TITLE: Rakiplikten Isbirlikçilige: Çin'deki Yeniden Yükselen Milliyetçiligin Ilginç Vakasi

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From Rival to Collaborator: The Curious Case of Resurgent Nationalism in China

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Abstract

In this article, first, the causes and the characteristics of the resurgent nationalism in China are examined. To that end, emergence of nationalism in China in the early 20th century, simply old nationalism, and reemergence of nationalism in China in the late 20th century, simply new nationalism, are discussed, and the two nationalisms are to be contrasted. An important argument here is that the main objective of old nationalism was to be a nation, emphasizing the need and the desire to resemble other nations, while the main objective of new nationalism is to become the nation, emphasizing the need and the desire to assert the peculiarity of the nation. Second, this article addresses the issue that while old nationalism was a fatal rival of the state, the Imperial Court, in the early 20th century, new nationalism is a vital collaborator of the state, the Communist government. Accordingly, the causes of this rather intriguing transformation are to be evaluated.

Keywords: *Nationalism, China, Communism.*

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Rakiplikten İşbirlikçiliğe: Çin'deki Yeniden Yükselen Milliyetçiliğin İlginç Vakası

Öz

Bu makalede, ilk olarak Çin'deki yeniden yükselen milliyetçiliğin nedenleri ve özellikleri incelenmektedir. Bu minvalde, Çin'de 20. yüzyılın erken döneminde ortaya çıkan basitçe eski milliyetçilik diyebileceğimiz milliyetçiliğin ortaya çıkması ile Çin'de 20. yüzyılın son döneminde basitçe yeni milliyetçilik diyebileceğimiz milliyetçiliğin tekrar ortaya çıkması tartışılmakta ve iki milliyetçilik mukayese edilmektedir. Buradaki önemli bir iddia, diğer milletlere benzeme ihtiyacı ve arzusunu vurgulayan eski milliyetçiliğin amacının bir millet olmak iken milletin kendine özgü karakterini öne sürme ihtiyaç ve arzusunu vurgulayan yeni milliyetçiliğin amacının ise özgün millet haline gelmek olmasıdır. İkinci olarak, bu makale eski milliyetçiliğin 20. yüzyılın erken döneminde devletin, yani sarayın, ölümcül bir rakibi olması ama yeni milliyetçiliğin devletin, yani Komünist hükümetin, hayati bir işbirlikçisi olması meselesini ele almaktadır. Buna uygun olarak da bu oldukça şaşırtıcı dönüşümün nedenleri değerlendirilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Milliyetçilik, Çin, Komünizm.*

1. Introduction

Even though they engage in meticulous analyses of the origins of nations and nationalisms from a variety of perspectives, mainstream theories of nationalism have been prone to disregard the reemergence of nationalism. This notable propensity of mainstream theories of nationalism to overlook the contingent and continual reproduction of nationalism has been critically assessed by several scholars. A prominent critique is Michael Billig who have disapproved popular and academic writing in which "nationalism is associated with those who struggle to create new states or with extreme right-wing politics" while stressing that nations are daily reproduced.[2] Introducing the concept 'banal nationalism' to denote the "ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced", Billig contends that "nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition".[3] Furthermore, Billig continues, "in so many little ways, the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, this reminding is so familiar, so continual that it is not consciously registered as reminding".[4]

Still, the resurgence of nationalism in China affirms that the endemic condition would become acute, or in other words, banal nationalism would become abnormal. Emulating Billig's words, it can be argued that, in contemporary China in so many big ways, the Chinese citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, this reminding is so unfamiliar, yet so continual that it can be consciously and conspicuously registered as reminding. Accordingly, this paper, concurring with Billig's basic contention that nationalism is daily reproduced, further attempts to seek the causes of the exceptional shift in the daily reproduction of nationalism in China; simply, it addresses the curious case of the resurgence of nationalism in contemporary China.

This paper has two objectives. First, it examines the causes and the characteristics of the resurgent nationalism in China. To that end, emergence of nationalism in China in the early 20ᵗʰ century, simply old nationalism, and reemergence of nationalism in China in the late 20ᵗʰ century, simply new nationalism, will be discussed, and the two nationalisms are to be contrasted. An important argument here is that the main objective of

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[2] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, Sage Publications, London, 2002, p. 5.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 6.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 8.

old nationalism was to be *a* nation, emphasizing the need and the desire to resemble other nations, while the main objective of new nationalism is to become the nation, emphasizing the need and the desire to assert the peculiarity of the nation. Second, this paper addresses the issue that while old nationalism was a fatal rival of the state, the Imperial Court, in the early 20th century, new nationalism is a vital collaborator of the state, the Communist government. Accordingly, the causes of this rather intriguing transformation are to be evaluated.

Besides, this paper, in its analysis, tacitly advances two additional arguments. First, endorsing the conviction that multiplicity of agency is as essential trait of social developments and transformations, and that social phenomena cannot be ascribed to the deeds of one single agent of change, this paper takes several actors into consideration in its discussions. Thus, with respect to the resurgence of nationalism in China, attitudes and policies of three sets of actors, i.e. public, intelligentsia, and political elite, are incorporated into discussions. Second, in an attempt to evade reductionist argumentation, this paper specifies political, economic, and social causes of the transformations discussed.

This paper is composed of three parts. The first part ascertains the prevalence of resurgent nationalism in China. The second part discusses the causes and the characteristics of old nationalism. The third part explains the reemergence of nationalism in China with particular attention to its collaboration with the Chinese state, and discusses the main characteristics of new nationalism.

2. Resurgent Nationalism in China

Any discussion of nationalism first and foremost requires a particular definition of nationalism. The analytical setback is that different theories of nationalism, including perennialist theories, modernist theories, cultural constructivist theories, and ethno symbolic theories, present and adopt different definitions and conceptions of nationalism.[5] A somewhat exhaustive definition is that

> "nationalism (the form of culture characterized by national identity's salience) is the most fundamental image of the social order in modernity and as such represents the specific form of modern social con-

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[5] Anthony D. Smith, "Theories of Nationalism: Alternative Models of Nation Formation" in *Asian Nationalism* (Ed. Michael Leifer), Routledge, London, 2000, pp. 1-20.

sciousness and can be treated as a cultural 'blueprint' for various features of social and political organization in the modern world."[6]

Whatever the particularities of the definitions of nationalism, the common element in all the definitions, it is argued, "is the discourse of nationalism, which is shared by all movements, policies or ideologies we call 'nationalist'".[7] To Özkırımlı, the nationalist discourse has three main characteristics. First, as John Breuilly asserts, "the interests and values of…nation take priority over all other interests and values".[8] Second, in the nationalist discourse, the only source of legitimacy is the nation. "The nation (or nationalism) can be used to justify all kinds of actions that would not otherwise be condoned or tolerated".[9] Third, the nationalist discourse is characterized by binary categorizations between whom or what is included in the nation and who or what is not. Zygmunt Bauman indicates that there is a sharp separation between these categories by "mutually exclusive sets of assigned rights and duties, moral significance and behavioral principles".[10] The rationale for this sharp separation between the self and the other is explained by Stuart Hall with "the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its *constitutive outside* that the positive meaning of…[identity] can be constructed".[11] In short, interest and value, legitimacy, and self-representation are the three basic elements of the nationalist discourse.

Therefore, in ascertaining the prevalence of resurgent nationalism in contemporary China, it seems more reasonable to trace changes in the Chinese nationalist discourse, especially in its rhetorical fervor and social pervasiveness. One example of the resurgent nationalist discourse in the Chinese public is the recent popularization of nationalist themes in popular songs. In an illustrative study of the relationship between nationalism and popular music in China, Wai-Chung Ho states that "updated forms of

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[6] Liah Greenfeld and Jonathan Eastwood, "National Identity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics* (Eds. Charles Boix and Susan C. Stokes), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009, p. 259.

[7] Ümit Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 2000, p. 230.

[8] John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994, p. 2.

[9] Ümit Özkırımlı, *ibid*, p. 230.

[10] Zygmunt Bauman, "Soil, Blood and Identity", *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 40, No. 4, 1992, p. 678.

[11] Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" in *Questions of Cultural Identity* (Eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay)*,* Sage Publications, London, 2003, p. 4.

old revolutionary songs from before the establishment of the PRC in 1949 became popular in 1990s".[12] Apart from the Chinese national anthem, one of the most popular has been 'My Motherland' "which was the theme song for a film against US aggression and the need to supply aid to North Korea in the early 1950s" while similar old revolutionary songs like 'The East is Red' and 'The March of the Volunteers' have "emerged with a disco beat".[13]

By the same token, a new tide of resurgent nationalist discourse is discernible among the Chinese intelligentsia. In a similar transformation observed in the popular music, "Chinese intellectuals have progressed from hastily snatching ideas from the West and totally negating tradition to rediscovering the value of their own past and rejecting Western attitudes" in their turbulent quest of "*qiangguomeng*: to make China rich and strong".[14] In addition, the nationalist discourse is also pervasive among the Chinese political elite. The official discourse, as Ian Seckington notes, "is centered on the Party as the embodiment and object of nationalist, or patriotic, sentiment" and it is "reminiscent of much earlier debates about making China strong again and regaining its rightful place in the world".[15] In short, the nationalistic discourse is palpable and has received much vigor in the Chinese public, among the Chinese intelligentsia, and in the Chinese leadership.

3. Old Nationalism

Chinese nationalism initially emerged in the early 20th century, was driven by the Chinese political-military elite and intelligentsia against the Imperial Court of the Qing Dynasty, and consequently culminated in the establishment of the Chinese Republic on January 1, 1912, with the subsequent abdication of the Empress Dowager Lonyu on behalf of the last Qing emperor Puyi next month. However, the 1911 Revolution could not satisfy the expectations as it could not yield the expected developments. As Michael H. Hunt states, "new political arrangements failed to bring unity and order, not to mention legitimacy. Representative government degenerated

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[12] Wai-Chung Ho, "Social Change and Nationalism in China's Popular Songs", *Social History*, Vol. 31, No. 4, November 2006, p. 447.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Suisheng Zhao, "Chinese Intellectuals' Quest for National Greatness and Nationalistic Writing in the 1990s", *China Quarterly*, No. 152, 1997, p. 743.

[15] Ian Seckington, "Nationalism, Ideology, and China's 'Fourth Generation Leadership'", *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 14, No. 42, 2005, pp. 23-33.

rapidly into an autocracy hostile to popular participation and ineffective in foreign policy".[16] As a result, losing the Chinese Civil War, the Chinese Republic of the nationalists was to be replaced by the People's Republic of China of the communists in 1949.

Old nationalism was a result of a constellation of political, economic, and social dynamics. Politically, the Imperial Court of the Qing/Manchu dynasty was beleaguered with rampant corruption, administrative ineffectiveness, military incompetence against colonial powers, and therefore its legitimacy was severely compromised. Due to its severe administrative and military shortcomings, "at the turn of the century, China was regarded as the 'sick man of Asia'; the European powers and Japan had repeatedly defeated China at war and claimed spheres of in its territory; global commentators were contemplating China's partition".[17] The most crucial shortcoming was the incompetence of the Imperial Court to carry out political reforms. China's traditional political structure under the Qing rule was very centralized but the central government was very feeble. Thus, paradoxically, since "the centralized national government [the Imperial Court] was too weak to implement various modernization programs by itself" it "had to decentralize its power in order to create local initiatives, which often further weakened the center".[18] To sum up, the imperial government was constantly proven incapable of protecting the Chinese territory and the people, and thus lost its *raison d'être* for most of the political and military elite and intelligentsia.

Economically, China was characterized with prevailing backwardness despite multiple attempts of the state to implement comprehensive reforms. The Qing court, in an attempt to mitigate the bleak economic conditions of the country, introduced new forms of industrial development which, in turn, induced substantial dislocations in the lives of workers. Dramatic economic developments stirred social unrest, especially among factory workers, in all of the large cities of China. For example, in Hankou, a city in eastern China, due to bleak labor conditions, low wages, and ter-

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[16] Michael H. Hunt, "Chinese National Identity and the Strong State: The Late Qing-Republican Crisis" in *China's Quest for National Identity* (Eds. Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim), Cornell University Press, New York, 1993, p. 68.

[17] Joseph W. Esherick, "How the Qing Became China", in *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World* (Eds. Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Oxford, 2006, p. 229.

[18] Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China: Modernization, Identity, and International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 25.

rible housing conditions, "copper workers struck in 1905, mint employees in 1907, and thousands of street vendors, hawkers, and stall keepers, along with piece-good shop assistants, struck in 1908".[19] Economic reforms of the late Qing era could not alter the backward economic situation in the country, and worse undermined the popular legitimacy for the state.

Socially, a feeling of humiliation was rife among Chinese intellectuals and officials who promoted extensive reforms, and they attributed the humiliation of the Chinese to the debilitated rule of the Qing dynasty. The reformist intelligentsia, Spencer underlines, "shared a central patriotic ground: they wished for a rejuvenated, unified China that would have the means to cope with the three great problems of warlordism, an exploitative landlord system now [then] often described as 'feudal' in nature, and foreign imperialism".[20] Their wishes were to be futile and not realized neither by the Imperial Court nor the Republic. A second social issue pertained to the ethnic origins of the Qing Dynasty. As the rulers of the Chinese people, the Qing Dynasty was of a different ethnic origin, Manchu, and, in other words, were not Han Chinese, which made the claim of imperial rule highly questionable. Anti-Manchu rhetoric was a significant feature of the nationalist revolutionary propaganda. Discussions of why the Manchus could not be commended to rule China, Esherick mentions, "often cited a line from the ancient *Zuozhuan* text that used the common character (zu) in two terms: 'Those who are not our kind (zu) are certain to be a different mind'".[21] In short, it was conceived by the nationalists, "in order to revive the fortunes of the glorious Han nation that the Manchu yoke was thrown off".[22]

Old nationalism emerged out of the pursuit of the Chinese political-military elite and intelligentsia for countervailing power and wealth to 'save China' (*jiu guo*).[23] As Arif Dirlik states

> "Mainstream Chinese political thinking during the first decade of the century revolved around the question of how to make china into a nation, to forge a cohesive political system out of a loosely organized power structure of a bureaucratic monarchy, and to ward

[19] Jonathan D. Spencer, *The Search for Modern China,* Norton & Company, New York, 1990, p. 242.

[20] *Ibid*, p. 302.

[21] Joseph W. Esherick, *ibid*, p. 236.

[22] *Ibid*, p. 237.

[23] See, for example, Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*, Belknap Press, USA, 1964.

off the threat to the country's existence in a new world where the competition for power of expansive nation-states promised to consume those societies unable to emulate their example."[24]

As a corollary, the most urgent question was "how to develop the country economically to establish a material foundation for national strength and the conditions for political sovereignty in a world where national power seemed to be contingent upon the control of global economic resources".[25] Accordingly, the principle, to the Chinese nationalists, that seemed to rule the world was the pursuit of wealth and power, and in this pursuit, "'static' Chinese society had to be revitalized if it was to survive".[26] In brief, for the Chinese nationalists, in an instrumentalist understanding, to be a nation was required to exist and to survive as a state.

There were several defining characteristics of old nationalism. First, although old nationalism aimed at saving China, for the nationalists of the time, it was based on universal principles and values, such as parliamentary democracy and freedom of speech. For example, according to Chen Duxiu, a leading figure in the nationalist movement, to build a new state in China "the basic task is to import the foundation of Western society, that is, the new belief in equality and human rights".[27] Chinese nationalists regarded and presented the nation and the nation-state as a phase in the evolution or the progress of China, and opted for emulating other nations and nation states to resemble them; their focus was on similarity.

Second, old nationalism was critical of traditional political institutions of the state, identified them as major causes China's corrupt and ineffective governance, and called for extensive restructuring of political institutional order. The state's governance was considered illegitimate. In short, "Chinese nationalism in the early 20th century was, therefore, anti-regime, revolutionary, and progressive";[28] its focus was on change.

Third, old nationalism called for popular participation in governance and struggled for parliamentary system and constitutionalism. In Wu's words, nationalists of the time were "naturally and notably pro-democracy

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[24] Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1991, p. 47.

[25] *Ibid*, p. 48.

[26] Guoguang Wu, "From Post-Imperial to Late Communist Nationalism: Historical Change in Chinese Nationalism from May 4th to the 1990s", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2008, p. 469.

[27] Lin Yusheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1979, p. 76.

[28] Guoguang Wu, ibid, p. 473.

at both the conceptual level…and in the practice of social movements, in which Mr. Democracy served as a political and moral tutor to the students demonstrating against imperialism and the corrupt Chinese government";[29] their focus was on society.

Fourth, old nationalism, while advocating for cultural and spiritual restructuring programs, was severely critical of the Chinese tradition, and the rhetoric and the praxis of cultural iconoclasm dominated it. Some nationalist intellectuals of the time, for example, "concentrated on launching attacks against reactionary or irrelevant 'old ways' such as Confucianism, the patriarchal family, arranged marriages, or traditional education".[30] In particular, most of the nationalists brutally attacked Confucianism and related principles, such as obedience and loyalty, identifying it a main source of China's backwardness, and an obstacle to national progress; their focus was on modernity.

4. New Nationalism

Nationalism in China has resurged in the late 20th century, has been driven by the Chinese leadership, the intelligentsia, and the public, and has culminated in a rather widespread support for the rule of the Communist Party of China (CCP), which also represents the government and the state in Chinese politics. Here, I argue that although they extensively address the origins of nationalism and can be considered as necessary starting points for the study of the resurgence of nationalism, modernist theories of nationalism, in their diverse approaches, seem to be incapable of providing a more appropriate framework for investigating the resurgence of nationalism in contemporary China since their accounts are highly problematic with particular respect to the economic and social aspects of new nationalism. New nationalism observed in China is the result of a constellation of political, economic, and social dynamics.

Politically, there are two inextricable causes. First, the Chinese government has opted for appropriating the resurgent nationalism by being the political organization of it, not against it. Second, the Chinese government has opted for appropriating the resurgent nationalism as a source of legitimacy. On the first issue, Breuilly contends that "nationalism, above and beyond all else, is about politics and that politics is about power" and

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[29] Guoguang Wu, ibid, p. 474.

[30] Jonathan D. Spencer, *ibid*, p. 301.

"power, in the modern world is principally about control of the state".[31] Therefore, to Breuilly, "the central task is to relate nationalism to the objectives of obtaining and using state power. We need to understand why nationalism has played a major role in the pursuit of these objectives".[32] In accordance with Breuilly, Paul R. Brass stresses the political nature of nationalism. To Brass

> "The study of ethnicity and nationalism is in large part the study of politically induced cultural change. More precisely, it is the study of the process by which elites and counter-elites within ethnic groups select aspects of the group's culture, attach new value and meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilize the group, to defend its interests, and to *compete* with other groups.[33] [emphasis mine]"

Under the light of this discussion, my contention is that the Communist Party has opted for appropriating the resurgent nationalism so as to preclude an emergence of a rival social movement, if not an institutionalized political organization, that would compete with it for political power in Chinese politics through the utilization of the cultural aspects of the resurgent nationalism. In other words, the Communist Party's appropriation the new nationalism can be considered an attempt to eliminate potential rivalry, which would capitalize on the new nationalism, and to perpetuate its political rule as the sole political organization in the political system.

On the second issue, as several scholars have underscored, the Communist Party's appeal to the resurgent nationalism appears to be an attempt to sustain and to strengthen the base of its legitimacy within the country and abroad. First, Yasheng Huang argues that "the post-Tiananmen regime has eagerly embraced Chinese nationalism as a new fount of legitimacy… the CCP began in earnest to revive traditional values that the Maoist regime had tried for years to eliminate. The strategy has worked…"[34] In a similar vein, Suisheng Zhao contends that "the rapid decay of Communist ideology has led the Chinese Communist Party to emphasize its role as the paramount patriotic force and the guardian of national pride in order to

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[31] John Breuilly, *ibid*, p. 1.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] Paul R. Brass, quoted in Özkırımlı, *ibid*, p. 110.

[34] Yasheng Huang, "Why China will not Collapse", *Foreign Policy*, No. 99, Summer 1995, p. 57.

find a new basis of legitimacy to sustain its role".[35] The rapid decay of the Communist ideology has had repercussions in China's foreign policy as well and the Party's embrace of nationalism has been a means of addressing this international ideological decay. As one Chinese author highlights

> "Although China had already abandoned the use of its ideology as its guideline and turned to a pragmatic approach, it as unwilling to adapt itself to the Western value system. China thus encountered external ideological pressure. Facing all internal and external challenges, nationalism became a candidate for replacing the old ideology."[36]

In brief, to the Communist Party, espousing nationalism as the state's, non-official though, ideology has been expedient to address the challenges engendered by the ideological decay of communism both at home and abroad.

Economically, several scholars associated with the modernist theory of nationalism have stressed the fundamental role of economic factors in the emergence of nationalism. According to Tom Nairn, the rapid implementation of Western capitalism into the world society, the uneven industrial development between the Western core and the non-Western periphery, and the struggle of elites in the periphery to dispose domination and to achieve material progress independently of the direct intervention of the colonial core was the main impetus behind the emergence of nationalism. In Nairn's words, in the periphery

> "[t]heir rulers-or at least the newly awakened elites who now come to power-had to mobilize their societies for this historical short-cut. This meant the conscious formation of a militant, inter-class community rendered strongly (if mythically) aware of its own separate identity vis-à-vis the outside forces of domination. There was no other way of doing it."[37]

Michael Hechter, on the other hand, employs the notion of uneven development between the core and the periphery to the process of intra-state industrial development, which he refers to internal colonialism. First, to Hetcher, the uneven wave of industrial development over industrial state's

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[35] Suisheng Zhao, ibid, p. 725.

[36] Chen Chaoming, quoted in Yongnian Zheng, *ibid*, p. 52.

[37] Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain,* Big Thinking, Edinburgh, 2003, p. 327.

domestic territories created two groups among which the advantages of economic developments were unevenly distributed. To maintain its advantageous position, then, the advanced group of the domestic core resorted to discriminatory policies against the less advanced group of the domestic periphery, which promoted a 'cultural division of labor'. To Hechter, the cultural division of labor led "the social actors come to define themselves and others according to the range of roles each may be expected to play. They are aided in this categorization by the presence of visible signs".[38] Ultimately, Hechter claims, there existed the probability that the disadvantaged group, in time, reactively asserted "its own culture as equal or superior to that of the relatively advantaged core", and this helped "it conceive of itself as a separate 'nation' and seek independence".[39]

Economic foundations of nationalism are also received substantial attention in Eric J. Hobsbawm's analysis. To put it succinctly, propounding a liberal bourgeois theory of the nation, Hobsbawm asserts that the nation-state was promoted in the form of self-determination by the respective bourgeoisies of states since in the process of capitalist development nation-state performed certain economic functions and even provided certain benefits.[40]

These accounts of nationalism, however insightful they are to explain the emergence of old nationalism in China, seem to fall short of providing satisfactory explanations for the resurgence of new nationalism in China. Nonetheless, economic factors have indisputably played a role in the resurgence of new nationalism which entails a discussion of the economic dimensions of the new nationalism. Economic development constitutes the foundation of China's wealth and power, and is inextricably tied with the Communist Party's legitimacy of rule. Therefore, it is imperative for the Communist Party to prolong economic development to provide a strong foundation for the state and to sustain the confidence of the people in the rule of the Party. As a consequence, guaranteeing the *political* stability for the efficacious functioning of the 'socialist market economy' through the course of rapid economic modernization has become the paramount policy priority for the Communist Party. As Zheng observes, the opinion

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[38] Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development*, Transaction Publishers, New Jersey, 1999, p. 9.

[39] Ibid, p. 10.

[40] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 28.

among the Chinese leadership is that "while economic modernization can provide an economic base for China's power position in the world of nation-states, political stability is the most important prerequisite for economic development".[41] Accordingly, reminiscent of the characteristics of nationalist discourse discussed above, the Communist Party has adopted a discourse of patriotism which promotes the stable and uninterrupted continuation of economic development by arguing that "further economic reform needs to be implemented regardless of whatever the costs, otherwise there is no chance for China to be strong nation-state in the world of nation-states".[42] In short, the Chinese leadership is of the conviction that the nationalist discourse is required for political stability, which is required for economic development, which, in turn, is required to consolidate the legitimacy of the regime and to strengthen the state.

Socially, several scholars associated with the modernist theory of nationalism have stressed the significant role of social transformations in the emergence of nationalism. According to Ernest Gellner, nationalism is a product of industrial social organization. In particular, for Gellner, standardization and homogenization of 'high culture' in industrial societies plays the crucial role in the emergence of nationalism. Nations can emerge "when general social conditions make for standardized, homogenous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities".[43] Accordingly, nationalism is

> "essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases of the totality, of the population…It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind…"[44]

By the same token, in his seminal account of nationalism, Benedict Anderson investigates the social and cultural roots of nationalism. Anderson, in a nutshell, contends that the disintegration of religious community, with the waning of the sacred basis of legitimacy for monarchies, and with the transformation of the conception of time in the 17th century Europe,

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[41] Yongnian Zheng, *ibid*, p. 92, [emphasis in original].

[42] *Ibid*.

[43] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2006, p. 54.

[44] *Ibid*, p. 56.

a new search appeared "for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together".[45] This new way of linking was to be nationalism by virtue of print-capitalism which, to Anderson, "laid the bases for national consciousness in three distinct ways".[46] Another important work on the role of social and cultural transformations in the emergence of nationalism is Miroslav Hroch's *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* in which he contends that "the formation of the modern nation was a process in which the establishment of objective relations between people was reflected in a growth of their awareness of national identity".[47] Hroch, in his analysis, "related the process of nation-forming explicitly to the larger processes social transformation", and "by combining the study of nationalism with a framework of social transformation, he delivered a socially and culturally grounded model of political development…"[48]

These socially and culturally oriented studies of nationalism become problematic though when they are applied to the socio-cultural aspects to the resurgent new nationalism. One noticeable shortcoming is their exclusive concern with the formation of national identity while dismissing the equally important issue of the transformation of national identity. Specifically, the issue of a crisis in an already 'constructed' national identity seems to be omitted in these analyses. However, concerning the social dimensions of the resurgent Chinese nationalism, identity crisis is of great import.

First of all, Chinese national identity, since the establishment of the Republic, has continually undergone distinct definitions. While "in modern times [the Republican and the Maoist eras], ethnic, cultural and political criteria have been used to define a Chinese nation as the basis of the Chinese state which could gain entrance as a respected member into the family of nations", in contemporary China, "as a result of the implementation of the modernization programme and the dismantling of the Maoist orthodoxy, the public discourse…has become polyphonic".[49] It is the gen-

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[45] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London, 1991, p. 36.

[46] *Ibid*, p. 44.

[47] Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, p. 10.

[48] Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (Eds.), *Becoming National: A Reader*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, p. 59.

[49] Torbjörn Loden, "Nationalism Transcending the State: Changing Conceptions of Chinese Identity", in *Asian Forms of the Nation* (Eds. Stein Tonnesson and Hans Antlöv), Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Surrey, 1996, p. 294.

eral understanding among scholars of Chinese nationalism that "post-Ti-ananmen China is faced with an unprecedented national identity crisis".[50] There are two basic causes of this crisis. First is the presence of conceptual contradictions within the Chinese political and economic system. As Kim and Dittmer indicate, "the basic dilemma of post-Mao China is what to do about its apparent inability to completely embrace or reject socialism".[51] This dilemma is conspicuous, for example, in the concept 'socialist market economy' introduced by state, which in itself is an oxymoron.

A second related cause is the rampant modernization of China, which has presented the same dilemma the old nationalism encountered that modernization is associated with westernization. Directly responding to this dilemma, a new intellectual movement in contemporary China called 'the New Left' has forcefully argued that "China's modernization in the 1980s was westernization-oriented and resulted in various forms of crises such as the decline of national identity, the decline in traditional values…", and proposed a solution to the identity crisis that "if China wants to be strong its modernization has to be based on nationalism". [52] In brief, the New Left "aims to build a new national identity for China by emphasizing the 'Chineseness' of China's post-Mao reform and differentiating between Chinese civilization and Western civilization".[53]

There are several defining characteristics of new nationalism. First, even though the focus of old nationalism was on similarity, the focus of new nationalism is on difference. Chinese exceptionalism is the perhaps the most salient characteristics of new nationalism. China's path to development and modernization, it is argued, is successful and autonomously achieved in a distinctive manner. "According to nationalist writers…this path was more advanced, more socially robust and just, and more benevolent internationally (in terms of sharing prosperity with other countries), than Western paths to prosperity".[54] Similarly, this 'China advantage' argument is reiterated by the Chinese leadership in every occasion to emphasize its peaceful and non-exploitative character, and thereby to accentuate its difference from the Western road to development and modernization.

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[50] Samuel S. Kim and Lowell Dittmer, "Whither China's Quest for National Identity?" in *China's Quest for National Identity* (Eds. Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim), Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1993, p. 286.

[51] Ibid, p. 287.

[52] Yongnian Zheng, *ibid*, p. 47.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] Guoguang Wu, ibid, p. 470.

Second, even though the focus of old nationalism was on change, the focus of new nationalism is on stability as it has endorsed and reinforced the legitimacy of the existing Communist regime. For new nationalism, political stability is crucial for the continuance of economic modernization which is considered as the basis of China's greatness, and only the existing political institutions of the party state can guarantee it. For instance, Xiao Gongqin, a prominent figure in 'the New Left', asserts

> "The growth of modernization would have to rely on a powerful state; that is, through the effective government of a 'strong man', to maintain the order and peaceful stability of the entire society's development, and create a steadier social environment for the prosperity and the growth of the economy and the growth and maturity of the middle class."[55]

The reasoning goes to suggest that any attempt for political change threatens the status quo and stability. In addition, communism and the Communist Party have been bestowed legitimacy by new nationalism since, for example, it is the Communist Party which has established a successful model of modernization, and has brought peace, prosperity, and power to China.

Third, even though the focus of old nationalism was on society, the focus of new nationalism is on state. Existing communist regime and its political institutions are considered the best way to promote economic development and national progress. In the new nationalist discourse the critique of old nationalism's efforts to introduce Western political ideas and institutions occupies a significant place. The reformers of old nationalism are "criticized for being 'pre-mature', 'misleading' and 'blind' 'worshipers' of Western novelties like constitutionalism".[56]

Fourth, even though the focus of old nationalism was on modernity, the focus of new nationalism is on tradition as the traditional Chinese culture is appreciated and extolled by new nationalism. For new nationalism, "all China's contemporary shortcomings-social, cultural, economic and political- emanated from Western influences or from departure from Confucian principles", Confucianism is now identified "as one of the sources of East Asian economic success", and the imperial system of ancient China

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[55] Xiao Gongqin, quoted in Yongnian Zheng, ibid, p. 55.

[56] Guoguang Wu, ibid, p. 474.

is now "credited with economic advances and spiritual glory over 2000 years before the late 19th century".[57] In addition, new nationalism strongly urges the state to mobilize traditional cultural resources for national integration and social stability.

5. Conclusion

Resurgent nationalism is a conspicuous phenomenon in contemporary China as the rhetorical fervor and social pervasiveness of the nationalist discourse among the people, the intelligentsia, and the political leadership demonstrates. A myriad of political, economic, and social factors played a role in the emergence of both old nationalism and new nationalism. However, the nature of these factors differs substantially in each case. Another difference between old nationalism and new nationalism is that while old nationalism was driven largely by anti-state political and military elite and intelligentsia, new nationalism has been driven by all the major agents of nationalism, namely the people, the intelligentsia, and the political elite. Still, it is, of course, impossible to argue that new nationalism has gained the endorsement of all segments of the people, or the intelligentsia, or even the political leadership. Yet another difference is that while the focus of old nationalism was on similarity, change, society, and modernity, the focus of new nationalism is on difference, stability, state, and tradition.

To sum up, the resurgent Chinese nationalism has emerged against the background of political legitimacy crisis, economic modernization, and social identity crisis. Therefore, new nationalism has emerged out of three main concerns: the survival of the regime, the rise of the state, the identification of the nation. Modernist theories of nationalism provide a *necessary* framework for the study of the resurgence of nationalism since they incorporate a wide array of political, economic, and social factors. However, since their focus is on the formation of nation, nationalism, and national identity but not on the transformation of them, they do not provide a *sufficient* framework for the study of the resurgence of nationalism. Still, a new eclectic approach based on the insights of the modernist theories of nationalism would provide the much needed theoretical and analytical framework for the students of the resurgence of nationalism.

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[57] Ibid, p. 477.

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