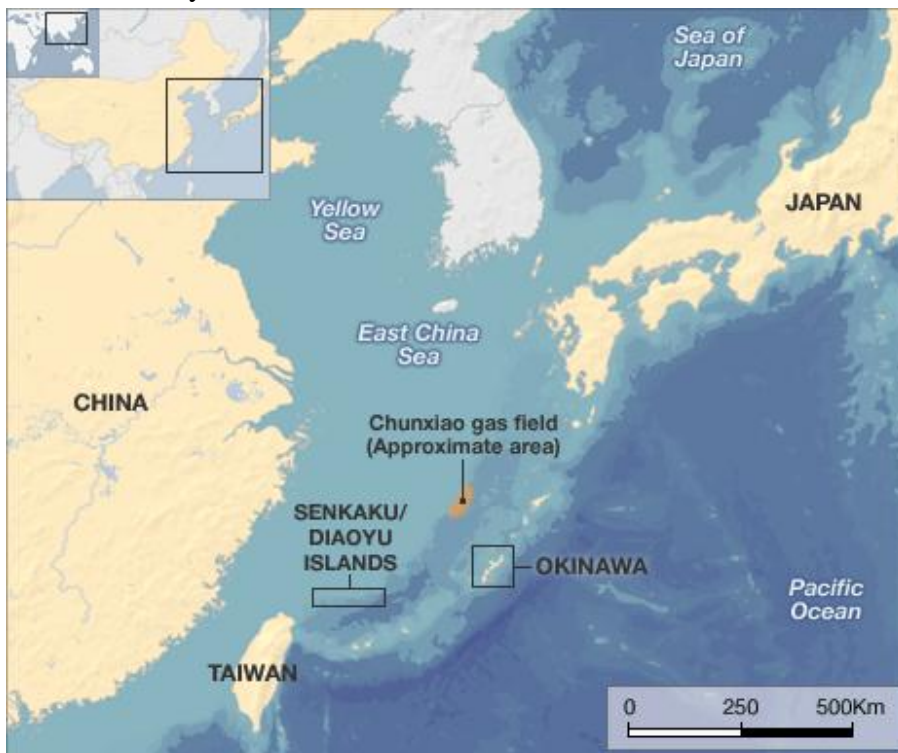
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Appendix

Map 1)

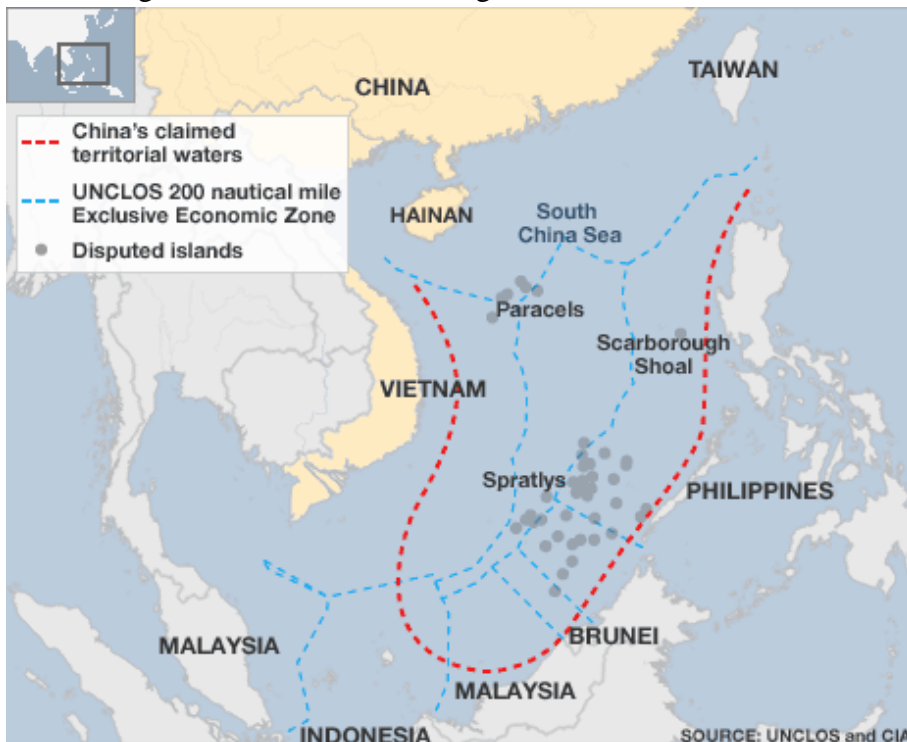
Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands



Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11341139>

Map 2)

Scarborough Shoal – and surroundings



Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>