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# **The Chinese Nationalism and Foreign Policy Component in Mass Consciousness in China**

## **Abstract**

The research describes the phenomenon of Chinese nationalism in the context of the foreign policy component of the mass consciousness of residents in China. The ideas of Chinese nationalism become more popular both on the individual level and the level of mass consciousness. This is according to opinion polls, data from the media, as well as views widely spread among the intellectual elite.

Between 2000–2010 there was a significant rise of nationalism in China. The reason was the transformation of Chinese public opinion. Under the influence of progress in the development of China, people have come to realize that modern China certainly plays a crucial role in world politics and economics.

A characteristic feature of modern Chinese nationalism is that it proliferates far outside of China. Currently, its main content is a growing anti-American and anti-Japanese views.

The ideas of modern Chinese nationalism have become most prevalent among the younger generation of Chinese citizens. These processes are partially controlled by the PRC authorities, who need the population to have certain ideological orientation.

Considering the rise of nationalism in China we can see the appearance of the 'Chinese Dream' concept in 2012.

**Key words:** China, nationalism, foreign policy, public opinion, 'new Chinese nationalism', 'old Chinese nationalism', concept of 'Chinese Dream'.

## Introduction

As evidenced by numerous facts, in recent years, nationalist ideas have been increasingly spreading in China not only at the level of the individual, but also at the level of mass consciousness. This is according to opinion polls, data from the media, as well as views widely spread among the intellectual elite (Кузнецов 2014).

This article attempts to examine the phenomenon of Chinese nationalism in the context of the foreign component of the mass consciousness of the Chinese people, predominately focused on the period between 2000–2010. However, attention is paid to the earlier periods of the 20<sup>th</sup> century during which the observed processes associated with the evolution of Chinese nationalism are noticeable.

So far domestic and foreign sciences have achieved significant results in the study of the problems of nationalism in general and Chinese nationalism in particular.

Sinology in the Russian Federation and other countries has been enriched with scientific works – monographs, articles, doctoral researches – dedicated to the phenomenon of Chinese nationalism. Among these works, the articles of A.A. Moskal'ov (1930–2006) are of particular importance (Москалёв 2001a; 2001b; 2001c; 2002; 2005; 2009), whilst coming in close behind are those by authors studying Chinese nationalism as a whole (Goodman & Segal 1996; Unger & Barmé 1996; Safran 1998; He & Guo 2000; Chang 2001; Karl 2002; Guo 2004; Liew & Wang 2004; Leibold 2007; Russell 2013; Zhao 2014), and in the context of foreign policy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Xiaoqu 2000; Mirams 2009; Shan 2013).

Y. Zheng, for example, explores the complicated nature of revived nationalism in China and presents the reader with a very different picture to that portrayed in Western readings on Chinese nationalism. He argues that China's new nationalism is a reaction to changes in the country's international circumstances and can be regarded as a 'voice' over the existing unjustified international order. Y. Zheng shows that the present Chinese leadership is pursuing strategies not to isolate China, but to integrate it into the international community. Based on the author's extensive research in China, the book provides a set of provocative arguments against prevailing Western attitudes to and perceptions of China's nationalism (Zheng 1999).

G. Wei and X. Liu argue that Chinese nationalism is a multifaceted concept. At different historical moments and under certain circumstances,

it had different meanings and interacted with other competing motives and interests (Wei & Liu 2001; 2002).

Among these authors, S. Zhao and his monograph *A nation-state by construction: Dynamics of modern Chinese nationalism* is of particular note. This is the first historically comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the causes, content, and consequences of nationalism in China, an ancient empire that has struggled to construct a modern nation-state and find its place in the modern world (Zhao 2004).

Peter Hays Gries in his monograph *China's new nationalism: Pride, politics, and diplomacy* offers a rare, in-depth look at the nature of China's new nationalism particularly as it involves Sino-American and Sino-Japanese relations (Gries 2004).

S. Shen's monograph *Redefining nationalism in modern China: Sino-American relations and the emergence of Chinese public opinion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* explores the possibility of whether the contemporary nationalist movement in China, a movement that is non-unitary, segmented and practised by different people for different purposes, could be reshaped and absorbed by neighbouring regions. He selects recent case studies such as the Chinese response to the September 11 attacks in the United States as well as the war in Iraq and includes a detailed discussion on the intellectual battle in China (the Liberals versus the 'New Leftists'). Using a variety of previously untapped sources, including a range of news sources within China itself, weblogs, and interviews with prominent figures, Shen makes a powerful new argument about the causes and consequences of the new Chinese nationalism (Shen 2007).

The specific form of modern Chinese nationalism is linked with the sphere of high technologies: X. Wu, S. Shen and Sh. Breslin examination of the Chinese segment of the Internet (for example, Sina Weibo) is an arena for intense discussions on current issues in contemporary China (Wu 2007; Shen & Breslin 2010).

Christopher W. Hughes examines the problems which will inevitably arise as a result of China's claims on Taiwan, and analyses Taiwan's 'post-nationalist' identity (Hughes 1997; 2006).

Also of interest is Z. Lu's *Sport and nationalism in China*. This book examines the relationships between sport, nationalism, and nation building in China. By exploring the last 150 years of Chinese history, it offers unparalleled depth and breadth of coverage and provides a clear grasp of Chinese sports nationalism from both macro and micro perspectives. Moving on to the era of Communist China (1949–present), the book

scans the whole spectrum of both modern and contemporary Chinese nationalism and interprets the most important issues on the course of China's nation building, explaining why sport is so tightly bound up with nationalism and patriotism, and how sport became an essential part of nationalists', politicians', and educationalists' strategy to revive the Chinese nation (Lu 2014).

Further, of considerable interest are the monographs in which the state of the Chinese public opinion is revealed (Tang 2005; Reilly 2012; Young 2012; Hollihan 2014; Lee 2014). The focus of these research papers is that the state of public opinion in modern China is experiencing a period of significant changes in the socio-economic, political, and cultural areas.

Nationalism refers to the ideology and politics, according to which a nation is treated as the highest form of social cohesion as a harmonious entity with identical fundamental interests of all the components of its social strata.

Nationalism includes not only the idea that a country shares common interests, but that it should and must promote its interests over and against those of other nations.

Nationalism is directly linked to the term 'nation'. It is a widespread concept in science and politics, which represents the totality of the citizens of the state as a political community. The members of the nation are characterized by a general civil identity (e.g., Americans, Chinese, Russians), with a sense of common historical destiny and a common cultural heritage, and in many cases – with a common language or even religion.

Taking into consideration everything that has been said before, Chinese nationalism can be understood as a set of ideological and theoretical guidelines, ideology, and politics, according to which the Chinese nation is treated as the highest form of social cohesion as a harmonious entity with identical fundamental interests of all the components of its social strata, a uniting principle for the cultural unity of China. In fact, this is the form of identification with the nation, with a lot of people who belong to one community that is mostly united with culture, in this case – the Chinese culture.

This research describes the phenomenon of Chinese nationalism in the context of the foreign policy component of the mass consciousness of residents in China including the historical retrospective. For a deeper understanding of the essence of modern Chinese nationalism it was necessary to look at the history of its occurrence.

We studied the history of Chinese nationalism, Chinese nationalism in the 1990s, 2000–2010, and the role of the Communist Part of China (CPC) in the management of processes in the development of Chinese nationalism. Special attention is paid to the concept of the ‘Chinese Dream’ (2012), which is a continuation of the previously formulated idea of “the great renaissance of the Chinese nation.”

## Origins of Chinese Nationalism

The origin of Chinese nationalism as a movement in social and political life belongs to the late period of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) in China. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century China was forcibly ‘opened’ by the Western powers, and transformed into a semi-colonial country. The cooperation of the rulers of the Qing Dynasty and the Western powers led to the growth of nationalist sentiment. The ideas of national liberation and national independence in the international arena became widespread in China. Those ideas were relevant, taking into consideration the defeat of the Qing Empire in the First (1840–1842) and the Second (1856–1860) Opium War, as a result of which China signed unequal treaties with the Western powers and partially lost its sovereignty (Wang 2005, pp. 1–2).

Chinese nationalism emerging in the 19<sup>th</sup> century originally had two components – anti-Manchu and anti-Western. These components of Chinese nationalism showed up during major armed uprisings – the Taiping rebellion of 1850–1864 (with a predominance of anti-Manchu element – antimanchzhurizm) and the Boxer Rebellion between 1899–1901 (with a predominance of anti-Western elements – anti-imperialism) (Kuhn 1978).

The defeat of the Qing Empire in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, which resulted in signing the Treaty of Shimonoseki (April 17, 1895) – a humiliating treaty for China, only strengthened the position of those who advocated the idea of Chinese nationalism (Hsu 1980).

The Xinhai Revolution started in 1911 and resulted in the fall of the Qing Empire and the establishment of the Republic of China. It became the apotheosis of the Chinese nationalist movement (meaning Han nationalism, which sought to create their own nation-state) at the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Moreover, it was the main driving force of the revolutionary process that started in China. A great contribution to the development of these processes was made by Sun Yat-sen, as well

as a number of organizations, established with his direct participation ('China Revival Union', among others). The 'Three People's Principles' – a political doctrine developed by Sun Yat-sen – should be considered in the same context. It is a part of political philosophy aimed at making China a free, prosperous and strong state. The three principles entailed: nationalism, democracy, and the people's well-being (Bastid-Bruguiere 1980; Gasster 1980).

After the victory of the Xinhai Revolution, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and up until now, Chinese nationalism has gone through several stages of development. In our opinion, before the start of the 1960s, the development of Chinese nationalism was limited to the inner frame, without going beyond the borders of China. In the 1960s and 1970s, as China became a global player in the world arena, their nationalist impulses reached neighboring countries.

Initially, the development of Chinese nationalism was mostly associated with the activities created with the participation of the National Sun Yat-Sen Chinese party – the Kuomintang (KMT). However, the process of putting into practice the idea of the unity of the Chinese nation was delayed for a long period due to the soon started acute internal power struggles in China (the 'era of the warlords', 1916–1928, 'Nanjing Decade', 1928–1937, within which the civil war between the forces of the KMT and the CPC, which lasted with interruptions until 1949 and culminated in the proclamation of the PRC). A powerful factor that caused the increase in Chinese nationalism was the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–1945 (Sheridan 1983; Wilbur 1983; Eastman 1986a; 1986b).

The KMT and the CPC put forward various concepts on the future of the Chinese state. There was a clash of two alternative lines of the development in China, personified by the KMT and the CPC. Each of these parties had its own approach to the national unity of China. The CPC Party has put forward a fundamentally different program for solving the national question in the country. It was based on the recognition of the rights of all non-Han peoples to self-determination up to the secession and the formation of the nation-state, the creation of China's future on the basis of a free union of equal nations.

Since the mid 1950s, China gradually started facing the new tendency manifested in the significant growth of Chinese nationalism, including those aimed at the neighboring countries. The new phenomenon was that Chinese nationalism proliferated into the international arena. The Chinese nationalist waves reached the countries bordering with China.

Between 1959–1965 there were many articles and books published in China with basically idealistic concepts on the Mongol conquest and the personality of Genghis Khan, about the power of the Manchu Qing Dynasty and its representatives – the reign of Emperor Kangxi, about the special role of China in world history, about the eternal revolutionary spirit of the Chinese peasantry, etc. *Rénmín Ribào* wrote: “Dynasty, founded by Genghis Khan, played a progressive role in the history of China [...]. Genghis Khan broke the boundaries between nationalities and restored again the great multinational state, which had not been since the Han and Tang dynasties” (*Rénmín Ribào*, 10.08.1961).

At the same time there was a reassessment of several social movements and the role of individuals in the history of China: the assimilation of small nations, forcibly included at various times in the Chinese empire, became portrayed as a blessing for those nations, the idea of a ‘classics’ aura belonging to all Chinese became popular, the role of China in world history was emphasized, the growing trend towards the coverage of many historical events in the pro-Chinese spirit became explicitly vivid. All those factors strengthened the trends associated with increased Chinese nationalism.

Thus, in the 1960s and 1970s there was another surge of Chinese nationalism. At this time, the viewpoint in the Soviet Union was emerging that it was the period of a temporary transformation of Chinese nationalism into the fundamental concept of public policy. Chinese nationalism received its most concentrated expression in a chauvinist and hegemonic line of Maoism.

In this case, it refers to some of Mao’s ideological installations, in particular, the theory of ‘Three Worlds’, which stated that three political-economic worlds took shape in the field of international relations: The First World – ‘superpowers’ like the Soviet Union and the United States (US), The Second World – allies of the ‘superpowers’, and The Third World – developing Asia, Africa, and Latin America, which during the years of ‘Cold War’ clung to the Non-Aligned Movement. China, as a part of the ‘Third World’, according to the plans of Mao Zedong, was to lead the struggle against the ‘hegemony’ of ‘superpowers’ – American imperialism and the Soviet revisionism (Nakajima 1987).

The PRC leadership tried to approve China as the leader of the countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that recently had become independent from colonial rule. China was declared as the outpost, the vanguard of the world revolution. Mao Zedong and his supporters justified



their avant-garde aspirations in the following way: "Wind from the East prevails over the wind from the West" (Мао Цзэдун 1969). Asia, Africa, and Latin America comprised the zone of future revolutionary storms. In those backward peasant areas revolution would develop according to the Chinese pattern. The center of the world revolution had moved further to the East – to China. Beijing was depicted as something akin to a new Mecca for all 'orthodox' followers of the line of the Chinese leadership and Mao Zedong – 'leader' of the world revolutionary forces.

The involvement of China in the Korean War, Vietnam War, Taiwan crises (first Taiwan Strait crisis of 1954–1955 and the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958), armed conflict between China and India (1962, 1967), between China and Vietnam (1979) – all provided the opportunity for the external output of Chinese nationalism, which was mainly aimed against the US, Japan, and Taiwan.

Against the backdrop of a serious deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations, the apogee of which was a series of armed conflicts on the Soviet-Chinese border (Damanskii island, March 2–15, 1969; Lake Zhalanashkol, August 13, 1969), trends in external manifestations of Chinese nationalism only intensified. However, in this case it turned out to be aimed against the Soviet Union (Whiting 1987; Robinson 1991).

The weakening trends in the external manifestations of Chinese nationalism became visible only with the end of the period of 'Cultural Revolution' in China. In 1978 after Deng Xiaoping's initiative on the transition to 'reforms and openness' policy which meant wide-range reforms undertaken in the PRC in order to upgrade the quality of individual areas of Chinese society under the concept of 'socialism with Chinese features', the level of Chinese nationalism in the foreign component of the mass consciousness decreased significantly.

At the same time due to the successes that had been achieved in the modernization of the traditional structures of Chinese society the following trend gradually began to take shape in the world and Chinese public opinion: the foreigners and the Chinese public gradually came to understand that this modern China, which was epitomized by the PRC, of course, played an important role in world politics and economy (Кузнецов 2013).

China's leadership was trying to consolidate among the citizens the idea of transformation of China into a great power, able to exercise significant influence on the processes in world politics and economy. Using various means of propaganda (including visual agitation), the government



consistently pursued the idea of strengthening the power of the Chinese state and its revival as a great power (Кузнецов 2011; 2012).

The most important idea that PRC leaders sought to convey to citizens of the country was the continuity of the various epochs in the history of Chinese civilization, each contributing their specific contribution to the development of China's greatness.

Particular attention was paid to the modern period in China's history, which began on October 1, 1949. The PRC period, according to the official position, is an essential stage in the progressive development of the Chinese civilization. The progress made since 1949, contributed a lot to the strengthening of the Chinese state. Accordingly, the history of China consists of individual periods which are in some measure successful. Each of these periods is associated with Chinese leaders – Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping. Already by 1999, when China celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PRC's foundation, this idea had penetrated deeply into the mass consciousness of the Chinese people.

## **Chinese Nationalism in the 1990s**

In the 1990s, there was again a fairly significant growth of nationalism in China. The growth of nationalist sentiment in China was conditioned by a number of other reasons and circumstances, both internal and external. Of course, the landmark event was the Tiananmen uprising in 1989. The West's reaction to that event (the subsequent sanctions, etc.) caused a backlash in China as an anti-Western (primarily anti-American) nationalist sentiment. Subsequent events and the general course of Western policy toward China that was perceived by the Chinese government as a 'policy of containment' retained the vector of Chinese nationalism development, directed outwards (Москалёв 2001a).

As A.A. Moskaev underlines, the CPC's position toward emerging wave of nationalism in the country also played its role. The CPC did not directly participate in the public debate on nationalism, but the fact that it did not prohibit this discussion was rather obvious. As pointed out by A.A. Moskaev, nationalism that became the subject of discussion in China, in the 1990s went outside the scope of the official doctrine of the two 'hold-over' nationalisms (i.e., the Great Han nationalism and local nationalism). This is quite different nationalism. This is 'Chinese

nationalism' – nationalism "in all of China", "for the whole nation", i.e., the 'Chinese nation' (Москалёв 2001a).

A characteristic feature of Chinese nationalism was that impulses from it, as was the case previously, in the 1960s and 1970s, began to proliferate out of China. Their main contents were gradually intensifying anti-American views.

A number of serious crises affecting US–China relations strengthened the anti-American component in Chinese public opinion in the 1990s.

The thorniest of them was the Hainan Island incident (April 1, 2001). This incident with US Air Force military spy plane EP-3, which carried out a reconnaissance flight in the immediate vicinity of China's airspace and eventually broke it. The Chinese fighter pursuing the spy plane collided with it, with the Chinese pilot being killed. The intruder was urged to land on the airfield on Hainan Island. The incident led to a serious diplomatic crisis in Sino-US relations. Then the Internet forums were overflowed with angry posts calling to make America pay a 'blood debt' for the martyred Chinese fighter pilot Wang Wei. Combined with the US-related events that took place in the previous decade Chinese anti-Americanism received extra fuel (Brookes 2002, pp. 101–110).

Referring to earlier events, it's necessary to mention a very strong reaction of the US leadership to the tragic events in Tiananmen Square (1989), which led to a large number of casualties among Chinese students.

The US support of Taiwan (especially arms shipments) contributed a lot to the rise of anti-Americanism in China. Periodically emerged Taiwanese crises, the sharpest of which occurred in the years 1995–1996, when the US demonstrated its support for the Taiwan authorities and even dispatched their warships to the conflict area, only intensified the critical attitude of the Chinese people against the United States.

The trend towards the normalization of Sino-US relations emerged in 1997–1998 and culminated in the mutual visits of representatives of the top leadership of China (Jiang Zemin) and the US (William J. Clinton) in 1999 again faced serious problems associated with the incident that occurred during the military operations of NATO against Yugoslavia.

The accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy building in Belgrade on May 7, 1999, which led to casualties among the Chinese staff (3 dead and 20 wounded), caused a storm of indignation among the Chinese people, contributing to the strengthening of anti-Americanism in Chinese society. Thousands protest demonstrations were held then in front of the US Embassy in Beijing and the US Consulates (in Shanghai,

Guangzhou, Chengdu, Shenyang, etc.) showed a very emotional reaction of the Chinese citizens to the tragedy (Wong & Zheng 1999).

There were other incidents that contributed to the deterioration of the atmosphere of US–China relations and, as a consequence, caused an increase of anti-Americanism among the Chinese people.

The abovementioned events unsealed China's bitter memories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Western imperialism, when the 'foreign devils' were oppressing and humiliating China, running roughshod over a once-proud people. Echoes of the past humiliations were clearly evident in the stream of popular anti-American editions, published in the late 1990s, with titles such as "Evil Plans of America", "China can not be intimidated" and others. Those and other publications used the 19<sup>th</sup> century term 'guochi' – 'national humiliation' that expressed a fair Chinese resentment against mocking imperialist powers. By the end of the 1990s, the majority of Chinese citizens regarded America as their primary enemy (Baum 2002).

On the other hand, the tragic events of September 11, 2001, have led to a temporary weakening of the anti-American component in the Chinese public opinion. However, soon a critical attitude toward the United States began to grow again in the Chinese society, as a result of steps taken by the US in the international arena (Iraq war, for example) (Mansfield Asian Opinion Poll Database 2006; Lowy Institute China Poll 2009; Pew Global Attitudes Project 2007; 2016a; 2016b).

## Chinese Nationalism in 2000–2010

In the 2000s, there was a new surge of Chinese nationalism. This surge was largely caused by the changing role that China played in world politics and economy.

The social and economic development of China accelerated in the conditions of the 2000s was not even hampered by the global financial and economic crisis that began in 2008. That fact contributed to a widespread conviction in the inevitable transformation of China into the largest world power in the near future. In this regard, M. Leonard, author of *What Does China Think?* said that at present "in almost every global event there is the impact of the Chinese factor." And further: "China's position affects the dynamics of a number of issues [...]. China has ceased to be just a big country, a business partner, or the subject of diplomatic relations. China has started the process of becoming a real factor of world politics [...]" (Leonard 2008).

In addition, the active foreign policy conducted by China in the past decade has received wide response among the Chinese public and the world, and one way or another, it contributes to strengthening trends associated with the surge in Chinese nationalism. The restoration of sovereignty over Hong Kong (1997) and Macao (1999), and their joining China on the rights of the Special Administrative Regions under the principle of 'One country, two systems', only strengthened this trend.

Other factors that, in my opinion, contribute to the growth of Chinese nationalism are: China's achievements and progress in the fields not related to politics and economics.

Among them – the strengthening of China's military power. It is known that at present, China, being a nuclear power, has the largest army in the world and is modernizing its armed forces, creating and acquiring new types of weapons and military equipment.

A successful performance of China's team at the XXIX Olympic Games in Beijing spawned a huge-scale growth of pride among the Chinese population. The fact that the Chinese team won 100 medals (51 gold, 21 silver and 28 bronze), which allowed the Chinese team to take 1<sup>st</sup> place in the team event and thereby outperform its main competitor – the US team, was regarded as evidence of China's significant success.

The development of China's space program should be considered in the same vein.

In my view, all of the above, strengthens the confidence of China's population that now their country is in fact playing an increasingly important role in world politics and economics, affects the growth of nationalism in China, and forms the proper configuration of the Chinese public opinion concerning the place, role and policy of China in modern international relations.

The most important characteristic of Chinese nationalism is a sense of national superiority. In one way or another, it is inherent in many nations of the world – Americans, Russians, as well as other nations, naturally. Nevertheless, it seems that in China this feeling is largely intensified by the changes that relate to the place and role of modern China in world politics and economics.

A kind of 'feeding' for Chinese nationalism comes from the widespread basic values, acting as a foundation of China's foreign policy mentality among the Chinese residents. It seems that at present these basic values actually determine the state of the Chinese public opinion about the place, role and policy of China in modern international relations. In this case,

these are the concepts of China and the outside world – Sinocentrism (中国中心主义) (Ретунских 2006).

Of course, there are no grounds to assert that now the mass consciousness of the Chinese people is fully imbued with the spirit of Sinocentrism. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to ignore the impact of this concept on Chinese public opinion. As pointed out by E.P. Bazhanov, Sinocentrism, conviction in own superiority inherent in the Chinese since ancient times, is not some exception to the general rules of conduct of states in the international system. China, unlike other hegemons (Ancient Rome etc.) ‘indefinitely’ was a hegemon among its neighbors, that is why “Chinese behavior is particularly striking to the researchers, and seems unique” (Бажанов 2007).

In general, China’s foreign policy has historically inherent Sinocentrism, which is characterized by vertical connections in international relations. In modern conditions the Sinocentric tradition may be well fed by China’s great-power ambitions in its resurgence as an influential and independent factor in the international arena. However, in a ‘new world order’ Sinocentrism is characterized by greater economic, than political, influence.

Now China can really be and is becoming the center of the ever dynamic Asia-Pacific Region. In addition, China has a robust geopolitical framework (vast territory with abundant resources and a large population), to play the role of a natural center of attraction for the surrounding countries and peoples, which in addition to East Asian countries include the countries of South and Central Asia.

In recent years, the growing Chinese nationalism has been acquiring a very specific manifestation in anti-American and anti-Japanese sentiment.

At the level of mass consciousness of China’s inhabitants, individual manifestations of Chinese nationalism in relation to the Western countries have been identified. And it was not just about the anti-American component.

For example, in 2008 after the unrest in Tibet and the calls of the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, to boycott the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, a wave of anti-French demonstrations spread over China. Among the protest actions – the boycott of the French retail chain Carrefour (Jacobs 2008).

However, during the period of 2000–2010, perhaps most of all the individual manifestations of Chinese nationalism penetrated the mass consciousness of Chinese residents when it came to their attitude towards Japan.

This was followed by the fact that the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was characterized by a sharp aggravation of relations between China and Japan. This was caused by China's discontent with Japan's position on Taiwan (the Koizumi government for the first time since World War II, openly supported the US position, announcing that it stood against attempts to change the situation in the Taiwan Strait by force); the visits of Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine, dedicated to "the souls of the heroes who died for Japan", where the remains of Japanese war criminals were buried; publication of a new history textbook that justified Japan's aggressive expansion in 1930–1940; and Japan's desire to be a permanent UN Security Council member. Of equal concern from China were Japan's plans to create their own missile defense system with the assistance of the US.

In 2005, thousands of anti-Japanese protests swept through China, when Japan published a new edition of its history textbooks, which, according to Chinese authorities, insufficiently covered the story of the Japanese invasion of China and partial occupation of the country in 1931–1945. The invasion of the Japanese army was rephrased as an 'entry' into China. The textbooks contain only a cursory mention of the events of 1937, commonly known as the 'Nanjing Massacre', which resulted in 300,000 civilian victims – according to the Chinese side (Selden & Nozaki 2009).

An unprecedented crisis in relations between China and Japan ignited in 2010–2012. In this case about it was caused by the escalation – (in 2010 and 2012) around the Senkaku Islands (Chinese name Diaoyu) the East China Sea – which de facto belong to Japan (Дьячков 2013, pp. 97–101). Two waves of massive anti-Japanese demonstrations involving tens of thousands of people (August 18–19, 2012, and September 15–16, 2012) scattered across China. Turmoils broke out in major Chinese cities characterized by burning Japanese flags, disorders in residential areas where Japanese diplomats lived (including near the building of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing), acts of vandalism, pogroms of Japanese shops and restaurants, the destruction of Japanese-made cars. Thousands of people chanted "Give us back the Diaoyu Islands," "Japan should confess to their crimes," "Smash the Japanese imperialists!" and others. People called for a boycott against Japanese goods. On September 18, 2012, the streets of almost a hundred Chinese cities once again were filled with giant crowds. The aggravation of the conflict coincided with the anniversary of the Mukden incident (September 18, 1931) – the beginning of Japan's aggression against China (Lai 2014).

As a result, the Senkaku archipelago crisis revealed an unprecedented growth of Chinese nationalism, the impulses of which due to the growing role of China in the international arena became tangible in surrounding countries, specifically in Japan.

## **Chinese Nationalism and the Role of the CPC**

So the rise of nationalism in China in recent years has been proven. The nationalistic views are mostly rooted among the representatives of the younger generation. These processes are partially controlled by the Chinese authorities, who are largely interested in the fact that the citizens have a certain ideological orientation and follow it.

In general, we can agree with the opinions expressed by some experts on China. They say that nationalist views have been cultivated by Chinese authorities since the early 1990s. The main reason for such a policy was the fact that the brutally repressed student protest in Tiananmen Square in June 1989 made the Chinese leadership realize that the ideas of Marxism-Leninism had more and more weakening influence on the minds of the younger generation. Subsequent events associated with the collapse of the world socialist system and the collapse of the Soviet Union convinced the country's leadership that Chinese society needed a new idea that would strengthen the legitimacy of the regime based on the undivided rule of the CPC in the national political system. As a result, Chinese nationalism has become a kind of alternative to the conceptions that formerly prevailed in the sphere of ideology.

Thus, Chinese nationalism has filled the ideological vacuum created in China after the start of market reforms. In other words, there was an actual shift from socialism to nationalism. Considering that 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' is increasingly acquiring the features of capitalism, the reference to the ideas of Chinese nationalism, especially to the cultural and national superiority of the Chinese people with their 5,000-year history above other societies, as well as the need to restore the national greatness and repay old humiliations, has become an important mechanism that can strengthen the unity of the Chinese people.

Along with this, an important role is played by another point. As underlined by I.Y. Rozhkov, in order to make citizens not perceive as sharply the many problems they face, the government suggests both nationalistic and idealistic ideas that explain their 'difficult past' and promises a 'bright



future'. It can be briefly stated as follows: "Before the revolution in 1949 China had undergone humiliation from the capitalist powers (for example – the 'Opium Wars'). The country suffered much from the semi-colonial state of fragmentation. The multi-party system of the KMT was not acceptable for the country under such circumstances. Only the will and wisdom of the Communist Party of China and Mao Zedong liberated and united the country, 'raised it from its knees.' The purpose of the reforms proclaimed by Deng Xiaoping – to return China the greatness and power, which it had possessed for ages" (Рождков 2006, pp. 26–27).

As a result, by the reference to the ideas of Chinese nationalism, the Chinese government may try to use them to deflect public anger, switching it to 'foreign enemies' while there are growing economic and social problems which cause instability in Chinese society.

The national spirit in China is also reinforced through the mass media. For example, there are various articles in the local press that serve to strengthen the national identity of the people. This, for example, refers to *Rénmín Ribào*, where such articles repeatedly appear: "The eyes of the world glued to the Chinese way" (September 25, 2009), "On the way to greatness China is not afraid of difficulties" (October 4, 2012), "Great historical relay race" (January 16, 2013), and others.

The article "Does China have the will to greatness?" that was published on June 26, 2004, in *China Daily*, drew readers' attention to the fact that "the desire to acquire the status of a great world power can succeed only if China has the strong determination to do so." "A country the size of China – the third largest state in the world – is simply obliged to become a great world power, whether it wants to or not" (Lau Guan Kim 2004).

Chinese leaders have given a positive assessment of the raising national consciousness, as it helps to strengthen the internal order in the country, promotes social cohesion, and intensifies political life.

## **Chinese Nationalism and the Concept of 'the Chinese Dream'**

The growth of nationalism in China has become the foundation for the concept of 'the Chinese Dream' (中国梦 simplified Chinese; 中國夢 traditional Chinese; *Zhōngguó mèng* in pinyin), which is essentially a continuation of the previously formulated idea of "the great revival of the Chinese nation" (Гельбрас 2003, pp. 80–90).

The ideas that appeared within the concept of 'the Chinese Dream' are spreading rapidly both on the level of individual and mass consciousness. Moreover, they are turning into a key direction of social thought in modern China (Кузнецов 2013, pp. 185–252).

The concept of 'the Chinese Dream' is a continuation of the previously formulated idea of 'the great revival of China'. After ripening for quite a long period of time, the concept of 'the Chinese Dream' formed only in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Colossal changes in terms of the place of China in the world and outstanding economic growth have boosted the formulation of the concept of 'the Chinese Dream'.

The concept of 'the Chinese Dream' was initially coined up by Xi Jinping in November 2012, two weeks after the completion of the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPC, when he and other representatives of the Chinese leadership visited the exhibition "By the road of revival" (Fuxing zhi lu) at the National Museum of Chinese History. The exposition was devoted to the period of China's struggle to achieve national sovereignty and independence (1840–1949) and the subsequent development of the country. Xi Jinping urged "to implement the Chinese dream of a great national revival" and used the term 'revival' for the first time in the modern political context (Газета ЖЭНЬМИНЬ жибао он-лайн 2012).

The two dates have been set as the key milestones in achieving 'the Chinese Dream' ideals: 2021 – the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CPC, and in 2049 – the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the PRC. The first date presupposes the creation of the society with medium income, the second – the creation of a rich, strong, and culturally developed socialist country, based on the principles of democracy, harmony and modernization (Кондрашова 2014).

Xi Jinping's broad interpretation of 'the Chinese Dream' includes 'rich and strong country', 'national raise', and 'happiness of the people' ("Си Цзиньпин о «китайской мечте»" 2013).

The important peculiarity of 'the Chinese Dream' is that it is based on conceptually fundamental principles. Firstly, 'the Chinese Dream' concept insets into the concept of 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics' which is based on the ideas formulated by Deng Xiaoping, as well as the ideas formulated by Jiang Zeming (three represents), and Hu Jintao (scientific concept of development).

The concept of 'the Chinese Dream' can be seen in the context of individual aspirations of each individual resident of China, which is very well correlated with the set goals and objectives focused on improving the

welfare of the Chinese people. For the majority of Chinese people 'the Chinese dream' is something each individual Chinese is trying to achieve (Китайский информационный Интернет-центр 2013).

In order to promote the concept of 'the Chinese Dream' among people from every walk of life, the Chinese leadership is taking various steps. The most important of them relate to the propaganda of the separate elements that the concept comprises.

The Chinese leadership is translating 'the Chinese Dream' to the outside world, i.e. is explaining to the world the essence and content of the concept of 'the Chinese Dream', revealing its individual components and drawing attention to the fact that "the dream of the great revival of the Chinese nation" does not pose a threat to the world.

The concept of 'the Chinese Dream' received its official recognition during the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the 11<sup>th</sup> convocation of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Council (CPPCC) (March 3–17, 2013) (XVIII Всекитайский съезд КПК. Китайская мечта и мир 2013).

The new head of the Chinese state, Xi Jinping, outlined the priority objectives for country development in the coming years. The main content of his speech was the thesis of the implementation of the concept of 'China dream', which was positioned as a national idea of Chinese society in the future (Си Цзиньпин 2013).

Speaking about 'the Chinese Dream' and referring to the national feelings of the Chinese people, Xi Jinping primarily meant the process of further strengthening of the Chinese state, its progressive socio-economic and political development, and the growth of the welfare of the Chinese nation (Си Цзиньпин 2014).

The emergence of 'the Chinese Dream' concept has led to its multiple interpretations in a broader context. As pointed out by S.G. Luzianin, "the problem for Beijing is that there are many alternative readings and interpretations of the 'dream' overseas today which not always add advantages to a carefully created positive image of China. One of the versions popular in the West now is the 'historical version' which hypothetically can collide the West with China in the further implementation of the new doctrine" (Лузянин 2013; 2014).

The Chinese position in this concept is about the "national humiliation of the Chinese people" when, since 1840, after unleashing the 'Opium Wars' and imposing 'unfair contract' for an extended period (up to 1949), the West would not allow China to realize the idea of national revival. As a result, the

'China Dream' in its historical part wittingly or unwittingly ignites some resentment among the Chinese, urging them to decisive actions, the aim of which should be the revival of Chinese power, and this in turn can have a negative impact on the states surrounding China, for bilateral relations, and likely for the Russian-Chinese relations (Лукин 2011).

In this regard, there have been growing concerns about the emergence of conflicts in the Asia-Pacific region, where China will be an active participant (Throop 2013).

## Conclusion

Of course, the role of nationalism in Chinese history can be evaluated as significant. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century the ideas of nationalism were a powerful source of mobilization in Chinese society. It is due to the strengthening of Chinese nationalism that the country and its inhabitants were able to overcome the legacy of the era of imperialism, strengthen the national independence and national sovereignty, create a powerful state, which is now rightly one of the world leaders in terms of politics and economy.

However, the 'new Chinese nationalism' that has been developing in the last decade is significantly different from the 'old Chinese nationalism'. Unlike the latter, it is mainly the result of a rapidly strengthening of China's power in recent years.

On the other hand, the 'new Chinese nationalism' similar to the 'old Chinese nationalism' is fueled by still continuing people's memories of the period when China was subjected to humiliation. Thus, as a result of sociological research among students, university graduates and others conducted in the Chinese city of Ningbo, scientists came to the following conclusion: "The growing Chinese nationalism is a populist, mass movement, rather than a product of the official policy. Its sources are partially concealed in the memory of the humiliation of the colonial era, and partially in the new self-confidence because of the growth of Chinese economic power. The most obvious manifestation of growing nationalism can be seen in the spontaneous and genuine public outrage that accompanies China's conflicts in the international arena" (Тавровский 2013; 2015).

In modern conditions the positive effect from the Chinese nationalism stems from the fact that at critical moments, thanks to its powerful force it can help in strengthening the unity of the country, resulting in readiness

to effectively respond to emerging challenges, such as was the case with the Sichuan earthquake in 2008.

However, there is a risk that the development of Chinese nationalism, the edge of which is pointed at the Western countries, especially the US and Japan (for example, in China, Russia is not mentioned at all or called among the potential allies in the struggle with the West) can get out of control. As a result, Chinese nationalism will become a destructive factor that could destabilize the situation in China and abroad, aggravate relations with the surrounding countries (especially with those China has unresolved territorial issues) and thus have a negative impact on regional security. In the most negative scenario nationalism can obtain a militant character, pushing China to pursue a rigid foreign policy in the international arena, and even (in case the majority of Chinese population will be dissatisfied with the promotion of China's interests in the world), channelize its power against the national government. For example, Sina Weibo has become a platform to cast doubt on China's government policy in the international arena. This is illustrated by the people's reaction to the official Chinese position regarding the most acute international problems of today. The polls conducted on Sina Weibo, showed that the majority of netizens are skeptical of the low-key Chinese policy in the Syrian issue (Parello-Plesner 2012).

Therefore, it seems that the Chinese leadership must approach this issue with great responsibility. Currently, through the support of China's national pride, civic nationalism, and fight with ethnic nationalism, the country's government in general tries not to cross the 'red line' beyond which it can face uncontrolled and destructive processes. It is important that this course will be followed in the future.

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