

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

MANAGING HYPERNATIONALISM:

THE MEDIA, THE MILITARY, AND THE MAKING OF CONCILIATORY FOREIGN POLICY

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BY

YUBING SHENG

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Dedicated to my parents

and Michael

for walking with me

through the darkness

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Nationalism has always fascinated me. As part of a generation heavily influenced by China's patriotic education campaign, I grew up being taught to view the Japanese as invaders and Americans as imperialists. However, as a passionately patriotic teenager, I was completely baffled when I found out the Chinese government did not resort to militancy against the United States after the latter bombed our Embassy in Belgrade; it also puzzled me why we maintain an amicable economic relationship with Japan regardless of the historical and territorial issues. This dissertation builds upon this lifelong puzzle and advances with assistance from many brilliant minds.

I have been extremely fortunate to pursue graduate education overseas at the University of Chicago where I have come to realize that learning can be done without hierarchy. This is an environment that encourages critical thinking, constructive criticism, and inclusivity. I have learned a great deal from it. The co-chair of my committee, John Mearsheimer, once told me that I was Americanized. I was quite shocked when hearing it as I immediately started to search in my memory what I had done to “deserve” this description. Was it when I started to call him John instead of Professor Mearsheimer? Or was it when I comfortably exchanged arguments with him during the office hours and workshops. If Americanization means obtaining freedom in idea expression and removing authority influence in truth seeking, I will proudly accept it as I walk out of the University of Chicago.

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## ABSTRACT

Nationalism is often considered as a destructive force that interferes with international concessions and promotes conflicts. However, existing literature is ambiguous about how exactly nationalism affects a state's foreign policy. It largely neglects the central role of the state in controlling nationalism. To examine the independent effect of nationalism, this dissertation starts from the condition when there exists a discrepancy in foreign policy preference between the state and the nation. That is, when nationalism drives the domestic population to embrace assertiveness and violence against a foreign enemy, the state leader prefers conciliation and conflict de-escalation.

Within the scope condition, the dissertation asks when nationalism pushes the state into unwanted conflict with another state and conversely when the state is able to successfully manage nationalism so as to fulfill its preference of conciliation. I present a two-step argument to explain the variation in state's success or failure in nationalism management. The main argument is that *whether the state is able to manage nationalism and make concessions depends on whether it obtains assistance from the pivot supporter—the media or the military*. The second level of argument concerns when it is the media or the military that plays the pivot role. I argue that the pivot-ness of the media or the military is a function of the means—voting or popular resistance—the nationalist opposition stages to challenge the state foreign policy, which is largely conditioned by a state's regime type. Utilizing a medium-N cross-national study of 47 cases, I find a consistent pattern that it is the side the pivot supporter takes—which I call *domestic alliance structure*—that determines the success or failure of nationalism management. I then rely on comparative studies of two sets of cases to test the causal mechanism. The first set is selected among democracies, namely Britain during the 1853-4 Crimean Crisis and Britain during the pre-WWII Crisis; the second consists of cases of autocracies, namely China during the 1931-2 Manchuria Crisis and

China during the 1935-7 North China Crisis against Japan. The comparative case studies further demonstrate that it is the alliance structure that determines the success or failure in the state's nationalism management, rather than other widely acknowledged factors such as regime type, international context, or resistance capacity.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

*No man who has taken such a stand before the attentive eyes and ears of the world can in full public view agree to a compromise without looking like a fool and a knave.*

-----Hans Morgenthau<sup>1</sup>

*You'll need a strong political decision to accept any compromises now.*

-----said by Tao Jingzhou, business and dispute resolution lawyer in Beijing amid the US-China trade talk in May 2019

### 1.1 The Puzzle

Since 2018, the trade war between the United States and China has been accompanied with rising nationalist sentiment among the Chinese public. Tensions drastically increased after the U.S. President Donald Trump made public threats to hike tariffs. The alleged American involvement in assisting Hong Kong activists and the US's sanctions on China's human rights abuses against Muslims in Xinjiang Province further heightened Chinese nationalism. Chinese public responded with boycotts against the American signature product iPhones and outbursts of indignation across multiple social media platforms.<sup>2</sup> The most popular Chinese social media platform, Weibo, has circulated an unusual amount of nationalist content expressing Chinese people's contempt and hatred against America.<sup>3</sup> Slogan such as "we are open for negotiation, but we are also prepared for

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<sup>1</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 1st ed., rev. (New York: Knopf, 1948), p. 441.

<sup>2</sup> For boycott against iPhone, see for instance, Cadell and Horwitz, "Paying the price: China shoppers, stung by slowdown, take bite out of Apple", *Reuters*, Jan 3, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-apple-forecast-china-reaction/paying-the-price-china-shoppers-stung-by-slowdown-take-bite-out-of-apple-idUSKCN10X0U0>; Fifield et al., "China's judgment on Huawei case: Anger, patriotism and iPhone boycotts", *the Washington Post*, Dec. 12, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/chinas-judgment-on-huawei-case-anger-patriotism-and-iphone-boycotts/2018/12/11/5861371c-fa54-11e8-8642-c9718a256cbd\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.67ba243aaf28](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/chinas-judgment-on-huawei-case-anger-patriotism-and-iphone-boycotts/2018/12/11/5861371c-fa54-11e8-8642-c9718a256cbd_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.67ba243aaf28).

<sup>3</sup> For instance, one of the popular memes is that "all the trade wars are paper tigers", see Yanan Wang and Sam McNeil, "China voices strength, pushes nationalism around trade war", APNews, May 15, 2019, <https://apnews.com/f887e7219a6d4269989e5f527ccb971b>.

war”<sup>4</sup>, published by the People’s Daily on Weibo on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2019, was reposted 140K times with 483K likes, which is about 20 times higher than the usual amount of likes the posts of People’s Daily on Weibo would get during the month.

Will nationalism among the public push China to escalate the trade war to actual militancy? Many worry that Chinese nationalism is a key driver for China’s unwillingness to back down in the trade talks. Some policy analysts argue that the nationalist feelings in China could narrow the room for compromise. Even if it is in China’s interest to make certain concessions to the US during the trade talks, nationalist sentiment could limit the Chinese leaders’ ability to back down, as evident by Chinese President Xi Jinping’s last-minute switch leading to the breakdown of the trade talk in May 2019.<sup>5</sup> The consequence of the trade war between the two great powers can be dire. As some pundits warn, the prolonged trade war between the US and China could spark hot war worse than WWI.<sup>6</sup>

These concerns for the war-prone impact of Chinese nationalism is by no means unfounded. Nor is nationalism’s disruption of international concessions a China-specific phenomenon. Historically, nationalism contributed to the abortion of negotiation efforts and the escalation of interstate conflict in many cases. Over a century ago, anti-American sentiment consistently prevented Mexico from reaching settlements with the United States over the Mexico-Texas border disputes. Today, we still have numerous lingering territorial disputes in other areas such as the Kashmir, the West Bank, Crimea, and the Sakhalin Islands. Moreover, nationalism has been

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<sup>4</sup> The original Chinese text for the line is “打，奉陪到底！谈，大门敞开！”.

<sup>5</sup> Chris Buckley and Keith Bradsher, “How Xi’s Last-Minute Switch on U.S.-China Trade Deal Upended It”, *The New York Times*, May 16, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/16/world/asia/trade-xi-jinping-trump-china-united-states.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Danielle Wallace, “Kissinger, in Beijing, warns US-China trade war could spark conflict worse than WWI”, *Fox News*, November 21, 2019, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/kissinger-china-us-trade-war-foothills-cold-war-world-war-one>. See also “Kissinger fears hot war between US and China”, *Asia Times*, November 21, 2019, <https://www.asiatimes.com/2019/11/article/kissinger-fears-hot-war-between-us-and-china/>.

associated with the bloodiest interstate wars in history including the World War I, the 1854 Crimean War, and the 1937 Sino-Japanese War. It is not surprising that some scholars consider nationalism as a powerful ideology.<sup>7</sup>

Regardless of how negatively nationalism has been viewed, the impact of nationalism on a state's conciliatory foreign policy remains a puzzle for International Relations studies. Statistics shows that concessions in the age of nationalism are not only attainable but in fact quite common phenomena. According to the territorial dispute dataset composed by Paul Huth, which focuses exclusively on territorial disputes from 1945 to 2000, 93 out of 164 (about 56.7%) ended with settlements and among the 93 settlements, 86 were made through bilateral negotiations rather than through arbitration.<sup>8</sup> The result shows that even in territorial disputes which often are considered as indivisible and involve strong nationalist sentiments<sup>9</sup>, concessions were frequently made. The more conservative dataset—the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) dataset (Version 4.3), shows that 139 out of 2,292 (about 6%) militarized disputes from 1816 to 2010 were resolved with mutual compromise.<sup>10</sup> Because the MID dataset only records interstate disputes that involved at least threat to use force by one state, one would expect the number of concessions in overall disputes be greater and the rate of concessions higher. This is not only because the overall disputes include

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<sup>7</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018); Stephen Walt, "You Can't Defeat Nationalism, So Stop Trying", *Foreign Policy*, June 4, 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/06/04/you-cant-defeat-nationalism-so-stop-trying/>; Jessica Chen Weiss, *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> The number is based on both the MID dataset and the territorial dispute dataset provided by Paul Huth. According to Paul Huth, from 1945 to 2000, 93 out of 164 territorial disputes ended with settlements. 86 out of the 93 settlements were made by the two participants. See Paul Huth territorial dispute dataset, as cited in M. Taylor Fravel, *Territorial and Maritime Boundary Disputes in Asia* (United States, North America: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> For issue indivisibility, see James Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995), pp. 379–414.; Hensel Paul R. and Mitchell Sara McLaughlin, "Issue Indivisibility and Territorial Claims," *GeoJournal* 64, no. 4 (January 1, 2005), pp: 275–85.

<sup>10</sup> Palmer, Glenn, Vito D'Orazio, Michael R. Kenwick, and Roseanne W. McManus. Forthcoming. "Updating the Militarized Interstate Dispute Data: A Response to Gibler, Miller, and Little." *International Studies Quarterly*.

non-militarized disputes, but also due to the increased ease in making concessions when the threat or actual use of force is not resorted to.

Some empirical cases further help illustrate the puzzle. These cases demonstrate that many states were capable of making conciliatory foreign policies and avoiding conflict escalation in the face of anti-compromising nationalism. For instance, in 1839, the United States negotiated boundary concessions with the United Kingdom during the Aroostook confrontation in spite of anti-compromising sentiment among the Maine public.<sup>11</sup> Germany backed down during the second Moroccan Crisis in the middle of rising anti-British nationalism within the German society.<sup>12</sup> From 1937 to 1939, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain made a series of concessions—often referred to as “the Appeasement policy”—to the German Chancellor Adolf Hitler leading to the latter’s invasion of Central and Eastern Europe. While there was strong anti-appeasement sentiment domestically, Chamberlain nevertheless managed to keep conceding to Hitler’s demands without suffering much domestic cost.<sup>13</sup> The most recent telling example is that regardless of the great animosity harbored by the Chinese public against Japan, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime has been willing to and capable of pursuing conciliatory policies with Japan at the expense of national credentials.<sup>14</sup>

The variations in these statistical and historical illustrations present the question this dissertation seeks to answer: *Under what conditions does nationalism constrain states’ ability to*

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<sup>11</sup> Donald A. Rakestraw, *Daniel Webster: Defender of Peace* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914.*, ed. G. P. Gooch and Harold William Vazeille Temperley, VII vols. (London, 1932).

<sup>13</sup> Richard Cockett, *Twilight of Truth: Chamberlain, Appeasement, and the Manipulation of the Press* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> Erica Downs and Phillip Saunders provide a detailed analysis on the complex relationship between Chinese nationalism and its restrained policies towards Japan. They argue that the Chinese government proved willing to prevent the territorial disputes from harming bilateral relations. Erica Strecker Downs and Phillip C. Saunders, “Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands,” *International Security* 23, no. 3 (December 1, 1998), pp. 114–46.



*make concessions?* If nationalism is considered as such a powerful force driving domestic opposition against international concessions, why did it push states to escalate interstate conflict only in some cases but not others? And why have some states proven capable of insulating nationalism's influence while others failed? Answering these questions not only enables students of nationalism to unravel the actual effect of nationalism on a state's foreign policy but also generates important implications for conflict escalation and de-escalation.

## 1.2 Nationalism vs. Hypernationalism

One claim this dissertation intends to advance is that nationalism interferes international concession and promotes international conflict only when it turns into hypernationalism, an extreme version of nationalism which advocates demonization and the use of violence against others. While "nationalism" often involves the self-other comparison, it does not necessarily entail the propensity for violence. It is hypernationalism that propels the public to become uncompromising and legitimizes the use of force against the adversary state.

The existing definitions of nationalism largely encompass two dimensions: 1) *the identity dimension*—nationalism being an ideology held by a large group of people—referred to as "nation"—identifying with each other based on commonalities in history, language, culture, or ethnicity; and 2) the *political goal dimension*—this ideology having a political goal of achieving or sustaining political sovereignty.<sup>15</sup> This definition denotes that the formation of nationalism involves individuals' identifying with the "same kind" at a national level. Since humans are

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<sup>15</sup> For classic definitions of nationalism, see Ernest Gellner, who refers nationalism to "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent". Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism, Second Edition*, 2 edition (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009); See also John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2014), pp. 400-401; Barry R. Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (October 1, 1993), p. 81; Ernst B. Haas, "What Is Nationalism and Why Should We Study It?," *International Organization* 40, no. 3 (Summer 1986), pp. 727-8. The definition I adopt emphasizes both the identity and political dimension of nationalism. I would like to thank John Mearsheimer for providing the insights.

essentially social beings, it is natural for them to identify with and form a sense of a belonging to a group with shared and distinct feature. This can happen even when members do not know each other. In Benedict Anderson's words, nations are "imagined communities" where strangers recognize each other as belonging to the same group.<sup>16</sup>

However, as other historians and anthropologists have discovered, the construction and consolidation of national identity is not just through seeking the commonalities, but also through the making of difference and exclusion.<sup>17</sup> In Peter Sahlins's words, national identity is defined "by the social or territorial boundaries drawn to distinguish the collective self and its implicit negation, the other".<sup>18</sup> Or simply, we decide who we are by reference to who we are not. This comparison inevitably involves moral judgement since it is natural tendency for human beings to take pride in their own nation while treating others as inferior. As Derrida puts it, the self-other relationship is no different from the black-white relationship, which is always based on establishing a violent hierarchy between two resultant poles.<sup>19</sup> Thus, while nationalism promotes solidarity from within, it also creates cleavage between one nation and the others.

In times of international disputes or crises, the relatively benign nationalism could turn into the more malevolent *hypernationalism*. Hypernationalism, to put plainly, is an extreme version of nationalism. As first articulated by Mearsheimer in his article "Back to the Future", hypernationalism is a belief that other nations are both inferior and threatening and "must therefore

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<sup>16</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Revised Edition*, Revised edition (London ; New York: Verso, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> See for instance, Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, Phronesis (London: Verso, 1990); Paul. Du Gay and Stuart. Hall, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Sage, 1996); Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, Reprint edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 270-71.

<sup>19</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, p. 33.

be dealt with harshly”.<sup>20</sup> This conceptualization indicates that hypernationalism displays two distinct features that separate it from the relatively benign and peaceful nationalism.

The first feature, as often expressed in the idea of Chauvinism, is a belief in national uniqueness and superiority while others are inferior and evil. The manifestation of hypernationalism is more than self-other comparison as nationalism entails. Rather, it presents a dichotomized view of self and others, allocating one’s own nation and others’ to contesting sides while rejecting the consideration of others’ complex motives or nature. Compared to nationalism, hypernationalism takes the black-white distinction to an absolute level, promoting “Self” as the unquestionable good and reducing the “Other” as the unforgivable evil. More dangerously, because the concept of “Other” is fuzzy it can be used against anybody advocating policies threatening the interests of the “Self” or supporting accommodation with the adversary state.

The second feature is that groups with hypernationalism display the propensity for violence against other nations. This feature of hypernationalism finds its parallel in the term “Jingoism”, which means a form of aggressive foreign policy advocating the use of threats or actual forces to defend one’s national interests.<sup>21</sup> The propensity for violence can be justified by two mentalities created during the rise of hypernationalism. One is the *victim mentality*, which means a nation may perceive itself as a victim under the threats imposed by the other. The current or past sufferings, such as economic difficulties or discriminations, can be attributed to the wrongdoings by the other group. Such victimization, magnified by demonization of the enemy, strengthens the feelings of fear and hatred. Violence is then justified as a tool of resistance and vengeance against the group

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<sup>20</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War,” *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990), p. 21; Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp.400-401. Ashmore, Jussim and Wilder 2001; William Sumner, *Folkways* (Boston: Grinn, 1906); Daniel Druckman, “Nationalism, Patriotism, and Group Loyalty: A Social Psychological Perspective,” *Mershon International Studies Review* 38, no. 1 (1994), pp. 43–68.

<sup>21</sup> Catherine Soanes (ed.), *Compact Oxford English Dictionary for University and College Students* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 546.

having inflicted such sufferings. The other is the *knight mentality*. Rather than treating themselves as victims, groups possessing this mentality consider themselves entitled with the responsibility to execute justice and punish the morally inferior others. These groups demonstrate great confidence in their own identity. In contrast, they refer to adversaries as barbarians or bullies with inferior morality, lesser culture, or cruel behaviors. Violence is romanticized as a tool to punish injustice, protect the weak, and defend the honor. As historian Kingsley Martin vividly described the British hypernationalism at the eve of the 1854 Crimean War, “the people enter war willingly, moved by generous passion to revenge injustice or protect the weak” and the war “must appear a battle between right and might”.<sup>22</sup>

How does the relatively benign nationalism develop into hypernationalism? While hypernationalism may occur spontaneously due to an exogenous shock such as an international dispute or crisis, it is more than often a product of stimulation by the state or other political elites. This is because the escalation of nationalism to hypernationalism requires the people to not only perceive a high level of threat from the adversary nation, but also to engage themselves in widespread and enduring demonization of that nation. Due to the public’s short attention span complicated by varieties of information they receive, their spontaneous responses without external stimuli could hardly last long enough to produce hypernationalism.

Indeed, nationalism is frequently exploited by the state or its political opponents instrumentally. Studies have shown that state leaders are often responsible for instigating nationalist sentiment for political purposes. For instance, some find the state leader uses hypernationalism to divert attention from the domestic problems, such as economic downturn or

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<sup>22</sup> Kingsley Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston; a Study of Public Opinion in England before the Crimean War*. (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1924), p. 21.

political crisis.<sup>23</sup> Or the state may encourage hypernationalism to fulfill its expansionist goals which may otherwise be rejected.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, state leaders may purposefully advocate hypernationalism to signal their resolve and increase the international bargaining leverage.<sup>25</sup> Apart from the state leaders, the political opposition may also arouse hypernationalism out of their parochial political interests. Inciting hypernationalism is an extremely useful strategy to mobilize a wide base of popular support and fend off political rivals, including the incumbent state leaders.

### 1.3 The Limits of Existing Literature on Nationalism and Conflict

Existing literature on nationalism and war is strikingly ambiguous about how exactly nationalism affects a state's foreign policy. Most of the research on nationalism and conflict have failed to address the problem that the role of a war-intended state in instigating nationalism may be responsible for both the rise of nationalism and the escalation of conflict. Few have demonstrated the genuine impact of nationalism independent of a state's will.<sup>26</sup>

One set of the literature considers nationalism as a cause of war due to its powerful effect in boosting domestic unity. In that case, national leaders may utilize nationalism as a tool to serve their own political interests, such as winning the internal political competition or diverting the

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<sup>23</sup> For using nationalism to help with domestic rule, Jr. V. P. Gagnon, "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (December 1, 1994), pp. 130–66; Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," in Michael E. Brown, *Ethnic Conflict and International Security* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 79–101; Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (July 1, 1995), pp. 5–38; Jack S. Levy, "The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique," in Manus I. Midlarsky, *Handbook of War Studies* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989; Ross A. Miller, "Domestic Structures and the Diversionary Use of Force," *American Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 3 (August 1, 1995), pp. 760–85.

<sup>24</sup> See Jack Snyder, Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991); Stephen van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security* 18, no. 4 (April 1, 1994), pp. 30–33.

<sup>25</sup> For using nationalism to signal resolve in international bargaining, see Weiss, *Powerful Patriots*.

<sup>26</sup> An exception is Gruffydd-Johns' recent article, in which the author recognized the endogeneity problem that states' attempts to utilize nationalism to serve their war purposes may be the very reason that causes nationalism to rise. To address this issue, the author uses annual nationalism celebration and its impact on ensuing conflicts to test the independent impact of nationalism. See Jamie Gruffydd-Jones, "Dangerous Days: The Impact of Nationalism on Interstate Conflict," *Security Studies* 26, no. 4 (October 2, 2017), pp. 698–728.

public attention from the illegitimate domestic rule. Snyder, for instance, argues that state leaders use nationalism conveniently to justify wars with neighbors and to thus divert attention from domestic problems.<sup>27</sup> Nationalism also boosts unity among the soldiers, which contributes to an increased chance for war. According to Posen, nationalism enormously improves the state's ability to mobilize the creative energies and morale of its soldiers. The increased quantity and quality of soldiers as well as better tactics greatly enhanced the state's war-fighting capability.<sup>28</sup> Thus, a state equipped with strong nationalism might take the window of opportunity to initiate interstate war against another state that has not yet imitated the manufacturing of nationalism.

The socio-psychological studies tend to view nationalism from a different perspective by emphasizing the construction of common identity through the making of difference and exclusion.<sup>29</sup> The result is ethnocentrism, which sees anything that deviates from the self-group as wrong and in extreme case, challenged.<sup>30</sup> Ethnocentrism can be strengthened when a group collectively remembers the perceived wrongdoings or sufferings such as inequality and economic difficulties, either in the past or present, are inflicted by another group.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Jack L. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000).

<sup>28</sup> Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power."

<sup>29</sup> See for instance, Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, Phronesis (London: Verso, 1990); Paul. Du Gay and Stuart. Hall, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Sage, 1996); Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>30</sup> Daniel Druckman, "Nationalism, Patriotism, and Group Loyalty: A Social Psychological Perspective," *Mershon International Studies Review* 38, no. 1 (1994), pp. 43–68; Richard Ashmore, Lee Jussim and David Wilder eds., *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 17; Seymour Feshbach, "Individual Aggression, National Attachment, and the Search for Peace: Psychological Perspectives," *Aggressive Behavior* 13, no. 5 (1987), pp. 315–25.

<sup>31</sup> Michel Chossudovskym, *Ameriac's "War on Terror"*, 2nd edition (Global Research, 2005); Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2nd edition (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press), 2002.

The final school emphasizes the political goal dimension of nationalism and argues it is nations' ultimate goal to have their own state and sustain self-determination.<sup>32</sup> The desire to achieve nation-state "congruence" incentivizes nations without states to strive for self-determination; it also urges the states with lost territory or diasporas to fight for unification. As a result, the political goal dimension of nationalism creates room for many types of conflicts, such as pan-national unification, territorial disputes, separatist, or irredentist conflicts.<sup>33</sup>

The above arguments are uniformly ambiguous about whether war is resulted from nationalism *per se* or from the state itself that has determined for war and utilizes nationalism conveniently as a support-rallying instrument. This ambiguity is largely due to their shared implicit assumption that the state either agrees with the conflict-prone nationalist demands or plays a secondary role in shaping a group's behavior. But in reality, it is quite common for states to prefer a peace-prone foreign policy that goes against nationalist demands.

Optimal foreign policy requires concession making. One main reason is that concessions help states avoid armed conflict which they sometimes do not afford. States may lack the military capability to defend the frontier, not to mention win the offensive. Even if the state stands a good chance to win, the cost of conflict may be prohibitively high. Specifically, the very act of getting involved in war could exhaust the state's economic resources or manpower, which causes further downturn of its economy. Or state leaders prefer to preserve the use of military against domestic opposition rather than devote the military sources against foreign adversary. Moreover, making concessions may serve the true interests of the country because it brings mutual benefits. For

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<sup>32</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism, Second Edition*; Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion*.

<sup>33</sup> Andreas Wimmer, *Waves of War: Nationalism, State Formation, and Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Stephen M. Saideman and R. William Ayres, *For Kin or Country: Xenophobia, Nationalism, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Benjamin Miller, *States, Nations, and the Great Powers: The Sources of Regional War and Peace*, vol. 104, Cambridge Studies in International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War."

example, conciliation may promote normalization of trade relations, encourage foreign investments, and avoid the economic and human costs of conflict escalation.

Thus, there often exists a discrepancy between the nationalist demands for assertiveness against foreign adversary and the state leader's preference for conciliatory foreign policy for pragmatic reasons. This discrepancy serves as a key scope condition on which my theory is based. Just as power in general is defined as the ability to get another individual to do something that individual would not otherwise do,<sup>34</sup> the power of nationalism is best observed when the state does not want to escalate an interstate conflict but nationalist opposition pushes it to do so.

#### **1.4 Theory of Hypernationalism Management and Concession Making**

In order to disentangle the independent effect of nationalism on foreign policy, my theory starts with the aforementioned scope condition that there exists discrepancy in foreign policy preference between the state and the domestic nationalist opposition. The theory seeks provide a systematic explanation for the conditions under which the state is able to control hypernationalism and make the preferred conciliatory foreign policy. It not only acknowledges the violent propensity of hypernationalism in interfering with conciliation, but also emphasizes the state's agency in managing the domestic nationalist influence. It thus provides a novel perspective which sees the foreign policy decision as an outcome of a contest between two forces: the constraints from domestic nationalist opposition and the management of hypernationalist impact by the state.

My theory consists of two levels of arguments. The central argument is that *whether the state is able to manage hypernationalism and make concessions depends on whether it obtains assistance from the pivot supporter—the media or the military*. This main level of argument answers the question what shapes the outcome of state's international concession in the face of

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<sup>34</sup> Robert A. Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* 2, no. 3 (2007), pp. 202-3.



domestic nationalist opposition. It introduces the independent variable—*domestic alliance structure*—that describes a scenario when a particular pivot supporter takes the side with either the state or the nationalist opposition. The independent variable has four different values leading to varying outcomes.

Specifically, when the media allies with the state, it can assist the state with several information manipulation strategies to manage hypernationalism. To begin with, the media can launch information campaign aimed at promoting news or opinions in favor of the state's foreign policy while discrediting the oppositional views. The state may also rely on media assistance to conduct censorship and to divert public attention so as to diffuse or attenuate nationalist sentiment. In contrast, when the media sides with the nationalist opposition, it greatly increases the latter's influence by promoting nationalist opinions and enlarging the exposure of the nationalist sentiment as well as activities. It also helps disrupt the state's strategies of information manipulation by revealing secret nationalism-provoking information to the public. As a result, media coverage in support of the nationalists helps the latter gain more supporters, which may exert real pressure on the state leaders to withdraw a conciliatory foreign policy.

When the state obtains military support, it is equipped with the coercive ability to deter as well as defeat nationalist opposition, even when the latter takes the form of mass, organized, and potentially violent actions. In contrast, the consequence of military supporting nationalist public can be equally dire for the state. The military could offer passive support by disobeying the state order and allowing nationalist sentiment or activities to sustain and gain momentum. Or it can render active support through military revolt or coup which directly threatens the state leader's tenure or life. Both active or passive military support of the nationalist opposition can result in the state's withdrawal of concessional foreign policy.

The second level of argument specifies when the media as opposed to the military plays the pivot role. I argue that the pivot-ness of the media or the military is largely a function of the means the nationalist opposition stages to challenge the state. The nationalist opposition may rely on several approaches to express their nationalist demands from peaceful voting and protests to violent popular resistance. The state, accordingly, responds with either information manipulation or physical repression. When the state and the nationalist opposition primarily engage each other through information campaign and manipulation, the media plays the pivot role for either side to prevail. In contrast, if the two lead actors try to influence each other through violent means, the military becomes the pivot supporter. Whether the state and the nationalist opposition influence each other through peaceful or violent means is largely conditioned by a state's regime type.

In democracies, the media, as opposed to the military, plays the pivot role. This is because democracies are legally and culturally constrained to use coercive repression against nationalist opposition. Instead, states rely on informational strategies to shape public opinion and to gain supporters for their policies. The media serves as the main ally for the state to carry out information manipulation strategies. In the meantime, the general public in democracies is empowered with votes to constrain its leaders. For the nationalist public to exert influence, they need to mobilize enough supporters from the society who will vote against the state leader so as to create the pressure for policy change. To mobilize potential supporters requires massive exposure of the nationalist views and dissemination of information in support of such views. The media's ability to disseminate information to the mass public makes it a key ally for the nationalist opposition.

In autocracies, the military becomes the pivot supporter because dictators are much less constrained from using state repression. It has to be clarified that autocracies may rely on the media conduct information manipulation strategies when nationalism is at the early stage of verbal

expression. In fact, it is common practice for today's autocracies to engage in routine information manipulation in order to consolidate their rules. However, in case information manipulation fails and when the expression of nationalism takes the form of large, organized, and even violent uprisings, military support is essential in order for the state to deter and defeat the opposition and defend its preferred policy. As for the nationalist opponents dealing with dictators, media support is unlikely to bring about decisive pressure against the dictator's foreign policy making. After all, dictators can resort to the military to repress the opposition no matter how broad the support base for nationalist view is. Instead, the nationalist opponents need to obtain support from the very pillar—the military—the state relies on to repress the opposition.

Mixed polities introduce a slightly complicated situation since either the media or the military may play the pivot role. This is because unlike autocracies, mixed polities allow elections for selecting state leaders, which provides their public some leverage to influence a state's policy. Yet unlike liberal democracies, they are often less constrained by liberal values and thus more willing to conduct state repression in the face of nationalist opposition. Thus, to determine whether the media or the military becomes the pivot supporter, an additional variable needs to be introduced when examining the pivot supporter in mixed polities. A surveying of empirical cases finds that whether the media or the military plays the pivot role in mixed polities depends on largely on whether the nationalist opponents adopt voting or popular uprisings to influence a state's foreign policy. When the public find elections frequently manipulated and their votes impose little constraints on the state leader, they may resort to popular protests or uprisings which poses higher threats to the state and invites the intervention by the military. In this case, the military would play a pivot role. However, if the public can largely rely on voting to make their state leader accountable in foreign policy making, military involvement is less likely to occur. Instead, information

becomes the key for the nationalists or the state to gain supporters and the media support is essential for either side to prevail.

In sum, I provide a new theoretical framework, one viewing foreign policy making as an outcome of contest between the state and its domestic nationalist opposition. The pivot supporter—the media or the military—acts as a game changer in the contest. States obtaining assistance from the pivot supporter are more likely to succeed in insulating domestic influence and making international concessions. Unlike regime type arguments and international context theories that overemphasize the determinant role of structure, this theory takes into account the agency of both the state and the domestic opposition in explaining the making of conciliatory foreign policy. In this sense, my argument is in line with Robert Putnam’s logic of two-level games which treats foreign policy as a result of the entanglement of international effects and domestic constraints.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, I bring into the analysis a new actor, the pivot supporter, which has largely been neglected in the existing studies. I highlight the strategic benefits of having the pivot allies which could alter the balance of power between the two contestants. Last but not least, unlike many who consider compromise as a sign of weakness, this thesis sends a counterintuitive message that *states have to be strong domestically in order to be soft internationally*.

### **1.5 Alternative Explanations for Managing Hypernationalism**

The fields of International Relations and Comparative Politics offer relatively few systematic explanations of the conditions under which states successfully control nationalist influence or when nationalism constrains states’ concession making. Prominent theories in International

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<sup>35</sup> Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988), pp. 427–60.

Relations or Comparative Politics which do provide insights in explaining the outcomes can be divided into three categories: regime type, international context, as well as resistance capacity.

Regime type arguments focus exclusively on differences between states' institutional structures when explaining a state's international behavior. Taking various forms, these arguments concur that because the public in democracies have reliable means to punish their leaders for bad policies, democracies are more accountable. The implication is that once domestic nationalist sentiment is aroused, democracies are more likely to be constrained by domestic influence and less likely to make concessions in a dispute. In contrast, autocracies, with extra tool of repression against domestic dissidents, are given free rein to conduct foreign policy that suits best the state leaders' interests. However, regime type arguments neglect that states may have certain agency to manipulate and insulate domestic influence. As a result, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, they cannot satisfactorily account for the cases where some democracies successfully made conciliatory foreign policies in spite of uncompromising public opinion.

International context theories emphasize the role of international structure in shaping a state's international behavior. Its theoretical foundation can be traced back to structural realism with the essential idea that the structure of international system can shape a variety of state's behaviors. Unlike structural realism that leaves domestic politics unexplored, a new set of international context theories tries to fill the gap and unravels the details of foreign policy making by looking at the interactive impacts of the external threat environment and domestic politics. The main logic of these theories is that whether domestic politics plays a role in international politics depends on the opening and closing of opportunities created by the international structure. For instance, high level of external threat closes the opportunity for domestic politics to reign in because highly threatening international contexts facilitate domestic cohesion, which reduces the challenge the

state leader faces from domestic opposition.<sup>36</sup> This set of theories are particularly successful in explaining cases where state leaders are already making war plans. Under this condition, higher external threat indeed enhances domestic unity and reduces the role of domestic politics. However, these theories struggle to explain cases where state leaders prefer a conciliatory foreign policy, which can become the very source of domestic disunity and political struggle. Under this circumstance, whether the state is able to make its preferable response to the external threat remains unclear.

Finally, resistance capability theories concentrate on studying the capabilities or agency of the opposition groups in shaping the resistance effectiveness against a state's policy or the state itself. This set of arguments concurs that a certain feature of the resistance group, such as organizational level, membership base, ideology, violent or non-violent means of resistance, or acquisition of foreign support, can determine the success or failure of the resistance.<sup>37</sup> Although resistance capability theories bridge the gap left by classic international context theories in that they explore the constraining effect of domestic groups on a state's foreign policy, their explanations fail to take into account the state's agency as a crucial factor to alleviate such constraints. The one-sided story they provide find it difficult to account for cases, such as the 1931

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<sup>36</sup> For external environment affects civil-military relationship, see Michael C. Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); for external threat produces the rally-around-the-flag effect, see John E. Mueller, "Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson," *The American Political Science Review* 64, no. 1 (March 1, 1970), pp. 18–34; see also William D. Baker and John R. Oneal, "Patriotism or Opinion Leadership?: The Nature and Origins of the 'Rally 'Round the Flag' Effect," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 5 (October 1, 2001), pp. 661–87.

<sup>37</sup> See for instance Stephen van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security* 18, no. 4 (April 1, 1994), pp. 5–39; Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4 (October 1, 2004), pp. 563–95; Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power." Posen argues that state collapse leaves ethnic groups no other choice than to attack each other to prevent being attacked first; See also James D. Fearon and David Latin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003), pp. 75–90. The two authors argue that civil wars break out when a government is too weak to suppress the ubiquitous discontent of its population.

and 1935 student movements in China to be explained in detail in Chapter 5, where different resistance groups with varying features uniformly end up inflicting little constraints over the state.

## 1.6 Contribution

A legitimate question to ask about the implication of this project is why should we the impact of nationalism on foreign policy separately from other forms of domestic influence over state's policy. After all, nationalism is but part of the general public opinion, which should work similarly as other forms of domestic influence. There already exists a rich literature on the impact of domestic constraints on a state's policy. What then makes the impact of nationalism on foreign policy different?

One of the most important reasons is that unlike general public opinion, nationalism can turn into an extreme idea, i.e. hypernationalism, that encourages noncooperation and violence among groups. During the second half of the twentieth century, over three-quarters of all full-scale wars were fought either by nationalists seeking statehood or by ethnic groups striving for dominance within an existing state.<sup>38</sup> Nowadays, nationalism persists to be a factor for instability. It is allegedly to have driven the British decision to leave the European Union; intensified the animosity between India and Pakistan; and prolonged the maritime dispute between China and Japan. Due to its potential power in provoking conflicts, the impact of nationalism requires special attention and separate studies.

Additionally, whether the state is able to insulate the influence of nationalism presents a hard case for the study of domestic constraints over foreign policy. Unlike public opinions on most domestic policy issues which tend to be divided along the lines of partisanship, race, religion, or

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<sup>38</sup> For more detailed statistics and graph, please see Wimmer, *Waves of War: Nationalism, State Formation, and Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World*, pp. 2-3.

social identities, nationalism often transcends these domestic cleavages. The expression of nationalism as a special type of public opinion is more unified and endorsed by more people within the country. As a result, it is often more challenging for the state to manipulate nationalist sentiment or to control nationalist movement than shaping public opinion over other policy issues. If a theory explains the conditions under which the state can manage nationalism, this theory should be able to explain the conditions under which the state insulates domestic influence over other issues as well.

The dissertation contributes to several ongoing theoretical and empirical debates in international relations studies. First and foremost, it makes a first attempt to delineate the independent impact of nationalism on state's foreign policy and systematically examine the condition under which such impact can be successfully exerted. Second, its findings challenge the validity of audience cost argument as well as the rational actor assumption many international relations theories are based on. Finally, the theoretical framework provided in this study helps policy-makers to better understand the impact of nationalism on China's foreign policy, which eventually contributes to the broader debate on whether China will rise peacefully.

**1) Rethinking Nationalism and War.** As previously discussed, the studies of nationalism and war seldomly focus on the none-events, nor do they pay enough attention to the cases where state interest and nationalist demands are not aligned. My dissertation tries to solve this problem by examining the scenario when national demand and state interest are in conflict. That is, while the public do not want their leaders to back down in an international dispute, the leaders prefer otherwise. Only when national demand and state interest are different can we be certain the foreign policy outcome is due to one side's influence over the other. Moreover, this dissertation makes the first attempt to systematically examine the conditions under which nationalism would work to push



the state into conflicts. By examining the 47 cases where states attempted to preserve peace in militarized interstate disputes but face domestic opposition, my finding shows that nationalism can indeed influence a state's foreign policy, but always. The nationalistic public are able to force the state leaders withdraw conciliatory foreign policy when pivot supporters side with them.

**2) Reevaluating the Efficacy of the Audience Cost.** In addition, this dissertation highlights that the state has certain ability to manipulate and control domestic influence and such ability is not determined by regime types. By making this claim, I make two contributions to the debates on the impact of domestic influence on foreign policy. First, the public opinion literature is ripe with empirical tests to examine whether public opinion has a real impact on foreign policy.<sup>39</sup> However, few studies have questioned under what conditions the domestic audience constrains the state's foreign policy. Instead of dismissing or emphasizing the effect of public opinion on foreign policy, I specify the conditions under which the effect of public opinion takes place. Second, I challenge the well-celebrated argument that democracies have a stronger domestic audience than autocracies and are therefore more constrained by public opinion. This general thesis has been applied in many arguments to explain the interaction between domestic audience and a state's international behavior. For instance, the audience cost literature concur that because democracies have stronger domestic audience, they tend to be more sensitive to audience cost and therefore are more restrained from backing down once a public threat is made.<sup>40</sup> However, after examining the cases,

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<sup>39</sup> James Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (1994), pp. 577–92; Joe Eyerma and Jr. Robert A. Hart, "An Empirical Test of the Audience Cost Proposition: Democracy Speaks Louder than Words," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40, no. 4 (December 1, 1996), pp. 597–616; Michael Tomz, "Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach," *International Organization* 61, no. 4 (2007), pp. 821–40; Michael Tomz, Jessica L. P. Weeks, and Keren Yarhi-Milo, "Public Opinion and Decisions about Military Force in Democracies," *International Organization* 74, no. 1 (Win 2020), pp. 119–43.

<sup>40</sup> See for instance, Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes"; Kenneth A. Schultz, "Domestic Opposition and Signaling in International Crises," *The American Political Science Review* 92, no. 4 (1998), pp. 829–44; Kenneth A. Schultz, "Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform?"

one can find that democracies are as equally capable as their authoritarian counterparts to manipulate and insulate domestic influence.<sup>41</sup>

**3) Challenging the Rationality Assumption.** While international structure theories are built upon the famous assumption that states are rational and unified as if domestic constraints do not exist or are automatically insulated, I make no such assumptions since not all states are *capable* of responding to the international environment as a rational and centrally coordinated individual. Rather, it is my argument that domestic influence serves as a filter which selects out only a portion of states that are capable of responding rationally toward the international environment. When states' decisions are bound by domestic influence, they are less likely to act rationally as structural realism dictates. The reason, as Realists also agree, is that public opinion tends to be a barrier to thoughtful and rational foreign policy.<sup>42</sup> In contrast, if states are strong enough to insulate domestic influence, they are better positioned to act rationally on the international stage, even if it means that states have to make concessions in an international dispute. In sum, I do not question the logic rigorousness of structural realism, but rather the starting assumption it is based on.

**4) New Perspective for the Debate on Rise of China.** There is a growing concern shared by scholars and policy makers that the Chinese nationalism has become an important cause for China's assertive foreign policies in East and South China Sea.<sup>43</sup> These international disputes have

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Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War," *International Organization* 53, no. 2 (April 1, 1999), pp. 233–66.

<sup>41</sup> There are many studies that show that democratic leaders manipulate public opinion and carry out their preferred foreign policy. For instance, Chaim Kaufmann, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War," *International Security* 29, no. 1 (2004), pp. 5–48.

<sup>42</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 1978.

<sup>43</sup> See Paul Collier and Anke Hoefler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4 (October 1, 2004), pp. 563–95. Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Clive H. Schofield and Ian Storey, *The South China Sea Dispute: Increasing Stakes and Rising Tensions* (Washington, D.C.: Jamestown Foundation, 2009), p. 3; Michael Yahuda, "China's New Assertiveness in the South China Sea," *Journal of Contemporary China* 22, no. 81 (January 1, 2013), pp. 446–59; David Shambaugh, "Containment or Engagement of China? Calculating Beijing's Responses," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (October 1, 1996), pp. 180–209.

become increasingly difficult to solve. The underlying reason is that nationalism makes international concession a costly move for state leaders. Particularly in China, the Chinese public has long been socialized into the “Century of Humiliation” mindset and believes that the territories the Chinese government is currently claiming are those lost during the era when China was bullied by the imperialist powers.<sup>44</sup> Thus, any external challenges towards these territories could wake up China’s national indignation. Concessions to foreign adversaries challenging China’s claims over the lost territories is widely viewed as a sign of treachery and immorality. Worse, they may fundamentally undermine the legitimacy of the ruling leadership and give rise to a domestic crisis. This dissertation provides policy-makers with a theoretical tool to better unravel the impact of nationalism on China’s foreign policy. It also contributes to a more sophisticated understanding of the fundamental question: whether China’s rise is going to be peaceful and how Chinese nationalism is going to affect this process. An accurate understanding of domestic nationalist influence on foreign policy in China is crucial for policy makers because relying on wrong indicators to decipher China’s future behavior could lead to premature conflict escalation.

The concerns for the war-prone impact of Chinese nationalism is by no means unfounded, but my study rejects the notion that nationalism is the main driver for China’s assertive foreign policy at the moment or in the future. According to my theory, it requires the nationalist opposition in China to obtain the support from the Chinese military in order to push the Chinese government to act assertively against a foreign adversary. However, the Chinese leadership tightly controls its media portals and a massive coercive apparatus—including the People’s Liberation Army (PLA),

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<sup>44</sup> At the beginning the 1990s, the Chinese government launched a national-wide nationalist educational campaign emphasizing how a weak China was bullied by the stronger imperialist powers to lose territories and partial sovereignty from the 1840 Opium War to 1949 when the CCP took power. For details, see for instance, Matt Schiavenza, “How Humiliation Drove Modern Chinese History”, *The Atlantic*, October 25, 2013. <https://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/10/how-humiliation-drove-modern-chinese-history/280878/>.

the People's Armed Police (PAP), and other internal security services. These two institutions are available to prevent nationalism from increasing and constraining China's foreign policy flexibility. With the media and the military firmly controlled by the Chinese government, Chinese nationalism is at best a powerful instrument for China rather than a truly powerful force. I am not arguing, however, that China will not behave aggressively or initiate armed conflicts with her international rivalries. Rather, I am emphasizing that among many potential causes of war, nationalism is not one of them. While nationalism might be the culprit of many interstate conflicts in history, it is unlikely to push china into war with its neighbors now and in the foreseeable future.

### **1.7 Caveats**

As ambitious as the dissertation is, there are two caveats worth noting. First, this project is conducted based on the scope condition where state leaders prefer conciliatory foreign policy while domestic nationalist opposition demands otherwise. Undeniably, this scope condition excludes many interesting cases where state leaders intentionally instigate or ride with nationalism and pursue conflict escalation. However, only when there is a discrepancy in the foreign policy preference between the state and the nationalist population can the true influence of nationalism be revealed. On the one hand, if the state ended up behaving forcefully while the state leadership clearly expressed its unwillingness to do so, we can be more confident that nationalism can cause conflict escalation without being reduced to an instrument utilized by war-prone states. On the other hand, it indicates that not all conflict escalations are a result of a state's choice, but can be an outcome of the state's failure of controlling the aggressive nationalist forces.

Moreover, I do not claim that failing to manage nationalism is the only cause of conflict between nations. Rational pursuit of conquest, security dilemma, imbalance of power, irrational leaders, miscalculations, and others can all cause conflict escalation between two states. Moreover,

escalation of conflict involves two players rather than one. The provoking or reconciliatory move of one side depends very much on the other. These factors can create conflict independent of nationalism, or they may interact with nationalism to increase or dilute its effects. However, while I do not claim that my theory predicts every case of conflict escalation, I do assert that it predicts whether a state is capable of insulating its foreign policy from nationalist sentiment and domestic opposition. This, in turn, serves as an indispensable step to understanding the likelihood of interstate conflict escalation.

### **1.8 Plan of the Dissertation**

The following chapters seek to develop in detail the theory on state's hypernationalism management and concession making while pursuing a research design geared towards establishing the internal and external validity of my argument. Both cross-national evidence and comparative historical case study analysis will be utilized to test my theory.

Chapter 2 presents the core of the argument. I begin by framing the parameters of the debate. Specifically, I will define the key term hypernationalism management. I then turn to introducing the players in the game, the state leader, the nationalists, and the pivot supporter. I lay out my theory in detail by explaining the channels through which the nationalists influence a state's decision making and the strategies the state uses to manage hypernationalism and insulate its influence. I argue that pivot supporter plays a key role in affecting both directions. The side the pivot supporter takes shapes the outcome of the state's management of nationalism and concession making.

Having elaborated on my theory and advanced the hypotheses, I use a combination of medium-N cross-national qualitative analysis (Chapter 3) and in-depth case studies of democracies and autocracies (Chapter 4 and 5). To conduct the cross-national analysis, I rely on the data

extracted from the Militarized Interstate Dispute dataset (Version 4.3), because it currently has the most comprehensive record of the interstate disputes since 1789 when nationalism emerged.<sup>45</sup> After examining all 2,299 cases from 1816-2010 in the MID dataset,<sup>46</sup> I select 47 cases to evaluate my theory based on the dual criteria that 1) they qualify the theory's scope condition that there existed a discrepancy in the state leader's foreign policy preference for conciliation and the nationalist demands for conflict; and 2) the evidence can be verified from at least two independent sources. The details for how to determine whether a case meet the first criterion will be discussed in length in Chapter 3. This cross-national pattern analysis allows me to evaluate my two levels of arguments systematically and test the three alternative arguments—regime type, the level of external threat, and resistance capability. To preview the result, I find that domestic structure alliance performs more strongly in explaining the outcome of hypernationalism management than all other alternative explanations.

With the external validity of my theory established, the subsequent two chapters provide further examination about whether the causal mechanisms operate as I expected. I rely on comparative studies of two sets of cases, which involve principally “most similar with different outcome (MSDO)” designs. Moreover, this method is paired with the increased inferential leverage through the selection of two well-known cases that are most likely for the conventional wisdom but least likely for my theory. The two sets of cases include Britain during the 1853-4 Crimean Crisis and Britain during the pre-WWII Crisis for the examination under the democracy scenario; and China during the 1931-2 Manchuria Crisis and China during the 1935-7 North China

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<sup>45</sup> There exists a general consensus that the 1789 French Revolution played a key role in the birth of nationalism across Europe and initiated a movement toward the modern nation-state.

<sup>46</sup> Palmer, Glenn, Vito D'Orazio, Michael R. Kenwick, and Roseanne W. McManus. Forthcoming. “Updating the Militarized Interstate Dispute Data: A Response to Gibler, Miller, and Little.” *International Studies Quarterly*.

Crisis against Japan as two autocracy cases. Table 1.1. summaries the four cases that will be studied further in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

**Table 1.1 Plan of the Case Study**

Dispute	Regime Type	State	Year	Chapter
The 1853-4 Crimean Crisis	Democracy	Britain	1853-1854	Chapter 4
The Pre-WWII Crisis	Democracy	Britain	1937-1939	Chapter 4
The 1931-2 Manchuria Crisis	Autocracy	China	1931-1932	Chapter 5
The 1935-7 North China Crisis	Autocracy	China	1935-1937	Chapter 5

I trace the process of each case and rely on primary and secondary sources obtained from various archives and state libraries in China, Britain, as well as the US.<sup>47</sup> The majority of the primary evidence was obtained from Second Historical Archives of China in Nanjing, the Hoover Institute Archive at the Stanford University, and the National Archives in Kew. Considering the complexity in each case and limitation in data, this combined methods of medium-N cross national study and comparative cases study stands out to be the fittest way to achieve high level of conceptual validity and measurement precision as well as allowing for rigorous tests of the exact causal pathway.<sup>48</sup>

Chapter 4 focuses on two democratic cases where the public can rely on voting to influence the foreign policy, namely Britain from 1853 to 1854 under the leadership of Lord Aberdeen and Britain from 1937 to 1939 under the leadership of Neville Chamberlain. These two cases share

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<sup>47</sup> Primary resources utilized in this dissertation include, for instance, Collection of Lord John Russel’s papers and Collection of the official Foreign Office and Home Office Papers from Public Record Office (merged to The National Archives) at Kew; Aberdeen, Gladston, Peel, and Palmerston papers at the British Library; Collection of Great Britain, Ministry of Information Propaganda 1938-1949 at Hoover Institution, Stanford; Collection of the Cabinet Papers: Neville Chamberlain 1937 and Collection of the Cabinet Papers: Appeasement and War at the National Archives at Kew; Collection of Nanjing National Government 1927-1937 and Records of Famous Individuals at the Second Historical Archives of China, Nanjing; Records of Chinese Student Movement of National Salvation in the 1930s at the State Archives Administration of China, Beijing; Collection of Chiang Kai-shek’s Diary and Letters at Hoover Institution: Library and Archives, Stanford.

<sup>48</sup> Alexander L. George and Andrew. Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 19–22.

many similarities. For instance, Britain was democracy in both cases, protecting the voting power of at least some portion of the population;<sup>49</sup> in both cases, Britain was facing an external adversary advancing territorial encroachment towards third parties while the British Prime Minister was determined to maintain peace and ready to make concessions; and both British leaders encountered domestic opposition against conciliation. However, the impact of nationalism on the state's foreign policy in these two cases varies sharply.

Due to the familiarity of the two cases, abundant historical sources are available, including well-documented Cabinet papers and correspondences during the Aberdeen and Chamberlain administrations, details of the British Lobby system revealing how the British Government manipulated media reports, as well as the circulation numbers of the then influential media. Some of the key material obtained from archives in Kew and London, such as the Collection of Aberdeen, Palmerston, and John Russel papers and Hansard's Parliamentary debates, reveals that the Aberdeen Administration's withdrawal of conciliation towards Russia before entering the Crimean war was due to the pressure under British anti-Russian hypernationalism. Such intensified sentiment, according to various primary and secondary resources, was a direct result of information manipulation conducted by Aberdeen's political rivalry—Lord Palmerston—and his media allies. On the contrary, no such hypernationalist sentiment rose up to disrupt Chamberlain's appeasement foreign policy till the last minute when Hitler invaded Poland. The comparison of these two British cases demonstrates that even in democracies, state leaders may strategically obtain media support

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<sup>49</sup> Britain introduced wide-ranging changes to the electoral system of England and Wales in 1832, known as the 1832 Reform Act, which increased the electorate from about 400,000 to 650,000, making about one in five adult males eligible to vote. See for instance, John A. Phillips and Charles Wetherell, "The Great Reform Act of 1832 and the Political Modernization of England," *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (April 1, 1995), pp. 411–36. Though during the 1850s, Britain had not adopted universal suffrage, but the right to vote for those who can vote was fully protected. Thus, in both cases, the public had the means of voting to constrain a leader's foreign policy.



and manipulate public opinion rather than allowing the public sentiment to push the state towards conflict escalation.

Chapter 5 focuses on two China cases under the almost identical setting. The first case is China in the 1931-1933 Manchuria Crisis during which Japan invaded and took control of the province of Manchuria. The second case focuses on China in the 1935 to 1937 North China crisis during which China was facing the second wave of Japanese invasion in Northern provinces of China. This set of cases is strategically selected to control all three key alternative variables: regime type, level of external threat, and resistance capacity of the nationalist opposition groups. In both cases, China was ruled by the Nationalist Government under the leadership of the autocratic Kuomintang Party (KMT),<sup>50</sup> it was facing high levels of external threat from Japan; domestically it had to deal with challenges from the nationalist opposition, including the popular nationalist movements and violent resistance by the Communist Party. While in both cases the Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek refused to escalate the conflict with Japan for a variety of pragmatic concerns, the outcome of the two cases diverged. These two Chinese cases provide strong evidence for the crucial role of the military in shaping the outcome of state's hypernationalism management and concession making.

There is also an advantage of data availability to study these two historical Chinese cases. In comparison to other cases of autocracy, there is a good collection of data preserved to record the Chiang Kai-shek administration's policy making during the 1930s. For instance, the Second Historical Archive of China preserves multiple collections, such as the Collection of the Nanjing National Government 1927-1937, Records of Key Officials, policy memos, and letters from officials to Chiang Kai-shek. The Nanjing Library made it public collections of memos of

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<sup>50</sup> Commonly translated as the Nationalist Party.

Conferences held by the Communist Party. The Hoover Institution at the University of Stanford holds a whole collection of Chiang Kai-shek's Diary and Records of Chinese Student Movement of National Salvation in the 1930s, which has provided valuable information for this study.

The concluding chapter (Chapter 6) lays out the dissertation's theoretical and empirical implications. In a nutshell, the findings suggest that nationalism, or more broadly public opinion, does have constraining effect on a state's foreign policy, but only under certain conditions. This condition is the side the pivot supporter takes. When the pivot supporter sides with the nationalist public, the latter is more likely to push the state into a uncompromising foreign policy or even armed conflict with the foreign adversary. In contrast, when the state obtains the pivot supporter's assistance, it is more likely to insulate domestic influence. Next, it explains why, unlike many would agree, the rising nationalism in China could not signal the state's aggressive intention to other states, not is it so power as to drive the state into a conflict.

Finally, this chapter maximizes external validity of the theory by applying it to "mixed" cases where states may hold elections but nevertheless violate many liberal values. Doing this allows the dissertation to move beyond the clear cut cases of liberal democracies and authoritarian regimes. Three Southeast Asian cases in the South China Sea dispute with China since 2010, namely Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines, are selected for comparison. The South China Sea dispute provides a great opportunity to examine my theory not only because it is commonly described as one of the main flashpoints for the potential regional or global conflict, but also that it involves three active Southeast Asian claimants spanning a full range of regime types, including Vietnam (autocracy), Malaysia (mixed polity), and the Philippines (liberal democracy).<sup>51</sup> The findings are

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<sup>51</sup> Chapter 2 will elaborate on what qualifies as an illiberal democracy. The categorization of regime type is based on the Polity IV dataset (a scale of -10 to +10 with -10 being full autocracy and +10 being full democracy) and the Freedom House Score (a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being the most free and 7 being the least free). Between 2010 to 2018, Vietnam had the most autocratic Polity IV score (-7 throughout) and the lowest aggregate Freedom House score

in line with my theory's prediction that as long as states obtain the pivot supporter's assistance, they can insulate the influence of nationalism against China and avoid being dragged into conflicts under such influence. The rest of the chapter highlights its contribution to the ongoing discussion regarding the future stability of the South China Sea dispute. It hopes to challenge the conventional rationalist explanations for conflicts and encourage scholars and policy makers to take seriously the conditions under which nationalism undermines states' rationality in foreign policy making.

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(6 throughout). Malaysia had the Polity IV score of 6 from 2010 to 2013, 5 from 2014 to 2017, and 7 in 2018. Its Freedom House score was consistently 4 from 2010 to 2018. The Philippines had the consistent polity IV score of 8 throughout. Its Freedom House Score was 3.5 in 2010, but maintained at 3 from 2010 to 2018. It has been argued that the Philippines has slide into illiberal democracy after Rodrigo Duterte came to power. See for instance, Richard Javad Heydarian, *The Rise of Duterte: A Populist Revolt against Elite Democracy*, Palgrave Pivot (London: This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature, 2018); M.d. Ordoñez and A.I. Borja, "Philippine Liberal Democracy under Siege: The Ideological Underpinnings of Duterte's Populist Challenge," *Philippine Political Science Journal*, Vol. 39. No. 2 (2018), pp. 139-153..

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORY OF HYPERNATIONALISM MANAGEMENT

*The rational requirements of good foreign policy cannot from the outset count upon the support of a public opinion whose preferences are emotional rather than rational.*

-----Hans Morgenthau<sup>1</sup>

*The unhappy truth is that the prevailing public opinion has been destructively wrong at the critical junctures.*

-----Lippmann<sup>2</sup>

#### 2.1 Introduction

The history of international relations is filled with cases where the state is contemplating making concessions towards an adversary but would face the costs of severe domestic repercussions. It is tempting for us to conclude that nationalism makes conciliation an unfavorable foreign policy and can be a powerful force to push a state towards militancy.<sup>3</sup> However, domestic concern is only one of the factors state leaders consider when making the foreign policy. Other than nationalist feelings, factors such as cost of war, risks to regime stability, or feasibility of alternative means to handle the dispute, often dominate states' decision to engage in an interstate conflict or not. Because of

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<sup>1</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 1978. p. 558.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Essays in the Public Philosophy*, [1st ed.] (Boston: Little, Brown, 1955), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, a large set of literature on whether China can rise peacefully concur that rising nationalism is making Chinese government behave more assertively over issues such as its maritime sovereignty, the Taiwan independence, and the U.S.-dominated liberal international order, etc. See Shirk, *China, Fragile Superpower*; Gries, *China's New Nationalism*; Clive H. Schofield and Ian Storey, *The South China Sea Dispute: Increasing Stakes and Rising Tensions*, p. 3; Yahuda, "China's New Assertiveness in the South China Sea," pp. 446–459. Agreeing on the assertion that nationalism *can* constrain a state's foreign policy, another study focuses on the signaling value of nationalist protests. See Weiss, *Powerful Patriots*.

such discrepancy between the state interests and the national demands, not all states end up acting assertively and escalating international disputes under domestic pressure.

*What is the effect of nationalism on a state's foreign policy in interstate disputes? Why do some states succeed in nationalism management while others fail? More specifically, under what condition(s) can a state insulate the influence of nationalism so as to reduce the cost of backing down and making concessions in an international crisis?* To examine the independent effect of nationalism, this dissertation starts from the condition when there exists a discrepancy in foreign policy preference between the state and the nation. That is, when nationalism drives the domestic population to embrace assertiveness and violence against a foreign enemy, the state leader prefers conciliation and conflict de-escalation. Only under this scope condition can we be certain that when a state refuses to concede or escalates a conflict, it is not because it incentives to, but because it is influenced by nationalism.

This chapter introduces a novel theory to systematically explain the variations in the outcome of state's nationalism management and international concession making. It starts by defining the dependent variable—hypernationalism management and identifying key players, which includes the state, the nationalist opposition, and the pivot supporter consisting of the military and the media. It then presents in detail two levels of argument. The main argument centers on explaining why and how domestic alliance structure—whether the pivot supporter takes the side of the state or the nationalist opposition—leads to success or failure in nationalism management. The next level of argument concerns the condition under which the media is more or less likely to play the pivot role compared to the military. Following the elaboration of arguments, I highlight the hypotheses and the alternative explanations for the relationship between domestic influence and international concession making.

## 2.2 Theory of Hypernationalism Management and International Concession Making

### 2.2.1 *Dependent Variable: Nationalism Management*

Given the discrepancy in foreign policy preference between the state and the nationalist opposition, state leaders are incentivized to manage hypernationalism so as to preserve their flexibility in policy making. *Hypernationalism management* refers to the purposeful effort by the state to prevent nationalism from becoming hypernationalism; or in case hypernationalism occurs, to suppress it. The manifest of hypernationalism may take the form of either large-scale verbal expression of hatred or collective action calling for forceful foreign policy against an adversary state. Hypernationalism management succeeds when hypernationalism is prevented or dampened down so that the state can maintain its conciliatory foreign policy stance or make concessions in an international dispute. In contrast, it fails when hypernationalist sentiment or movement gains momentum. The direct manifestation of such momentum is that hypernationalism rises to pressure the state to adopt aggressive or uncompromising foreign policy, which paves the way for conflict escalation. These definitions are summarized in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Dependent Variable—Nationalism Management Outcome**

Nationalism Management	Meaning
Success	Hypernationalist sentiment or movement is prevented or dampened down
Failure	Hypernationalist sentiment or movement gains the momentum and pressures the state to adopt aggressive or uncompromising foreign policy

### 2.2.2 *Key Players: The State Leader, The Nationalist Opposition, The Media, and The Military*

This theory addresses two sets of players in nationalism management. The first set, which I call lead actors, includes state leaders and nationalist opposition. The *state leader*, in this context, is the individual who leads the state and holds the de facto power in foreign policy decision making. The other player, the *nationalist opposition*, consists of members of the nation who oppose the state's foreign policy and demand a nationalistic alternative. It includes an extensive range of population from the general public to social and political elites.

The second set is referred to as pivot supporters, which includes the media and the military. I define the *media* as channels or source which is used to connect and communicate with a large number of people at once. Often referred to as Mass Media, it includes not only traditional printed newspapers, radio, and television, but also new media including online news websites and social media.<sup>4</sup> They have dominated information provision and dissemination to the public, which indicates that obtaining support from the media may greatly increase the strength of one's bidding for a certain foreign policy. The *military* in this study refers to a broad range of armed agency, which includes both professional military and other armed forces such as paramilitaries, national police, secret police, and death squads. Fully aware that standard military and other coercive forces

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<sup>4</sup> Many believe that the new media, such as YouTube, blogs, or Twitter, are fundamentally different from the traditional news media and therefore the two should be treated separately. Some even view the new media as a powerful challenger gradually disrupting and replacing the traditional one. I treat both similarly as both are important platforms of information sharing. Even with the rise of social media, traditional media remains one of the most important channels through which the majority of the public receives information day to day. According to a 2016 survey conducted by Pew Research Center, 57% of American adults get news from TV, 25% from radio, 20% from print newspapers, and 38% from new media. Moreover, though the new media has empowered many ordinary people to become "citizen journalists", it only affects social news in which ordinary people can be the source or witnesses. For information regarding foreign policies or national security which can be highly sensitive, both the new media and traditional media share the similar sources. For arguments on the difference between traditional media and social media, see Satish Tandon, "The Future of Print News Media: Adapting to Change", *Journal of Global Media Studies*, Vol. 2 (2018); Jean M. Twenge, Gabriell N. Martin, and Brian H. Spitzberg, "Trends in U.S. Adolescents' Media Use, 1976–2016: The Rise of Digital Media, the Decline of TV, and the (Near) Demise of Print", *Psychology of Popular Media Culture* (August 20, 2018); for Pew Research Center survey study, see Amy Mitchell et al., "The Modern News Consumer: News Attitudes and Practices in the Digital Era", <http://www.journalism.org/2016/07/07/pathways-to-news/>; for citizen journalist argument, see Philip Bennett and Moises Naim, "21<sup>st</sup>-century censorship: Governments around the world are using stealthy strategies to manipulate the media", *Columbia Journalism Review*, [https://archives.cjr.org/cover\\_story/21st\\_century\\_censorship.php](https://archives.cjr.org/cover_story/21st_century_censorship.php).

are different in many ways<sup>5</sup>, I nevertheless find their functions similar, particularly in times of state emergency. Both professional military and other armed forces are coercive forces that can be used by the state to threaten or repress its opponents. Although the primary role of the professional military is defending the state against external threats, when state leaders face organized and potentially violent mass protest, the military is the only force states rely on to conduct political repression and maintain domestic stability.

### *2.2.3 Domestic Alliance Structure and the Outcome of Nationalism Management*

What shapes the success or failure in states' nationalism management and concession making? I argue that because the pivot supporter can either help the nationalist opposition to threaten the state leader's tenure in power or assist the state leader to manipulate or repress the nationalist opposition, *whichever side the pivot supporter takes greatly enhance the chosen side's chance to prevail*. I use the term *domestic alliance structure* to describe a situation when one of the lead actors, the state or the nationalist opposition, obtains the pivot supporter's assistance.

The media or the military serves as the pivot supporter because they are the key sources of power for either the state or the nationalist opposition to influence each other. Due to the media's domination in the daily information provision and dissemination to the mass public, obtaining media support helps with the manipulation of information to the advantage of the state or the nationalist opposition. This advantage determines the suppression or intensification of hypernationalism, which further mobilizes or demobilizes supporters for the state's conciliatory foreign policy. Similarly, military is the main, if not only, source of power for the state to deter or repress mass nationalist uprisings or for the nationalist opposition to coerce the state to alter its

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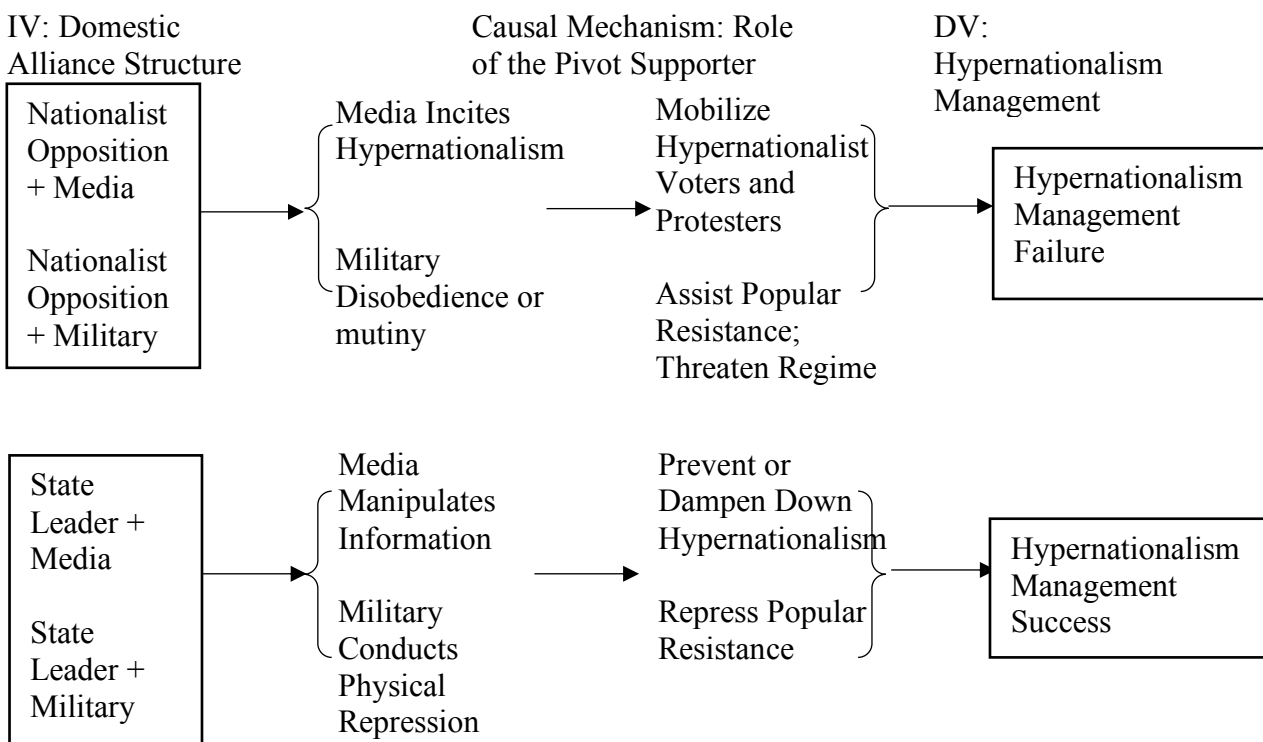
<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the pros and cons of a broad conceptualization of the security section, see Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei, "Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations," *Democratization* 15, no. 5 (December 2008), pp. 913-4.



foreign policy. Ultimately, the success or failure of state's nationalism management depends on whether the state's key sources of power stays on its side or is removed.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the different combinations of the lead actor and the pivot supporter, *domestic*

**Figure 2.1 The Causal Mechanism of How Domestic Alliance Structure Shapes Hypernationalism Management Outcome**



*alliance structure* contains four specific values: nationalist opposition with media assistance, nationalist opposition with military assistance, the state with media assistance, and the state with military assistance. As Figure 2.1. summarizes, when nationalist opposition obtaining the pivot supporter's assistance, the state suffers failure in nationalism management. Conversely, when the state acquires the pivot supporter's assistance, it can successfully manage nationalism. The rest of

<sup>6</sup> This argument is in line with what Chenoweth and Stephan suggest in their study of civil resistance. According to them, the coercive capacity of civil resistance is not based on violent disruption to the social order, but rather on the removal of the adversary's key sources of power. See Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 43.

this section will elaborate on how each type of domestic alliance structure leads to a certain outcome of nationalism management.

***1) Nationalist Opposition Obtaining Media Assistance and Nationalism Management Failure:***

The nationalist opposition influences foreign policy mainly through two channels: voting and popular resistance. Political science studies have found evidence that the dissenting public does have an impact on state leader's foreign policy decisions.<sup>7</sup> In an open political system where elections are regularly and fairly held,<sup>8</sup> voting has been acknowledged as the most common channel for the public to influence foreign policy making. Compared to other means of influence such as lobbying, direct letters, or polls, voting power enables the public to exert pressure on the state leader in the most direct way. Research on public opinion and foreign policy has rigorously shown that elections empower the public to punish the state leader for making unpopular foreign policy.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, elected politicians will avoid taking unpopular positions and be accountable to the voters' opinions. The more voters that are expected to vote against their foreign policy, the more pressure the state leaders perceives to avoid such unpopular policy.

In order to influence the state, the nationalist opposition will need to gain more protentional supporters who are willing to vote against the state leader on the particular foreign policy issue. Information campaign is the main strategy nationalist opposition adopts to instigate hypernationalism and rally supporters. It encompasses a broad range of tactics—from publishing

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<sup>7</sup> See for instance, Melvin Small, "Influencing the Decision Makers: The Vietnam Experience," *Journal of Peace Research* 24, no. 2 (June 1, 1987), pp 185–98; Michael Tomz, Jessica L. P. Weeks, and Keren Yarhi-Milo, "Public Opinion and Decisions about Military Force in Democracies," *International Organization* 74, no. 1 (Winter 2020), pp. 119–43.

<sup>8</sup> Such political system is often referred to as "democracy". However, an ideal democracy is often more than a political system that holds regular and fair elections.

<sup>9</sup> John H. Aldrich et al., "Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9, no. 1 (June 2006), pp. 477–502; Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*, Rev. ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Tomz, Weeks, and Yarhi-Milo, "Public Opinion and Decisions about Military Force in Democracies."

articles to participating in public debates, from disseminating brochures to reposting tweets, and from radio broadcasting to TV advertising. Information campaign aims at inciting the negative feelings of fear or hatred against the foreign adversary. In the meantime, it also tries to demobilize supporters for the state by labeling anyone who favors conciliation as being “others”. The specific content may include emphasizing or exaggerating the security threat the adversary state imposes, attributing their nation’s sufferings to the adversary state’s behaviors at present or in the past, glorifying their own nation and urging the defense of its honor, or attacking the sympathizers for the adversary state as being treacherous. One vivid example is the British public’s anti-Russian sentiment at the eve of the 1854 Crimean War.<sup>10</sup> Apart from charging Russia for being evil, the British public launched vehement attacks against their own Prince Albert for being a Russian agent due to that fact that he was foreign-born and against war with Russia.

In addition to information campaign, nationalist opposition relies on civil resistance to incite hypernationalism and influence the state. Civil resistance employs a variety of non-violent methods, including boycotts, strikes, protests, or other acts of noncooperation.<sup>11</sup> In an electoral political system, because voting is a reliable channel to constrain a state’s foreign policy, civil resistance activities serve as a staple way of communicating with the state rather than driving the state leader out of the power. To achieve this goal, civil resistance activities often attempt to attract media attention and seek attention from those who are otherwise unaware of the problem.<sup>12</sup> With more people exposed to the problem, the nationalist opposition may expect to recruit more supporters against the state.

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<sup>10</sup> Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, pp. 203-224.

<sup>11</sup> Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1973). Vol. 1.

<sup>12</sup> A growing body of polling data has provided evidence of the public’s limited store of factual knowledge about foreign affairs. See Ole R. Holsti, “Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almond-Lippmann Consensus Mershon Series: Research Programs and Debates,” *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (December 1, 1992), p. 443.

Thus, the role of the media becomes crucial in the electoral political system. To start, the mass media is a major forum of opinion voicing and information sharing. Due to its wide-reaching capacity, the media can greatly enhance the nationalist opposition's information campaign by exposing the policy problem to the nation. Second, the media is good at shaping public opinion. Studies have found that the mass media can affect people's way of perception and pervasively unify thoughts and actions.<sup>13</sup> Thus, by launching pro-nationalist campaign and discrediting the conciliatory foreign policy, the media may incite hypernationalist sentiment among the public and drive more voters to support the nationalist opposition. Additionally, media may assist the nationalist opposition by disclosing information undermining the state's foreign policy. It is common the state keeps secret or selectively releases certain information in order to maintain its flexibility in conducting foreign policy.<sup>14</sup> Media leakage of secret information may alter the public's initial support for a foreign policy and greatly undermines the state's ability to achieve the foreign policy objectives. For instance, in 1937 the information of Adolf Hitler's intention to negotiate a "free hand" in central Europe in a secret meeting with Lord Halifax of Britain was leaked to the British newspaper the *Evening Standard*. The leakage enraged the British public and caused an immediate disruption of the talk.<sup>15</sup>

Apart from supporting information campaign, the media plays a vital role in increasing the exposure and the impact of civil resistance activities. A large literature in sociology and political

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<sup>13</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); George Gerbner, Larry Cross, and L. Gross, "Living with Television: The Violence Profile," *Journal of Communication* 26 (June 1976), pp. 172–99; Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Media and Mass Communication Theory*, Seventh edition / Denis McQuail, Mark Deuze. (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> The idea that states rely on covert action to manage conflict escalation and minimize hawkish domestic influence is well theorized in Carson's work. See Austin Carson, *Secret Wars: Covert Conflict in International Politics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018).

<sup>15</sup> Schwoerer Lois G., "Lord Halifax's Visit To Germany: November 1937," *The Historian* 32, no. 3 (May 1, 1970), pp. 358-9; Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*.

science has shown that news coverage is important for protest events to exert political influence.<sup>16</sup> Some studies even go so far as to claim that if a protest or movement is not covered by the news media, it basically does not exist.<sup>17</sup> The underlying reason is that media coverage amplifies the signal that a large number of people is discontented with a certain policy, which draws policy makers' attention to address the issue. For instance, Martin Luther King's strategy of using protest marches to attract media coverage successfully obtained the US President's attention.<sup>18</sup> On the contrary, the anti-war protests in the US against the 2003 Iraq war in the US failed to change the state's foreign policy as a result of little media attention. In sum, without media's assistance, it would be challenging for the nationalist opposition to gain or sustain the influence over policy makers.

**2) *The State Obtaining Media Assistance and Nationalism Management Success:*** When the media takes the state's side, it assists the state with information manipulation, which can be very effective in managing hypernationalist sentiment or nationalist civil resistance. *Information manipulation* consists of several strategies dedicated to managing hypernationalism, including *information campaign*, *censorship*, and *diversion*.

Specifically, states' *information campaign* aims at promoting news or opinions in favor of conciliatory foreign policy while discrediting the nationalist opposition's. Instead of impartially

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<sup>16</sup> Rens Vliegenthart et al., "The Media as a Dual Mediator of the Political Agenda-Setting Effect of Protest. A Longitudinal Study in Six Western European Countries," *Social Forces* 95, no. 2 (December 1, 2016), pp. 837-59; Ruud Koopmans, "Movements and Media: Selection Processes and Evolutionary Dynamics in the Public Sphere," *Theory and Society* 33, no. 3/4 (June 1, 2004), pp. 367-91.

<sup>17</sup> Ruud Koopmans and Susan Olzak, "Discursive Opportunities and the Evolution of Right-Wing Violence in Germany," *American Journal of Sociology* 110, no. 1 (2004), pp. 198-230; In a similar vein, Gamson and Wolfsfeld state that a protest event with no media coverage at all is a non-event. See William A. Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Movements and Media as Interacting Systems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 528 (1993), p. 116.

<sup>18</sup> James A. Colaiaco, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Paradox of Nonviolent Direct Action," *Phylon (1960-)* 47, no. 1 (1986), p. 21.

presenting the information, information campaign manipulates the information and deliberately sways public opinion. It includes a wide range of techniques, some of which involving selective or dishonest use of information. For instance, the state may downplay the external threat or whitewash the image of the adversary state. It also involves exaggerating the cost a potential war so as to prevent the public from supporting an assertive foreign policy. Manufacturing fake information to defame the leaders of the nationalist opposition is another common technique of information campaign for the purpose of demobilizing their supporters.

*Censorship* makes certain information inaccessible to the general public. By deleting or suppressing the information that might incite hypernationalism, the state tries to keep the public uninformed or confused about the current international situation so that they would not form a unified anti-compromise attitude. Studies have found that censorship can be conducted so efficiently that the public might not even be aware certain event happened.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, censorship works effectively when the public is already hypernationalistic. Due to the public's short "attention span", as supported by previous media studies,<sup>20</sup> their enthusiasm for the event would quickly decline once being cut off from any stimulating information or opinions.

Last but not least, the state also uses *diversion* to manage nationalism. Diversion refers to the introduction of a new issue in order to alter the public's foreign policy preference or divert public attention from the existing issue. Based on Arrow's Impossibility Theorem, Chaim Kaufmann reasoned that the median voters who opposed certain policy may later support it after the

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<sup>19</sup> Margaret Earling Roberts, "Fear, Friction, and Flooding: Methods of Online Information Control," Dissertation, June 6, 2014, p. 67.

<sup>20</sup> Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Anthony Downs, "Up and down with Ecology: The "Issue Attention Cycle," *Public Interest*, no. 28 (June 1972), pp. 38–50.

introduction of a second issue crosscutting preferences on the first one.<sup>21</sup> In the case of managing nationalism, the introduction of new issue may drive those who were supporters for the nationalist opposition closer to the state. Moreover, the introduction of a new issue also diverts public attention from the existing issue that stimulates hypernationalism, which helps diffuse the conflict-prone sentiment. In both ways, diversion contributes to the demobilization of the supporters for the nationalist opposition.

The success of information manipulation depends on media assistance. Media cooperation to cover or not cover certain information is vital for the success of information campaign and censorship. As previously mentioned, the media is good at selectively disseminating information and shaping public opinion, which directly influences the result of information campaign. Additionally, successful censorship depends on media's cooperation to not cover or remove the detrimental information. Moreover, the media's "agenda-setting" ability can significantly increase the effectiveness of diversion.<sup>22</sup> Media studies have long argued that the media is particularly capable of driving the public to focus on a certain issue. As succinctly stated by Cohen, the media "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."<sup>23</sup> The reason is that the majority of the people

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<sup>21</sup> For Arrow's Impossibility Theorem, see Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values*, pp. 26–33; for Kaufmann's argument on how issue manipulation explains the failure of the marketplace of ideas, see Chaim Kaufmann, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War," *International Security* 29, no. 1 (2004), p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (July 1, 1972), pp. 176–87; Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Media and Mass Communication Theory*, Seventh edition / Denis McQuail, Mark Deuze.. (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2020); Monika Djerf-Pierre 1961 and Adam Shehata 1981, "Still an Agenda Setter: Traditional News Media and Public Opinion During the Transition From Low to High Choice Media Environments," *Journal of Communication* 67, no. 5 (January 1, 2017), pp. 733–57.

<sup>23</sup> Bernard Cecil Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 13.

do not actively seek information, but receive what they are given.<sup>24</sup> Further, political campaign studies have found that the voters learn in direct proportion to the emphasis placed on the campaign issue by the mass media.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, all the main strategies of information manipulation—information campaign, censorship, and diversion—rely on the media to achieve success.

### ***3) Nationalist Opposition Obtaining Military Assistance and Nationalism Management Failure:***

Not all states adopt electoral political system that supports free and fair elections. In countries where voting is banned or highly manipulated, the nationalist opposition has no other channels available but to carry out popular resistance in order to influence a state's foreign policy. Popular resistance, also referred to as contentious politics in the studies of Comparative Politics<sup>26</sup>, involves considerable popular mobilization and employs either nonviolent or violent methods to challenge a particular policy, state leadership or regime. Unlike civil resistance activities in electoral political systems aimed at communicating with the state, popular resistance in non-electoral political systems focuses on physically coercing the state leader to alter the unpopular foreign policy with the threat of leadership or regime removal.

Due to the coercive nature in popular resistance, military assistance becomes crucial for the nationalist opposition to successfully influence the state. Military support is the most direct and determinant contributor to the increase in the nationalist opposition's resistance capacity. Shift of military assistance changes the balance of power between the state and the nationalist opposition, which increases the chance for the latter to succeed. This argument is supported by findings in recent studies of the Arab Spring revolts, which suggest that military disobedience plays a crucial

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<sup>24</sup> Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media." p. 177.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Dan Slater, *Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 5.



role in assisting popular resistance to achieve success.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Chenoweth and Stephan's study of civil resistance finds that nonviolent campaigns have been most successful when they have produced security-force defections.<sup>28</sup>

Military support may take the form of a full spectrum of insubordinate behaviors, all of which contribute to state's failure in managing nationalism. Based on the activeness of the military's involvement, military insubordination may include passive *shirking*, *mutiny*, and *coup d'état*. Military *shirking* refers to the military's disobedience against civilian orders. Unlike military mutiny or coups, these armies do not seize power themselves, nor do they actively impose their preferred policy agenda on the state. Rather, they remain on the sidelines as a result of their own interests.<sup>29</sup> Military shirking may sound less threatening than mutiny or coups, it can have powerfully disruptive effects. This is because shirking brings the state leader a declining prospect of managing the popular uprising and a sense of helplessness. Recent research has supported the statement by showing that among all the 21st-century cases in which military was ordered by the state to repress mass non-violent uprisings, seven out of ten involved military shirking and end up with the removal of the state leader.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See for instance, Holger Albrecht and Dorothy Ohl, "Exit, Resistance, Loyalty: Military Behavior during Unrest in Authoritarian Regimes," *Perspectives on Politics* (United States: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2 (January 1, 2004): 139–57; Milan W. Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Other works on military's role in democratic transition include: Alfred C. Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988); Michael C. Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Wendy Hunter, *Eroding Military Influence in Brazil: Politicians against Soldiers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 51-8.

<sup>29</sup> These interests may be rational interests that maximize the soldiers' material utilities, ideational interests that related to their professional identities, or organizational interests concerning the well-being and cohesion of the institution. See David Pion-Berlin, Diego Esparza, and Kevin Grisham, "Staying Quartered Civilian Uprisings and Military Disobedience in the Twenty-First Century," *Comparative Political Studies* 47, no. 2 (2014), p. 231.

<sup>30</sup> Pion-Berlin, Esparza, and Grisham, p. 240.

Unlike shirking, military revolts or coups are much less common and are often carefully planned schemes with more ambitious goals. They may aim at pressing for a certain policy agenda, as exemplified in the Nepalese police revolt over inferior food rations from June to July 2008. Or they could target directly at seizing power, such as the July 2016 coup d'état attempted in Turkey against the President Recep Erdogan. Like shirking, military revolts or coups in support of the nationalist opposition often lead to dire consequences for the state leader. The result could be that the state leader withdraws the unpopular foreign policy under the mounting life threats from the revolting militaries; or it may be the exile of the state leader; or the more devastating result could be the assassination of the incumbent leader, as was the case of the 1963 Vietnamese military coup during which the President of South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem, was deposed and assassinated.

These consequences indicate that military mutinies or coups can decisively result in the state's failure in nationalism management. This result has been supported by the quantitative test conducted by Chenoweth and Stephan, who find that nonviolent campaigns have been most successful when they have produced security-force defections.<sup>31</sup> Not only are military mutinies or coups capable of forcing the state leader to change the foreign policy or to step down, their success rate is impressively high. For military coups alone, studies have found that the mean success rate of military coups from 1950 to 2010 is as high as 48%.<sup>32</sup> In sum, the military's assistance—passive shirking or active revolts—is another paramount factor contributing to the success of nationalist opposition's resistance.

**4) *The State Obtaining Military Assistance and Nationalism Management Success:*** Unlike assisting the nationalist opposition through insubordination, military assistance towards the state

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<sup>31</sup> Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 51-8.

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan M Powell and Clayton L Thyne, "Global Instances of Coups from 1950 to 2010: A New Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 2 (March 1, 2011), pp. 249–59.

entails obeying the state's orders to manage nationalism when needed. In the face of large-scale, organized, and even violent popular resistance, the state is more likely to use coercive forces to repress the domestic threats. The military is the key pillar of the state's coercive power to defeat the oppositional challenges. Some even consider the military as the only force capable of defeating a large group of organized and potentially violent opposition because of its size and proficiency in the deployment.<sup>33</sup>

The military assists the state by conducting *physical repression* against nationalist opposition.<sup>34</sup> According to Goldstein, repression involves the actual or threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization for the purpose of imposing a cost on the target as well as deterring specific activities and/or beliefs.<sup>35</sup> Not all state crackdowns, such as repression of crimes, belong to state repression. Instead, physical repression only concerns itself with behaviors that violate civil rights including the freedom of speech and assemble, freedom of association, or the right to protest and petition the government.<sup>36</sup> Because hypernationalism takes the form of voices or collective protests disparaging and calling for violence against the other states, physical repression is often adopted by the state to prevent hypernationalism from rising or dampen down the already risen hypernationalism.

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<sup>33</sup> Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, p. 127.

<sup>34</sup> Existing works tend to agree that governments respond to overt collective challenges, such as protests, strikes, or riots, with repression. See Sabine C. Carey, "The Use of Repression as a Response to Domestic Dissent," *Political Studies* 58, no. 1 (February 1, 2010), pp.167–86; Christian Davenport, "Multi-Dimensional Threat Perception and State Repression: An Inquiry into Why States Apply Negative Sanctions," *American Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 3 (August 1, 1995), pp. 683–713; Christian Davenport, *State Repression and the Domestic Democratic Peace* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Pion-Berlin, Esparza, and Grisham, "Staying Quartered Civilian Uprisings and Military Disobedience in the Twenty-First Century"; Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare," *International Organization* 58, no. 2 (2004), pp. 375–407.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Justin. Goldstein, *Political Repression in Modern America from 1870 to the Present* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1978), pp. xxvii; see also Davenport, *State Repression and the Domestic Democratic Peace*, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Goldstein, *Political Repression in Modern America from 1870 to the Present*, pp. xxx-xxxi.

At the stage when nationalism has yet turned into hypernationalism, the state may rely on the military to conduct *selective repression*. Selective repression prevents large scale of nationalist collective action by creating deterrence effect towards the potential participates. When the state anticipates the development of popular uprisings, sending well-equipped coercive forces onto the street intensifies fear and the anticipation of participation costs. Moreover, it achieves the control of hypernationalism by suppressing the key figures responsible for promoting popular resistance, such as influential journalists, key opinion leaders, or the heads of the nationalist movement organizations. Selective repression helps the state prevent hypernationalism from rising at the initial stage. It is also a less costly strategy compared to massive repression which often generates high human, economic, and social costs.

Once hypernationalism rises, as manifested by large-scale, organized, and sometimes violent movements calling for assertive foreign policy, states would have to resort to *indiscriminate repression* against the nationalist opposition. The prevention of hypernationalism may fail when some exogenous shock arouses widespread anger among the public, or when initially peaceful demonstrations turn violent, or when the nationalist movements are strategically organized that evade the police surveillance. Under the circumstances, the military forces can offer the last-resort assistance for indiscriminate repression. Civil resistance with unarmed protesters is particularly vulnerable in the face of fully armed and well trained forces. Violent resistance may be more resilient against military repression, as studies on civil war have confirmed, only a very small portion of rebel groups are able to avoid defeat and pose a military threat to an entrenched state.<sup>37</sup> In short, military support is essential for the state to successfully control nationalistic popular resistance and defend its preferred foreign policy.

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<sup>37</sup> Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response," 2004, p. 5.

#### 2.2.4 *The Media or the Military?*

The previous discussion demonstrates that the media or the military plays the pivot role for either the state or the nationalist opposition to influence each other and achieve their preferred foreign policy. But when should we expect the media, as opposed to the military, to play the pivot role? As indicated in the former section, whether the media or the military plays the pivot role depends on whether the nationalist opposition chiefly relies on voting or popular resistance to challenge the state's foreign policy. When the nationalist opposition uses voting power to influence foreign policy making, the state largely responds with information manipulation. If the nationalist opposition adopts violent popular resistance, the state would have to resort to military repression.

The means the nationalist opposition relies on is largely conditioned by the state's regime type. In line with Gurr's seminal categorization of regime type, I define regime type based on two binary dimensions: 1) whether the state holds elections for leadership transition; 2) whether the state respects the liberal values including individuals' freedom of expression, belief, and their associational and organizational rights.<sup>38</sup> Regime type based on the above two dimensions are divided into three categories: 1) *democracy* which adopts electoral system and follows the principles of liberalism; 2) *autocracy* which neither holds elections nor observes liberal values; and 3) the mixed category displays a mixture of the characteristics of both democracies and autocracies or could be a state undergoing rapid political change. It should be noted that while the ideal concepts of regime type is well-defined, particularly democracies and autocracies, the empirical boundary between the three categories is always fuzzy and may be subjected to varying interpretations.

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<sup>38</sup> The Freedom House used these four subcategories to measure the level of civil liberties. I borrow the four attributes to measure whether a state is liberal or illiberal. See: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/methodology-freedom-world-2019>.

**Table 2.2 Hypernationalism Management Strategy, Nationalist Opposition Channel of Influence, and the Pivot Supporter in Different Political Regimes**

	Democracy	Mixed Polity	Autocracy
Dominant Hypernationalism Management Strategy	Information Manipulation	Information Manipulation or Repression	Repression
Nationalist Opposition's Main Channel of Influence	Voting	Voting or Popular Resistance	Popular Resistance
More likely Pivot Supporter	Media	Media or Military	Military

How does each regime type affect the pivot role of the media or the military? As Table 2.2 summarizes, in *democracies*, the main channel through which the domestic audience influences the state's foreign policy making is election. With voting as a reliable channel to constrain the state leader, the domestic audience do not need to mobilize popular resistance to put pressure on the state leader. For the states, repression against opposition is against liberal values and this strategy of management is prohibitively costly. Thus, states are more likely rely on information manipulation to shape public opinion and manage nationalist sentiment. Previous studies, such as Chaim Kaufman's seminal work on Bush's campaign for Iraq war, have found that liberal democracies did engage in information manipulation and successfully shaped public opinion.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, Since information is the key for the state leader and the domestic audience to influence each other, media plays the pivot role in liberal democracy.

In *autocracies*, the supreme political power is concentrated in the hands of a single person or a small group, whose decisions are not subject to external legal restraints, domestic electoral

<sup>39</sup> Kaufmann, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War."

incentives, or international commitments to respect human rights.<sup>40</sup> With voting not available, challenge of foreign policy mainly takes the form of popular resistance. Popular resistance, which may start off peacefully, can easily turn violent and imposes a significant degree of domestic threat towards to the state leadership. Compared to democracies, autocracies have wider range of options to deal with the nationalist opposition. It may not only adopt information manipulation to shape public opinion, but also resort to physical repression when nationalist sentiment and movements cannot be dampened down by media's manipulation of information. Because the military is the only force capable of deterring or defeating large-scale and organized nationalist movements and coercing the autocrat to withdraw the foreign policy, it plays the pivot role in autocracies.

In mixed polities, whether the media or the military becomes the pivot supporter depends on whether the nationalist opponents rely on voting or popular uprisings to influence a state's foreign policy. Unlike autocracies, mixed polities allow elections for selecting state leaders, which provides their public some leverage to influence a state's policy. Yet unlike democracies, they are often less constrained by liberal values and thus more willing to conduct state repression in the face of nationalist opposition. nationalist opposition finds elections frequently manipulated and their votes impose little constraints, they may resort to popular uprisings to impose higher threats to the state. In this case, the military would play a pivot role. However, if the nationalist opposition can largely rely on voting to make their state leader accountable for foreign policy making, military involvement is less likely to occur. Information becomes the key to gain supporters and the media support is essential for either side to prevail.

### *2.2.5 Factors Shaping Domestic Alliance Structure*

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<sup>40</sup> For definition and typologies of authoritarian regimes, see Dan Slater, "Iron Cage in an Iron Fist: Authoritarian Institutions and the Personalization of Power in Malaysia," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 1 (2003), pp. 81–101.

What causes the formation of certain type of domestic alliance structure? While this dissertation treats the type of domestic alliance structure as a given independent variable, it is helpful to provide at least some explanations for where the independent variable comes from. There are largely three sets of factors that may cause the pivot supporter to take a particular side, namely: material interest, ideological alignment, and personal patronage.

**Material Interests.** First, material interests are often considered as a key factor shaping the armed forces' decisions to side with the state or not.<sup>41</sup> According to this view, military leaders make choices based on which one maximizes the material profit. The material benefit often includes funding, advanced weapons programs, access to domestic economic opportunities, or other privileges provided through patronage relationships. Huntington's advice on how civilian leaders can better control the military is illustrative. As he noted, providing the military with toys such as "new and fancy tanks, planes, armored cars, artillery, and sophisticated electronic equipment... will make them happy and keep them busy trying to learn how to operate it."<sup>42</sup>

Alternatively, military defection to the side of nationalist opposition may arise from that fact that the other side provides better material profits than what the incumbent offers. For instance, military disagreement occurs when there are intrusions of material interests by the state, such as budget cuts, suspension of military modernization programs, or crackdowns on corruption. Or mass uprisings weakens the position of the state, which further changes the military's perception of the state's capability in continuously providing the material benefits. Finally, military may take the

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<sup>41</sup> For theories based on military interests, see Milan W. Svoblik, "Contracting on Violence: The Moral Hazard in Authoritarian Repression and Military Intervention in Politics," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, no. 5 (2013), pp. 765–94; Terence Lee, "The Armed Forces and Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Explaining the Role of the Military in 1986 Philippines and 1998 Indonesia," *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no. 5 (2009), pp. 640–69., Slater, "Altering Authoritarianism: Institutional Complexity and Autocratic Agency in Indonesia," in *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*, ed. Mahoney and Thelen (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p. 252.



side of the domestic audience because of the availability of new opportunities to advance their material interests after regime change.

Similarly as the military, the media's attitudes may also be affected by material incentives. Media studies have long warned that commercial and social influence shapes coverage and undermines media independence.<sup>43</sup> According to Herman and Chomsky, the media serve, and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them. The representatives of these interests control the media “by the selection of right-thinking personnel and by the editors' and working journalists' internalization of priorities and definitions of newsworthiness that conform to the institution's policy”.<sup>44</sup> Recent studies have also found the phenomenon of “media capture”—a situation in which the media fails to manifest its own will independent from others—exist in all types of regimes, including Austria, Italy, Turkey, and Venezuela.<sup>45</sup> Both the government and private sectors have been found engaged in a variety of activities to provide material incentives to and influence with the media. The typical material incentives include advertisement, state subsidy to the media, economic opportunities, or political advancement for the owners or editors. In the extreme case, the government would simply acquire the ownership or pressure friendly business interests to buy up the ownership of certain media houses.

**Ideological Alignment.** Ideology serves as another important factor in shaping the domestic alliance structure. Media stance is heavily influenced by ideology. In party systems, media

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<sup>43</sup> Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988); Ben H. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983).

<sup>44</sup> Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*.

<sup>45</sup> See for instance, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, “Freedom without Impartiality: The Vicious Circle of Media Capture”, in Peter Gross and Karol. Jakubowicz ed., *Media Transformations in the Post-Communist World: Eastern Europe's Tortured Path to Change* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2013), p. 41; for media capture in various countries, see Anya Schiffrin ed., *In the Service of Power: Media Capture and the Threat to Democracy* (National Endowment for Democracy, 2017), pp. 2-3.

endorsing one party's ideology tends to produce coverage which promotes the endorsed party's policy rather than criticizing it. Such partisanship in media stance is more obvious in coverage on domestic issues or public policies. On foreign policy, media position is affected not only by domestic partisanship, but also ideological cleavage between states. For instance, the ideology of anticommunism in the US was considered as to have exercised a profound influence on the mass media.<sup>46</sup> Because of the ideological impact, the media tend to frame issues in a dichotomized fashion while lowering the demand for serious evidence in support of claims that is considered as "our side".<sup>47</sup> Like Communism, hypernationalism may also deeply influence the media's stance in supporting or criticizing it.

In the studies of authoritarian rule and civil-military relations, ideology alignment is one of the key reasons why the military leaders remain loyal to the authoritarian regime.<sup>48</sup> In turn, emotive appeals to ideology such as nationalist sentiments can push military leaders to sympathize the nationalist opposition. Slater's study on the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998 shows that a large array of communal leaders—religious, nationalist, and military—withdrawed their active support for the Suharto regime because of ideological reasons.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, as will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 4, I find ideological shift made by the Communist Party of China—from extreme counterrevolutionary ideology to nationalism—was the exact cause of military loyalty shift during China's nationalist movement against Japanese invasion in 1936.

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<sup>46</sup> Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, p. 30.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 30-1.

<sup>48</sup> Way Lucan A. and Levitsky Steven, "The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion after the Cold War," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39, no. 3 (September 1, 2006): 387–410; Dan Slater, "Revolutions, Crackdowns, and Quiescence: Communal Elites and Democratic Mobilization in Southeast Asia," *American Journal of Sociology* 115, no. 1 (January 1, 2009), pp. 203–54.

<sup>49</sup> Slater, "Revolutions, Crackdowns, and Quiescence," p.226.

Nationalism can be one of the most important reasons driving the military closer to the nationalist opposition. This is because militaries are often imbued with a deep sense of nationalism. All modern militaries depend on and foster nationalism to ensure the commitment and efficacy of their fighting forces. The core value is taught by military education system, which influences officers' and soldiers' perceptions of threats and the response.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, militaries do not like reconciliatory or compromising policies and that is why they are more likely to agree with an assertive foreign policy demanded by the nationalist opposition. Scholars have shown that soldiers are less likely than civilians to see the value in diplomacy and to view military force as costly.<sup>51</sup> Instead, because militaries are inclined to view the international environment as threatening and because military conflict could increase institutional prestige and equip the military with money and toys, they often prefer assertive international behaviors.<sup>52</sup> Whether military passively disobey state's order to repress the public or takes the active role of removing the leader from power, these activities all impose dire threat on the state leader which results in his/her yielding to the popular demand.

**Personal Bond.** In some occasions, personal bond plays a significant role in shaping alliance structure between the pivot supporter and a lead actor. These bonds can be established based on

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<sup>50</sup> This is key finding in William S. Ackroyd, "Military Professionalism, Education, and Political Behavior in Mexico," *Armed Forces & Society* (0095327X) 18, no. 1 (Fall 1991), pp. 81–96; John Samuel Fitch, *The Military Coup d'état as a Political Process: Ecuador, 1948-1966*, vol. v. 95, pt.1., Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

<sup>51</sup> See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1957); Debs Alexandre and Goemans H.e., "Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War," *The American Political Science Review* 104, no. 3 (August 1, 2010), pp. 430–45; Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth Neal Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons : A Debate Renewed : With New Sections on India and Pakistan, Terrorism, and Missile Defense*, vol. [2nd (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003); Jessica L. P. Weeks, *Dictators at War and Peace*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2014).

<sup>52</sup> According to Huntington, soldiers are socialized to believe that the world resembles more of a realist's world, and to "view with alarm the potency and immediacy of the security threats to the state". Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 66; Alfred Vagts, *Defense and Diplomacy: The Soldier and the Conduct of Foreign Relations*, Topical Studies in International Relations (New York: King's Crown Press, 1956), p. 263; Sagan and Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons : A Debate Renewed : With New Sections on India and Pakistan, Terrorism, and Missile Defense*.

shared experiences, private friendship, patron-client relations, political philosophy, or even familial connections.<sup>53</sup> Unlike material interests or ideology that exert influence across the organizations, personal bond is a special relationship established between individual leaders. Such relationship, if carefully cultivated and sustained, may produce strong loyalty from the leaders of the supporting organizations to leaders of the state or the nationalist opposition.

Studies of civil-military relations have found personal bonds between military and state leaders have contributed to militaries' obedience of civilian orders. In fact, coup-proofing strategies purposefully cultivate and exploit these linkages in an effort to ensure military compliance.<sup>54</sup> Media studies have also discovered numerous instances where the state leaders cultivate friendly bonds with media owners so as to obtain media control. Such were the case in Venezuela before 2015 where private entities linked to the government took ownership of media outlet and in Tunisia before 2011 where broadcast and radio licenses were given to relatives of Ben Ali so he could claim he was liberalizing media without losing his control.<sup>55</sup> Alternatively, personal bonds can also be exploited by the nationalist opposition in order to obtain military or media support. For instance, my research on the 1853-4 Crimean Crisis case demonstrates that in the 1850s, British political elites—particularly the Prime Minister's key political opponent Lord Palmerston—had cultivated personal bonds with the owners and chief editors of influential media

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<sup>53</sup> Patron-client networks have existed and played important roles in many political systems. See for instance S. N. Eisenstadt and Luis Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, Themes in the Social Sciences (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1984); James C. Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia," *The American Political Science Review* 66, no. 1 (March 1, 1972), pp. 91–113.

<sup>54</sup> James T. Quinlivan, "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (October 1, 1999), pp. 131–65.

<sup>55</sup> For Venezuela, see Philip Bennett and Moises Naim, "21st-century censorship," *Columbia Journalism Review*, [https://archives.cjr.org/cover\\_story/21st\\_century\\_censorship.php](https://archives.cjr.org/cover_story/21st_century_censorship.php). Assessed May 10, 2021; For Tunisia, see Kamel Labidi, "Tunisia's media barons wage war on independent media regulation", in Anya Schiffrin ed., *In the Service of Power: Media Capture and the Threat to Democracy* (Center for International Media Assistance, 2017).

in Britain. These media played a key role in assisting Lord Palmerston instigate anti-Russian British hypernationalism and attack the Prime Minister's accommodation foreign policy.

The above analysis by no means claims that it is an exhaustive list of factors shaping the domestic alliance structure. Nor does it attempt to reduce the causes of certain alliance structure to any single factor. Rather, the discussion intends to provide some initial understandings, with preliminary evidence, for the main factors driving the pivot supporter to assist with a particular lead actor. While the actual factors may vary from case to case, the outcome would not affect how the theory proceeds in this dissertation.

#### *2.2.6 Hypotheses on Domestic Alliance Structure and Hypernationalism Management*

The above discussion produced several hypotheses about the side the pivot supporters take and the outcome of a state's management of hypernationalism and making of international concessions. I expect the main hypothesis should work regardless of other factors that will be elaborated in section of alternative arguments. The main hypothesis is:

*H1. Domestic alliance structure determines the success or failure of hypernationalism management.*

Because regime type conditions whether the media or the military plays a pivot role, three sub-hypotheses are generated for more refined tests.

*H2. In democracies, states are more likely to manage hypernationalism and make international concessions when they obtain media support.*

*H3. In autocracies, states are more likely to manage hypernationalism and make international concessions when they obtain military support.*

*H4. In mixed polities, states are more likely to manage hypernationalism and make international concessions when they obtain the pivot supporter's assistance. Whether the media or the military becomes the pivot supporter depends on whether the nationalist opponents rely on voting or popular uprisings to influence a state's foreign policy.*

## 2.3 Alternative Explanations for Hypernationalism Management Outcome

The fields of International Relations and Comparative Politics offer relatively few systematic explanations of the conditions under which states successfully insulate domestic influence and make international concessions.<sup>56</sup> Because the majority of the literature explaining the war-causing effect of nationalism focuses only on the situation when the state already prefers to enter the war, it is difficult to tease out the actual effect of nationalism. However, prominent theories in International Relations and Comparative Politics which do not directly address the impact of nationalism on foreign policy do provide important answers. These theories fall under two broad categories: regime type and international context.

### 2.3.1 Regime Type

Regime type theories focus exclusively on differences between states' institutional structures when explaining a state's international behavior. Taking various forms, these arguments concur that because the public in democracies have reliable means to punish their leaders for bad policies, democracies are more accountable to and more constrained by domestic influence. The implication for this study is that once domestic nationalist sentiment is aroused, democracies are more likely to act assertively and less likely to make concessions in an international dispute. In contrast, because autocracies are less constrained by institutional, electoral, and normative barriers, they are more capable to resort to harsh methods to deal with domestic opposition.<sup>57</sup>

Recent studies in comparative politics start to pay more attention to the fine-grained categorization of regime types. Two arguments not only treat regime type as a crucial factor to explain the impact of nationalism on the likelihood of conflict, but also center on the role of the

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<sup>56</sup> John D. Ciorciari and Jessica Chen Weiss, "Nationalist Protests, Government Responses, and the Risk of Escalation in Interstate Disputes," *Security Studies* 25, no. 3 (July 2016), pp. 546–83.

<sup>57</sup> Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

middle-category regimes<sup>58</sup>. One argument advanced by Snyder relies on the marketplace of ideas as its mechanism. The other “incentive-cost” argument put forward by Weiss and Ciorciari focuses on the likelihood of state stoking nationalism and the cost of state repression. These two alternative theories agree in their prediction that states which fall in the middle of the political regime spectrum are most likely to lose control of nationalism and resort to interstate conflict.

The “*Marketplace of Ideas*” argument, according to Snyder and Ballentine, goes that allowing oppositional voice to be channeled through media without a mature democratic institution to regulate fairness of debate is the main cause of nationalist mythmaking and violence.<sup>59</sup> They predict that because of a lack of check on information manipulation, nationalist mythmaking is most likely in states under democratization or in young democracies. In contrast, mature liberal democracies, with nearly “perfect competition” in the marketplace of ideas, are capable of weeding out extreme ideas because their proponents cannot avoid wide-ranging debate and public scrutiny.<sup>60</sup>

The *the incentive-cost argument* advanced by Weiss and Ciorciari concurs that regime type alone explains whether nationalism would push a state into interstate conflict. Specifically, different types of regimes have different degrees of incentives to incite nationalism and face differentiated costs of repression. The authors divide regimes into four types, i.e., autocracies, electoral authoritarian regimes, weakly institutionalized democracies, and established

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<sup>58</sup> These states are often young democracies, flawed or weakly-institutionalized democracies, or states under democratization. They are referred to as mixed polities in this study.

<sup>59</sup> Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, “Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas,” *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996), pp. 5–40; Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*.

<sup>60</sup> Josiah Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge: Innovation and Learning in Classical Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 32-55; Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*, pp.56-66; Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War : Power and the Roots of Conflict*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), chap. 2, 5.

democracies.<sup>61</sup> Agreeing with Snyder and Ballentine's prediction, Weiss and Ciorciari expect the middle categories, particularly weakly-institutionalized democracies to be most likely to lose control of nationalism as these regimes are most incentivized to stir up nationalist protests but face high costs of repression. In contrast, autocracies and established democracies are more likely to keep nationalist demonstrations under control.<sup>62</sup>

Both arguments acknowledge that although states themselves are largely responsible for stoking nationalism, they do face the risk that nationalism gets out of control to the extent that it would constrain state's flexibility in foreign policy making. However, these two arguments rely on the assumption that once nationalism intensifies, the state would either go along with it willingly as the marketplace of ideas argument suggests, or give way to it reluctantly as the incentive-cost argument implies. Like the conventional regime type arguments, neither of the argument gives enough credit to the state's agency to manage nationalism. Such neglect of state's capacity would cause the logical confusion about the independent effect of nationalism on interstate conflict.

To be certain, the incentive-cost argument does offer an explanation for why nationalism could triumph state's preference in pushing the state into conflict, i.e. certain type of state faces higher cost of repression. this structure-based explanation fails to consider that states, regardless of regime types, may have the agency to utilize the pivot supporter to control nationalism and achieve foreign policy objectives. Other things being equal, democracies are theoretically no more or less likely than other types of regimes to manage nationalism. This statement finds its support in the qualitative analysis section below.

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<sup>61</sup> Ciorciari and Weiss, "Nationalist Protests, Government Responses, and the Risk of Escalation in Interstate Disputes."

<sup>62</sup> Ciorciari and Weiss, p. 13.



### 2.3.2 *International Context*

International context theories emphasize the role of international structure in shaping a state's international behavior. Its theoretical foundation can be traced back to structural realism, which emphasizes that anarchy and the shift of external threat environment can shape a variety of state's behaviors, including international concessions.<sup>63</sup> Domestic influence, on the other hand, plays a secondary role. While preserving the parsimony, classic international context theories are nevertheless much better at explaining an international outcome rather than grasping the full process of foreign policy making. Foreign policy making is often a complicated process where multiple domestic forces struggle to promote or constrain state leader's policy preferences.<sup>64</sup> Without unraveling this process, we are unsure whether a state's response to international stimuli is a result of the state agreeing with, overcoming, or yielding to domestic influence. Worse, international context theories may generate predictions that deviate from the reality. For instance, while international context theories predicts that states behave to pursue their power or interests, these states may lack the ability to do so if they are constrained by domestic nationalist forces.

Unlike structural realism that leaves domestic politics unexplored, one set of international context theories tries to fill the gap and capture the interaction between the external threat environment and the domestic influence. The main logic of these theories is that whether domestic politics plays a role in international politics depends on the opening and closing of opportunities created by the international structure. High level of external threat closes the opportunity for domestic politics to reign in as a result of increase in domestic cohesion. Specifically, because high

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<sup>63</sup> Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979).

<sup>64</sup> Critics along the line was provided by John Vasquez, who argued that realism did not present an accurate picture of foreign policy decision-making process. See John A. Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics: A Critique* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1983).

external threat produces strong sense of nationalism, domestic opposition is inclined to put aside policy difference and cooperate with the state to cope with the external threat. Such domestic cohesion can emerge among the civilian leadership, between civilian leadership and the military, as well as between the state and the society.<sup>65</sup> For instance, Desch's theory proposes that higher external threat increases military subordination to civilian rule. Similarly, the "rally-around-the-flag" argument emphasizes the cohesive relationship between the state and the society as a result of threatening external environment. In contrast, a low level of external threat provides the opportunity for domestic struggles and civil-military schisms over foreign policy making.

The threat-cohesion theories are particularly successful in explaining cases where state leaders are already making war plans. In that context, because the state leader's assertive foreign policy preference agrees with the pro-conflict nationalist demand, it is understandable that high level of external threat brings about domestic cohesion. Yet it leaves a complete explanation to be desired when the state prefers conciliation. After all, there is little evidence to show that the threatening external environment necessarily invites a state's forceful response. It is therefore doubtful that high threats always lead to domestic cohesion. A look into the cases of China's concessions to Japan from 1931 to 1935, Portugal's soft attitudes towards British colonial demands during the 1890s, as well as Mexico's loss of California and Texas to the US in 1846, tells us that high level of external threat did bring about deep political cleavage and social turmoil rather than internal cohesion.

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<sup>65</sup> For external environment affects civil-military relationship, see Michael C. Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); for external threat produces the rally-around-the-flag effect, see John E. Mueller, "Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson," *The American Political Science Review* 64, no. 1 (March 1, 1970), pp. 18–34; William D. Baker and John R. Oneal, "Patriotism or Opinion Leadership?: The Nature and Origins of the 'Rally 'Round the Flag' Effect," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 5 (October 1, 2001), pp. 661–87.

### 2.3.3 Resistance Capacity

A third group of explanations focuses on the resistance groups' strength which is largely shaped by two sets of factors. The first factor shaping resistance capacity is group features such as the organizational level, level of internal cohesion, the membership base, or group ideology; the second is group agency focusing on the strategic choices made by group members when conducting resistance campaign such as adopting violent or non-violent means of resistance. According to this literature, resistance groups are more likely to achieve success in their campaigns when they have higher level of group organization—equipped with well-established formal structures of decision-making and communication; when they are more cohesive internally; when they adopt extreme ideologies; or when they rely on non-violent means of resistance.<sup>66</sup>

Group strength theories have greatly enriched our understanding on popular resistance from the perspective of the opposition groups. Moreover, they provide important implications for the study of domestic influence on a state's foreign policy. However, their exclusive focus on resistance groups without situating these groups in comparison with the state can sometimes be problematic. After all, a state is a highly institutionalized organization monopolizing the use of lethal coercive forces.<sup>67</sup> When a strong state backed up by loyal coercive forces ready to conduct repression, it may render any resistance campaigns ineffective, even when the latter are well-organized, highly cohesive, ideologically motivated, or non-violent.

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<sup>66</sup> Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*; Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (Cambridge, [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Stefano Costalli and Andrea Ruggeri, "Indignation, Ideologies, and Armed Mobilization: Civil War in Italy, 1943-45," *International Security* 40, no. 2 (October 1, 2015), pp. 119–57; Barbara F. Walter, "The Extremist's Advantage in Civil Wars," *International Security* 42, no. 2 (Fall 2017), pp. 7–39; .Walter, Barbara F. 2017. "The Extremist's Advantage in Civil Wars." *International Security* 42 (2):7–39; Adrienne LeBas, *From Protest to Parties: Party-Building and Democratization in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>67</sup> Tony Waters and Dagmar Waters, *Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society: New Translations on Politics, Bureaucracy, and Social Stratification*, First edition. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 181-2.

Due to a lack of consideration of the state's capacity, the outcome predicted by group strength theories may deviate from the reality. Though high group strength may well increase the difficulty for the state to tackle with the resistance campaigns and endure the resistance campaign, it does not necessarily lead to the campaign's success in bringing about policy or regime change. Studies in civil resistance have shown that in order for resistance campaign to achieve success, they need to pull apart the state's pillars of supporters.<sup>68</sup> A large number of research on the Arab Spring echoes this finding and specifies that one of the key pillars for the state in shaping resistance success or failure is the military.<sup>69</sup> The reason why the Syrian popular resistance did not succeed is not because resistance groups were any weaker than their counterparts in other Arab states, but because Syrian military remained loyal to the Assad Regime. Thus, if resistance groups cannot shake the source of power the state relies on, their influences are at best marginal.

Worse, resistance capacity theories fail to take into the consideration the possibility that resistance group with high strength may pose enough threat to the state leadership and other elites that the latter would be pushed more closely rather than being pulled apart. Dan Slater's benchmark work on the authoritarian state formation in Southeast Asia shows that strong, endemic, and perceivably unmanageable contentious politics produces highly united elite coalitions around the state power and helps consolidate authoritarian controls.<sup>70</sup> Desch's theory on civilian control of the military also proposes that if high level of threat from the society are imposed on the state and

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<sup>68</sup> Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, p. 58.

<sup>69</sup> Risa Brooks, "Military Defection and the Arab Spring", in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, February 2017; Sharon Erickson Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring Military Defections and Loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3 (May 1, 2013), pp. 337–49.

<sup>70</sup> Slater, *Ordering Power*..

its military institutions, it could enhance military subordination to civilian rule as in the case of Alberto Fujimori's Peru.<sup>71</sup>

Therefore, focusing exclusively on resistance groups would produce unreliable predictions. An accurate assessment of domestic influence on the state's foreign policy or state's management of domestic influence requires taking both the resistance groups and the state into consideration. Moreover, group resistance studies have correctly pointed out that the key mechanism for domestic resistance to achieve success is to pull apart the pillars of power the state relies on.<sup>72</sup> Resistance group strength may activate the loyalty shift among the pillars of power, but not always. In order to make a convincing argument on the effect of domestic influence on state's foreign policy, one need to focus on the stance of the pillars of power, since it is these power pillars—or pivot supporters in this study—that determines balance of power between the state and the nationalist opposition.

## 2.4 Conclusion

This chapter provides a novel framework for analyzing the conditions under which the state can insulate domestic nationalism and make international concessions. It has identified the lead actors—the state and the nationalist opposition—and specified the their conflictual preferences. It has also introduced the pivot supporter—the media or the military—and its key role in assisting the domestic influence over the state and the state's management of nationalism. Essentially, this dissertation treats the pivot supporter as the pillars of power for both the nationalist opposition and the state. Thus, it argues that the side the pivot supporter takes determines the outcome of

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<sup>71</sup> Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military*.

<sup>72</sup> Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, p. 58.

nationalism management. The next chapter uses a medium-N cross-national qualitative analysis to evaluate my arguments in comparison with the alternatives.

**CHAPTER 3**

**ASSESSING EXPLANATIONS FOR HYPERNATIONALISM**

**MANAGEMENT OUTCOME**

**3.1 Introduction**

Does nationalism interfere with international concessions and promote conflicts even when the state prefers conciliation? Under what conditions can the state manage nationalism and achieve foreign policy flexibility? To test my theory of nationalism management, I use two methods of inference, the qualitative medium-N cross-national study and comparative case studies. This chapter presents a qualitative medium-N cross-national study of nationalism management using a unique dataset I collected.

Drawn upon the Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID) dataset with 2,292 militarized interstate disputes from 1815 to 2010, I select cases that comply with the scope condition in my theory. That is, in these cases, there exists a discrepancy in foreign policy preference between the state leaders and the nationalist opposition. Specifically, while state leaders demonstrated their intention to soften their stance and pursue conciliation towards the adversary state, they are also aware of domestic anti-foreign or anti-compromise expressions. Based on this scope condition, 47 cases are extracted from the MIDS dataset for further examination. I compare these cases and examine whether the pattern of nationalism management outcome fits the anticipation of the theory.

To preview the results of the medium-N cross national study, I find a consistent pattern that domestic alliance structure determines nationalism management outcome. Specifically, when the

state obtains the pivot supporter's assistance, it is more likely to successfully manage hypernationalism and make international concessions. On the contrary, when the pivot supporter sides with the nationalist opposition, the state is more likely to be pushed by hypernationalistic public to escalate the conflict. Other factors such as regime type and level of external threat are found to be able to explain some cases, but their explanatory power is much weaker compared to domestic alliance structure. Notably, while I do not find regime type as a convincing factor shaping the outcome of nationalism management, it does largely condition which supporter—the media or the military—plays the pivot role.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows. First, I outline the operationalization of the key variables, namely nationalism management and domestic alliance structure. Then I specify the data source on which this study relies and how I collected data. Next, I describe the data and discuss the findings. After evaluating my own theory, I will use the available data to test three alternative arguments—the regime type argument, the level of external threat argument, and resistance capacity.

### **3.2 Measuring Hypernationalism Management and Domestic Alliance Structure**

This study explains the outcome of state's nationalism management by starting from the scope condition when the state leader is contemplating making concessions while facing nationalist opposition. As defined in previous two chapters, hypernationalism management refers to the purposeful effort by the state to prevent nationalism from becoming hypernationalism; or in case hypernationalism occurs, to suppress it.

Ideally, the outcome of hypernationalism management is measured by the difference in the degree of nationalism between the pre-management and post-management period. However, there are two major concerns for conducting direct measurement. The first concern is data availability.



Not only is there a lack of comprehensive data regarding the outcome of nationalism management, the systematic measurement for the degree of nationalism is extremely scant.<sup>1</sup> As Alastair Johnston points out during his survey study measuring nationalism in China, the statement that nationalism in China has been rising is largely taken for granted and it is mostly supported by anecdotal or unsystematic evidence.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the very few studies which do attempt to measure the level of nationalism tend to focus on a particular country rather than examine cases comprehensively.<sup>3</sup>

The other concern is the accuracy of the available data. In part, the lack of accuracy in measuring the degree of nationalism stems from the difficulty in operationalizing the concept of nationalism itself. In the existing few studies which have attempted to measure the level of nationalism, scholars adopt diverging ways due to the different definitions of nationalism they adopt. Some consider nationalism no different from the concept of patriotism while others disagree. For instance, while Kosterman and Feshbach's survey of the American public focuses on examining their feelings of attachment to American and whether they support the view that America is superior and should be dominant, Johnston's recent survey on Chinese nationalism incorporates the public's negative attitudes towards an adversary nation. Others focus on measuring nationalist attitudes only rather than incorporating other forms of expressions, such as nationalist resistance activities.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the varying definitions of nationalism make available data less replicable.

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<sup>1</sup> One exception is Alastair Iain Johnston's work on measuring Chinese nationalism. See Alastair Iain Johnston, "Is Chinese Nationalism Rising? Evidence from Beijing," *International Security* 41, no. 3 (Winter 2016/2017 2016), pp. 7–43.

<sup>2</sup> Johnston, "Is Chinese Nationalism Rising? Evidence from Beijing", pp. 8-10

<sup>3</sup> See for instance, Johnston, "Is Chinese Nationalism Rising? Evidence from Beijing"; Rick Kosterman and Seymour Feshbach, "Toward a Measure of Patriotic and Nationalistic Attitudes," *Political Psychology* 10, no. 2 (June 1, 1989), pp. 257–74.

<sup>4</sup> Johnston, "Is Chinese Nationalism Rising? Evidence from Beijing"; Smith, Tom W. 2009. "National Pride in Comparative Perspective." In Max Haller, Roger Jowell, and Tom W. Smith ed., *The International Social Survey Programme, 1984-2009: Charting the Globe* (London: Routledge), pp. 197–221; Rick Kosterman and Seymour Feshbach, "Toward a Measure of Patriotic and Nationalistic Attitudes," pp. 257-274.

Due to the concerns for data availability and accuracy, I use the outcome of international concession as a proxy to operationalize the outcome of nationalism management rather than measuring this dependent variable directly. There are several reasons for this. First, while international concession and nationalism management seem to be different concepts, they are closely related as the former is often a direct result after the latter is achieved. Second, the data available to measure the outcome of international concessions are much more systematic and accurate compared to the nationalism management data. For instance, the MID dataset has recorded 2,292 cases from 1816 to 2010 and is one of the most widely acknowledged and replicated dataset in the field of international relations. Moreover, because international concessions are official behaviors made by state leaders, there tends to be more complete data available to record the process. Finally, the definition and measurement of international concessions are more clear-cut and can be more easily observed.

In this study, the dependent variable—outcome of international concession—consists of two observable values: making a concession or making no concession in an international dispute. To make a concession means to give up part or all of the demand originally claimed by the state.<sup>5</sup> International concession encompasses the relinquishment of demands in a broad range of issue areas, including territorial, political, economic, and, regime dispute issues. The purpose of making concessions is usually to find a mutual agreement or/and to avoid conflict escalation. It indicates a peaceful and communicative means of conflict resolution. The specific manifestation of international concession may range from releasing fishing boats captured in a state's maritime

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<sup>5</sup> This definition is in line with the ones provided by other scholars. See for instance, Carrie Menkel-Meadow, "Ethics of Compromise", in A. Farazmand (ed.), *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance* (Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2016), p.2; Avishai Margalit, *On Compromise and Rotten Compromises*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

territory, submitting the disputed issue to third party arbitration, withdrawing the troops lining up at the disputed border, to giving up the territory originally claimed by the state.

In contrast, making no concession could mean either not to relinquish any demand or to even strengthen the existing claim through the threat or actual use of force. The latter often leads to quick escalation of conflict. I use the term making concessions, making compromises, or making conciliatory foreign policy interchangeably. Table 3.1 summarizes how outcome of international concession making varies and what each variable means.

**Table 3.1 Dependent Variable (DV) Proxy—Outcome of International Concession Making**

Value of the DV	Meaning
Concession	Giving up part or all of the original claim
No Concession	1) Not relinquishing any part of the original claim; or 2) strengthening the claim with the threat or actual use of force

It is worth noting that concessions made by one state are not equal to the reach of a settlement in a dispute. The analysis of concession making applies to only one side of the disputing parties. Whether the other side reciprocates by making concessions depends on a variety of other factors. In fact, even when one state offers concession, war could still occur as a result of the other state's failure to reciprocate. This was exactly what happened in a number of historical cases, including Hitler's aggression invasions in Europe in response to Britain's appeasement before the Second World War. Thus, although one state's conciliatory or assertive behavior certainly provides important implications on the occurrence of international conflict, my dissertation is best suited to explain the outcome of a state's foreign policy rather than the outcome of an international dispute or crisis.

The independent variable—domestic alliance structure—describes a situation when one of the lead actors, the state or the nationalist opposition, obtains the pivot supporter’s assistance. The media or the military serves as the pivot supporter across different types of regimes. To operationalize the independent variable means to clarify what counts as pivot supporter “taking the side” with a certain lead actor and what does not. One major difficulty in the operationalization is that while the pivot supporter is conceptually treated as a unified actor, it is hardly the case empirically. Both the media and the military may not hold universal views regarding a certain issue. Often, the stance of the media organizations is divided due to such factors as ownership, partisanship or ideologies. The military, albeit a highly organized institution commanded by the state leader, is not a unitary actor either. Rather, it encompasses “a shifting set of actors who share a central identity but who have malleable allegiances and potentially divergent interests”.<sup>6</sup> Different military stances may result from military factional schisms or cleavage exists between the military commanders and their military subordinates.<sup>7</sup>

To avoid oversimplification or getting lost in a myriad of details, I will focus on the systematic stance of the pivot supporter by focusing on the key members in these institutions. Specifically, I examine at least three most influential newspapers with highest circulations in each qualifying case and use the outcome of these newspapers’ aggregated stance to represent the overall media attitude. If the newspapers with views in support of the state have a higher number of total circulations, then I code the domestic alliance structure as media supporting the state, or “media-state”; if lower, I code the domestic alliance structure as “media-nationalist opposition”. Indicators for pro-state view largely include but are not limited to: supporting conciliatory foreign policy; calling for a

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<sup>6</sup> Kristin M. Bakke, Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and Lee J. M. Seymour, “A Plague of Initials: Fragmentation, Cohesion, and Infighting in Civil Wars,” *Perspectives On Politics* 10, no. 2 (June 1, 2012): 265–83.

<sup>7</sup> Albrecht and Ohl, “Exit, Resistance, Loyalty,” p.41.

calm attitude rather than hypernationalist views; criticizing or attacking nationalist opposition; and censoring or downplaying hypernationalist views or activities. On the contrary, pro-nationalist opposition media tend to exaggerate the threats posed by the external adversary, frequently mention the defense of national honor to incite hypernationalism, and attack the government for adopting a soft or even traitorous stance.

Regarding the military's stance, I focus on the key military leaders' loyalty as indicators for military assistance. This is to say that I will only examine whether there is loyalty defection undertaken by high-rank military commanders who are in control of sizable armed forces. I do not consider sporadic mutiny or revolt conducted by rank-and-file soldiers as evidence for military's support for the nationalist opposition.<sup>8</sup> Notably in many cases, popular resistance took the form of organized and violent rebellions. Opposition groups may recruit their own parallel coercive forces and conduct armed insurgencies against the foreign state or their own government. Some groups display high levels of institutionalization and internal unity, contributing to military effectiveness in the battleground.<sup>9</sup> However, as long as there are no military leaders who defect and support these armed opposition groups, I do not consider armed groups resistance as military supporting the nationalist opposition. In short, I consider military defection—ranging from active challenge of power (such as coups) to passive disobedience of order—as evidence of military loyalty shift from the state towards the nationalist opposition. I code it as military siding with the nationalist opposition, or “military-nationalist opposition”. Conversely, if no such military defection occurs, the military is regarded as taking the side of the state and coded as “military-state”.

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<sup>8</sup> This is in line with the approach Chenoweth and Stephan utilized to identify defections. According the authors, defections do not include routine individual defections but rather large-scale, systematic breakdowns in the execution of a regime's orders. Nevertheless, they fail to provide a clear threshold for what counts as large-scale. as See Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, p. 46.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 1-3.

The next step closely related to operationalize the independent variable is to determine which of the two pivot supporters—the media or the military—that plays the dominant role. In most of the cases, both the military and the media were involved in shaping nationalism. When that is the case, the role of military dominates even when the media takes the opposite side of the military's. This is because the coercive capability of the military serves as the ultimate force for the state to repress any nationalist resistance the media incites. In a small number of cases, the military was not involved in influencing or controlling nationalism. The reasons of military non-involvement are manifold. For instance, the popular resistance might not be perceived by the state as threatening enough to invite military intervention; or the military is constrained by the Constitution to intervene in domestic affairs; or in some cases, it could be resulted from observational difficulties, especially when the data for military activities were not collected or remain classified. In these cases, the media plays the dominating pivot role.

### **3.3 Data Sources and Specification**

I rely on the data from the 4<sup>th</sup> version of Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID 4) Dataset, one of the most comprehensive datasets in the study of International Relations that provides a variety of information about 2,292 militarized disputes between 1816 and 2010.<sup>10</sup> Not only does the MID 4 dataset provides the largest number of potential cases for my cross-national analysis, it gathers variables with disaggregated values this study heavily draws reference from, such as participating states, the hostility level of the dispute, and the dispute outcome.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Palmer, Glenn, Vito D'Orazio, Michael R. Kenwick, and Roseanne W. McManus. Forthcoming. "Updating the Militarized Interstate Dispute Data: A Response to Gibler, Miller, and Little." *International Studies Quarterly*.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, the outcome of dispute in MID 4 has nine different values, including Victory for Side A, Victory for side B, Yield by Side A, Yield by Side B, Stalemate, Compromise, Released, Unclear, Joins ongoing war, and Missing.

To determine whether a particular case is within the scope condition, I primarily look at whether the state leaders were contemplating conciliation and conflict aversion in a dispute and whether there existed nationalist demands calling against soft or concessional policies. Specifically, state leaders may reveal their intention for conciliatory foreign policy by discussing with close members of the government about their unwillingness to go to war, assess the cost of war, or making preparations for negotiations to resolve the dispute diplomatically with the adversary state. For instance, when examining the case Emery arbitration dispute between Nicaragua and the US, I find a number of indicators for the willingness of Nicaragua president to offer conciliation. They include President Zelaya's offer to renegotiate the terms; his suggestion to waive certain requirement after learning the US's gunboat diplomacy; and Zelaya's proposal to submit the decision for the dispute to the Central American Court of Justice.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, to determine if there existed nationalist pro-conflict demands, I look through newspaper coverage, state leader autobiographies and memoirs, diplomatic correspondence, declassified cables, and secondary sources for indicators revealing their existence in the public sphere or they were brought to the state leader's attention. Sample indicators of such evidence may include words or phrases emphasizing self-other distinction with moral judgement, such as "public opinion", "nationalism", "Jingoism", "Chauvinism", "anti-Xism" (X representing the adversary state), "hostile", "defending", "pride", "superior", "national honor", "other", "traitor", "betray", "treacherous", "selling-out", and etc. Based on the above qualifications, I identify 47 cases from the MID 4 dataset to further test my theory.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Gismondi Michael and Mouat Jeremy, "'La Enojosa Cuestión de Emery': The Emery Claim in Nicaragua and American Foreign Policy, C. 1880-1910," *The Americas* 65, no. 3 (January 1, 2009): pp. 392-4; Michel Gobat, *Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua under U.S. Imperial Rule* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 69.

<sup>13</sup> However, these 47 cases do not necessarily corresponds to 47 disputes in the MID 4 dataset. This is because one dispute in the MID 4 dataset often involves two states and both may constitute my qualifying cases.

The cross-national qualitative analysis also intends to assess three alternative factors, namely regime type, external threat level, and resistance means. In order to identify a state's regime type, this study relies on Marshall and Gurr's Polity V dataset.<sup>14</sup> I incorporate the POLITY score (computed by subtracting the Autocracy score from the Democracy score) which ranges from +10 (strongly democratic) to -10 (strongly autocratic) to identify a state's regime type in a given year.<sup>15</sup>

The second alternative factor is the level of external threat proposed by international context theories. Unfortunately, while there are abundant works suggesting how to measure the level of external threat, systematic data measuring it are almost non-existent.<sup>16</sup> Considering data limitation, I will use the relative comprehensive material capability as a simple proxy to measure the threat level a state perceives based on the understanding that a state feels more threatened when the adversary state is materially more powerful. The absolute comprehensive material capability data of a state in a given year is obtained from the variable CINC collected in the National Material Capabilities (NMC) dataset (v5.0).<sup>17</sup> Relative material capability can be measured by dividing the under-study state's absolute military capability by the adversary's. If the result is  $<0.9$ , then the

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<sup>14</sup> Ted Robert Gurr and Monty G. Marshall, *Polity V: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2018*, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>.

<sup>15</sup> If a state receives the score from +5 to +10, it will be classified as a democracy. If a state receives the score from -10 to -5, it will be identified as an autocracy. States receiving scores from -4 to +4 will be considered as mixed polities. Cases with a score of -66 are ones of foreign interruption and treated by Polity V dataset as system missing. I will rely on additional historical details to assist with the identification.

<sup>16</sup> According to Walt, external threat can be measured based on four types of sources: 1) aggregate power; 2) geographical proximity; 3) offensive capability; and 4) offensive intention. However, Walt did not suggest how to determine the level of the external threat when taking all sources together. Because each factor contains different values that could point towards different directions and there lacks a convincing formula to aggregate the four factors on the same dimension, it is difficult to operationalize Walt's concept of external threat directly. Another approach to measure threat environment is suggested by Desch when evaluating how threat environment affects civil-military relations. This approach identifies wars and periods of heightened international tensions as high threat level while detentes and periods of peace present low external threats. Yet this approach fails to consider the important periods of disputes and crises in between war and peace and leaves the variation in the intensity of different types of disputes unaccounted. See Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985), p. 9; Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military*, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Singer, J. David, Stuart Bremer, and John Stuckey. (1972). "Capability Distribution, Uncertainty, and Major Power War, 1820-1965." in Bruce Russett (ed) *Peace, War, and Numbers*, Beverly Hills: Sage, 19-48.



threat level is coded as high; if the result is within the interval of 0.9 to 1.1, the threat level is medium; and if the result is  $>1.1$ , the threat level is low. Finally, to test the resistance means argument, I rely on both the NAVCO dataset version 3.0 (NAVCO 3) and primary and secondary sources to identify the primary means of resistance the nationalist opposition adopted.<sup>18</sup> If means of resistance primarily includes expression of nationalist sentiment and demonstrations, it is considered as non-violent; if the means of resistance involves popular unrest, popular revolt, or low-rank military mutiny, it is considered as violent.

Table 3.2 displays all cases detailing the dispute name, the state under observation, the year of the case, regime type of the state under observation, level of external threat, means of domestic opposition, predicted pivot supporter, the observed domestic alliance structure, predicted outcome, and the actual outcome.

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<sup>18</sup> Erica Chenoweth, Jonathan Pinckney and Orion A. Lewis. 2017. Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes Dataset, v. 3.0. University of Denver.

**Table 3.2 Summary of Cases for States' International Concession Making in the Face of Nationalist Opposition, 1815-2010**

NUM	DISP NUM*	Dispute Name	State	Year	Regime Type (POLITY score)	Threat Level!	Means of Domestic Opposition#	Predicted Pivot Supporter	Actual Alliance Structure (IV)	Predicted Outcome	Actual Outcome
1	9	Anglo-Portuguese Colonial Dispute of 1890	Portugal	1889-1890	Mixed (-4)	High (<1)	Anti-British demonstrations; popular unrest; low-rank military uprising	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession; ^Prime Minister ousted after concession
2	11	Anschluss	Britain	1938	Democracy (10)	High (<1)	Anti-German sentiment by anti-appeasers	Media	Media-State	Concession	Concession
3	12	Czechoslovakia Crisis	Britain	1938	Democracy (10)	High (<1)	Anti-German/appeasement sentiment	Media	Media-State	Concession	Concession
4	15	Aroostook War	US	1839	Democracy (10)	High (<1)	Anti-British/cession sentiment	Media	Media-State	Concession	Concession
5	31	The Boxer Rebellion	China	1900-1901	Autocracy (-6)	High (<1)	Anti-Imperialist sentiment; popular resistance	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession
6	57	Pre-Crimean War Crisis	Britain	1853-1854	Democracy (~5)	Low (>1)	Anti-Russian Sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession
7	69	Dominican Republic-US Dispute over US Interference of Sovereignty	Dominican Republic	1915-1916	Mixed (-66)	High (<1)	Anti-American Sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession
8	129	Sino-Japanese Dispute Over Manchuria	China	1931-1933	Autocracy (-5)	High (<1)	Anti-Japanese demonstrations; popular unrest	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession

**Table 3.2 Summary of Cases for States' International Concession Making in the Face of Nationalist Opposition, 1815-2010, Continued**

9	152	France	1896-1898	Democracy (8)	High (<1)	Anti-British Sentiment	Media	Media-State	Concession	Concession					
10	152	Britain	1896-1898	Democracy (8)	Low (>1)	Anti-French Sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession					
11	2214	China	1935-1937	Autocracy (-5)	High (<1)	Anti-Japanese Sentiment; popular rebellion	Military	Military-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession					
12	177	Germany	1923-1925	Democracy (6)	Medium (~1)	Anti-French demonstrations; popular rebellion	Media	Military-State	Concession	Concession					
13	199	India	1956-1962	Democracy	Low (>1)	Anti-Chinese Sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession					
14	258	Britain	1939	Democracy (10)	High (<1)	Anti-German Sentiment	Media	Media-State	Concession	Concession					
15	260	China	1914-1915	Autocracy (-5)	High (<1)	Anti-Japanese Sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession					
16	301	France	1835-1836	Mixed (-1)	Low (>1)	Anti-American Sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession					
17	309	China	1898	Autocracy (-6)	High (<1)	Anti-Imperialist sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession					
18	315	Germany	1911	Mixed (2)	Medium (~1)	German Nationalist sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession					
19	360	Guatemala	1975	Autocracy (-6)	Low (>1)	Anti-cession sentiment	Military	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession					

**Table 3.2 Summary of Cases for States' International Concession Making in the Face of Nationalist Opposition, 1815-2010, Continued**

20	360	Belizean-Guatemalan Territorial Dispute	Belize	1775	Mixed (N/A)	High (<1)	Anti-cession sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession
21	373	UK-US Dispute Over Oregon	Britain	1846	Mixed (3)	Low (>1)	Anti-US sentiment	Media	Media-State	Concession	Concession
22	1025	Bolivia-Paraguay Border Dispute Over Chaco	Paraguay	1927	Mixed (-3)	High (<1)	Anti-compromising sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession
23	1026	Bolivia-Paraguay Border Dispute Over Chaco I	Paraguay	1928-1929	Autocracy (-7)	High (<1)	Anti-compromising demonstrations; low-rank military mutiny	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession
24	1027	Bolivia-Paraguay Border Dispute Over Chaco II	Bolivia	1931-1935	Mixed (1)	Low (>1)	Anti-compromising protests; popular unrest	Military	Military-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession
25	1120	Haitian-Dominican Republic Border Conflict	Haiti	1901	Mixed (-3)	Low (>1)	Anti-compromising sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession
26	1120	Haitian-Dominican Republic Border Conflict	Dominican Republic	1901	Mixed (-3)	High (<1)	Anti-Haitian Sentiment	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession
27	1124	Mexico-Guatemala Conflict	Mexico	1958-1959	Mixed (-4)	Low (>1)	Anti-Guatemalan Sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession
28	1124	Mexico-Guatemala Conflict	Guatemala	1958-1959	Autocracy (-5)	High (<1)	Anti-Mexican Sentiment	Military	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession
29	1139	Leticia Incident Between Colombia And Peru	Peru	1932	Mixed (2)	Medium (~1)	Irredentist Nationalist sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession

**Table 3.2 Summary of Cases for States' International Concession Making in the Face of Nationalist Opposition, 1815-2010, Continued**

30	1203	Emery Arbitration Dispute between Nicaragua and US	Nicaragua	1909	Mixed (-3)	High (<1)	Anti-American Sentiment; popular revolt	Military	Military-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	Concession	Concession
31	1512	The U.S.S. Baltimore Incident	Chile	1891	Mixed (3)	High (<1)	Anti-American Sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession	Concession
32	1529	Mole Saint-Nicolas Affair Between US And Haiti	Haiti	1889-1891	Mixed (-3)	High (<1)	Anti-American demonstrations; popular unrest	Military	Military-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession	No Concession
33	1541	US-Mexican Chamizal Track Dispute	Mexico	1893-1915	Mixed (-1)	High (<1)	Anti-American Sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession	No Concession
34	1544	US-Mexican Dispute over Regime Recognition and Border Intrusion	Mexico	1876-1880	Autocracy (-9)	High (<1)	Anti-American Sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession	Concession
35	1551	The Gadsden Purchase	Mexico	1850-1854	Mixed (-3)	High (<1)	Anti-American Sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession	Concession
36	1552	US-Mexican War After Annexation Of Texas	Mexico	1843-1848	Mixed (-3)	High (<1)	Anti-American Sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession	No Concession
37	1557	American-Spanish War	US	1898	Democracy (10)	Low (>1)	Anti-Spanish Sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession	No Concession
38	1775	US-Mexican Dispute over Regime and Border	Mexico	1915-1916	Mixed (-1)	High (<1)	Anti-American Sentiment	Media	Media-State	Concession	Concession	Concession

**Table 3.2 Summary of Cases for States' International Concession Making in the Face of Nationalist Opposition, 1815-2010, Continued**

39	1777	China-Japan Dispute After Versailles Conference	China	1918-1920	Autocracy (-5)	High (<1)	Anti-Japanese demonstrations; popular unrest	Military	Military-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession
40	2211	China-Japan Dispute Over <del>Chubai</del> , Inner Mongolia	China	1933-1935	Autocracy (-5)	High (<1)	Anti-Japanese demonstrations; popular unrest	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession
41	2741	Panama Canal Crisis between the US and Panama	Panama	1977	Autocracy (-7)	High (<1)	Anti-American Sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession
42	2741	Panama Canal Crisis between the US and Panama	US	1977	Democracy (10)	High (<1)	Anti-Compromising Sentiment	Media	Media-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession
43	2776	Thai-Laotian Border Conflict	Thailand	1987-1988	Mixed (3)	Low (>1)	Anti-cession demonstrations; popular unrest	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession
44	4062	<del>Senkaku</del> Island Dispute	China	1996	Autocracy (-7)	Low (>1)	Anti-Japanese demonstrations	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession
45	4472	<del>Chunxiao</del> , Gas Field Dispute	China	2005	Autocracy (-7)	Low (>1)	Anti-Japanese demonstrations	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession
46	4491	<del>Senkaku</del> Island Dispute	China	2010	Autocracy (-7)	Low (>1)	Anti-Japanese demonstrations	Military	Military-State	Concession	Concession
47	4588	Thai-Cambodia Border Conflict Over Preah <del>Vihear</del>	Thailand	2008-2010	Mixed (4)	Low (>1)	Anti-Cambodian Sentiment; popular unrest	Military	Military-Nationalist Opposition	No Concession	No Concession

\*DISP NUM: Dispute Number listed in the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) Dataset Version 4.

^: Cases in shaded rows are cases that the theory fails to explain.

! Threat Level is measured by the material capability of the state under observation divided by the material capability of the adversary state. I use CINC obtained from the National Material Capabilities (NMC) dataset (v5.0) to represent a state's material capability in a given year. If the result is <0.9, the threat level is coded as high; if the result is around 1 (within the interval of 0.9-1.1), the threat level is medium; and if the result is >1.1, the threat level is low.

# If means of resistance primarily includes expression of sentiment and demonstrations, it is considered as non-violent; if the means of resistance involves popular unrest, popular revolt, or low-rank military mutiny, it is considered as violent.

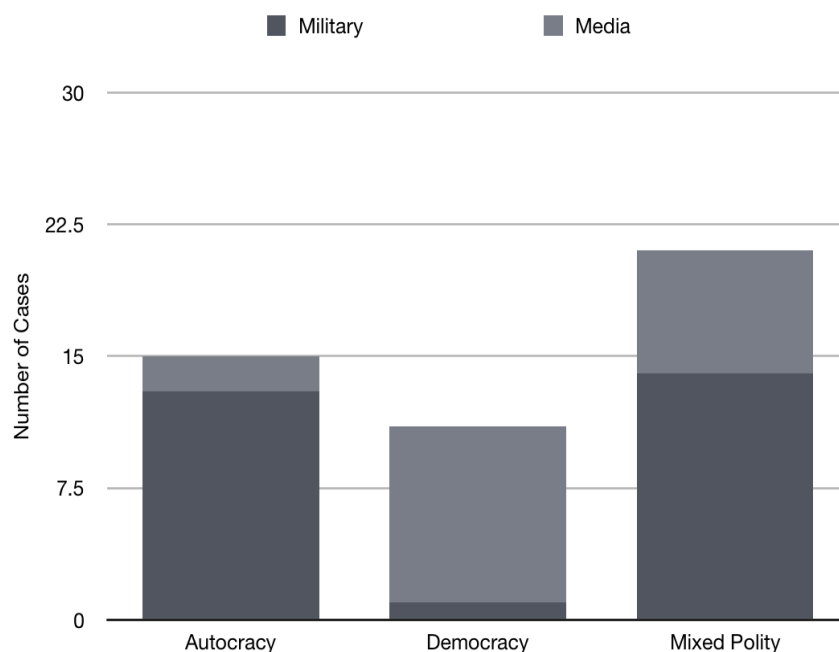
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### **3.4 Discussion of the Findings**

The findings for the outcomes of states' concession making in the face of domestic opposition support my main hypothesis. Over all, of the 47 cases, 20 ended up with no concession while 27 resulted in concession. In other words, states failed to manage nationalism and were pushed by the nationalist opposition to adopt forceful foreign policy in 42.6% of the cases but succeeded in managing nationalism in 57.4% of the cases. My theory explains 44 out of 47 cases. In all 44 cases, domestic alliance structure shapes the outcome of a state's concession making.

Moreover, the findings largely fit the anticipations of my second-level argument. Specifically, my second-level argument expects that in democracies, the media plays the pivot role and in autocracies, the military plays the pivot role. In mixed polities, however, whether the media or the military becomes the pivot supporter depends on whether the nationalist opponents rely on voting or popular uprisings to influence foreign policy. As Figure 3.1 shows, among the 15 autocracy cases, the military played the pivot role in 13 cases (86.7%) while the media played the pivot role in only two cases (13.3%). Among the 11 democracy cases, the media played the pivot role in 10 cases (90.9%) and the military in one (9%). Finally, among the 21 cases of mixed polities, the military played the pivot role in 14 cases (66.7%) while the media played the pivot role in seven (33.3%). In these cases, whether the military or the media played the pivot role largely depends on how violent and threatening the nationalist opposition stages their resistance.

**Figure 3.1 Regime Type and Pivot Supporter**



It is worth noting that even in autocracies, the media may play the pivot role in managing nationalism. Oftentimes, states would rely on the media support to manipulate public sentiment at the beginning stage. This is largely because information manipulation incurs much less cost from social backlash than outright military repression. Military repression is rather a last resort when information manipulation is ineffective and the state leaders perceive high levels of domestic threat imposed by nationalist opposition. Moreover, the only democracy case where military was sent to control nationalism was Case 12 the French Occupation of the Ruhr. Right after French occupation in 1923, nationalist civil unrest in Germany grew into riots and coup attempts against the government of the Weimar Republic, including the infamous Beer Hall Putsch led by the Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. The threat of the popular resistance was only diminished because the military,



including the armed forces and all police officers, remained loyal to the government and was mobilized to suppress the rebels.<sup>19</sup>

As Table 3.2 shows, the findings also demonstrate three cases this theory fails to account for. The first case is the 1890 Anglo-Portuguese colonial dispute (Case 1). In 1890, Britain sent Portugal an Ultimatum requiring the latter to cease from activity in disputed area. The Ultimatum caused violent anti-British sentiments in Portugal and soon demonstrations turned into a country-wide social unrest.<sup>20</sup> On January 31, 1891, the social unrest incited a low-rank military uprising against the Portuguese monarchy for yielding to the British demands. Eventually, the revolt was suppressed by a military detachment that remained loyal to the Portuguese government and the latter conceded to Britain by signing the Treaty of London.<sup>21</sup> While my theory correctly predicts that this case should end up with state's concession to the British demands due to military assistance, it fails to account for the ouster of the state leader which took place immediately after the concession. While the state did manage nationalism momentarily, the effect did not last long.

Similar to the case of 1890 Anglo-Portuguese colonial dispute, Case 30 the Emery Arbitration Dispute between Nicaragua and the US also ended up with state leader's concession and his removal from office shortly afterwards.<sup>22</sup> The difference between the two cases is that while in the former case, the military largely remained loyal to the government, in the latter case, the government was challenged by a key military general. While popular resistance and military revolt were staged against the Nicaragua state leader Zelaya for his soft stance towards the US, he

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<sup>19</sup> Ileen Bear, *Adolf Hitler: A Biography*. (Delhi: VIJ Books (India) PVT Ltd, 2016); Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, 1st American ed. (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> Maria Teresa Pinto Coelho, "'Pérfida Albion' and 'Little Portugal': The Role of the Press in British and Portuguese National Perceptions of the 1890 Ultimatum," *Portuguese Studies* 6 (1990), pp: 173–90.

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey S. Bennett, *When the Sun Danced: Myth, Miracles, and Modernity in Early Twentieth-Century Portugal*, Studies in Religion and Culture (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> Gobat, *Confronting the American Dream*, pp; 62-5.

nevertheless managed to make concessions. While my theory failed to predict correctly this outcome, Zelaya's concessions to the US also precipitated his downfall in 1909. These chains of events demonstrate fully the complicated interactions between domestic politics and a state's international behavior, which a parsimonious theory fails to capture fully.

Lastly, the theory also fails to account for Germany's concession in the Second Moroccan Crisis (Case 18). This Crisis started when France deployed a substantial force in the interior of Morocco in April 1911, followed by the German dispatch of a gunboat named "Panther" in July to protect its own colonial interest. When the French demands were made to the German public, pan-German nationalism was aroused. Opinions in newspaper and private letters threatened the German Secretary of State with "the direct consequences if he gave up the smallest fraction of what Germany considered to be her rights in Morocco".<sup>23</sup> However, in November, Germany backed down from its original demand and signed the Franco-German Accord to settle the dispute. Evidence shows that the balance of public opinion and media support was unfavorable to the arrangement.<sup>24</sup> My theory expects the outburst of German nationalism facilitated by the German media would lead to the breakdown of the agreement. However, the German concession was not interrupted by domestic nationalist sentiment. Part of the reason could be that the German government also obtained some media support calling for a calm interpretation of the arrangement and appreciation for the valuable addition to Germany's colonial possessions.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, ed. by G.P. Gooch, D. Litt., F. B. A., and Harold Temperley, Litt. D., F. B. A., *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914*, Vol. VII. The Agadir Crisis, p. 388.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 658.

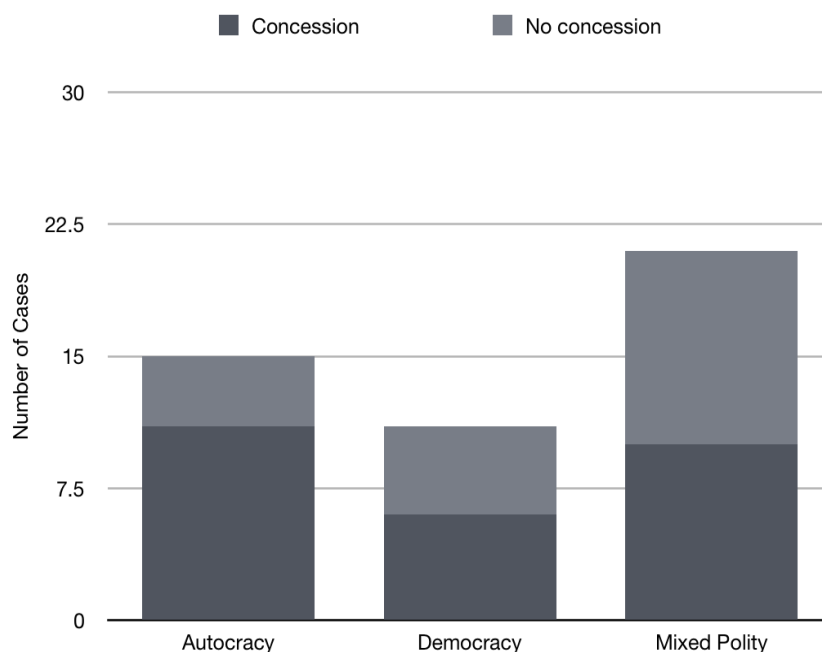
<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.5 Evaluating the Alternative Explanations

Three alternative arguments—regime type, level of external threat, and resistance means will be tested in the section. The first alternative factor to consider is regime type. As previously mentioned, regime type arguments largely agree in expecting democracies to be less war-prone and more willing to make concessions than autocracies. The recently evolved regime type arguments move a step further to argue that the middle categories are most likely to lose control of nationalism and be pushed by nationalism to war.

As Figure 3.2 demonstrates, the findings in this study are against the anticipation by regime type arguments. In autocracies, 11 out of 15 cases (73.3%) ended up with international concessions while only four lead to conflict escalation. In contrast, democracies are not particularly better at making concessions. Among the 11 cases where democracies were involved, six cases (55%) resulted in concession while the other five (45%) resulted in absence of concessions. The mixed

**Figure 3.2 Regime Type and International Concession**



polity, which is expected by the recent regime type arguments as the most dangerous category with highest risk for conflict escalation, showed that there was a fairly equal chance for concession (10 out of 21) and no concession to take place. As a result, regime type arguments perform quite poorly in explaining the outcome of concession making.

Admittedly, these cases in my study are confined by the scope condition that state leaders prefer to adopt a conciliatory foreign policy. It is thus not surprising to see that autocracies are particularly good at making concessions since they are less constrained to use repression against opposition compared to the democracies. Yet what makes regime type unconvincing is that there seems to be no clear pattern regarding whether democracies or mixed polities are good at making concessions or not. Regime type arguments may counter by saying that because in reality state leaders in autocracies or mixed polities simply have stronger incentives for conflict escalation as opposed to concessions, limiting the cases to aforementioned scope condition simply skewed the result. However, the debate on whether autocracies or mix policies are more incentivized than democracies to escalate conflict is at best inconclusive. In fact, early studies have already shown that democracies are no less war-prone than autocracies.<sup>26</sup> My study shows that when controlling the state's incentives, there is no clear pattern which type of state necessarily leads to a particular outcome. Thus, the variation in states' ability to manage nationalism and avoid conflict escalation is not determined by regime type.

The second alternative factor is the level of external threat proposal by international context theories. According to the threat environment arguments, higher external threat unifies the country

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<sup>26</sup> T. Clifton Morgan and Sally Howard Campbell, "Domestic Structure, Decisional Constraints, and War: So Why Kant Democracies Fight?," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 2 (1991), pp. 187–211; William J. Dixon, "Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict," *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 1 (1994), pp. 14–32.

and focuses everyone’s attention outward.<sup>27</sup> It therefore allows the state to carry out its preferred foreign policy without suffering from domestic opposition. In contrast, lower level of external threat invites domestic political contention and increases the difficulty for the state to adopt concessions.

**Figure 3.3 External Threat and International Concession**

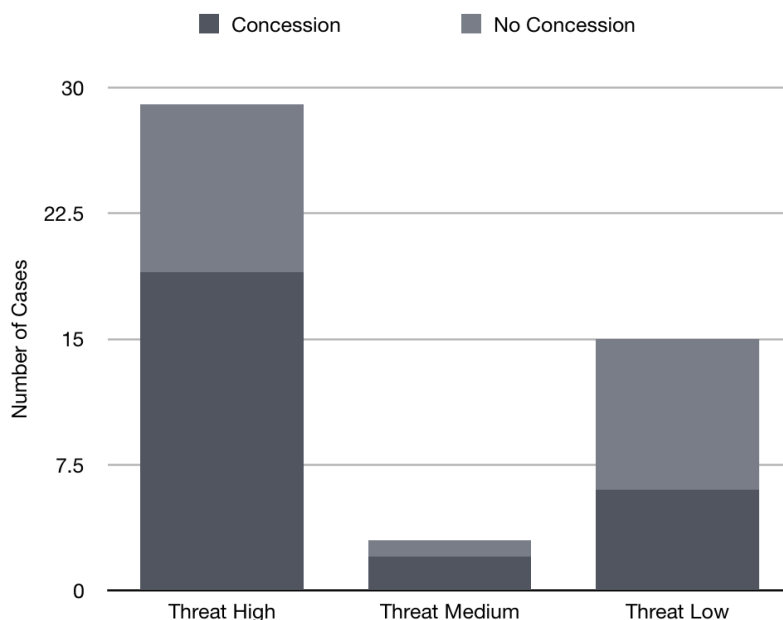


Figure 3.3 reveals that the threat-level argument explains quite well the outcome of states’ international concessions. As it anticipates, when the level of external threat is high, states are more capable of making concessions. The result shows that among 29 cases when states faced high external threats, these states were able to make concessions or back down from their claim in 19 (65.5%) cases. On the contrary, among the 15 cases where states face low external threat, these states made no concession in nine (60%) cases. While international context theories may not explain as many cases as my theory, they largely predict the patterns correctly.

<sup>27</sup> Michael C. Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military*, p.12.

The third alternative factor is the means of resistance adopted by the nationalist opposition. According to Chenoweth and Stephan, nationalist opposition adopting non-violent means is more likely to achieve resistance success than their violent counterparts. As an implication, we should expect nationalist opposition who adopt non-violent means to have a higher chance of achieving success in pushing the state towards non-conciliatory foreign policy.

**Figure 3.4 Resistance Means and International Concession**

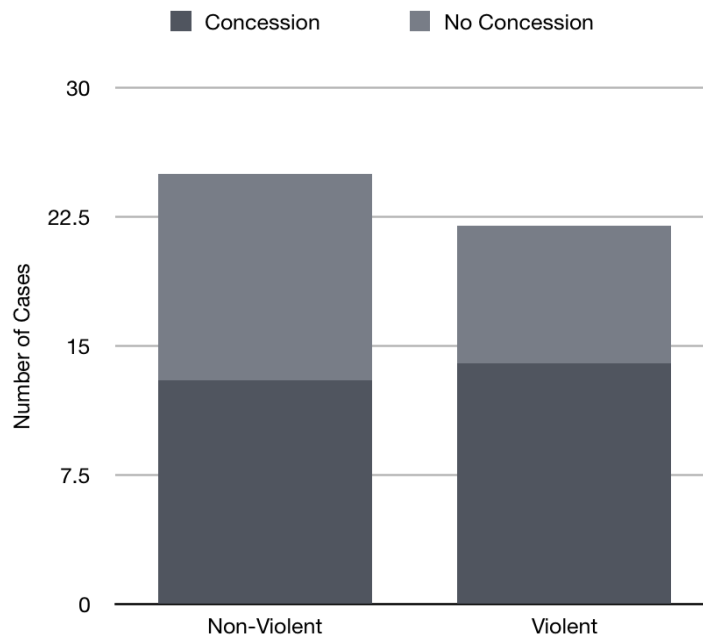


Figure 3.4 shows that among the 25 cases where the nationalist opposition relied on non-violent means such as expressing the nationalist sentiment and organizing peaceful demonstrations, 13 (52%) resulted in failure in influencing the state’s foreign policy while 12 (48%) succeeded. Conversely, violent nationalist resistance in the form of popular unrest or revolt failed to push the state to escalate conflict in 14 (out of 22; 63.6%) cases and succeeded in the rest eight (36.4%) cases. Unlike the prediction made by the resistance means argument, my analysis does not find that non-violent means adopted by the nationalist opposition is significantly better than the violent-means

in forcing the state to withdraw concessions. Compared to the domestic alliance structure theory, the resistance means theory exhibits weaker predictive power.

### 3.6 Conclusion

As the cross-national evidence has shown, the result fits the anticipation of the theory established in this study. That is, domestic alliance structure shapes the outcome of a state's nationalism management. Moreover, which of the two supporters—the media or the military—plays the pivot role is largely conditioned by a state's regime type. The three alternative explanations—regime type, level of external threat, and resistance capacity—demonstrates varying levels of explanatory power during the test, with external threat level argument being the strongest. To investigate further the explanatory power of the competing arguments and credibly test the causation, I rely on comparative studies of two pairs of cases and principally on “most similar with different outcome (MSDO)” designs. This method allows me to control a number of key alternative variables, including regime type, external level of threat, as well as resistance capacity.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, this method is paired with the increased inferential leverage by the selection of two well-known cases that are most likely for the conventional wisdom but least likely for my theory.

Chapter 4 focuses on two democratic cases where the public can rely on voting to influence the foreign policy, namely Britain from 1853 to 1854 under the leadership of Lord Aberdeen and Britain from 1937 to 1939 under the leadership of Neville Chamberlain. These two cases are selected not only because the latter is extremely well-known, but also due the many similarities the two share. Chapter 5 focuses on two China cases under the almost identical setting. The first case is China in the 1931-1933 Manchuria Crisis during which Japan invaded and took control of

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<sup>28</sup> Charles Ragin, 1996; Przeworski and Teune, 1970.

the province of Manchuria. The second case focuses on China in the 1935 to 1937 North China crisis during which China was facing the second wave of Japanese invasion in Northern provinces of China. This set of cases is strategically selected to control the key alternative variables including regime type and level of external threat. The comparative case study pays a special attention to testing one of the main competing explanations—resistance capacity—for hypernationalism management outcomes.



## CHAPTER 4

# MEDIA SUPPORT AND THE CONTROL OF HYPERNATIONALISM IN DEMOCRACIES

Evidence From Britain Before the 1854 Crimean War and Before WWII

*“I agree in thinking the public feeling in this matter is a generous feeling...but, my Lords, it is not for us to encourage that feeling. It is, on the contrary, the duty of the Government...to direct them in the course of prudence and of policy...”<sup>1</sup>*

-----*Lord Aberdeen spoke at the parliamentary debate in February 1854, one month before Britain’s declaration of war*

### 4.1 Introduction

Since Britain took the form of parliamentary democracy in 1832, it fought three major wars, which resulted in millions of casualties. The comparison of the onset of two wars—the 1854-56 Crimean War and the Second World War—has shown a puzzling result. The Crimean War has been described as “perfectly useless”, “unnecessary” and “by accident”.<sup>2</sup> It was a war both the British Government and its adversary Russia had desperately tried to avert. Opportunities of peaceful settlement existed, but they did not save Britain from rushing into war. Instead, the British

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<sup>1</sup> “Russia And The Porte”, *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debate*, Vol. 130, February 14 1854, Column 646.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Robert Morier, quoted in J. A. R. Marriott, *The Eastern Question; an Historical Study in European Diplomacy*, Fourth edition. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 249; Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, Chapter 2; M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 132.

Government made several decisions that contributed to the escalation of conflict, including dispatching its fleets in an effort to deter Russia.

Britain's hasty entrance into the Crimean War contrasted sharply with its behavior during the pre-WWII era. Like in the 1850s, the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was determined to avoid war. But what made the pre-WWII case different is that Chamberlain successfully delayed the war with Nazi Germany. Despite that Germany's aggression in Europe intensified since early 1938 and that there existed the strong voice that it was rational for Britain to enter war against Nazi Germany in 1938 instead of 1939,<sup>3</sup> Chamberlain managed to offer concessions to appease Hitler without suffering domestic repercussions. Up until the eve of the German invasion of Poland, Britain had not made a single move that was intended to escalate the tension with Germany.

*Why did Britain fail to act conciliatorily towards Russia from 1853 to 1854 but successfully sustain the appeasement policy towards Nazi Germany from 1937 to September 1939?* By tracing the process leading up to the two wars, I find existing theories, including structural Realism,<sup>4</sup> and other rationalist explanations of war, war memory argument, and regime type argument fail to explain the divergent outcomes of the two cases. Rather, the comparison of the two pre-war periods demonstrates the analytical leverage of my theory of media control and foreign policy making in democracies. Evidence I have found shows that *what leads to the two distinct outcomes, i.e. Britain made compromise from 1937 to 1939 but not in 1854, was whether the state was able to manage*

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<sup>3</sup> Churchill, for instance, firmly believed that "it would have been better in all the circumstances...to fight Hitler in 1938 than it was when we finally had to do so in September, 1939." See Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, A De Luxe Golden Book (New York: Golden Press, 1960), p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> IR scholars attributed the delay to a lack of German military power and clarity of German intention before 1939. Mearsheimer, for instance, referred Britain's behavior before 1939 as "buck-passing" and argued that the balanced multipolar system in 1938 in Europe allowed Britain to pass the buck to the more powerful France to handle Germany first. See John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), pp. 270-2; See also Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," pp. 3-43.

*British nationalism.* Media served as the pivot supporter for the state to manipulate the anti-compromising public opinion and reduce the domestic cost of making concessions.

In the case of Crimean War, the British Government failed to obtain media support for its course to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the adversary Russia. The policy opposition utilized the media to instigate anti-Russian sentiment among the British public, who blamed the Government for being too soft towards Russia and thus treacherous for failing to defend British honor. Evidence from the memoirs of the then British Cabinet members demonstrates that the British Government was under significant public pressure to act firmly against Russia. It was the media's instigation of anti-Russian hypernationalist sentiment that pushed the British Government to abandon negotiations and to escalate the conflict step by step, first by dispatching the British fleets and eventually by sending the ultimatum to Russia.

In contrast, drawing the data from the public opinion polls conducted by the British Institute of Public Opinion in 1938, I find no prevailing public sentiment rose to push the Government to relinquish its appeasement foreign policy. This is true even when Germany had incorporated Austria and was amassing its troops at the Czechoslovakian border during the summer of 1938. Relying on various primary and secondary sources including the Cabinet papers and the British leaders' memoirs, I show that it was the British Prime Minister Chamberlain's manipulation of information with the media's assistance that prevented anti-German hypernationalism from rising and sustained appeasement policy. Though war was eventually declared in 1939, it was not due to the pressure from the British public. Rather, Britain had to declare war because it promised to protect Poland in March 1939 and Hitler invaded Poland six months later. If Hitler didn't ignore the British warning, war might well be further delayed.

This chapter proceeds as follows: first, I focus on the 1853-4 Crimean Crisis by providing an overview of it first, and then presenting the evidence that it is the media assistance with the

nationalist opposition that led to Britain's conflict escalation. The next section discusses the pre-WWII case as a comparison of the first. It overviews the case and shows how media assistance with the state results in the state's successful management of British anti-German sentiment. Then I discuss why the existing theories cannot explain the variations of the outcome. Finally, I conclude with a discussion on the theoretical and empirical contribution this chapter has made to the existing knowledge.

## **4.2 Media Support With the Nationalist Opposition and Conflict Escalation During the Pre-Crimean Crisis (March 1853 to March 1854)**

### 4.2.1 Overview of The Pre-Crimean War Crisis

In March 1854, the English Government declared war upon Russia. Its cause and timing have puzzled historians and political scientists for many years.<sup>5</sup> The main historical antecedent for the Crimean War is the Russian Tsar's ambition to exercise protection over the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman sultan. It created the dispute between Russia and France over the privileges of the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches in the holy places in Palestine. Once Lord Aberdeen, who had agreed that England and Russia should negotiate the partition of Turkey, became the Prime Minister, the Tsar saw an opportunity to reclaim his demands.<sup>6</sup>

However, even the Tsar would not expect the Eastern question to escalate so quickly into a European war. The crisis (1853-4) began with the dispatch of Prince Menschikoff by the Tsar to Turkey in February 1853. Menschikoff carried the mission of delivering the Tsar's demand to both restore Orthodox control of the Holy places and obtain his right to "protect" the Greek Christians

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance, Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*; Norman Rich, *Why the Crimean War?: A Cautionary Tale* (Hanover [N.H.]: Published for Brown University by University Press of New England, 1985).

<sup>6</sup> Herbert C. F. Bell, *Lord Palmerston* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966), Vol. 2, p. 81.

in the Ottoman Empire. He was met with Turkey's refusal and left with an ultimatum. After the Turkey rejected the ultimatum, the Tsar escalated the crisis by dispatching troops across the Pruth river into two Turkey's Principalities—Waldachia and Moldavia.

What happened next demonstrated the ambivalent British foreign policy. On the one hand, the British Government was working hard towards making peace. On the other, it somehow made moves that contributed to the escalation of conflict. For instance, while Menschikoff was at Turkey, the French leader Louis Napoleon dispatched his fleet to Dardanelles, a narrow strait in Northwestern Turkey, as a deterrence against the expansion of Russian power. This move was initially dismissed by the British government as “unwise”,<sup>7</sup> but it did not take long for them to dispatch the British fleet to join the French.

Another move that escalated the Anglo-Russo tension was the abandonment of an essential mediation effort. The British Cabinet at first were united to ease the tension and make peace. In July 1853, it worked with the other three Powers (France, Austria, and Prussia) to draft the Vienna Note for the purpose of mediating between the Tsar and the Sultan. The Note was supposed to guarantee Russia's rights at the Porte while at the same time ensuring the Sultan's sovereignty. Once submitted, it was immediately accepted by the Tsar, and early in August the whole dispute seemed to be at an end. But the situation was made worse by the leak of the “Nesselrode Dispatch” to a Berlin paper, which interpreted the Vienna Note as favorable to Russian interests. The dispatch was read by the British public as a “violent interpretation”.<sup>8</sup> Under the public pressure, the British Government abandoned the Vienna Note reluctantly. It also took a further step towards hostility

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<sup>7</sup> The British Cabinet members considered the France's dispatch of fleets as a result of “the vanity of the French”. See Charles Greville, Lytton Strachey, and Roger Fulford, *The Greville Memoirs, 1814-1860* (London: Macmillan & co., 1938), Vol. vii, p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Peterson, *Crisis Bargaining and the State: The Domestic Politics of International Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 83

by sending the warships to protect the Sultan, regardless of the Tsar's recent counter-offer of conciliation.<sup>9</sup>

The incident that decisively escalated the conflict between Britain and Russia came after Turkey's declaration of war against the Tsar. Shortly after the declaration, Russia caught a small Turkish fleet at Sinope and destroyed it. Such news shocked the British public, who were led by the media to believe that the catastrophe of Sinope was a treacherous "slaughter" committed by Russia and an outright assault against liberal values.<sup>10</sup> Adding to the agitation was the news of the resignation of Lord Palmerston, who was widely considered as the sole representor of British national pride and an advocate for standing firm against Russia. Hence the British public were enraged by the British Government for failing to defend British honor and driving out the only "English" Minister who would do so.

Anti-Russian sentiment among the British public resulted in sharp switch of British foreign policy towards Russia. Three days after the confirmation of news of Sinope, the Cabinet still displayed the desire for peace and determined to resist the French proposals for special measures.<sup>11</sup> However, as the uncompromising public sentiment grew overwhelming, they completely altered their policy and sent a warning to the Tsar that any act of aggression afterwards would be repelled by force.<sup>12</sup> Though even during this time—about two months ahead of the War, the Tsar sent a conciliatory Note to all the Powers to obtain support on armistice negotiation with Turkey, the allied representatives had been in a hurry to end the negotiation. They hastily

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<sup>9</sup> The Tsar offered if the British Government would enforce the Vienna Note, he was ready to issue a declaration denying his right to the general interference feared by the Sultan. See Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, pp. 36-7.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander William Kinglake, *The Invasion of the Crimea: Its Origin and an Account of Its Progress down to the Death of Lord Raglan* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1875), p. 378.

<sup>11</sup> Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, p. 168.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

examined the Tsar's proposal, pronounced "inadmissible", and sent an ultimatum to Russia. On March 28th, a month after the ultimatum was dispatched to Russia, war by Britain and France was declared.

#### 4.2.2 Explaining British Entrance of Crimean War: Media-Nationalist

##### Opposition Alliance and the State's Failure in Hypernationalism Management

It has been called "useless war" that "took place by accident".<sup>13</sup> Standard theories do not work well in explaining why Britain entered the war. For instance, the rationalist explanations of war proceed that issue indivisibility, the holding of private information and the commitment problems lead to the breakdown of negotiations and the choice of war.<sup>14</sup> However, none of the problems were at issue during the negotiations. Both Britain and Russia preferred peace over war with each other. The British Government regarded Turkey not worth fighting for and was ready to pressure it to make peace with Russia. Nor did the British Government raise any concern about Russia's ability to commit after reaching an agreement.

Other speculations also fail to explain satisfactorily the cause of Crimean War. Perspectives based on deterrence blamed the war on Britain, whose early conciliation "misled the tsar" into believing in Britain's acquiescence.<sup>15</sup> However, in the last few months before war, the Tsar was more compromising than emboldened. It could be possible that war occurs as a result of troublesome historical relations between the two states. But for Britain before 1853, the historical enemy of Britain was France, not Russia. In effect, it was not until 1853 did Russia take France's place and attracted Britain's hostile attention. At first sight, no reason appears why war should

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<sup>13</sup> Sir Robert Morier, quoted in Marriott, *The Eastern Question*, p. 249.

<sup>14</sup> James Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995), pp. 379–414..

<sup>15</sup> Ann Pottinger Saab, *The Origins of the Crimean Alliance* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), p. 16.

have been declared in March 1854. It is not surprising that the Crimean War was considered as classic case of war of accident.<sup>16</sup>

But a hand of historical evidence shows that British anti-Russian sentiment played a key role in pushing the British Government into the war with Russia. This view was confirmed by contemporary politicians and historians. For instance, Kinglake remarked that when Englishmen knew of the catastrophe of Sinope, “they were inflamed with a desire to execute justice.”<sup>17</sup> In the biography of Aberdeen, Lord Stanmore pointed out that it was the force of public opinion that changed the Cabinet’s views and ultimately pushed Aberdeen into consent for war.<sup>18</sup> However, many questions remain unanswered. For instance, if the public’s anti-foreign sentiment was the most potent factor in bringing about a European war, how did the common indifference among the public towards foreign affairs disappear? Through what mechanism did the voice of the people become the voice of the state? If the Prime Minister Lord Aberdeen was consistently opposing war, how did he surrender in the end?

My theory provides an answer that the British media aroused the anti-Russian sentiment among the public, which in turn pressured the British Cabinet and the Prime Minister to adopt a confrontational foreign policy towards Russia. Before the Crimean War, the influential newspapers were against the British Government’s conciliatory foreign policy towards Russia and were largely taking the side of the nationalist opposition, led by Lord Palmerston. As Table 4.1 shows, compared with the British Prime Minister Lord Aberdeen, his leading policy opponent Lord Palmerston who strongly favored militant response against Russia enjoyed the support from a larger number of newspapers in 1853.

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<sup>16</sup> Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923*, p. 132

<sup>17</sup> Kinglake, *The Invasion of the Crimea*, p. 61.

<sup>18</sup> Arthur Hamilton-Gordon Stanmore, *The Earl of Aberdeen*, The Prime Ministers of Queen Victoria. [VIII] (London: S. Low, Marston & company (limited), 1893), pp. 256-7.



Among Palmerston’s media supporters, the *Daily News* sold fewer than 4,000 copies daily in 1853, but the number increased gradually to 5,000 in 1854. The *Morning Post* was preferred by aristocracy and its circulation remained largely steady, with some 3,000 copies being sold per day from 1853 to 1854. During the same pre-war period, The *Morning Chronicle* had roughly same circulation. The *Morning Herald*’s circulation was slightly higher, but fewer than 5,000. The circulation of the *Morning Advertiser* was highest among its peers, with 7,000 to 8,000 copies being sold daily.<sup>19</sup> The *Globe* became one of the mainstream papers by the 1840s, with an estimated circulation under 5,000.<sup>20</sup> Though compared with *the Times*, the circulation of all the above newspapers combined fell short, but the sheer number of major newspapers supporting Palmerston’s foreign policy stance indicated the latter’s popularity and influence.

**Table 4.1 Average Daily Circulation Figures and Stance of the Most Influential Newspapers in 1853**

Newspaper	Circulation	Supporting Who?
The Times	40,000-50,000	The Aberdeen Administration
The Morning Advertiser	7,000	Lord Palmerston
The Daily News	<4,000	Lord Palmerston
The Morning Post	3,000	Lord Palmerston
Morning Chronicle	3,000	Lord Palmerston
Morning Herald	5,000	Lord Palmerston
Globe	<5,000	Lord Palmerston
Manchester Guardian	20,000	Lord Palmerston

Source: Alfred P Wadsworth and Manchester Statistical Society, “Newspaper Circulations 1800-1954,” [Paper] Read Wednesday, 9th March, 1955 (Manchester: Norbury, Lockwood & Co., 1955).

*The Times* had remained as a loyal supporter of the Government till 1853. It has been the most prestigious since the nineteenth century. By the 1850s, it was acknowledged to have the largest circulation. In 1852, it enjoyed an average daily circulation of around 40,000 copies while in the

<sup>19</sup> Alfred P Wadsworth and Manchester Statistical Society, “*Newspaper Circulations 1800-1954*,” [Paper] Read Wednesday, 9th March, 1955 (Manchester: Norbury, Lockwood & Co., 1955), p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Wadsworth and Manchester Statistical Society, “*Newspaper Circulations 1800-1954*,” p. 7.

end of 1854, the circulation number reached over 50,000. The influence of *The Times* throughout the 19th Century was enormous. Its nearest rival—the *Morning Advertiser*—could only claim 7,000 and its main metropolitan rivals combined was an average of 17,889.<sup>21</sup> However, after the Sinope incident in December 1853, even *the Times* switched side and joined the clamor for punishing Russia and criticizing the government.

How did media assist the nationalist opposition with manipulating nationalist sentiment? During the Turkish crisis that eventually led up to war, media allies played an indispensable role in assisting the opposition leader Lord Palmerston in directing the public sentiment so as to push Britain into war. Before January 1853, the British public agitation was not aimed at Russia at all. Rather, the main target was Napoleon III, who had overthrown the constitution and persisted as a dictator since the *coup d'etat* on 2 December 1851. All public attention and debates were focused on whether France was about to invade England.<sup>22</sup> Nobody would have thought Britain would enter a war with Russia within fifteen months. Many Cabinet members, including Russell, Gladstone and Aberdeen, were not in favor of continuing to support Turkey.

But suddenly there came a change. This change was made not because France became more peaceful, but because the media found there new attacking object—Russia. When Prince Menschikoff left Constantinople with the Ultimatum in May 1853, the British public were immediately reminded by the media of the evil committed by the Russian Tsar. Both old and fresh memories were brought back to spotlight. Reproduced in the newspapers was Russia's brutal suppression of the Polish insurrection in 1831 and the cruelty of the Tsar in sending a 200,000 men army to crush the Hungarian forces after the 1848 Hungary Revolution.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-11.

<sup>22</sup> Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, p. 117.

Following the ultimatum, Russia dispatched its army across the River Pruth and entered the two Turkish principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. The Cabinet gathered to discuss whether to cooperate with France to send fleets into Dardanelles. Palmerston, along with a few Cabinet members, was inclined to let British fleets advance with France into the Bosphorus, the narrow strait in Northwestern Turkey. But the majority of the ministers, especially Lord Aberdeen, deemed Napoleon's action as both unnecessary and provocative. They rejected sending the fleets and decided on a peaceful settlement in conjunction with other Powers.<sup>23</sup>

While the Cabinet was still debating about whether to cooperate with France, the British newspapers did everything they could to rally public support for conflict escalation by exaggerating the threat of Russian aggression while picturing Turkey as state sharing the British value. The *Morning Post* depicted Turkey as “a tolerant State, and although poorly governed at present, capable of improvement.”<sup>24</sup> The argument that the Tsar meant not to risk war upon the East Question and was able to provide protection to the Christians in Turkey, was received as pro-Russian propaganda. The *Morning Chronicle* called that “the whole country rising to the occasion if Russian aggression continues”.<sup>25</sup> The *Morning Herald* went further by claiming that the Russia was going to start a European War and “the first act of aggression might be the seizure of Constantinople.”<sup>26</sup> All these papers were Palmerston's supporters. The only influential paper that was backing the Aberdeen's stance was *The Times*. It appealed to the public that “the prime aggressor of which Turkey has to complain is France” and that “it was England's duty to abstain from any interference”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Orlando. Figes, *The Crimean War: A History*, 1st ed. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), p. 110.

<sup>24</sup> Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, p. 125.

<sup>25</sup> *The News Chronicle*, July 10, 1853.

<sup>26</sup> *The Morning Herald*, June 13, 1853.

<sup>27</sup> *Times*, March 21 and 22, 1853.

Under the pressure of public opinion, Aberdeen unwillingly agreed to send the British fleet to Besika Bay, a strategic location at the mouth of the Dardanelles strait, so as to deter a Russian attack on the Turkish capital, but not close enough to provoke a conflict between Britain and Russia. This is largely due to the information campaign waged by Palmerston and the media. The latter succeeded in preparing the British public with the idea that the defense of the Turkey principalities against Russian aggression was vitally important for the British honor. Although the historical record of Turkey was barbaric, the British public came to believe that Turkey had been undergoing domestic reform and would soon embrace the liberal values. Lord Aberdeen, who were hesitating to stand up for Turkey, was depicted as a friend of the Tsar, in Russian pay, and implicitly a traitor.<sup>28</sup> Under the public pressure, Lord Clarendon, a close member of Aberdeen's Cabinet, tried to convince Aberdeen that "I recommend this (i.e., the dispatch of the fleets) as the least measure that will satisfy public opinion..."<sup>29</sup> Thus Palmerston and his media allies claimed the first victory in pressing the British government to take militant action against Russia.

The draft of the Vienna Note seemed to provide a renewed prospect of peace as the European powers and Russia came to a close agreement of peaceful settlement. But such prospect was quickly doomed after the publication of the Nesselrode's dispatch. The press played a determinate role in leaking the information and instigating the fury among the British public. The *Morning Post* declared that Turkey had done well in rejecting the Vienna Note and that the fleet was about to pass the Dardanelles due to Palmerston's pressure in the Cabinet.<sup>30</sup> The *Morning Chronicle* and *The Globe* joined in praising Turkey for its rejection of the vague clauses of the Vienna Note.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, p. 124.

<sup>29</sup> Herbert Maxwell, *The Life and Letters of George William Frederick, Fourth Earl of Clarendon, K.G., G.C.B.* (London: E. Arnold, 1913), p. 25.

<sup>30</sup> After the publication of Nesselrode's dispatch, Clarendon wrote a letter to Stratford ordering the entry of the fleet. *The Morning Post*, September 23, 1853.

<sup>31</sup> *The Morning Chronicle*, September 21 to 28, 1853.

Not only were Russia and Austria denounced in newspapers, large and enthusiastic public meetings were called upon the Eastern Question. The public demanded that the Vienna Note be withdrawn, that Turkey be aided not merely by the presence of British fleet, but active participation against Russia in full support of France. These were resolutions passed in many parts of the country and reported in full in the daily papers.<sup>32</sup>

It was in view of this unanimity of public sentiment that the Cabinet reluctantly abandoned the Vienna Note instead of attempting to use it as a basis for further negotiation. Clarendon, usually serving as a cautious intermediate, admitted that “We cannot press the Turks too hard about the Note because public opinion would be against it...”<sup>33</sup> In a similar vein, John Russel asserted,

“I know something of the English people, and feel sure that they would fight to the stumps for the honour of England. To have held out such encouragement to the Turks as we have done and afterwards to desert them would be felt as deep disgrace and humiliation by the whole country.”<sup>34</sup>

Such anti-Russian sentiment did not rise automatically. Without the media to provide the conflict-provoking information and interpretation, such as the leaked interpretation of the Nesselrode’s dispatch, the public might well support the British government to continue negotiations with Russia. More importantly, the media were not acting independently. To many of the papers that denounced the Vienna Note, Palmerston was regularly providing opinions if not exact words. It was the alliance between the policy opposition and the media that accomplished the task of switching the direction of foreign policy to their favor.

The most fatal crisis to the last hope of peace came in early December. It was through this dramatic series of incidents that the media-nationalist opposition alliance successfully rallied

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<sup>32</sup> Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, p. 153.

<sup>33</sup> Maxwell, *The Life and Letters of George William Frederick*, ii. 20.

<sup>34</sup> Stanmore, *The Earl of Aberdeen*, p. 228.

almost the entire British public and the Cabinet behind them. On November 30, a division of the Russian fleet caught six Turkish wooden vessels into the harbor of Sinope, and destroyed them. Curiously coincided with the Sinope incident, Lord Palmerston announced his resignation on December 14<sup>th</sup>, only two weeks later. The effect of the two pieces of news on the British public was overwhelming. Not only were there a burst of emotional outrage against Russians<sup>35</sup>, the public were extremely frustrated and angry about their own government. According to Lord Stanmore, public opinion reached unanimity and displayed unprecedented enthusiasm.<sup>36</sup>

Palmerston's friend newspapers played a determinant role in shaping such public sentiment. Together, they managed to arouse British hypernationalism through distorted interpretations of the events in their favor. The *Morning Post* was among the most bellicose papers after Sinope. It declared that Sinope was "not a naval engagement" but a "violent outrage" which called for immediate war.<sup>37</sup> *The Morning Herald* demanded that "the damning disgrace of Sinope should be revenged at Sevastopol."<sup>38</sup> *The Manchester Guardian*, initially hesitated that Turkey was not worth fighting for, admitted war was inevitable.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, *The Morning Chronicle* declared on the 21<sup>st</sup> that Sinope was an "atrocious outrage" and on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, "we shall draw the sword, if draw it we must..."<sup>40</sup> Even *The Times* threw away their previous hopes of peace and stated that Sinope "dispels the hopes we have been led to entertain of pacification... We have thought it our duty to uphold and defend the cause of peace... but now... war has begun in earnest."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, p. 148; Stanmore, *The Earl of Aberdeen*, p. 255.

<sup>36</sup> Stanmore, *The Earl of Aberdeen*, p. 254.

<sup>37</sup> *The Morning Post*, December 16, 1853.

<sup>38</sup> *The Morning Herald*, December 16, 1853.

<sup>39</sup> *The Manchester Guardian*, December 24, 1853.

<sup>40</sup> *The Morning Chronicle*, December 21 and 23, 1853.

<sup>41</sup> *The Times*, December 13, 1853.

In a less biased view, the Sinope incident was not supposed to cause such a stir among the public. It was, after all, a naval engagement between the Russian and Turkish fleet and Russia, with superior armed forces, claimed the victory by sinking the wooden Turkish vessels. Moreover, it occurred not in peacetime, but at a war declared by Turkey, not Russia. As Lord Stanmore lamented,

“Looked at in the light of after years, there was nothing in the battle of Sinope to justify the outcry of horror which it called forth... When nations are at war, an attack on the fleet of one belligerent by the fleet of the other is not only justifiable but to be expected.”<sup>42</sup>

More importantly, it was strongly suspected by the Queen and other British statesmen that these Turkish vessels were deliberately provocative in order to lure the Russians out of their defensive posture.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, if not for the media’s information campaign, the Sinope Incident would have been some negligible noise. Even three days after the public knew about Sinope, the general view of the Cabinet was still that Sinope was merely an unnecessary and annoying event for which no new policy would be required.<sup>44</sup> It was the media presentation of the incident as a cruel “massacre” that brought unanimity in demanding for war across the country.

In the post-Sinope episode, Aberdeen and Clarendon continued the efforts to resolve the conflict by diplomacy or at least to persuade the other European powers to cease their support of the Turks.<sup>45</sup> But members of the Cabinet were all, as Clarendon said of his own feelings, ‘getting

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<sup>42</sup> Stanmore, *The Earl of Aberdeen*, pp. 242-243.

<sup>43</sup> “Queen Victoria to the Earl of Aberdeen”, *The Letters of Queen Victoria, A Selection from Her Majesty Correspondence Between the Years 1837 and 1861* (London: John Marry, Albemarle St., 1908), Vol. 2, p.463; The Duke of Argyll could not conceal his rage against the Turks when the incident of Sinope occurred. “The silly and wayward Turks, after declaring war against Russia, had the inconceivable folly to send their little wretched fleet into the Black Sea, and to anchor it in the open and undefended harbour of Sinope...of course the Turkish fleet was marked down by a reconnoitering squadron from the great Russian arsenal...”see George Douglas Campbell Argyll, *Autobiography and Memoirs* (London: J. Murray, 1906), Vol.1, p. 467.

<sup>44</sup> Stanmore, *The Earl of Aberdeen*, p. 168.

<sup>45</sup> Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* p. 99.

in favor of war'.<sup>46</sup> On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Aberdeen government succumbed to the pressure of British public opinion and agreed to order the British fleet to join the French into the Black Sea. It also adopted the proposal Palmerston had been pushing for, to give instructions to the admiral to prevent any Russian vessels of war from leaving port.<sup>47</sup> Lord Aberdeen explained the action of the Cabinet to the Queen that "I should have hesitated to agree to this proposal had it not been evident that continuance of the French alliance depended upon its adoption...unfortunately *public opinion* in this country would not permit the risk of dissolving the alliance at this juncture by the assertion of a little more independence."<sup>48</sup> In less than three months, the British Government declared war against Russia.

Why didn't the state try to actively influence the media and public opinion? Aberdeen's failure of sustaining his preferred foreign policy was a direct result of his failure of utilizing the media to shape public opinion. Unlike his competitors, Aberdeen never had attempted to cultivate the relations with the media or to lead public opinion throughout the turbulent period. He regarded public opinion as irrational and was well aware of the importance of guiding it. In the parliamentary debate in February, 1854, he implored,

"I agree in thinking the public feeling in this matter is a generous feeling...but, my Lords, it is not for us to encourage that feeling. It is, on the contrary, the duty of the Government as much as possible to resist such feelings, however natural and generous they may be—to direct them in the course of prudence and of policy..."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Clarendon to Lady Clarendon, 2 Jan. 1854, in Maxwell, *The Life and Letters of George William Frederick*, Vol. 2, p. 37; J. B. Conacher, *The Aberdeen Coalition 1852-1855: A Study in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Party Politics* (London: Cambridge U.P., 1968), pp. 245, 261-3.

<sup>47</sup> Evelyn Ashley, *The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston* (London: R. Bentley & Son, 1879), p. 291.

<sup>48</sup> Correspondence, December 22, 1853, in George Hamilton-Gordon Aberdeen and Arthur Hamilton-Gordon Stanmore, *Selections from the Correspondence of the Earl of Aberdeen* (London: Printed by Harrison and Sons, 1854).

<sup>49</sup> "Russia And The Porte", *Hansard's Parliamentary Debate*, Vol. 130, February 14 1854, Column 646.



Nonetheless, he never put it into action to guide public feelings. He chose the wrong way to soliciting support for his foreign policy. Instead of actively obtaining media allies, Aberdeen was found unable to maintain his existing media friend—Delane, the Editor of *The Times*. Rather than appealing to the public or resorting to information manipulation, he tried hard to persuade the Parliamentary to withstand strong popular impressions and exhibit moral courage.<sup>50</sup> As Lord Stanmore correctly observed, Aberdeen’s influence “was exerted over those who were themselves leaders of opinion”. But to the general public, he was “almost a stranger”.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, he failed to realize the power of guiding public opinion but drifted with it. As the Duke of Argyll complained, the foreign policy of Aberdeen administration was “without some purpose more definitely recognized”, but were reluctantly made due to fear for public opinion. Nevertheless, “we do not try to lead or guide it...”<sup>52</sup>

In conclusion, the real cause of Aberdeen’s “drift” into war was that he did not secure the pivot tool—the media—to manage information and public opinion while his policy opponent did. Without active cultivation of media alliance and information control, Aberdeen left the policy opposition little barrier to take advantage of the media and public opinion so as to advance their own political goals. The main policy opposition, Palmerston, not only acknowledged the power of public opinion, but manipulated it through the assistance of the media. He cultivated the alliance with influential newspapers of the day through active courting and material rewards. The media repaid his favor by disseminating the information facilitating Palmerston’s hawkish foreign policy.

#### 4.2.3 The Cultivation of Media-Nationalist Opposition Alliance

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 648-9.

<sup>51</sup> Stanmore, *The Earl of Aberdeen*, p.311.

<sup>52</sup> Clarendon Deposit, MSS. Clar. Dep. C. 14, fols 706-15, Argyll to Clarendon, October 25, 1854.

It should be noted that the media did not lend its support to the nationalist opposition automatically. Rather, this tie was carefully cultivated by the opposition leader, Lord Palmerson. He had been establishing close contacts with the press and exploiting such alliance for a long time. Before he became an industrious and reforming Home Secretary in 1853, Palmerston had served 15 years of Foreign Secretary and maintained a keen interest in the Eastern crisis. His view of foreign policy emphasized national prestige and patriotic honor above all else. For him, Russia was not only the aggressor against the weak power Turkey, but also a great menace to the European balance of power. Thus, he was found stirring up anti-Russian sentiment and trying to pressure the Prime Minister into the adoption of a war policy.<sup>53</sup>

Palmerston's methodology to cultivate media allies including both providing material incentives and been attentive to the journalists' needs. He met the journalists socially, frequently invited them to the evening parties host by Lady Palmerston, and bribed them with material rewards and titles. For instance, in return for the Morning Chronicle's loyalty, Palmerston awarded the proprietor, Easthope, the baronetcy.<sup>54</sup> In 1851, he made the acquaintance of an American journalist Henry Wikoff. Since then, he had actively courted Wikoff's assistance as a means of promoting his reputation in America and paid him secret funds.<sup>55</sup> James Grant, editor of the Morning Advertiser, claimed to have had the "privilege to enjoy some measure of personal intimacy with him [Palmerston]", wrote in 1870 that there "never was a man who was so great a

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<sup>53</sup> Bell, *Lord Palmerston*, p. 83.

<sup>54</sup> Stephen E. Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 74–5.

<sup>55</sup> Algernon Borthwick to Peter Borthwick, 2 July 1851, in *Glenesk-Bathurst Correspondence and Papers*, MS. Dep. 1990/1/1111

favourite personally with, not the reporters only, but with all the gentlemen filling high positions on the press, as the late Lord Palmerston".<sup>56</sup>

Apart from providing material incentives, Palmerston was also very attentive to the journalists' needs for years. For instance, when he was leading the Foreign Office during the 1830s, he would pass early intelligence of diplomatic events on to certain newspapers.<sup>57</sup> In order to accommodate the deadlines of reporters, Palmerston would often rearrange the times of meetings or provide reporters with advance notice of subjects he intended to refer to.<sup>58</sup> It is through both material rewards and attentiveness that Palmerston successfully cultivated the allegiance of the so-called Palmerstonian journals and made sure that he was not subject to editorial whims and commercial considerations.

Up till 1853, the English Press was in favor of Palmerston rather than the Prime Minister Aberdeen.<sup>59</sup> Particularly, *The Globe* and the *Morning Post* had offered their ardent loyalty to Palmerston since the late 1840s. The *Morning Post* became "Palmerston's Paper" after 1849 when it changed its ownership.<sup>60</sup> The change of ownership at *the Morning Post* caught Palmerston's attention and the names of Borthwick appeared in his diary months before the paper finally changed hands.<sup>61</sup> Soon, a close connection was developed between Palmerston and the new editor Peter Borthwick and his son Algernon. As Stephen Koss proclaimed, on questions of foreign

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<sup>56</sup> James Grant, *The Newspaper Press: Its Origin--Progress--and Present Position* (London: Tinsley brothers, 1871), pp. 205-6.

<sup>57</sup> Palmerston to Andrew Doyle, Palmerston Papers, PP/GC/DO/17, February 3, 1837.

<sup>58</sup> David Brown "Compelling but Not Controlling?: Palmerston and the Press, 1846-1855," *History* 86, no. 281 (2001), p. 47.

<sup>59</sup> Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, p. 88.

<sup>60</sup> This is according one of the Post's historian. See W. H. Hindle, *The Morning Post, 1772-1939: Portrait of a Newspaper* (1937), pp. 187-202. Ridley called *The Morning Post* Palmerston's "chief mouth piece". See Jasper Godwin. Ridley, *Lord Palmerston* (London: Constable, 1970), p. 413.

<sup>61</sup> Laurence Fenton, *Palmerston and The Times: Foreign Policy, the Press and Public Opinion in Mid-Victorian Britain*, vol. 6 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), p. 107.

policy “the Post is Borthwick and Borthwick is Palmerston”.<sup>62</sup> The *Post* was broadly won over by Palmerston through a series of social meetings and also a frank interchange of political news between the Borthwicks (Peter and Algernon) and Palmerston. At one point, Palmerston almost reward Peter Borthwick a position in the Foreign Office.<sup>63</sup>

Compared to the *Morning Post*, the *Globe* was a more supportive ally throughout and a vital organ for the propaganda of Palmerstonian policy. Palmerston had formed such a close connection with *the Globe* that he was able to direct its articles to best suit his purposes. In letters to *the Globe*, for instance, Palmerston was found requesting that a particular line be taken in particular editions.<sup>64</sup> The Broadlands Papers showed a series of notes to which Palmerston had attached copies of articles for insertion in *the Globe*. He directed his secretary to forward to articles to the *Globe* while instructed that “insert it in *the Globe* of Tomorrow, but without mentioning my name but signing your own and dating F.O.”.<sup>65</sup> He carefully coached the editors about the tone of articles and the supplied the foreign affair information to be based on. Moreover, many of its articles were allegedly written by Palmerston himself. Under his control, *The Globe* was used to not only advocate Palmerston’s policy, but also rebut and respond to articles in other papers, including the *Morning Herald* and *The Times*.

Due to Lord Palmerston’s active cultivation of media support through providing rewards and heeding their needs, the policy opposition gradually dominated in obtaining media support in the

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<sup>62</sup> Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, vol. 1, p. 81.

<sup>63</sup> Russell wrote to Palmerston at the time of the change in the *Post*’s ownership and editorship: ‘I think it would be fair to say that if the *Morning Post* becomes gradually more favorable to the Ministry, you would give a Consulship to the present Editor when vacant. I understand from you that he is a person quite fit for employment, from education & manners’; see Russell to Palmerston, August 4, 1849, in Palmerston Papers, PP/GC/RU/279/1–2.

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Palmerston ‘to the *Globe*’, 22 Feb. 1849 and 9 July 1849, in which he wanted the *Globe* to criticize the recent article written by *The Chronicle*, “You might say that *The Chronicle* as usual, makes up by vulgar Personalities for its utter Incapacity to deal with argument, it rails at the writer because it cannot refute what he has written.” see Broadlands Papers, PRE/A/11–12.

<sup>65</sup> Note by Palmerston, 24 Dec. 1848, Broadlands Papers, PRE/B/138/enc.1.

1850s. By 1853, Palmerston's popularity had already extended beyond the *Globe* and *The Morning Post*. According to Koss, "Neither the *Daily News*, with its progressive leanings, nor the *Standard*, with its ultra-Tory ones, was immune to his appeal."<sup>66</sup> In 1853, almost of all major London papers, except for *the Times*, supported Palmerston's foreign policy stance.<sup>67</sup>

In comparison, the main media support of the Aberdeen Administration came from *The Times*. However, after the Sinope Incident, even *The Times* withdrew its support for the government and became one of most ardent supporters for war against Russia. As it stated, Sinope "dispels the hopes we have been led to entertain of pacification... war has begun in earnest"<sup>68</sup> and it is necessary for Britain "to take a decisive part".<sup>69</sup> It has to be point out that *The Times*'s alteration of stance was not due to active cultivation by Palmerston, but more of the growing schism in the policy views and personal relations between Aberdeen and *The Times*'s editor Delane. Aberdeen's indecisiveness in foreign policy not only annoyed Delane, but also caused him considerable embarrassment in his endeavors to guide public opinion.<sup>70</sup> Once Delane departed its policy line from Aberdeen's, Aberdeen no longer communicate with Delane and refused to provide *The Times* with any private information.

Thus, with the strengthening of the Palmerston-media alliance and the loss of The Times on Aberdeen's side, the pacifying foreign policy towards Russia was no longer able to hold. The British Prime Minister enjoyed little journalist support to back the conciliatory policy and assuage public bellicosity. By the end of 1853, the public and the media were unanimous in demanding

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<sup>66</sup> Cobden decried the *Daily News* as 'a mere instrument in the hands of the Foreign Minister (Palmerston)'. See, Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, vol. 1, p. 100..

<sup>67</sup> I rely on circulation as an indicator for the newspaper's influence. Often the higher the paper's circulation, the more it is read by people, and the more influence it exerts on the public.

<sup>68</sup> *The Times*, December 16, 1853.

<sup>69</sup> Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*, p. 196.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

war against Russia. In the beginning of 1854, even the pacific side of the Cabinet turned to the pro-war camp. In the end, Lord Aberdeen was left alone to insist on seeking diplomatic settlement and had no choice but to agree on the declaration of war.

### **4.3 Media Support With the State and Concession Making During the Pre-WWII Crisis (1937-1939)**

#### 4.2.4 Overview of The Pre-WWII Crises

World War II provides a prima facie case against the prevailing wisdom. If public opinion is, as most scholars have claimed, to be the guardian of the national interests and can push the state into war in face of external threat, it is surprising that such powerful public opinion was largely absent in face of a series of Hitler's invasions in Europe. Compared with the 1853 case, the external threat Britain was facing during 1937 to 1939 was much more intensive. The 1936 reoccupation of the Rhineland, the 1938 Anschluss or the 1939 occupation of Czechoslovakia accomplished by Nazi Germany were no less threatening than the Russian occupation of the Turkish Principalities or the incident of Sinope in 1853. Yet anti-German sentiment did not spread as widely and influentially as the anti-Russian sentiment. Whereas over 80 years ago the British public pushed their Prime Minister to declare war against Russia, they nevertheless allowed the Chamberlain to maintain his appeasement policy till Germany marched into Poland. Unlike in the Eastern Crisis in 1853 where the Aberdeen administration had to dispatch British naval force to protect Turkey so to placate the British public opinion, Neville Chamberlain did not make a single provocative move.

From 1937 to 1939, Nazi Germany showcased an increasing appetite for territorial aggression. But Chamberlain carried out the policy of satisfying all "legitimate" grievances Germany as long as he could secure peace. On March 11, 1938, the German army swiftly occupied Austria, an action

against which Britain protested initially. However, Chamberlain refused to follow through the protest by doing anything confrontational towards Germany. Soon after Anschluss, Hitler was preparing to invade Czechoslovakia under the guise of settling the problem of Sudeten Germans within Czechoslovakian territory. Chamberlain flew to Germany three times to meet Hitler in order to negotiate peace, which led to the infamous Munich meeting of September 29 to 30. Though Chamberlain claimed to have achieved the settlement the Czechoslovakian problem and obtained an agreement from Hitler that “our two peoples never to go to war with one another”,<sup>71</sup> the meeting only modulated the timing but not the essence of the German acquisitions.

Less than two months after Munich, Germany’s behavior in Europe became increasingly alarming. Detailed coverage of the treatment against the Jews during the night of 10 November 1938 came in from abroad. A little later, the German government announced its intention of building up to 100% of British submarine strength, a manifestly hostile gesture against Britain.<sup>72</sup> Only five months after the Munich meeting, Hitler’s troops marched into Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939. However, the official tone of the British government was still optimistic.<sup>73</sup> Chamberlain refused to approve any provocative moves against Hitler and rejected the demands for the formation of Ministry of Supply and imposition of conscription.<sup>74</sup> Even as late as August 23, 1939 when the Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed, which allowed Hitler to proceed with his plan to divide Poland, Chamberlain still hesitated and wished to settle the difference between German and

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<sup>71</sup> Neville Chamberlain, “Peace in our Time,” Speech given in Defense of the Munich Agreement, 1938.

<sup>72</sup> Paul M. Kennedy, *The Realities behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865-1980* (London: Allen & Unwin in association with Fontana Books, 1981), p. 307.

<sup>73</sup> It became evident in a speech given by John Simon on behalf of the Government after Hitler’s invasion of Prague, see Anthony Eden, *The Reckoning; the Eden Memoirs* (London: Cassell, 1965), pp. 53-4.

<sup>74</sup> Telford Taylor, *Munich: The Price of Peace* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), pp.949-950, 973; Henry Channon and Robert Rhodes James, “Chips”: *The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), p. 191.

Poles through negotiation.<sup>75</sup> But Hitler simply could not be appeased. On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Two days later, on 3 September, after a British ultimatum to Germany to cease military operations was ignored, Britain and France declared war on Germany.

As the brief introduction of the pre-WWII crises has shown that Chamberlain maintained his appeasement policy till the last minute before war. Compared with the Crimean War case, British public opinion seemed to make little impact during this period. Anti-appeasers did exist. For instance, Winston Churchill, the British Foreign Secretary in 1938 Anthony Eden, the permanent Under-Secretary in 1938 Sir Robert Vansittart, have all voiced their opposition against Chamberlain's appeasement policy. However, their influence was proven limited. It is imperative to ask: why was there no angry British public challenging Chamberlain's conciliatory policy like almost a century ago, especially considering Nazi Germany's aggression was more explicit and threatening than Russia's? If anti-appeasers did exist, how did Chamberlain overcome the influence of the domestic opposition?

The above overview of the two cases demonstrates that these two wars began not because of negotiation failure. Nor was there any immediate threat to the British Empire. Most importantly, both British leaders did not want war. Rather, it indicates that the British public opinion played a key role in pushing the British Government to rush into war in the Crimean Case but did not make much influence in shaping the direction of the British foreign policy in the WWII case. As I will show in greater detail below, the reason why the British public opinion had different influences in these two cases was that the British Government was able to shape public opinion in the pre-WWII period with the media assistance, but not before the Crimean War.

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<sup>75</sup> He tried to convey to Hitler that Britain still attached "tremendous importance to the documents signed between him and Hitler at Munich". See account of conversation with Hitler on 27 July 1939 in PRO PREM 1/332.



#### 4.2.5 Explaining Chamberlain's Appeasement: Media-State Alliance and the State's Prevention of British Hypernationalism

The main reason that appeasement worked till the last minute is that Chamberlain was able to control the information that might instigate anti-German nationalism. To achieve this outcome, Chamberlain had obtained assistance from the most influential newspapers since 1937. On the contrary, the opposition against appeasement, led by Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden, and other anti-appeasers, acquired little media support and failed to instigate anti-German sentiment among the British public.

In contrast to a lack of media support the Aberdeen administration had experienced, influential media during the late 1930s were allying with the Chamberlain Administration due to Chamberlain's active courting and subtle controlling. Together, these media organizations, including newspapers, radio stations, and film companies, helped Chamberlain to pursue his appeasement course by keeping domestic anti-compromise sentiment at bay. Figure 4.2 shows that by late 1938, the tie between the Chamberlain Administration and the media had grown very strong. Chamberlain and his inner Cabinet members created a vast network with the media leaders. Almost all the proprietors of the most influential newspapers were on close terms with the Chamberlainites.

**Table 4.2 Average Daily Circulation Figures, Ownership, and Stance of the Most Influential Newspapers in 1938 (Total British population of 1938: 46 million)**

Newspaper	Circulation	Proprietor	Appeasement?
Daily Express	2,329,000	Lord Beaverbrook	Pro
Sunday Express	1,337,000	Lord Beaverbrook	Pro
Evening Standard	392,000	Lord Beaverbrook	Pro
Daily Mail	1,580,000	Lord Rothermere	Pro
Evening News	791,000	Lord Rothermere	Pro
Sunday Times	270,000	Lord Kemsley	Pro
Daily Sketch	850,000	Lord Kemsley	Pro
Observer	214,000	Lord Astor	Pro
The Times	192,000	Colonel J. J. Astor	Pro

Daily Herald	Over 2,000,000	Lord Southwood	Pro
Daily Telegraph	637,000	Lord Camrose	N/A <sup>76</sup>
Daily Mirror	1,367,000	Mirror Group	Anti
News Chronicle	1,324,000	Cadbury Brothers	Anti

Source: Political and Economic Planning Press Group, *Report on the British Press* (London, April 1938); Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*.

Nine out of Twelve big newspapers discreetly adopted pro-appeasement attitude. The *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express* together enjoyed larger circulation than that of the anti-appeasement newspapers combined. Though *The Times* had relatively a small circulation, it was the most influential national newspapers during the inter-war years. The editor of *The Times* was said to be one of the most powerful figures in British public life, along with the king, the prime minister and the archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>77</sup> Its influence also extended to the international sphere as it was considered as the ‘voice of the British government’ by the foreign countries.<sup>78</sup>

The media served as pivot supporter for Chamberlain to manipulate information to the extent that anti-German sentiment would be prevented, sidelined, or suppressed. In order to pursue peaceful settlement with the German and Italian dictators, it was essential to keep the dictators from anything provocative, including antagonist opinions or demands of firm action such as acceleration of rearmament. Thus, information detrimental to appeasement needs to be silenced and disseminators of such information be prevented or suppressed from doing so.

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<sup>76</sup> The Daily Telegraph had been adopting a quite vacillating line. Its foreign correspondent, Gordon-Lennox, was a firmly against appeasement but its owner, Lord Camrose, was a supporter of Chamberlain. Though the paper published many articles criticizing Chamberlain’s foreign policy, it came heavily in against Anthony Eden when he resigned in February, 1938. See Oliver Harvey, *The Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey, 1937-1940*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1971), p. 102.

<sup>77</sup> Frank. McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain, Appeasement, and the British Road to War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 116.

<sup>78</sup> *The History of the Times*. (London: Written, printed and published at the Office of the Times, 1935), Vol. IV, Part 2 (London, 1952); see also F. McDonough, “The Times, Norman Ebbut and the Nazis, 1927-1937”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (1992).

The Lobby system facilitated Chamberlain's news management, especially when the world situation became increasingly menacing. This system, unlike the contemporary one in the United States, a unique phenomenon in the UK in the 1930s, where a small group of Lobby journalists were bequeathed with the unique privilege of having free and unfettered access to any Member of Parliament or Minister who wished to speak confidentially to the press.<sup>79</sup> While on the surface, the Lobby system was meant to help the press look for information. But in reality, it was used by politicians to control the media and the flow of information.

Chamberlain adeptly exploited this system. He urged the Lobby correspondents to write reports and articles reflecting a strong mood of optimism. He genuinely believed that by inventing and publishing good news, he might contrive to relieve the external threats and get reciprocated from the dictator with peace. The most notable example was on March 9, 1939, only five days before Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia, Chamberlain privately met a few of the Lobby journalists without notifying his Cabinet beforehand. Despite the danger, Chamberlain claimed the situation had never been better; he was actually working towards halting the armament race and looking forward to an agreement later in the year...On the following day, *The Times* and other papers all contained identical and rosy accounts of the current situation which was only "more promising".<sup>80</sup>

These rosy news reports Lobby journalists provided did meet skepticism and critiques from the editors, as such reports appeared to be increasingly unconvincing and ridiculous, especially when dictators' aggression intensified. However, Chamberlain always managed to keep the correspondents stick to his preferred course. For instance, in a private lunch where the journalists firmly pointed out that editors were becoming skeptical of the correspondents' source,

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<sup>79</sup> Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*, p. 5.

<sup>80</sup> Harvey, *The Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey, 1937-1940*.

Chamberlain pronounced himself astounded that journalists should be so short-sighted as to take such a self-centered view of their national responsibilities. He claimed that it was the attacks upon Hitler and Mussolini made in the British Press that provoked them. It was his belief that Hitler and Mussolini appreciated his efforts to improve the atmosphere and to correct the mischievous criticism in the British newspapers.<sup>81</sup>

It was through the Lobby correspondents that Chamberlain presented the public a promising picture of international environment and drastically downplayed the threats from Germany and Italy. The information the public received were heavily screwed to the pro-peace side. It facilitated the public to embrace peace and consider war as an unnecessary and horrifying course. As a result, no notable anti-German or anti-Italian hypernationalism rose among the public until Anglo-German War carried into the second year. War was declared not because Chamberlain failed to control nationalism, but rather Hitler's aggression became too extensive.

Moreover, thanks to the close relations with the chief editors and proprietors, Chamberlain's supporting newspapers had all engaged themselves in certain degree of censorship or self-censorship. One notable example is *The Times*. *The Times* had been censoring its correspondents' reports in order to suit the advance of appeasement policy since Dawson became its chief editor. The Berlin correspondent of *The Times*, Norman Ebbut, found his articles consistently cut and censored to suit the needs of British diplomacy.<sup>82</sup> Another correspondent of *The Times*, Iverach McDonald, reviewed in his memoir that most of the usual channels for expressing political opinion were blocked or led nowhere.<sup>83</sup> Journalists in other media organizations such as Beverbrook and Harmsworth also felt that they could not give the warnings that were needed about the national

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<sup>81</sup> James D. Margach, *The Abuse of Power: The War between Downing Street and the Media from Lloyd George to Callaghan* (London: W. H. Allen, 1978), p. 59.

<sup>82</sup> F. McDonough, "The Times, Norman Ebbut and the Nazis, 1927-1937".

<sup>83</sup> Iverach McDonald, *A Man of The Times* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1976), p. 53.

dangers.<sup>84</sup> Due to the increasing censorship, an increasingly number of journalists resigned. For instance, one reporter of the Times, Anthony Winn, resigned in 1938 with a distaste for the paper's editorial stance on Germany.<sup>85</sup>

Not only newspapers, radio stations such as the BBC were also heavily censored and restricted from criticizing the foreign policy under Government pressure.<sup>86</sup> The BBC's coverage of international events hardly offered any critical comments and severely limited the views of policy opponents to be aired. In February 1938, the BBC was told by the foreign office 'to say nothing of Germany and Italy' when reporting Anthony Eden's resignation as foreign secretary. Joseph Ball set to ensure that Chamberlain had the fullest support against Eden.<sup>87</sup> In March 1938, Halifax approached the BBC and asked it to take account of the 'extreme sensitiveness of Hitler and Mussolini' when reporting news about them. Around the same period, Josiah Wedgwood, the Labor MP, refused to delete critical comments on Hitler from a talk show called 'The Way of Peace' and found the broadcast promptly canceled.<sup>88</sup>

Cinema suffered the same fate. During the 1930s, cinema was an extremely powerful medium, attended by around 23 million people every week.<sup>89</sup> In addition to films, all cinemas showed newsreels, which presented short films of news with comments. The Cinema was tightly controlled by the British Board of Film Censors. Further, the content of newsreels was restricted through self-censorship, employed by the chief editors of the newsreel companies, who met regularly with the

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>85</sup> Winn to Dawson, 4 October 1938, Times Archives, as cited in McDonough, "The Times, Norman Ebbut and the Nazis, 1927-1937", p.419.

<sup>86</sup> See for instance, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain, Appeasement, and the British Road to War*, pp. 124-6.

<sup>87</sup> John Ramsden, *The Age of Balfour and Baldwin, 1902-1940* (London: Longman, 1978), p. 366.

<sup>88</sup> McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain, Appeasement, and the British Road to War*, pp. 124-5.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

Chamberlain administration to discuss the content. Thus, like the newspapers, newsreels presented a highly sanitized view of foreign policy.<sup>90</sup>

Furthermore, the weekly periodical, *Truth*, served loyally to facilitate Chamberlain's appeasement policy. Together with other pro-appeasement media, it helped play down the German threat and present in front of public a false optimism about peace. *Truth* took every opportunity to whitewash Hitler's true intention. It emphasized the German grievances in order to legitimize its increasingly threatening behaviors. Repeatedly, it blamed the French for precipitating the European crisis.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, *Truth* also committed itself to downplaying systematically German's treatment of Jews.<sup>92</sup> The most notable example is that it supported and published a letter from Major-General Fuller in which he denied the allegation that there existed concentration camps in Germany.<sup>93</sup> The paper wholly ignored the anti-semitic pogroms of November 1938 carried out by the Nazis.

*Truth's* peace campaign went hand in hand with attacking Chamberlain's policy opponents. Anti-appeasers were identified as unpatriotic or 'unEnglish', among whom Communists and Jews suffered worst vilification as they were branded as traitors to the true English cause. For instance, *Truth* alleged that *the Daily Mirror*, a newspaper most vociferously critical against Chamberlain, was in effect under secret manipulation by a subversive Jewish interest. Other newspapers, such as *the Yorkshire Post*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Mirror* were described as despicable organs, which would "seize any weapon with which to attack the Prime

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<sup>90</sup> Nicholas Pronay, "British Newsreels in the 1930's. Part 1: Audience and Producers," *History* 56, no. 188 (October 1971), pp. 411–18.

<sup>91</sup> The excerpt of this editorial is presented in R. B. Cockett, "Ball, Chamberlain and Truth," *The Historical Journal* 33, no. 1 (March 1, 1990), p. 135.

<sup>92</sup> Bernhard Dietz and Ian D. Copestake, *Neo-Tories: The Revolt of British Conservatives against Democracy and Political Modernity (1929-1939)*, English edition (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), p. 139.

<sup>93</sup> *Truth*, 24 Nov 1939, as cited in Dietz and Copestake, p. 260, note. 535.

Minister, and their devices can be dismissed as of no account”.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, it commented on a large demonstration consisting about 4,000 protests against appeasement on 28 September 1938, that “very few of them are British, almost none of them are typically British, thank heaven.”<sup>95</sup> Increasingly from early 1939 onwards, *Truth* turned its hostility towards Winston Churchill and his supporters. On 7 July 1938, in response to the campaign to include Churchill into the Cabinet, the whole front page of *Truth* was devoted to a long article belittling such idea. It denigrated Churchill’s credentials a potential cabinet minister and reminded readers of his long list of alleged political mistakes.

Other than controlling information, Chamberlain was also engaged in suppressing his opposition. To tackle with the information leakage launched by the policy opponents, Chamberlain used his own media resources to discredit them for the purpose of making them lose their credibility or deprive their ability of continuing to inform the public. For instance, Winston Churchill, had been a premium target of attack from Chamberlain’s supporters. Chamberlain’s assistant Ball was able to draw on vast resources to monitor and apply covert pressure against Churchill and keep him in the political wilderness.<sup>96</sup> By 1938, Churchill’s telephones had been tapped and mail intercepted. Using his connection with media lords, Ball curtailed Churchill’s channels to make his voices. Churchill’s long-standing contracts with the Daily Express and other pro-appeasement papers was ended after German threat intensified. Moreover, Churchill was banned from broadcasting on the BBC.<sup>97</sup>

Newspaper proprietors who went against appeasement were attacked. For instance, after a major newspaper campaign calling for the inclusion of Churchill into the government as a symbol

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<sup>94</sup> Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*. p. 115.

<sup>95</sup> *Truth*, 28 September 1938, As cited in R. B. Cockett, “Ball, Chamberlain and Truth,” p. 136.

<sup>96</sup> Jonathan Pile, *Churchill’s Secret Enemy*, Kindle Version, Location 200.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, location 385.

of resisting Hitler, the Astors were discounted as having personal pique while Lord Camrose was alleged to have made such bad judgement due to his illness. Churchill was under heavy attacks by the weekly paper *Truth*, which lasted till 1940. Another notable example was the treatment of The Yorkshire Post's editor, Arthur Mann, who had been known for unreserved criticism against Chamberlain's press control and his foreign policy. Not only were Mann's opinions being stifled, he was also faced with unjust charges such as suffering mental and nervous illness as well as he, as editor, was merely a puppet of Eden and so did not arrive at his views independently.<sup>98</sup> Mann's leader columns were perceived as misleading the public and he was personally under intense pressure from his employers.

To wrap up, the media played a pivot role in shaping British public opinion in the two cases. Before the Crimean War, most of the influential newspapers were against the British Government's conciliatory foreign policy towards Russia. Instead, they assisted the leading policy opponent—Lord Palmerston—to demand a militant response towards Russia. They offered their assistance through manipulating the information disseminated to the public. Specifically, they greatly exaggerated the Russian threat and pictured the state and its supporters as being soft and traitorous, which in turn invoked anti-Russian nationalistic sentiment among the British public. Under the strong domestic pressure, the Aberdeen Administration made several moves that contributed to the escalation of conflict with Russia.

In contrast, influential media during the late 1930s were allying with the Chamberlain Administration due to Chamberlain's active courting and subtle controlling. Together, these media organizations, including newspapers, radio stations, and film companies, helped Chamberlain to pursue his appeasement course by keeping domestic anti-compromise sentiment at bay.

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<sup>98</sup> Beckett to Mann, 14 December 1938, in Mann Papers, as cited in Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*, p. 99.



Specifically, the British media downplayed the German threat regardless of Hitler's increasing aggression in Europe, presented an optimistic view about the peace between Germany and Britain, censored any detrimental information to peace, as well as attacked Chamberlain's policy opponents. With media's assistance, no strong anti-compromise sentiment rose to challenge Chamberlain's appeasement policy.

#### 4.2.6 The Cultivation of Media-State Alliance

The Chamberlain administration established its alliance with the media through the following approaches: 1) exploiting the Lobby System; 2) building up media contacts with chief editors and proprietors; and 2) acquiring its own newspaper as a reliable mouthpiece. With media's help, Chamberlain successfully downplayed the threat of Germany, avoided the rising of anti-compromise sentiment, and prolonged the appeasement policy.

##### *1) The Exploitation of Lobby System*

Chamberlain was quick to see the potentials of the Lobby system in influencing the press. Even before he became Prime Minister, he had been treating the Lobby as his personal service and carefully courted the selected correspondents. During his predecessor's premiership, Chamberlain, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, regularly took the lobby meetings and distasted any attempts by other ministers to "muscle in on his regular briefings of Lobby correspondents".<sup>99</sup> This practice was carried into his own premiership and played a crucial role in maintaining the appeasement policy. Apart from assiduously courting about fifty Lobby journalists, Chamberlain paid selective

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<sup>99</sup> Margach, *The Abuse of Power*, p. 51.

attention to a few correspondents from “true-blue Conservative papers”.<sup>100</sup> These correspondents would be honored with “private meetings”, luncheons and extra information.<sup>101</sup>

As the international environment grew more acute and the war-clouds thickened, so did Chamberlain’s obsession with the management of information. It was his firm belief that the press’s only function was to support his policies. Thus, he was prepared to great lengths to ensure no departure of the press’s views from his own. Not only was he increasingly aggressive and openly manipulative towards the journalists, he also displayed cold arrogance and intolerance against critical questions and dissident comments. For instance, he would routinely scrutinize the newspapers to determine how his actions were reported.<sup>102</sup> During the meeting with the Lobby journalists, he refused to answer any impromptu questions and insisted that any question should be submitted four hours in advance if the journalists were to expect a reply.<sup>103</sup> Critical—or simply probing—questions would meet with intimidating “frozen silence”. Or when journalists expressed suspicions about Hitler’s or Mussolini’s intentions, Chamberlain would always respond that he was surprised that “such an experienced journalist was susceptible to Jewish-Communist propaganda”.<sup>104</sup> Sometimes, as a method of intimidation, he would request the question initiators to identify the name of the newspaper they represented.

## 2) *Establishing Private Contacts With Media Barons*

Apart from exploiting the Lobby system, Chamberlain’s another crucial method of building the state-media alliance and reinforcing information control was to establish close and personal

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Larry William Fuchser, *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement: A Study in the Politics of History*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 1982), p. 58.

<sup>103</sup> Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>104</sup> Margach, *The Abuse of Power*, p. 53.

contact with the editors or proprietors of the newspapers. He courted proprietors, leader writers, opinion formers and editors with unabashed zeal.<sup>105</sup> His inner Cabinet Ministers followed suit by socializing with press leaders. After all, it was these media leaders that ejected greatest influence or had the last word over the information to be disseminated. Through personal relations with the media leaders, Chamberlain proved to be able to persuade editorial opinion to follow and assist his policies as well as discrediting his opponents.

During his premiership, Chamberlain regularly socialized with a few newspaper editors and proprietors to ensure that the top direction of the media was always sympathetic to his policies. For instance, every Friday afternoon, W. W. Hadley, Editor of *the Sunday Times*, went on a pilgrimage to Downing Street to hear Chamberlain's views on the latest international situation.<sup>106</sup> Hadley was by far the most consistent and extravagant in his praise of Chamberlain.<sup>107</sup> Every Sunday morning, the paper's leading articles and reports faithfully reflected Chamberlain's preferred views. The Proprietor of the *Sunday Times* and a big group of provincial press, Lord Kemsley, was deeply trusted by Chamberlain to the extent that Chamberlain could comfortably confide to Kemsley his deepest personal views.

The *Sunday Times* was not alone. Lord Astor, Proprietor of the *Observer*, and his wife Nancy Astor were keen admirers of Chamberlain and a loyal supporter of the appeasement policy before the Munich meeting in September 1938. The Astors hosted weekend parties at their residence at Cliveden. Members of the government and fellow newspaper proprietors who were sympathetic with Germany and supportive of the appeasement policy often attended. The hardcore of the group later became known as the "Cliveden Set". Chamberlain himself was an occasional visitor,

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*, p. 8.

especially during times of crises.<sup>108</sup> Another newspaper that fervently supported appeasement policy was *the Times*. Through Lord Halifax, *The Times*'s editor, Geoffrey Dawson, had also grown close to Chamberlain.<sup>109</sup> Such close relations enabled Dawson to be acquainted with more Cabinet thinking and secrets than most members of the government.<sup>110</sup> It also made *The Times* a semi-official organ of the British government.

Chamberlain's trusted inner Cabinet members, such as Sir John Simon, Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Halifax, were particularly rich in media contacts. For instance, Hoare was very close to Lord Beaverbrook, who was a magnate and the proprietor of several very influential newspapers, including the *Daily Express*, *Sunday Express* and *Evening Standard*. Lord Halifax was on close term with Geoffrey Dawson, the Chief Editor of the *Times*, Lord Southwood, the owner of *The People*, and the Rothermere family, the owner of the *Daily Mail* and the *Evening News*. Lord Rothermere had already assured Chamberlain that he had 'instructed his newspapers to lend their full support to the only person who could save the peace.'<sup>111</sup> Sir Horace Wilson, Chamberlain's personal choice as his chief adviser on foreign affairs, was also used by Chamberlain as his own personal emissary to editors and proprietors.<sup>112</sup>

Close contact of the British Government with the editors and proprietors ensured the smooth application of censorship and self-censorship. Not only did they ensure the day to day new content met the standard of Chamberlain's, they also helped pressure those who held dissident views against appeasement to keep silent. For instance, in order to get at Low, the celebrated anti-Fascist cartoonist of the *Evening Standard*, Halifax had lunch with Michael Wardell, Beaverbrook's aide,

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<sup>108</sup> John Evelyn Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and our Times* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1955), p. 366.

<sup>109</sup> Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*, p. 12.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Fuchser, *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement*, p. 96.

<sup>112</sup> Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*, p. 15.

and Barbara Metcalfe, who were able to pressure Low to tone down his wicked cartoons of leading Nazi figures. As a result, Low ‘played it in a less personal key for a few weeks.’ Such informal state-media bond worked well in controlling information and shaping public opinion. Its effect had been amply demonstrated in the 1936 Abdication crisis. While the American press was saturated with information about Edward VIII’s relationship with Mrs. Simpson for months, the press in Britain maintained a collective silence and kept the public confused only a week before the Abdication.<sup>113</sup> Just like in the Abdication crisis, the British government called on the press barons and correspondents for the same spirit of self-restraint over Germany and Italy.

### 3) *Acquisition of Publication—The Truth*

Though in liberal democracies, state leaders do not overtly acquire their own newspapers to serve their political interests, they can rely on their trusted friends, families or colleagues to do so. The main advocator of newspaper acquisition during Chamberlain’s administration was his closest political adviser and fervent follower, Sir Joseph Ball.<sup>114</sup> As early as 1935 under Baldwin administration, Ball advocated the acquisition of a suitable weekly publication in order to tack with the lack of acquiescence by other newspapers. Moreover, he urged to build up a staff of really good young writes capable of guiding public opinion and exposing the fallacies for the benefit of the government.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, Ball acquired the radical weekly paper *Truth* in June 1936. As the largest share-holder, he selected a board of directors that were loyalty to him and enjoyed direct editorial control of the paper.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>114</sup> Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*, p. 9.

<sup>115</sup> Ball to Baldwin, December 6 1935, Baldwin Papers, 48/231.

<sup>116</sup> R. B. Cockett, “Ball, Chamberlain and Truth,” pp. 134-5.

After Ball's acquisition, *Truth* was used to keenly advocate the Government's policy and discredit political opponents. From 1936 to 1938 this included everyone outside the Conservative party. From 1938 to 1940, as Chamberlain's appeasement policy began to cause split within the party, *Truth* targeted against all policy opponents within the party as well. As Chamberlain's pursuit of appeasement accelerated in 1939, *Truth* became stridently pro-Fascist, anti-Churchill, and anti-Semitic. *Truth* served as a crucial mouthpiece for the Chamberlain administration to carry out its appeasement policy and to denigrate its policy opponents. Though the effect of *Truth* in swaying public opinion remains unspecified, it was notable enough that after Britain entered war, *Truth*'s pro-Fascist tendency and its detrimental impact on British society was debated in the British Parliament.<sup>117</sup> One of the Parliamentary debates revealed that *Truth* was widely read, particularly in the clubs and messes, by that large class of people. Its circulation may not be very large, but for every copy issued many people read it. Thus, the influence of the continual peace propaganda put forward by *Truth* can be considered as quite profound.<sup>118</sup>

How much Chamberlain personally directed *Truth*'s coverage and its attacks against anti-appeasers is impossible to tell. However, Given Ball's close and regular contact with Chamberlain, it is hard to believe that Chamberlain was not aware of the paper's policy.<sup>119</sup> After all, the contents of *Truth* never failed to fit the policy of appeasement. Moreover, if *Truth* were publishing contents that went against Chamberlain's will, it was quite within Chamberlain's power to request alternations. Quite the opposite, Chamberlain actually took delights in its contents, particularly the

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<sup>117</sup> [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1941/oct/09/truth#S5CV0374P0\\_19411009\\_HOC\\_130](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1941/oct/09/truth#S5CV0374P0_19411009_HOC_130), "Truth", Hansard, 9 October 1941, Retrieved May 02, 2021; See also <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1941/oct/15/civil-defence-truth>, "Civil Defence ("Truth")", Hansard, 15 October 1941, Retrieved May 02, 2021.

<sup>118</sup> <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1941/oct/15/civil-defence-truth>, "Civil Defence ("Truth")", Hansard, 15 October 1941, Retrieved May 02, 2021.

<sup>119</sup> Chamberlain recommended *Truth* to his sister on several occasions and admitted the paper was secretly controlled by Ball. See UBL, Chamberlain MSS, 18/1/108, Neville to Ida Chamberlain, July 23, 1939.

attacks against his political opponents.<sup>120</sup> In one of the letters, he heartily endorsed *Truth*'s article which made fun of the suggestion that Churchill would help matters in the Cabinet. Writing to Hilda Chamberlain on 23 July 1939, Chamberlain cheerfully noted that Churchill had looked 'very depressed at a dinner at Buckingham Palace'.<sup>121</sup>

#### 4.4 Alternative Explanations

Existing theories in multiple disciplines fail to explain satisfactorily the divergent outcomes of the two cases, i.e. the British Government was pushed by the public uncompromising sentiment to go to the Crimean War but managed to control such sentiment and sustained the appeasement policy before the Second World War. These alternative explanations include neo-realism, the rallying around the flag theory, the war experience argument, and the comparative politics argument—regime type shapes the efficacy of public opinion.

##### 1) *Structural Realism*

*Structural Realism* suggests that anarchy and states' desire to survive lead to balancing behavior against another power or threat.<sup>122</sup> One hypothesis delineates from the theory is that the likelihood of conflict increases as external threat becomes clearer.<sup>123</sup> Based on such hypothesis, one can predict that in both of the British cases, the balancing behaviors should be more observable as the adversary becomes more threatening. However, as the above discussion has demonstrated, increase in external threat leads to different outcomes in the two British cases. While Britain before

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<sup>120</sup> R. B. Cockett, "Ball, Chamberlain and Truth," p. 137.

<sup>121</sup> Neville Chamberlain to Hilda Chamberlain, 23 July 1939; Chamberlain Papers 18/1/1108.

<sup>122</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 2001; Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.

<sup>123</sup> Offensive realism argues that certain international system, particularly unbalanced multipolarity, is more prone to produce conflicts than others. This is essentially saying, threat can be more clearly observed in certain system and when threat is clear, conflict is more likely. See Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 2001; See also the balance of threat argument proposed by Stephen Walt. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power."

the Crimean War did participate in balancing against Russia, it did not make any move to escalate conflict with Germany before the WWII. Instead, Chamberlain took pains to appease the German dictator and kept domestic anti-appeasement sentiment at bay. Admittedly in the pre-WWII case, Britain did declare war against Germany after the latter ignored Britain's commitment to protect Poland. In this sense, neo-realism is correct in predicting that high external threat leads to balancing behavior. However, such claim should be conditioned on that balancing behavior only occurs after certain threshold in the degree of external threat is reached. Before such threshold is reached, neo-realism is ill-suited in explaining a state's behavior.

## 2) *War Memory*

The war experience argument points to the difference in the public mindsets regarding war caused by the previous war experience. A society that has experienced war recently is more likely to be averse to a new war. On the contrary, lack of recent war experience can produce indifference, excitement, or even romanticism about war. Before the Crimean War, the British had not been put to war for several hundreds of years. In contrast, the trauma of the First World War was too deep that many British loathe to think of another war. Thus, conventional wisdom attributes the continuation of appeasement policy in the late 1930s to the anti-war sentiment developed after the first World War.

But data on British public opinion after 1938 shows otherwise. It may well be true that the majority of Britons throughout most of the beginning of 1930s felt a strong aversion to waging war. Nonetheless, with the intensification of aggression by Italy and Germany, particularly after Munich, the public mood towards war changed and pro-war voice was increasingly expressed.<sup>124</sup> Even Chamberlain himself acknowledged that public opinion demanded an escalation in the pace

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<sup>124</sup> See "British Institute of Public Opinion," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (March 1, 1940), pp. 78-80.



of rearmament.<sup>125</sup> It is not the anti-war sentiment that made the public before the WWII more peace-prone than their counterparts during the 1850s. Rather, after Munich, substantial voices outside and within the government existed to urge Chamberlain to take a firmer stand. However, with the help of the media, Chamberlain ensured that the effect of uncompromising sentiment was limited. In turn, such sentiment would not be powerful enough to pressure him to alter his foreign policy.

### 3) *Rally-around-the-flag*

Rallying-around-the-flag argument provides a different perspective, but is equally problematic in answering the question. Like neo-realism, *rallying-around-the-flag argument* also considers external threat as the main factor. It goes that high level of external threat generates rallying effects and increases internal cohesion within the state.<sup>126</sup> In contrast, when external threat is low, opposition to state's foreign policy is more likely to occur. This argument emphasizes the importance of domestic politics in shaping a state's policy making and acknowledges that states are not always unified and rational. However, as Table 3 shows, it predicts different outcomes from what the actual cases unravel. Though it correctly predicts the outcome in the pre-Crimean War cases as the rallying-around-the-flag phenomena did occur, such rallying was not around the state, but around the policy opposition. Moreover, its theoretical prediction fails to match the pre-WWII case. Before the Czechoslovakia Crisis when the German threat was relatively lower, cohesion between the British government and the population was higher and little resistance against Chamberlain's appeasement policy existed. However, when Nazi Germany became exponentially threatening, cohesion between the Government and the public started to collapse.

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<sup>125</sup> Taylor, *Munich*, pp. 958-997; Kennedy, *The Realities behind Diplomacy*, p. 296.

<sup>126</sup> This argument is essentially the same as the "rally round the flag" argument, which was first proposed by John Mueller. See John E. Mueller, "Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson." See also William D. Baker and John R. Oneal, "Patriotism or Opinion Leadership?"

One reason why this argument does not work well is because it is based on the implicit assumption that the state will automatically stand firmly against the external threat. When the state chooses to actively resist, it makes sense the public and even the domestic opposition will rally around the state leaders to defend the national interest. However, it fails to incorporate the situation when the state chooses to be conciliatory towards the adversary. If so, high external threat only creates the chasm between the state and the people instead of making it disappear. Another reason external threat argument is insufficient in explaining the outcome is that the perception of external threat by the public can in effect be manipulated by the state. When a state wants to carry out a conciliatory foreign policy towards the external opponent, it may set out to manipulate information and downplay external threat so as to minimize anti-compromise sentiment from the public. Thus, despite that external threat may shape public opinion, the latter may be more determinately shaped by state intervention.

#### 4) *Regime Type*

Finally, the darling factor in comparative politics—*regime type*—does not explain varying the effect of public opinion in these two cases. A prominent set of literature on audience cost concurs that democracies, due to their institutional features that empower the citizens, tend to have a stronger domestic audience than in autocracies.<sup>127</sup> Domestic audience in democracies can punish the leaders for adopting an unpopular policy through the voting system. On the contrary, autocrats can adopt their preferred policy without suffering audience costs simply because they can repress dissident opinions. Thus, regime type argument predicts that democracies are more likely to act uncompromisingly in a crisis than autocracies.<sup>128</sup> However, such argument neglects the fact that

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<sup>127</sup> Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes”; Tomz, “Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations”.

<sup>128</sup> Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes”.

even in democracies the state has some agency in shaping its own public opinion. With media's assistance to manipulate the information the public receives, the domestic audiences' influence over the state preferred policy can be insulated. The two British cases, which I purposefully chose to control regime type, show that it is rather the state's ability to control public opinion, rather than regime type, that affect the outcome.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

Through comparing two British cases, this chapter demonstrates that in democracies, whether a state can successfully make compromise in face of external threat depends on media's assistance. Media served as the pivot supporter for the state to manipulate information and public opinion in support of its foreign policy. Without media support, states find it difficult to shape public opinion and are more likely to act uncompromisingly in face of public pressure. In the case of Crimean War, the state failed to obtain media support for its course to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the adversary Russia. The opposition utilized the media to instigate anti-Russia hypernationalism among the British public, who blamed the Government for being too soft towards Russia. In contrast, regardless of the increasing threat from Germany, no prevailing public sentiment rose to push the Government to relinquish its appeasement foreign policy. It was Chamberlain's manipulation of information with the media's help that kept anti-compromise sentiment from rising and sustained appeasement policy.

This chapter offers two contributions to the existing literature. First, it modifies the audience cost literature by adding an important and perhaps the determinate factor: the state's ability to manipulate the audience cost. The audience cost argument goes that state leaders suffer from penalty from domestic audience if they escalate an interstate crisis and are then seen as backing down. Democracies, according to these works, are more constrained by domestic audience

compared with non-democratic regimes since the democratic audiences have more channels to punish their leaders.<sup>129</sup> Later research demonstrates that such cost varies among different types of states. Weeks, for instance, argues that authoritarian states face audience costs too. The domestic audience are not the general public as in democracies, but a small coalition of regime insiders on whom the leader relies to rule the country together.<sup>130</sup> While Weeks's contribution to the literature by bringing in autocracies is undeniably important, she nevertheless, like her predecessors, neglects that states may have more agency in the face of public opinion during a crisis. Put differently, my finding suggests that if states are willing to back down, they can use the pivot tool to help achieve the purpose and minimize the cost, regardless of regime types.

Second, this study found that even in a liberal democracy like Britain, politicians engaged themselves in manipulating the information to advance their own policy goals. It is often considered that in liberal democracies, media work independently from political influence, which makes the information they provided more credible. However, as both British cases have shown, media hardly work in political vacuum and the information it provided may be manipulated more often than we thought. If the state does not engage in the manipulation, other politicians might do. This finding challenges the validity of the marketplace of ideas argument.<sup>131</sup> It goes that in mature democracies, there exists the free marketplace of ideas in which bad information would be checked. However, the finding that even in mature democracies information can be manipulate provides a warning sign that democracy is not immune from extreme ideas, nor is it a panacea for every problem.

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<sup>129</sup> The most recent correction of this argument is made by Jessica Weeks, who demonstrates that many autocratic states are capable of generating audience costs at the same rate as democracies. See Jessica L. Weeks, "Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve," *International Organization* 62, no. 1 (January 1, 2008), pp. 35–64.

<sup>130</sup> Weeks, "Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve".

<sup>131</sup> Snyder and Ballentine, "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas"; Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*.

## CHAPTER 5

### MILITARY SUPPORT AND HYPERNATIONALISM

#### MANAGEMENT IN AUTOCRACIES

Evidence from the 1931-2 Manchuria Crisis and the 1935-1937 North China Crisis

##### 5.1 Introduction

Why are states able to control hypernationalist sentiment and carry out conciliatory foreign policies in some cases but not others? Under what conditions does domestic public opinion matter in a state's decision-making? It is widely accepted that compared with democracies, an autocratic state is more capable of implementing its preferred policy regardless of dissident public opinion due to a lack of constraints over state repression of the political opposition. In contrast, public opinion in democracies can hold the leaders accountable and influence the state's foreign policy making because unpopular policies often lead to punishment in the upcoming elections.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the conventional wisdom's focus on differences *between* democracies and autocracies can be misleading. As the previous chapter shows, variations of the outcome may take place *within* the democracies. What have shaped the varying outcomes is not regime type, but whether democratic states have obtained media support to manipulate information and insulate domestic influence.

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, *Democracies at War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002); Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes"; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace," *The American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4 (1999), pp. 791–807; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003); Weeks, *Dictators at War and Peace*.

In this chapter, I turn to two autocracy cases—China during the 1931-2 Manchuria Crisis and the 1935-1937 North China Crisis<sup>2</sup> to test my theory. Similar to the previous chapter, I explore variations of outcome *within* the same regime type and question what shapes the outcome of an autocracy's control over domestic opposition influence. From 1931 to 1932, Chinese National Government led by the Kuomintang Party (KMT)<sup>3</sup>, in the face of the intensifying Japanese invasion in Chinese homeland, was able to control the anti-Japanese movement and maintain the conciliatory foreign policy. However, in late 1936, Chiang Kai-shek's compromising foreign policy failed as a dramatic mutiny occurred in the city of Xi'an. As a result of the mutiny, Chiang was captured by two military leaders—Zhang Xueliang of the Northeastern Army and Yang Hucheng of the Northwestern Army—and was forced to accept terms to fight the Japanese. Half a year later, China officially declared war against Japan.

*Why did Chinese Government successfully control hypernationalist sentiment and make concessions to Japan during the 1931-2 crisis but was forced by such sentiment to declare war five years later?* By comparing four oppositional movements resisting against state's foreign policy across two time periods, this chapter demonstrates that the main cause of success in opposition's resistance (and failure in state's control) is the opposition's acquisition of military support. The four opposition groups are the student movement groups during the 1931-2 Manchuria crisis and during the 1935-7 North China Crisis, as well as the Chinese Communist Party during each of the two periods.

I rely on a two-step comparison to prove my main argument while rejecting the alternatives. First, through comparing the failed 1931-2 and 1935-6 student movements, I show that existing

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<sup>2</sup> North China, in Chinese 华北 Hua Bei, refers to the northern part of China proper, excluding Xinjiang and Northeast China.

<sup>3</sup> Kuomintang (KMT) is commonly translated as Chinese Nationalist Party.

arguments in civil resistance, such as organization level of opposition groups and the means of resistance are not the direct causes of success or failure in resistance. What remains consistent across the above sub-cases is that these opposition groups had not obtained military support. Second, a comparison of the failed Communist challenge and a successful one further confirms that military support is the key for the opposition to achieve success in resistance. From late 1935 to early 1937, the Communist Party was able to establish an alliance with the Northeast and the Northwest wings of the military, which loosened the National Government's grip of the military in general and eventually resulted in the mutiny and the abortion of Chiang's conciliatory foreign policy.

The above finding was based on primary sources gathered from archives such as the Second Historical Archives of China and the Hoover Institution Archive. While validating my theory, it challenges the main alternative arguments, including regime type, external threat level, and resistance capacity. While the first case in which the National Government successfully suppressed the nationalist movement can be well explained by the repressive feature of the autocratic state, the opposite outcome in the 1935-7 China case casts doubt on the idea that regime type shapes the outcome. Additionally, the general consensus explaining the varying outcome was that because external environment was more threatening towards China after 1935 than from 1931 to 1932, war was more likely to occur after Japan's second invasion. However, both Chiang kai-shek's diaries and contemporary observations show the external environment in the early 1930s, particularly during the bombing of Shanghai in 1932, was perceived no less threatening than in the late 1930s. Finally, resistance capacity argument fails to account for the same outcomes of several Chinese nationalist groups in resisting against the Chinese government in spite of their varying features such as their organization levels and means of resistance.

In the following section, I begin by providing a brief overview of each case. Next, I test my argument by examining four major opposition groups in the two cases via the two-step comparison. Particularly, I compare the performance of the major civilian opposition group—the student movement—across the two cases and explain why it failed. Then I compare the performance of the Communists in both cases and analyze the reason why they failed in the first case but succeeded in the second. Finally, I discuss the findings of the comparative study and assess the key alternative explanations.

### 5.2 Overview of the 1931-2 Manchuria Crisis and 1935-7 North China Crisis

From September 1931 to 1932, and from 1935 to 1936, there were two major Japanese invasions of China, followed by two upsurges in Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist sentiments. In both cases, China was ruled under the Nationalist Party led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Though principally intended to carry out democratic policies, the National Government was not shy from utilizing coercive tools to repress domestic dissidents. When Japanese invasion took place, Chiang Kai-shek prioritized stabilizing his domestic rule over putting up resistance against Japan. When domestic hypernationalism rose, the National Government dealt with it with a combination of persuasion and repression. An overview of the outcome of the four opposition groups' resistance against the state's conciliatory foreign policy is summarized in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Overview of the 1931 and 1935 Cases: Outcome of Resistance By Different Nationalist Opposition Groups**

	1931-1932	1935-1937
The Student Movement	Repressed	Repressed
The Communist Challenge	Repressed	Success: Mobilized the Xi'an mutiny and pushed Chiang Kai-shek to declare war against Japan



### 5.2.1 Nationalist Movement During the Manchuria Crisis

This case consists of two major consecutive incidents in which Japan imposed serious threats to China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, followed by strong domestic repercussions. The first incident occurred on September 18, 1931, when the Japanese Kwantung army planned on a small explosion of a Japanese-owned railway near Shenyang (Mukden), while accusing Chinese dissidents of the act. The Japanese quickly responded with full invasion that led to the occupation of China's entire Northeastern region (also referred to as Manchuria) and the establishment of a puppet government of "Manchukuo". The entire episode of events is known as the Mukden Incident in China.

Because the National Government did not provide any ammunition or food as support, the Northeastern Army put up with little resistance against the Japanese. For the purpose of reserving his troops and weapons, the Northeastern Army's Commander-in-Chief, Zhang Xueliang, adhered to a non-resistance policy and withdrew to inner China. Thus, Japan occupied the Northeastern region with minimal difficulty. In spite of the heightened nationalist sentiment in the Chinese society, the National Government maintained its conciliatory foreign policy towards Japan. Instead of sending troops to the North to fight against Japan, it sought diplomatic means and relied on international institutions, such as the League of Nation, for assistance.

The other major incident that escalated Chinese nationalism was Japan's bombing of Shanghai. In the beginning of 1932, the Japanese military planned to increase influence over inner China, especially Shanghai. In order to provide a *casus belli* to justify further military action in China, the Japanese military instigated among the Chinese public a series of anti-Japanese incidents and utilized the Japanese injuries during these incidents as an excuse to send an ultimatum to the Mayor of Shanghai. The ultimatum requested the Mayor to punish the assailants

and suppress all anti-Japanese organizations. Without waiting for the response from Shanghai, Japanese aircraft carrier bombed Shanghai on January 28, 1932.

For Chiang Kai-shek, the fundamental principle to handle the Shanghai Incident was to resist the Japanese invasion without escalating the conflict. He was in such a dilemma that on the one hand, China was not strong enough to have an open war with Japan; on the other, maintaining a non-resistance stance invites strong domestic denouncement. Thus, he tried to navigate strategically by ordering one of his armies—the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army of the Nationalist Party—to resist Japan's invasion in Shanghai but without providing reinforcements so as to avoid a quick escalation. While the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army achieved initial success, the Chinese Government unilaterally stopped fighting on March 6. However, the Japanese rejected the ceasefire. Two months later, as a result of Western mediation, China and Japan signed the Shanghai Ceasefire Agreement, in which China made a few concessions. The agreement made Shanghai a demilitarized zone, forbidding China to garrison troops in areas surrounding Shanghai while allowing the presence of a few Japanese units in the city.

The Japanese invasion and the non-resistance stance of the government caused a storm of nationalist movement. From September 1931 to January 1932, civilians led by students were engaged in the collective action to call for armed resistance against Japan. Local militia in Manchuria put up fierce resistance against Japan without the central government's support. The military leaders of 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army, who were reassigned by Chiang to suppress the Communist insurrection in Fujian Province after a short period of fighting the Japanese, revolted against the National Government. The Communist party, which saw the discrepancy of policy preferences between the National Government and the public as an opportunity for advancing its own political interests, also facilitated the student and civilian anti-Japanese movement.

However, all attempts to force Chiang's government to change the conciliatory foreign policy failed. The student-led anti-Japanese movement was unable to force the government to fight Japan; students who participated in petitions and anti-Japanese demonstrations were either dispersed or repressed. The economic boycotts organized by Chinese capitalists did not last long to have meaningful impact on Japan nor the Chinese Government.<sup>4</sup> The revolt led by the 19th Route Army was crushed by Chiang's Central Army. The Communists, though having their own armed forces and arguably being the most organized opposition group, also suffered military fiasco in face of Chiang's superior army and went exile in 1934.<sup>5</sup>

### 5.2.2 Nationalist Movement During the 1935-7 North China Crisis

The outcome of resistance in the North China crisis from 1935 to 1937 differed sharply from its predecessor in the early 1930s. The new series of incidents ended up with China's declaration of war against Japan in July 1937. It began with resumed Japanese advances in North China during summer 1935. Within three months, the Japanese manufactured several incidents that served as excuses to force the Chinese government to gradually compromise its sovereignty over North China. Like in 1931-2, Chang Kai-shek desperately tried to avoid war with Japan. On July 6, the Chinese government signed the He-Umezu Agreement with Japan, which gave Japan *de facto* control over the central province in North China—the Hebei Province—and outlawed all anti-Japanese words, deeds, and organizations. Later, China made further concessions in its sovereignty over the entire North China. North China provinces, including Hebei, Shandong, Shanxi, Suiyuan and Chahar, were forced to undergo “self-governance” but were in fact controlled by Japan.

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<sup>4</sup> C. F. Remer and William Braman Palmer, *A Study of Chinese Boycotts: With Special Reference to Their Economic Effectiveness* (Taipei [Taiwan]: Ch'eng-wen Pub. Co., 1966), pp. 155-169.

<sup>5</sup> The military retreat undertaken by the Red Army of the Communist Party to evade the pursuit of the KMT army was commonly referred to as the “Long March”.

With the increasing Japanese invasion, nationalism among Chinese public quickly turned hyper. Regardless of government censorship and suppression of anti-Japanese activities, student demonstrations soon spread all over China to demand for fight against Japan since December 9, 1935. Though the students gained broad support, which also set stage for the nation-wide National Salvation Movement dominated by intellectuals, the student movement achieved only partial success. It did result in the abortion of the He-Umezu agreement and to some extent frustrated Japanese invasion in North China. However, due to repression by the National Government, civilian anti-Japanese movement did not change the state's conciliatory policy.

In contrast to the limited influence of civilian anti-Japanese movement, the Communist Party (or CCP) played a key role in changing the National Government's foreign policy. In order to survive under Chiang Kai-shek's inexorable encirclement, the CCP changed its general principle from exclusive class struggle to establishing an inclusive "United Front" across the nation, allying with as many forces as possible. Under the guidance of the United Front policy, CCP strategically choose to ally with the military groups and target particularly at the Northeastern Army, which harbored a strong incentive to resist Japan and retrieve their hometown. The Communists actively established networks within the Northeastern Army and continuously mobilized the soldiers with the patriotic purposes, which became a crucial cause for the infamous Xi'an Mutiny. During the mutiny, the Generals of the Northeastern Army and of the Northwestern Army kidnapped Chiang Kai-shek and forced the him to agree on declaring war against Japan. In order to make sure that Chiang Kai-shek follow through the agreement, the CCP instigated the existing National Salvation Movement and mobilized the public to exert continuous pressure on Chiang to declare war.

### **5.3 The Military and the State's Hypernationalism Management**

The overview of the two cases shows that a variety of social forces in China, from academia to the political party, had put up their opposition against the conciliatory foreign policy. Their means of resistance varied from non-violent to violent. This section will start with the comparison of civilian resistance featuring the student nationalist movements during the 1931-2 and the 1935-6 periods. Using primary evidence drawn from the Second Historical Archives of China and the Hoover Institution Archives, I show that organization level of opposition groups does not explain whether civilian resistance succeed in pushing the state to change its conciliatory foreign policy. Next, I move to the comparison of the failed challenge of state's foreign policy by the Communist Party with the student movements. From these three failed sub-cases, I find the means of resistance is not the direct cause of success or failure in resistance against the state's foreign policy. Rather, the one factor that remains consistent across these sub-cases is that these opposition groups had not obtained military support. Finally, I compare the Communist Party's challenge from 1935 to 1937 with the previous three sub-cases to demonstrate that what caused an opposition group's success in pushing a state to change its conciliatory foreign policy was its alliance with the military.

Table 5.2 presents a brief summary of the four sub-cases, namely Student Patriotic Movements and the Communist Party's Resistance Campaign after the 1931 Mukden Incident and before the 1937 Second Sino-Japanese War. It includes information regarding the means of resistance adopted by the opposition group, the organization level of the opposition group, whether the group established alliance with the military, how the government responded towards the opposition activities, and the outcome of the opposition in each of the four sub-cases.

Both the 1931-1932 and 1935-1936 student patriotic movements relied chiefly on non-violent means, such as petition to the Government and peaceful demonstration. But compared to the 1935-6 student movement, the former grew increasingly violent after failure in peaceful resistance.

Student riots occurred with government officials physically attacked. The means of resistance adopted by the Communists Party in these two time periods included both violent and nonviolent means. On the one hand, they tried to mobilize, lead, and take advantage of the national salvation movements. On the other, they obtained a small size of armed forces to protect themselves from state repression. In terms of organization level, the student movements were largely led by student associations. As for organization level of groups, the student movement was fairly disorganized during the 1931-2 period as they lacked an overarching central union to direct and organize the movement. Such central student union was created during the 1935-6 movement with a strong leadership and a clear division of labor. In comparison, the Communist Party, founded in 1921 and with ten-year experience of political struggle, had already developed into a highly organized political party with a national base by 1931. In all of the four subcases, the state's response was mainly repression, with an exception of the 1931 student movement towards which the initial reaction of the state was persuasion.

**Table 5.2 Comparison of Student Movements and Communist Challenge of the Two Cases**

	1931-2 Student Movement	1935-7 Pre-War Student Movement	1931-2 CCP Challenge	1935-7 Pre-War CCP Challenge
Means of Resistance	Initially non-violent, later grew violent	Non-violent:	A combination of non-violent and violent	A combination of non-violent and violent
Organization level	Low	Medium	High	High
Military alliance	None	None	Passive and Minimal	<i>Active and Massive</i>
State response	Persuasion and Repression	Repression	Repression	Repression
Outcome of Pushing for Policy Change	Failure	Failure	Failure	<i>Success</i>

Student movements in both time periods did not obtain military support for their pursued causes. Though students plead with the military to defend the country and did gain sympathy from some soldiers, they failed to mobilize military disobedience or revolt against the state policy. The Communists failed to ally with the military in the 1930s for a different reason. Due to the party ideological principle of class struggle in the early 1930s, the CCP maintained a hardline against the non-working class and considered the military as a target of eradication rather than alliance. Starting from 1935, the Communists shifted their party principle and their alliance strategy from a radical and exclusive one to a much more inclusive United Front policy. The United Front policy allowed them to unite with all potential forces in the Chinese society, particularly the military, in order to resist against Japan. It is this CCP-military alliance that decisively changed the outcome of Chiang Kai-shek's non-resistance policy and pushed China into war with Japan.

### 5.3.1 The Repression of Student Movements in the 1931-2 Manchuria Crisis and 1935-7 North China Crisis

The most prominent civilian opposition against compromise in both cases was the student movement. The students were the initiators and dominant members of the national salvation movement, which grew in its influence across the country and attracted supporters from a variety of social classes. However, student movement in both cases failed with only limited achievements. For instance, the 1931-2 student movement forced the resignations of the Foreign Minister and the Mayor of Shanghai. The 1935-6 student movement pressured the Government to abolish the He-Umezu agreement signed with Japan, which meant to give Japan substantive control over North China. Yet there was no fundamental change in the state's conciliatory foreign policy. Exactly because of its prominence in civilian resistance, the student movements are chosen to be the object of observation in this comparative study. The cause of their failure can be telling and representative

when being applied to explain the outcome of nationalist opposition in general.

The 1931-1932 student national salvation movement started right after the Mukden Incident on September 18, and climaxed when the entire Northeastern China was invaded. Hundreds of students traveled to the capital to make petitions to the National Government, demanding its resistance against Japan. The peaceful petition was also accompanied with large-scale demonstrations on the street. The student movement lasted about six months before the state resorted to repression. Three years later, the Japanese resumed its territorial demands in China and student movement rose again in 1935. The two demonstrations occurred in early December witnessed the largest participation in student movement history. However, the momentum started to fade after the National Government sent coercive forces to repress the movement. Both student movements were eventually repressed by the state.

In the 1931-1932 case, the National Government was more restrained to use repression than in the 1935-1936 case. The heightening nationalism in the last quarter of 1931 left the National Government no good way to respond. In the beginning stage, the authorities permitted student movement with caution and restraint. When the petitioners remained pro-government, Nanjing was lenient, patiently persuading, arguing with, and placating the students. They also tried to retain the leadership of student movement. However, such strategies only worked to handle the moderates and the movement led by hard-cores quickly got out of the government's control.

In December 1931, when unstoppable students flooded into the Capital Nanjing, the National Government placed the capital under martial law and banned the students from coming to Nanjing for petitions.<sup>6</sup> Hundreds of police and guards patrolled the streets, government officials went into

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<sup>6</sup> *Zhongyang Ribao* [Central Daily News], December 6, 1931; *New York Times*, December 6, 1931; *Zhonghua minguo shiliao huibian* [Comprehensive Collection of Archival Documents on the History of Republic of China], Vol. 5, No. 1, Politics (The Second Historical Archives of China), p. 149.



hiding, and a fire brigade was alerted to stand by in case of further trouble.<sup>7</sup> On December 7, with more students making petition, Chiang Kai-shek had to meet with the student crowds. He told them that the government had followed a permissive policy since the Manchuria Incident towards the student; that the government had its own plan; that the students, while being patriotic, had been misguided by propaganda. In the end, he implied that such leniency might not continue indefinitely.<sup>8</sup> However, Chiang's persuasion achieved little impact.

Instead of appeasing the students further, The National government took offensive against students. Student leaders were denounced as Communists or "unconscious tools" of the Communists.<sup>9</sup> Underworld tactics were used to repress student movement. For instance, on December 9, a student leader of the demonstration was assaulted and taken by a gang on a black sedan.<sup>10</sup> According to a government official captured by a large group of student demonstrators, such order came from KMT supervisors.<sup>11</sup> The result of the repression was quite successful. By December 18, the authorities had been able to deliver a death blow to the student movement. Other than small-scaled isolated outbursts, no more mass encirclement of the capital took place.<sup>12</sup> About 16,000 students who had gone to the capital were dispersed all over the country and a few were kept in prison.<sup>13</sup>

The 1935-1936 student movement suffered from the same fate. The movement started from Beijing where many universities were located. It reached wide influence and attracted enormous support across the country. Many students and civilians in other cities were sympathized with the

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<sup>7</sup> *New York Times*, December 8, 1931; *Beiping Chen Bao* [Beiping Morning News], December 8, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> *Yishi Bao* [Yishi Newspaper], December 8, 1931.

<sup>9</sup> *Zhongyang Ribao* [Central Daily News], December 10, 1931.

<sup>10</sup> John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 72.

<sup>11</sup> *Shishi Xinbao* [The China Times], December 11, 1931; *New York Times*, December 11, 1931.

<sup>12</sup> *Shishi Xinbao* [The China Times], December 23, 1931; *Zhongyang Ribao* [Central Daily News], December 25, 1931.

<sup>13</sup> Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*, p. 78.

national salvation course and denounced the government's mal-treatment of the innocent students. In the words of one newspaper, student movement spread "like a wild fire" from Beijing to other big cities such as Shanghai and Nanjing.<sup>14</sup> At the city of Nanning and Wuhan, the demonstrators numbered more than 10,000. The students in Nanchang, Tsinan and Tsingtao have also held demonstration to call the attention of the National Government to the serious situation in North China.<sup>15</sup> Proclamations, telegrams, strikes, and propaganda campaign in support of the Beijing students came from Hangzhou (December 10), Canton (December 12), Shanghai and Xian (December 14), and Jinan (December 16). From December 18 to 22, the youth of 16 cities added their voices to the uproar; by the end of December, approximately 65 demonstrations had occurred in 32 different areas.<sup>16</sup>

To handle student demonstrators, the state responded with repression from the start. Apart from sending in troops and police to repress the demonstrators, it also ordered police raids on the campus searching for Communist members, whom the Government believed had participated in the organization of the demonstrations. On December 9 and 16, many students were treated with fire hoses, got beaten and a few were arrested.<sup>17</sup> The December 16 demonstration, particularly, ended up with about 85 students were severely wounded and 300 injured.<sup>18</sup> On February 18, 1936, police raided the dormitories of Beijing University and Beijing Normal University and arrested about twenty students. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, hundreds of police were again mobilized to search dormitories, which resulted in about 100 arrests at Chungkuo College and 43 at Northeastern University.<sup>19</sup> On March

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<sup>14</sup> *Da Gong Bao* [Da Gong Newspaper]. December 23, 1935.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Reuters, Dec. 9, 1931.

<sup>18</sup> *Shi'er Jiu Te Kan* [The December Ninth Special], No. 3 (Dec. 20, 1935); Helen F. Snow, "The Peiping Student Movement", *China Weekly Review*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (Dec 28, 1935), pp. 127-9.

<sup>19</sup> "Notes on the Chinese Student Movement, 1935-1936", Nym Wales Papers, Box 11/1, Hoover Institution Archives, p. 49.

18<sup>th</sup>, police repression reached a climax as six hundred students at Tsinghua University were individually interrogated and 21 were jailed.<sup>20</sup>

While students means of resistance turned violent at the later stage, the National Government successfully repressed both movements. The police imprisoned or forced underground many of the known movement leaders and deterred their followers from taking part. Not long after the state repression, both student movements lost their momentum with large-scale demonstrations being suspended by the end of 1932 and 1936. More importantly, student movements, in spite of their far-reaching influence, failed to pressure the state to declare war against Japan.

### 5.3.2 The Cause of Failure in Student Movements

What remains consistent in both student movements is the fact that the military stood with the state. Despite that the state's Japan policy created much frustration, students relied mainly on petition, demonstrations, and in the extreme occasion violent riots to express their dissents. In neither cases did they solicit military support to exert pressure on the National Government. Although the students tried to win the heart of the soldiers through persuasion, in neither case did military disobedience occur. Instead, the coercive forces took the state's order to repress student demonstrators and diligently followed through it.

For instance, during the 1931-2 student movements, the typical strategy students adopted was parading to the KMT headquarters to make petitions. When receiving no satisfying response from the Government, students insisted staying in the Capital and vowed not to leave until the government yielded with almost no money, no food, and no clean clothing.<sup>21</sup> Seeing that their peaceful resistance had achieved very little, students violently leashed their anger towards any

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> *Shen Bao* [Shanghai News], September 29, 1931; *New York Times*, September 30, 1931;

targets approachable. For instance, in one boycott instigated by the student in Guangdong Province, about 50 to 100 people were killed or wounded.<sup>22</sup> In Shanghai, a mob of several thousand students and workers attacked Japanese mills, stores, and homes.<sup>23</sup>

The idea that the military can be sought as allies for their resistance was never entertained the students. One of the main reasons was that the goal of student movement was to alter the state's foreign policy, rather than removing the state power. Throughout the movement, students still considered Chiang Kai-shek as their legitimate national leader and supported the KMT's rule whole-heartedly. They were eager to rally around Chiang Kai'shek's leadership if the latter declared war against Japan. This was manifest in many petitions during which the students declared their readiness to die for their country.<sup>24</sup> With no intention to challenge the state's legitimacy, students only tried to persuade the police and soldiers to not interfere with their marching and to actively fight the Japanese together. For instance, towards the police guarding the Foreign Ministry, some students shouted, "you love your country, don't you?"<sup>25</sup> Similar remarks to revoke the nationalist sentiment among the coercive forces appeared in many other occasions. Thus, students never attempted to mobilize the military to subvert the state's power.

Admittedly, students did cooperate with the military during the 1931-2 movement, especially after Japan's bombing of Shanghai in 1932. During this period, many students participated in support activities for the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army, which took the responsibility of resisting against Japan's invasion of Shanghai. Several hundreds of students formed the Volunteer Army, supporting the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army in sections such as intelligence, transportation, morale boosting,

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<sup>22</sup> Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*, p. 57.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> See for instance, *Zhonghua minguo shiliao huibian* [Comprehensive Collection of Archival Documents on the History of Republic of China], Vol. 5, No. 1, Politics, The Second Historical Archives of China, pp. 150-243; See also Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*, p. 81.

<sup>25</sup> Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*, p. 53.

public relations, and propaganda. However, when the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army received orders to retreat to its second line of defense, student Volunteer divisions were disbanded.<sup>26</sup> Thus, throughout the 1931-2 movement, students played the role of passive supporters of the military rather than active mobilizers to encourage disobedience against state's conciliatory foreign policy.

Like the 1931-2 student movement, students in the mid-1930s also failed to actively mobilize the military to exert pressure on the state's conciliatory foreign policy. Unlike the students in 1931, with years of state control and repression, by the start of 1935 students had developed growing discontent against the KMT government itself. This was revealed in the Proclamations made during the student's December demonstrations, which demanded not only opposition to the Japanese invasion, but explicitly cessation of arbitrary arrests and freedom of speech, press, assembly, and organization.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, with the Communist penetration into the student movement, the movement started leaning towards the Left. More radical slogans such as "Down with Imperialism (not merely Japanese imperialism)", "down anti-Communist autonomy movement" started to appear.<sup>28</sup> Some young propagandists more explicitly warned that "we never support the present government blindly. We support the government that will resist the enemy. If the present government takes no steps to resist the enemy within the year, we also want to throw it out."<sup>29</sup>

However, for most of the students, such dissatisfaction did not turn into anti-government schemes.<sup>30</sup> Rather, there was a glowing split within the student body around the debate whether they should make concessions to the National Government or pursue militant tactics instead. The

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 81-83.

<sup>27</sup> Nym Wales Paper, "Notes on the Chinese Student Movement, 1935-1936", pp. 26-27.

<sup>28</sup> Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*, p. 136.

<sup>29</sup> Nym Wales Papers, "Notes on the Chinese Student Movement, 1935-1936", p. 50.

<sup>30</sup> This was a main point of Nym Wales's observation on the motivation of December 9 Student Movement. See "Notes on the Chinese Student Movement, 1935-1936", Nym Wales Papers.

former could help them win more moderate supporters while the latter may keep the movement alive in the face of state repression. In the end, students chose the more moderate position. Thus, they switched their slogans to much less radical ones to appeal to broader support. Nevertheless, the change of student stance came late and was not appreciated by the National Government. Not soon after, the government declared the Emergency Law to destroy not only the Student Union but abolish all other student political activities.<sup>31</sup> Raids and arrests initiated by the Government led the loss of momentum of student movement. Due to a lack of active military support, student movements in 1935 and 1936 ended up as a failure.

### 5.3.3 Varying Outcome of Communist Resistance in the 1931-2 Manchuria

#### Crisis and the 1935-7 North China Crisis

Ever since it was founded in 1921, the Communist Party in China had been the largest political opposition against Chiang Kai-shek's rule.<sup>32</sup> From 1927 to 1936, the governing party of China, the Nationalist Party (KMT), was in the state of civil war with the Communist Party. For Chiang Kai-shek, the Communists had always been the greatest threat to his rule, much more than the Japanese. Thus, when Japan launched its invasion in Northeastern China, Chiang Kai-shek stuck to the non-resistance and non-escalation foreign policy. Instead, he put eradicating the Communists as his

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<sup>31</sup> Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*, p. 143.

<sup>32</sup> There were other opposition political parties or cliques existed but under the KMT's suppression from 1931 to 1937. The most famous ones included the China Nation and Society Party, which was established in October 1931 right after the September 18 Incident; the Chinese Youth Party, which was founded in Paris on December 2, 1923, two years after the establishment of the CCP. The party was banned after the Nationalists came to power in 1928 and refused Chiang Kai-shek's offer to merge the two parties. Based in Manchuria, it called for an immediate declaration of war, in contrast with the Nationalist government's resistance to a formal war declaration. Finally, there was the Chinese Peasants' and Worker's Democratic Party, also called the Third Party, which became a cohesive entity under the leadership of Deng Yanda after August 1930. Deng was secretly executed by Chiang Kai-shek in 1931 and the party went underground. There were also two military revolts that culminated in two independent governments against the Central Government. One was the Fujian Government led by the 19th Route Army and the other was the Southwest Government led by the political and military leaders of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces. But these political opposition groups were either short-lived or much smaller in scale compared to the Communist Party. See for instance, *Zhonghua minguo shiliao huibian* [Comprehensive Collection of Archival Documents on the History of Republic of China], Vol. 5, No. 1, Politics, The Second Historical Archives of China, pp.699-744, 791-816, 871-872, 930-931; Chen Bulei Diaries, Box 1, Hoover Institution Archives.

prioritized task over resisting against Japanese invasion.<sup>33</sup>

When Japan invaded Manchuria on September 18, 1931, the Communist Party was still in its resistance against KMT's third Encirclement Campaign. Till the beginning of September, the guideline of the Communist Party's challenge against the National Government focused exclusively on class struggle. It emphasized on establishing nation-wide labor union, mobilizing labor strikes and economic boycotts, and redistributing the land. Moreover, internally, it was busily dealing with its own factional split.<sup>34</sup> The sudden Japanese invasion and the immediate rise of civil anti-Japanese movements interrupted Chiang's full focus on eradicating the Communists. The CCP took the opportunity to expand its social support by incorporating the slogans of anti-Japanese, anti-imperialism, and anti-government into their campaign.<sup>35</sup>

With the fever of nationalism turning up, the Communist Party came to realize that potential benefits of taking advantage of the nationalist movement against the KMT rule. Many participants of the movement, particularly students, were frustrated by the KMT's non-resistance policy. Such dissatisfaction could be easily exploited as a powerful force. Therefore, starting from December 1931, three months after the Japanese invasion, the Communist Party engaged itself in planning and participating in student demonstrations, anti-government propaganda, and economic boycotts against Japanese goods.

As the year of 1932 proceeds, the National Government intensified its control and repression while the patriotic movement started to lose its momentum. The CCP had to find new incentives for sustaining the resistance.<sup>36</sup> For instance, CCP cadres manufactured incidents where they could

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<sup>33</sup> This policy is called “攘外必先安内” in Chinese.

<sup>34</sup> Central Archives of the Communist Party of China ed., *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji* 中共中央文件选集 [Selected Documents of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party], Vol. 7 (1931), pp. 424-426, 500-518, 548.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 427-430, 524-527.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 447.

call the Government selling out to the Japanese.<sup>37</sup> Also, they tried to gear the existing student movement towards revolutionary struggle. They capitalized discontent garnered by students against the academic systems and the non-resistance foreign policy. Once students were mobilized, the Communists intensified the conflict and pit the students against their authorities, or even each other. Because of the radical nature in the Communist struggles, violence frequently occurred. For instance, a number of Communist students died or injured in a pitched battle with army troops in Paoting's Second Normal School.<sup>38</sup>

However, the Communist efforts to resist against the KMT rule through intensifying patriotic movement failed to bare results. In effect, the radicalness and destructiveness in its means of struggle drove away many potential allies. The CCP itself, including both its underground cadre members in the city and the Red Army in rural areas, ended up being suppressed. The CCP's policy-making machinery suffered heavy loss. Six CCP Politburo members were arrested by the KMT police. Only half of the Politburo members were left in Shanghai.<sup>39</sup> By March 1933, the military police of the Nationalist party entered Beijing and started a vast-scale suppression on the Communist Party and its Youth Corps. Student Associations in over 20 schools were dismissed. According the CCP's own estimation, by the end of 1934 only 9 members were left who were still able to get in touch with the Party.<sup>40</sup>

Of the four sub-cases, only the Communist resistance during the 1935-7 period succeeded.

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<sup>37</sup> A few days before the Japanese attack on January 28, the military police under the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army reported that the organizers stirring up strikes and anti-Japanese uprisings so as to push for Sino-Japanese conflicts were CCP cadre. See Donald A. Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire: The Shanghai War of 1932* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), p. 26.

<sup>38</sup> Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*, p. 90.

<sup>39</sup> Ipyong J. Kim, *The Politics of Chinese Communism: Kiangsi under the Soviets* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

<sup>40</sup> The number was provided by two Communist officials in their talks about the December 9<sup>th</sup> Movement. One of them, Peng Tao, was the leader of the movement. See Ruilan Feng, "Who Started the December 9<sup>th</sup> Movement?", *Yanhuang Chunqiu* [China Through the Ages], No. 1 (2009).



Two conditions propelled the Communist Party to change their radical class struggle principle to united front policy. The first is the increasingly dire surviving condition for the CCP. After the Long March during which CCP retreated to Northwest China, it suffered huge personnel loss due to a variety of factors including fatigue, hunger, extreme environment, disease, military casualties, and desertion. Fewer than 7,000 survived among the original 100,000 soldiers who started the march. Party membership fell from 300,000 to around 40,000.<sup>41</sup> The second is the revival of Japanese invasion. Starting from the summer of 1935, Japan resumed its invasion in North China. It was against the backdrop that the CCP altered its alliance policy from allying exclusively with working class and peasants to establish a united front with all classes in the society.

On August 1, 1935, Mao Zedong drafted the August First Declaration, which called on members of the entire nation to unite, to stop civil war, to fight the Japanese, and to establish a unified national defense government and anti-Japanese army.<sup>42</sup> This declaration set stage for the formation of the United Front policy and the elimination of the ideological rhetoric. Compared with the class struggle policy in the early 1930s, this much more pragmatic policy allowed the CCP to earn the necessary breathing space by expanding its membership and accumulating its strength. Although the attempt to attract mass support was a familiar strategy, the elimination of ideological boundaries was unprecedented.

Like in the early 1930s, the CCP took advantage of the students' nationalist passion and their grievance towards the government's non-resistance foreign policy in 1935. They claimed an open bid for leadership of the nationalist movement and promised to cooperate with all anti-Japanese groups, regardless of their political standings. Because of this United Front policy, student national

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<sup>41</sup> Benjamin Yang, *From Revolution to Politics: Chinese Communists on the Long March* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p. 233.

<sup>42</sup> *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiu shi [Party Documents Research Office of the CCP Central Committee] ed. (1993), p. 458.

movement quickly developed into a broader national salvation movement involving the participation from members of various social classes.

However, what decisively changed Chiang Kai-shek's foreign policy was not the national movement. In spite of the influence the national salvation movement achieved, the state accelerated its repression and arrested several influential leaders. By mid-1936, large-scale national movement was mostly absent. With military on the state's side, Chiang was ready to repress any opposition. What led to Chiang's policy change was a military mutiny occurred in the city of Xi'an. The commanders of the Northeastern Army and Northwestern Army kidnapped Chiang Kai-shek and forced Chiang to agree on declaring war against Japan. Not long ago, these two military leaders were ordered by Chiang Kai-shek to exterminate the Communists in the Northwestern region.

The CCP's mobilization played an indispensable role in causing the shift of loyalty of the two armies. After Mao's August First speech laying the principles for the United Front policy, the CCP creatively reached out to the two armies that were sent to repress them. They began by converting the army captives, offering them kind treatments and even privileged terms.<sup>43</sup> Then they sent some of the converted captives as good-will messengers to the military headquarters in the region. Through communications advanced by the messengers, the CCP was able to communicate and build mutual trust with the Nationalist army leaders. For instance, in Mao's letter to Gao Guizi, Commander of the 84th Division of the Nationalist Army, he proposed the collaboration between the two armies on plans to resist the Japanese and establish an overarching national defense army.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian* [Preliminary Compilation of the Important Historical Material of the Nationalist Government of China], The Central Committee of the Nationalist Party of China on Party History ed., Vol. 5, p. 492.

<sup>44</sup> *Selected Letters of Mao Zedong*, The Party Literature Research Office of the Communist Party of China ed.(2003), pp. 26-28.

Soon the CCP was able to arrange meetings with the top military leaders of the Northeastern and Northwestern Armies and began building partnership with them. They reached mutually-beneficial agreements on complete ceasefire, trading commodities and weapons, exchanging telegraph passwords and intelligence, and more importantly establishing united anti-Japanese armed forces.<sup>45</sup> When Chiang Kai-shek continued to press the two Armies to focus on eradicate the Communists rather than fighting against the Japanese, the two army generals, after a long-term exposure to the nationalist mobilization by the CCP, eventually planned for the munity that was seemly surprising at the first glance.

#### 5.3.4 The Cause of Failure in Communist Resistance in 1931-2 and Success in 1937-7

After the August First Declaration on forming the United Front Line, the CCP announced that it was willing to cooperate with any armed forces to oppose Chiang's government.<sup>46</sup> Though the CCP had proposed to mobilize and instigate defection of the rank-and-file soldiers from the state-controlled military before, it is unprecedented that they extended alliance to military officers.<sup>47</sup> They actively sought to collude with all armed forces that garnered the resentment against Chiang Kai-shek's foreign policy.<sup>48</sup> They started with Zhang Xueliang, the Commander-in-Chief of the Northeastern Army who were known longing to take back his lost home territory in Manchuria.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian* [Preliminary Compilation of the Important Historical Material of the Nationalist Government of China], Vol. 5, pp. 505-512.

<sup>46</sup> *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], p. 458.

<sup>47</sup> Mao's speech in an internal meeting to emphasize absorbing the enemy armies. See *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], p. 492. The Communist attempts to incite defection from the Nationalist armies was confirmed by the sources from the Nationalist Party as well. See *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian* [Preliminary Compilation of the Important Historical Material of the Nationalist Government of China], Vol. 1, pp. 1-3, 19-21, 39-59.

<sup>48</sup> See Selected Letters of Mao Zedong, ed. by The Party Literature Research Office of the CPC, pp. 26-28.

<sup>49</sup> The Central Committee of CCP published the "Decision on How to Carrying Out Anti-Japanese and Anti-Chiang Kai-shek", which decided that mobilizing enemy troops should start with the Northeast Army. See *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji* [Selected Documents of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party], The Central Archives of the Communist Party of China ed., Vol. 9 (1986), p. 565.

Against the backdrop that the Northeastern Army suffered a few battle defeats by the Red Army, Mao wrote to the Commander of the 57<sup>th</sup> Corp of Northeastern Army to offer ceasefire and collaboration. Capitalizing the Northeastern Army's frustration of wasting manpower in internal conflicts, Mao appealed to nationalism and pointed out Chinese should not fight Chinese. In his view, the Northeastern Army should fight together with the Red Army to take back the lost territory. Mao offered to give preferential treatment to the captured military officers and soldiers of the Northeastern Army: not only would they not be killed, but they would be well fed, lodged, treated if wounded, and sent back to their home army.<sup>50</sup> With the same tune, Mao messaged five other Nationalist military leaders from December to February.<sup>51</sup>

To increase the likelihood of cooperation with the Nationalist armies, Mao ordered the Army Commanders to make sure all the Red Army soldiers had to treat the captives well and to understand why this order was made. No Red Army soldiers were allowed treat the captives with contempt. Using this strategy, they were able convert the captives and use them to mobilize more sympathizing troops when they went home.<sup>52</sup>

In January, the official meeting between the Communist and the Northeastern Army was successfully arranged. On January 16<sup>th</sup>, Mao proposed to send representatives to negotiate with the Army Commander, Wang Yizhe. As for the head of representatives, he strategically chose one of the captives who was sympathetic to the Communists' policies, Gao Fuyuan. Gao was one of the favorite students of Zhang and Wang at school. After graduation, he was quickly promoted to a Regiment Commander under Wang. After Gao was taken as a captive by the Communists, he was moved by the Communists' United Front policy and offered to persuade the rest of the

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<sup>50</sup> *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], p. 490.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 494-514.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 518-519.

Northeastern Army when he returned. Gao proved his worth and sincerity, as it was him who got Mao and the Northeastern Army Leader Wang connected.<sup>53</sup>

The first meeting between the Red Army representatives and the Northeastern Army turned out quite successful. The Communists were told that General Zhang Xueliang would like to work together with them to establishing the national defense government and fighting against the Japanese. Zhang also agreed on ceasefire and restoring trade between the regions controlled by the two armies. However, he was opposed to the idea of anti-Chiang Kai-shek, which remained as the main obstacle during the later negotiations. This problem was eventually resolved by the CCP's flexibility.<sup>54</sup> Having the successful negotiations with the Northeastern and Northwestern army generals as the first step, more military leaders came to respond to the Communists' offer for cooperation. By March, secret agreements were reached between the CCP and such troops as the 106<sup>th</sup> Division of the Northeastern Army, the 17<sup>th</sup> Route Army, and the 84<sup>th</sup> Division of the Nationalist Army.<sup>55</sup> To reinforce the favorite result of the negotiations and prevent that these armies to be bought out by Chiang, the Communist adopted the strategy of pitting the military leaders against Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>56</sup> To achieve this, the Communists kept denouncing Chiang's non-resistance policy and revealing that Chiang was blocking the Red Army's way to fight against the Japanese.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> See Kuisong Yang, *New Research on Xian Incident: the Relationship between Zhang Xueliang and the Communist Party* (Taipei: Dongda book company, 1995), p. 35; see also *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], p. 506.

<sup>54</sup> *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], pp. 507, 514. See also Yang, *New Research on Xian Incident: the Relationship between Zhang Xueliang and the Communist Party*, pp. 36-39.

<sup>55</sup> Yang, *New Research on Xian Incident*, p. 39.

<sup>56</sup> "Mao's Report on The United Front at the Politburo Meeting of the CCP Central Committee", see *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], pp. 512, 527-528.

<sup>57</sup> *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], p. 529.

These initial negotiations with the Nationalist military officers set the stage for the CCP's continuing mobilization of the rank and files within the potential allies. The ceasefire between the two sides made the political mobilization easier to be conducted. The exchange of telegram codes increased the communication between the two. Moreover, the reestablishment of trade enabled the exchange of goods, personnel and even military equipment.

In June, the CCP started the mobilization of the Northeastern Army. On June 12, the Committee on Northeastern Army Mobilization was set up and drafted a guidance with details on how to carry the work out. It emphasized that the key to attract the support of the Northeastern army was to remove from them Chiang Kai-shek's control and influence, so that they would disobey Chiang's order or even publicly oppose Chiang. The specific means include patient persuasion and attacking Chiang's foreign policy and his followers; avoiding using any force to coerce cooperation; relying on some active and capable military officers to mobilize and lead the Northeastern army; and establishing party organizations within the Northeastern Army and sending the most capable cadres to handle the management.<sup>58</sup> Throughout July and August, best Communist cadres were sent to explain such issues as anti-Japanese, anti-Chiang's policies, as well as how to collaborate with the Communists. Moreover, they set up party organizations to absorb new Communist members. Hierarchical political units were established within the Northeastern Army so that capable and trustworthy personnel could be appointed to mobilize rank-and-files.<sup>59</sup>

The CCP also relied on all means of propaganda to influence the Northeastern Army soldiers. They invited the artists to perform the live opera and musicals featuring anti-Japanese and National Salvation themes. The location of these performances were often strategically chosen, including

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 554.

<sup>59</sup> Yang, *New Research on Xian Incident*, p. 116.

the local markets which soldiers of the Northeastern Army would frequently visit. This strategy turned out to be very successful as it facilitated the establishment of secret party organizations in a number of divisions. In one of the division, 20 soldiers became Communist Party members.<sup>60</sup>

The Communists' pragmatism and flexibility contributed to further expansion of the United Front. On April 9, a new announcement was made by Mao to his followers that the current priority was anti-Japanese rather than anti-Chiang. He purposefully deemphasized the anti-Chiang course so as to attract more support from those who wanted to stop civil war.<sup>61</sup> On May 5<sup>th</sup>, the Communists published an announcement to the public to call for stopping the civil war and fighting against Japan together.<sup>62</sup> From May to November, Mao consecutively wrote letters to local military leaders who were former warlords, KMT Military and Political officers, influential intellectuals, bankers, lawyers, and group leaders, calling for putting aside differences and establishing the United Front. Face to face meetings helped with the CCP's strengthened connection with these groups greatly.<sup>63</sup>

It was under the Communists' inexorable mobilization that the leaders of the Northeastern Army and the 17<sup>th</sup> Route Army were brought together and came to firmly believe in the efficacy of the United Front Policy. While they might have their own parochial interests and calculation for colluding with the Communists<sup>64</sup>, it is undeniable that they all believe that opposing the state's appeasement policy and standing against the aggressor were the right thing to do. The mounting nationalist enthusiasm about the United Front policy and Chiang Kai-shek's suppression of it only

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>61</sup> "Mao's Report on The United Front at the Politburo Meeting of the CCP Central Committee", see *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], pp. 553..

<sup>62</sup> *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], p. 540.

<sup>63</sup> *Maozedong Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949], p. 544-602; See also *Selected Letters of Mao Zedong*, pp. 29-81.

<sup>64</sup> Both leaders were worried that the reason why Chiang deployed their groups to fight the Communists without providing supply was that Chiang had the intention to break their armies apart.

precipitated the Northeastern and Northwestern Army leaders' forceful plan. When Chiang took his Central Army with him to the Northwest to supervise the Encirclement Campaign against the Communists, the two army leaders took the chance to launch the mutiny in Xi'an, capturing Chiang Kai-shek and forced him to accept declaring war against the Japanese.

### 5.3.5 Discussion

The comparison of the two cases confirmed my main hypothesis under the closed-autocracy scenario. Comparison of the student movements and the Communist challenge in two historical periods show that without military support, resistance against state's conciliatory foreign policy can easily be repressed. Even when the opposition had its own armed forces, the size of their military forces was often much smaller and the capability much weaker compared to the State's. This was especially the case for the Red Army after suffering years of suppression from the Nationalist Army. Lacking military allies, it was difficult to even maintain the opposition's own survival, not to mention to force the state to change its foreign policy.

Alliance with the military forces leads to state's failure in controlling uncompromising resistance for two reasons. First, such alliance deprives, at least partially, the state's tool for repression. It gives the opposition the breathing space to plan on further oppositional activities. Second, the military forces allying with the opposition could be used by the opposition to turn against the state and to force the latter to change its policy.

Some might challenge that *the 1936 Xi'an Incident* is too idiosyncratic and contingent. What if Chiang Kai-shek never left for Xi'an? If the mutiny failed or never occurred, would Chiang never declare war? The Xi'an Incident is indeed highly contingent and it may well be true that Chiang would never have declared war so early. However, at the moment Xi'an mutiny occurred, the Communist was already in alliance with many military factions of the Nationalist Army and



the local military leaders. There were also numerous of cases where the soldiers showed sympathy to the nationalist movement. Due to the continuing Communist mobilization, Chiang's appeasement policy grew increasingly unpopular among the soldiers and military officers. Sooner or later, military leaders would revolt to force Chiang to change his policy. It was not a matter of whether or not, but rather when.

Another question is that if military coup was the key to force Chiang Kai-shek to switch policy, could military alone do the work without the professional opposition? Admittedly, the rate of military coup is fairly high, with a mean success rate of 48% during the span of 1950 to 2010.<sup>65</sup> However, in the Chinese cases, three military revolts occurred, but only one allying with the professional opposition succeeded. Apart from the Xi'an Incident, two instances of military revolt—the Fujian Revolt and the Southwest Revolt—occurred in opposition to Chiang's non-resistance policy from 1931 to 1936. Both revolts against the Central Government failed. Through bribery and soft coercion, Chiang Kai-shek successfully incited defections from the military rebels and destroyed their schemes.

The failure of the two revolts showcased that often the state's military strength is strong enough to repress and deter the rebel groups. The strength of the state also helps to reduce the benefits of military defection. Compared to insurgents or rebels, defected military groups are often handicapped by their lack of experiences or vested interests in resisting the state. It is not surprising when leaders of the Southwest Revolt announced their plans to the rank-and-files, many of them panicked.<sup>66</sup> As demonstrated in the Xi'an Mutiny case, the role of the professional opposition is indispensable because the professional opposition's vested interests and persistent mobilization helped strengthen the will of both the rebel leaders and the rank-and-files.

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<sup>65</sup> Jonathan M Powell and Clayton L Thyne, "Global Instances of Coups from 1950 to 2010", pp. 249-259.

<sup>66</sup> Chen Jitang, *The Autobiography of Chen Jitang* (Zhonghua Book Company, 2016), pp. 246-250.

## 5.4 Evaluating the Alternative Explanation: Resistance Capacity

What accounts for the varying outcome of nationalist resistance against a state's conciliatory foreign policy? As discussed in theory chapter, one of the key competing explanations scholars uphold is that the nationalist opposition's varying capacity can explain the success or failure of the resistance. This section will assess the two main factors shaping the opposition groups' capacity, namely organization level and means of resistance.

### 1) Level of Group Organization

One main explanation for different outcomes of opposition resistance is the level of organization of the opposition groups. Attributes of strong organization often include communication and coherence across different levels, means of resolving intra-organizational conflict, organizational complexity—linkage with other socioeconomic organizations, and ideological coherence—stable position on left-right continuum.<sup>67</sup> Thus, groups with higher level of organization are often more capable of reaching unanimous decisions, planning out activities with clear division of labor, and sustaining their movement. In another word, these groups have a higher chance to reach success in resistance.

Nonetheless, the two Chinese student movement sub-cases show that level of group organization does not decisively affect resistance effectiveness. Despite that the two student movements displayed different levels of organization, they both failed in face of state repression. During the 1931-1932 movement, city-wise student petition and demonstrations were carried out

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<sup>67</sup> Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power*; James Fearon, "Signaling Versus the Balance of Power and Interests," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38, no. 2 (1994): 236–69. Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*; Stefano Costalli and Andrea Ruggeri, "Indignation, Ideologies, and Armed Mobilization: Civil War in Italy, 1943-45," *International Security* 40, no. 2 (October 1, 2015), pp. 119–57; Barbara F. Walter, "The Extremist's Advantage in Civil Wars," *International Security* 42, no. 2 (Fall 2017), pp. 7–39; .Walter, Barbara F. 2017. "The Extremist's Advantage in Civil Wars." *International Security* 42 (2):7–39; Adrienne LeBas, *From Protest to Parties: Party-Building and Democratization in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

by student bodies with hierarchical structure and clear division of labor.<sup>68</sup> However, these dissident students failed to form an overarching decision-making center. Part of the reason is that the petition groups hold diverging political and ideological demands. Not a single party or ideology dominated the position, which contributed to in-cohesiveness and continuing conflicts among student factions.

Compared with the 1931-2 student movement, the 1935-6 one enjoyed higher level of internal cohesiveness and organizational complexity. It also established an overarching Student Union as a center of decision making to carry out and sustain resistance activities. From the very beginning of the movement, the Beiping Student Union was established to undertake the leadership of student movement. It was highly institutionalized with intricate organization and meticulous division of labor. A central command bureau, a supervisory corps, a communication corps, and a first-aid corps were quickly established.<sup>69</sup> For each demonstration or strike, the Union would propose its decision and the students would discuss and vote in mass meetings.

## 2) Means of Resistance

The means of resistance argument goes that non-violent resistance campaigns are more likely to achieve success than violent resistance. This is because compared to violent resistance, nonviolent campaigns are in an advantage when it comes to mobilizing participants, which reinforces the strategic benefits to participation.<sup>70</sup> Through carefully tracing the process of and comparing four resistance campaigns during the two China cases, I nonetheless find that the means of resistance is not a direct cause of success or failure in resistance campaigns.

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<sup>68</sup> Typical student petition group would have the Student Representative Assembly as the top decision-making organ. Under the Assembly, there were several committees, the command center, and the secretariat. The command center was in charge of the first-aid team, transportation team, armed force team whereas under the Secretariat, there were several departments managing general affairs, financing, propaganda, public relation department, and document preparation. See *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian* [Preliminary Compilation of the Important Historical Material of the Nationalist Government of China], Vol. 5, No. 1, Politics, , pp. 304, 337-341.

<sup>69</sup> Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*, p. 119.

<sup>70</sup> Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*.

**Student Movements:** In the beginning stage of the 1931-2 student movement, students relied chiefly on peaceful means of resistance, such as convening assemblies, sending telegrams to Chiang, and organization boycotts, petitions, and demonstrations. From September 22, 1931 to December 12, 1931, hundreds of student anti-Japanese associations were established. They carried out petitions and demonstrations in over 5 provinces, 13 large cities including Beiping, Shanghai, and Nanjing, as well as in overseas countries such as Britain, Germany, and Japan. In early December, about 30,000 middle school students and 12,000 university students went on strikes, their purpose being to pressure Nanking to declare war on Japan.<sup>71</sup> For less than three months, these student groups made over a hundred requests to the central and local government.

Nonetheless, the majority of these petitions received no response. The response the government officials did give was vague and perfunctory.<sup>72</sup> Out of over 110 petitions the student groups made that was recorded, only 16 got responses from the government officials. These responses serve as expediences to disperse and appease gathered students rather than actually seek to meet the students' request. For instance, some responses were that students' request would be submitted to the Central Government for consideration; or that students' prioritized task were study and they should trust the National Government which had already been working on its own plan to protect the country.<sup>73</sup>

These responses initially worked to disperse the students, but the government inactivity to change its soft stance towards Japan greatly frustrated the young patriots. Seeing that their petition and demonstrations received little effect, students started to behave violently. Though not equipped

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<sup>71</sup> This number was provided by the on-site journalist Helen Foster Edgar. See Nym Wales Papers, Box 11, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Archives, p. 18.

<sup>72</sup> *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian* [Preliminary Compilation of the Important Historical Material of the Nationalist Government of China], Vol. 5, No. 1, Politics, pp. 150-243.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

with lethal weapons or trained as armed forces, some students engaged in destruction of public goods and state properties as well as physical attacks against government officials. From November 22 to December 23, the Mayor of Shanghai sent seven urgent telegrams to Chiang Kai-shek and anxiously reported that student became increasingly vehement and destructive.<sup>74</sup> Foreign journalists start to call the students “mobs”.<sup>75</sup> By December 9, the National Government building surrounded by 50,000 student demonstrators. Trains going from the peripheral towns to the Capital were hijacked by students as some lay on the railway tracks.

The most violent and destructive riots occurred in mid-December, 1931. On December 9th, instigated by a case in which one student representative got beaten and severely injured, about four thousand students came to the Shanghai Municipal to protest. They not only surrounded the Municipal till midnight, but also vandalized the Municipal Party Center.<sup>76</sup> On December 15, several hundred students ransacked the Foreign Ministry, capturing and beating the officials, while another two hundred others proceed to Central Party Headquarters for more targets. On their way, the police came and the two sides were involved in a major brawl.<sup>77</sup> On December 17, Beijing leftists and several hundred sympathizers from Shanghai assailed KMT Headquarters but was compelled to retreat by strong troops. Later in the day, several hundreds of extremists ransacked the building of *Zhongyang Ribao* (Central Daily News) as they got enraged by the newspaper's efforts to label them Communists. The pillage was interrupted by government troops. When the

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<sup>74</sup> Secret Telegrams sent by the Mayor of Shanghai to Chiang Kai-shek, *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian* [Preliminary Compilation of the Important Historical Material of the Nationalist Government of China], Vol. 5, No. 1, Politics, pp. 275-278.

<sup>75</sup> *North China Daily News*, December 11, 1931.

<sup>76</sup> Secret Telegrams sent by the Mayor of Shanghai to Chiang Kai-shek, *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian* [Preliminary Compilation of the Important Historical Material of the Nationalist Government of China], Vol. 5, No. 1, Politics, pp. 277-278.

<sup>77</sup> *Zhongyang Ribao* [Central Daily News], December 16, 1931; *Yishi Bao* [Yishi Newspaper], December 16, 1931.

fight was over, 62 students had been arrested.<sup>78</sup>

In comparison, the 1935-1936 student movement relied almost exclusively on non-violent means. Part of the reason is that government control was already omnipresent to prevent extreme activities taken by the public. When the Japanese military made new demands over Chinese territory in early summer of 1935, student movement did rise immediately. The government had arrested a number of anti-Japanese academic figures. For fear of state repression, the organization of student movement was treated with extreme care and strict secrecy. Moreover, the student leadership was determined to avoid any violence. The purpose of doing so was clearly stated by the leader of student demonstrators from Yenching University: “We absolutely had to avoid causing a conflict. We had to preserve our young lives. Certainly, our influence would be wider if there were deaths, but we absolutely would not make this kind of opportunistic plan.”<sup>79</sup>

Just as the student leader said, student movement was carried out in a highly peaceful manner. Instead of colliding with the repressive forces, attacking government officials or sabotaging state properties, student relied on non-violent means of resistance such as making petitions, disseminating manifesto urging the resistance against Japan, organizing class strikes as well as marching onto the streets. For instance, the December 9th student demonstration in Beiping observed strictly the non-violent policy. The government authorities had prepared to close all the entrances into the city center and mobilizing the whole police force and big-sword corps from General Sun Cheh-yuan’s 29th Army on the streets. To stop the students from passing through the entrance to the city center, the police beat the students by belts and blunt edges of swords. Fire hoses were used to scatter the crowd with a stream of icy water. When students retreated, and

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<sup>78</sup> *Zhongyang Ribao* [Central Daily News], December 18, 1931.

<sup>79</sup> X. A. N., “Shier Jiu Huiyi Lu” (Reminiscences of December Ninth), in *Yenjing Taxue Xuehseng Zuzhi Hui*, p. 2, as cited in Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*, p. 120.

police and soldiers set upon them, slashing, kicking, and arresting those who could not escape.<sup>80</sup> In spite of state repression, students did not resort to violent means.

One week later, student demonstration on a larger scale than ever known in Beiping took place.<sup>81</sup> According to one published campus newspaper, 7,775 students from 28 schools took part.<sup>82</sup> Students marched peacefully towards Foreign Ministry and the Beiping Municipal for the purpose of urging the local authorities to stop selling out the nation. However, on their way, they were stopped by police and soldiers armed with swords and guns. Several thousand unarmed students were targeted by the police with the hose. When students marched to the square in front of the Qian Gate at the center of Beiping, the local police station fired blanks into the crowd, creating near-panic. Though clash between the students and the repressive forces occurred during the former's charge into the city center entrance, students did not act violently against the repressors. Instead, in order to continue marching, the students tried to negotiate with the coercive forces to let them through. After failed negotiation with the police, students started to disperse through the dark streets, many of them were assaulted by the police and soldiers. In the end, about 85 students were severely wounded and 300 injured.<sup>83</sup> Reuter's described the treatment as "unnecessarily brutal".<sup>84</sup>

A great deal of restraint in violence was displayed by students when the news of the death of an 18-year-old student, Guo Qing, hit the campuses. On March 10, 1936, Guo was dead in prison after being arrested as a demonstrator and this had been the third case of death from prison conditions within a short time frame.<sup>85</sup> Though resentment was prevailing the campus, students

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<sup>80</sup> *Reuters*, December 9, 1931.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, December 16, 1931.

<sup>82</sup> *Shi'er Jiu Te Kan* [The December Ninth Special], No. 3 (Dec. 20, 1935).

<sup>83</sup> Helen F. Snow, "The Peiping Student Movement", pp. 127-9.

<sup>84</sup> *Reuters*, December 16, 1931.

<sup>85</sup> Nym Wales Papers, Box 11, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Archives, p. 54;

resorted to peaceful means of resistance. On Mar 31, leftist students held a memorial meeting at Beijing University for Guo Qing. Following the meeting, participants marched down carrying the coffin. Physical fight did occur between the students and the police during the demonstration, but it was the police that charged first. After the fight, the demonstrators were dispersed and more than fifty of them arrested.<sup>86</sup>

The comparison of the two student movements shows that the failure of the student movements is not due to the means of resistance students adopted. Facing the state ready to order repression and its coercive forces to obey the order, unarmed students were either deterred or arrested. It was extremely difficult for them to carry on their demands and exert enough pressure on the state without equivalent tool against the highly trained repressive machine.

**Communist Campaigns:** The means of resistance argument again fails to explain the variations in the outcome in the Communist Campaigns in 1931-2 and 1935-7. In both cases, the Communist relied on a combination of non-violent and violent means to challenge the state and its Japan policy. While it had been targeting against the KMT state leadership for a long time, Japanese invasion provided a new opportunity for the CCP to gain momentum in its resistance course. In both cases, the CCP relied on chiefly violent means of resistance in the rural areas as that was where the Red Army<sup>87</sup> were based and where the KMT Encirclement campaigns took place. In the major cities where the KMT exerted dominant control, the Communist Party relied mainly on non-violent means including organizing and instigating nationalist movement.

In the 1931-3 case, the student demonstrations of Dec 15 and 17 was led by the Beijing Demonstration Corps who were essentially Communist sympathizers. This was evidenced by a

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> The Red Army of CCP was established on August 1, 1928.



photograph of a flag captured from the demonstrators that was published by the Chaoyang Daily News on December 16. It read, “Long Live the Chinese Communist Party!”<sup>88</sup> On December 18, Chaoyang Daily News again printed photographs of reactionary leaflets to prove that Communists had been responsible for the riot.<sup>89</sup> In late January, 1932, the Communists allegedly seized the opportunity to rally activist workers against the Shanghai Mayor and KMT for selling out to the Japanese.<sup>90</sup> The truth of whether CCP was responsible for mobilizing or engineering these anti-Japanese demonstrations was less of an issue when most of the public believed that the Communists were responsible. It is evident in the fact that when the student movement turned destructive and violent, the public opinion increasingly turned against the Communist.<sup>91</sup>

Compared to the early 1930s, the CCP’s means of resistance during 1935 to 1937 maintained more or less the same. After it retreated into Northwestern China, an extremely remote region towards the center, the remainder of the Red Army of the CCP continued to resist against Chiang Kai-shek’s Encirclement Campaigns. In urban areas where the CCP’s armed forces were almost absent while the KMT’s strength was the greatest, the CCP was engaged in mainly non-violent underground activities. The only difference between the CCP challenge in the early 1930s and in the mid-1930s was that the latter displayed more restraint in resorting to destructive means.

The restraint in violence was well demonstrated in Mao Zedong’s guidelines regarding the organizational work in the cities. He put forward in several CCP conferences that such work “must have well-selected cadres working underground, must accumulate strength and bide its

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<sup>88</sup> *Chaoyang Daily News*, December 16, 1931. It is to be noted that the interpretation of this photograph varied. According to Israel’s interview with one of the demonstrators, she claimed it was forgery made by the Chaoyang Daily News. It was this alleged forgery that was largely responsible for the students’ angry sack of the newspaper’s office.

<sup>89</sup> *Chaoyang Daily News*, December 18, 1931.

<sup>90</sup> A few days before the Japanese attack on January 28, the military police under the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army reported that the organizers stirring up strikes and anti-Japanese uprisings so as to push for Sino-Japanese conflicts were CCP cadre. See Donald A. Jordan, *China’s Trial by Fire*, p. 26.

<sup>91</sup> Israel, 80.

time there”.<sup>92</sup> After student demonstrations rose in early December 1935, the CCP actively engaged itself in leading the following nationalist movements. Eleven days after December 9, the Communist Youth Corps praised the student movement and encouraged the students to remain peaceful, seek support from middle and lower classes such as workers, peasants, soldiers and merchants, and not to repeat the fate of the 1931 efforts.<sup>93</sup> In his reflection of the organizational works in the cities during the mid-1930s, Mao Zedong emphasized on multiple occasions the activities of resistance in the cities must be conducted “on just grounds, to its advantage, and with restraint”.<sup>94</sup>

In spite of the similar means of resistance adopted by the Communist Party, they faced entirely different outcomes. This comparison again has confirmed that the means of resistance is not the determinant of resistance outcome. While non-violent means can still suffer resistance failure, violent means may lead to success in resistance. The key determinant of the variations of outcome is the factor that changed across the two sub-cases. That is, the Communists’ obtaining of military support.

This is not saying that the means of violence is an irrelevant factor in shaping the outcome. Sometimes, adopting non-violent means of resistance was the key reason to attract military support, which in turn led to success in civilian resistance against the state. For instance, during the Tunisian Revolution in 2011, the non-violent civilian resistance did lead to the military’s decision to “protect the revolution”,<sup>95</sup> which decisively caused the ouster of the former dictator of Tunisia, Ben Ali. What I am arguing is that the direct cause of resistance success is military

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<sup>92</sup> *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, December 18, 1935.

<sup>93</sup> “Wei Kangri Jiuguo Gao Quanguo Gexiao Xuesheng He Gejie Qingnian Tongbao Xuyan” [A Proclamation to the Entire Nation’s School Students and Various Circles of Young Countrymen on Resisting Japan and Saving the Nation], *The December Ninth Movement* (People’s Publishing House,) pp. 136-39.

<sup>94</sup> See for instance, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. 2, December 12, 1939 and May 4, 1940.

<sup>95</sup> David D. Kirkpatrick, “Chief of Tunisian Army Pledges His Support for the ‘Revolution’”, *The New York Times*, Jan 24, 2011. <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/25/world/africa/25tunis.html>. Retrieved on May 10, 2021.

support rather than non-violent means. The latter only serves to increase the chance of obtaining military support.

### **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter explores in autocracies, what makes a state successfully control uncompromising resistance. Through the comparison of four resistance campaigns launched by students and the Communist Party in two Chinese cases, I have demonstrated that the military plays a pivot role in shaping the outcome of nationalist movements and further a state's foreign policy in an interstate conflict. Obtaining military support significantly increased the chance of success in the Communist nationalist campaign in 1937. By strategically controlling and assessing the key alternative variables, this study concludes that international context, regime type, and resistance capacity, are not the direct explanations for hypernationalism management outcome.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Compromise as a Strength

In this dissertation, I have advanced a major argument that it is the state's acquisition of pivot supporter's assistance that determines the outcome of whether the state can make international concessions in the shadow of nationalism. Depending on the state's regime type, the pivot supporter can either be the media or the military. The significance of the pivot supporter lies in its dual role in assisting the state to manage nationalism or helping the domestic audience to influence the state's foreign policy making.

Specifically, the media increases the domestic audience's influence by promoting nationalist opinions, enlarging the exposure of the nationalist sentiment and the nationalistic civil resistance activities, and disrupting the state's strategies of information manipulation by revealing secret nationalism-provoking information to the public. However, it can also help the state with a variety of nationalism management strategies that makes international concession making much less costly. The military, on the other hand, is the only force capable of repressing the organized mass resistance. When it is on the side of the state, it helps in repressing nationalist movements. However, when it defects from the state and chooses the side of the domestic audience, it may either sustain the popular resistance, or directly threaten the state leader's tenure. Under such pressure, the state leader would have to withdraw unpopular foreign policy.

I then elaborated on how regime type opens up or closes the channels for the domestic audience to voice their opposition and how it defines the availability of certain nationalist management strategies. The domestic structural factors further affects whether the media or the

military would play a pivot role. In democracies where the public are endowed with voting power to voice their opposition and the state is constitutionally constrained from using the military to conduct repression, media support is crucial for both the domestic audience and the state. In autocracies, because the domestic audience cannot vote but has to organize popular resistance and because the state can resort to physical repression, the military becomes the pillar of support for both sides. In the middle-category regimes such as illiberal democracies and electoral autocracies, voting is often a less reliable channel for the domestic audience to constrain the state leader. This creates incentives for the domestic audience to rely on popular resistance instead. Correspondingly, while the state leaders in mixed polities may prefer using information manipulation to alleviate domestic cost, they are not constrained from resorting to physical repression. Whether the military will play the pivot role is contingent on how threatening the popular resistance is and how effective the state's information manipulation works.

That being said, regime type does not shape the outcome. As my cross-national evidence has shown, the assistance from the pivot supporter determines whether the state leader or the domestic audience to influence each other in international concession making. This has been true regardless of whether the state is a liberal democracy or a repressive authoritarian regime. Institutional features, whether that they affect the efficacy of the marketplace of ideas or the cost of state repression<sup>1</sup>, do not perform well in explaining the empirical cases. One of the main reasons is that regime type arguments neglect the state's agency to manipulate the marketplace of ideas and to explore alternative strategies other than repression by obtaining the pivot supporter's assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> For regime type affects the efficacy of the market place of ideas, see Snyder and Ballentine, 1996; Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*, 2000; for regime type shapes the cost of state repression, see John D. Ciorciari & Jessica Chen Weiss "Nationalist Protests, Government Responses, and the Risk of Escalation in Interstate Disputes", pp: 546-583.

Such agency allows the state to achieve its preferred foreign policy without suffering domestic costs regardless of institutional constraints.

Contrary to theorists of international relations and comparative politics who emphasize international context or resistance capabilities in shaping the outcome of whether the state can successfully insulate nationalism and making international concession, my study finds no such patterns. States can successfully make concessions regardless of the level of external threat, of the level of group organization, or of the level of violence the resistance groups adopt. I am not suggesting that international context or resistance capabilities are not important factors constraining the state's ability to make international concessions. Nor do I claim that the state's acquisition of pivot supporter's assistance always leads to successful international concessions making—as the cross-national evidence has shown in Chapter 3, my theory cannot explain 3 of the 47 cases.

A medium-N cross-national study of 47 cases extracted from the Militarized Interstate Dispute Dataset (V4) and a comparative study of two sets of cases support my argument that states can successfully manage nationalism and make international concessions when they obtain the support from the pivot supporter. The cases of the 1853-1854 Crimean Crisis and of the 1935-1937 North China Crisis illustrate that when the media or the military sides with the nationalist domestic audience, the state was particularly susceptible to nationalist pressure to take hardline foreign policy positions. On the contrary, the cases of the 1937-1939 pre-WWII Crises and 1931-2 Manchuria Crisis demonstrate that when the state leaders obtain support from the media or the military, they could successfully assuage domestic cost and make international concessions.

This study concludes that pivot supporter serves as a pillar of strength for both the state and the domestic audience. The acquisition of pivot supporter's assistance by one side means the loss of it by the other, which greatly diminishes the other side's chance to have their foreign policy

preference prevail. Therefore, states will have to be strong domestically in order to appear soft internationally.

## 6.2 Significance for Policy

### 6.2.1 The Cost of Empty Threats: Not a Pound, Nor A Penny

Research regarding the successes and failures of a state's insulation of domestic influence provides important insights for policy makers. To begin with, it provides the theoretical tool for policy makers to evaluate the role of domestic audience in international strategic communication and make corresponding decisions. Studies of intention signaling in international disputes tend to concur that due to the existence of the audience cost, state leaders can credibly signal their resolve to fight by making public threat and "tying their hands". Based on the rationalist bargaining model, the underlying logic of "tying hands" is to make it domestically costly to back down.<sup>2</sup> Taking nationalism as one particular form of domestic public opinion, Jessica Chen Weiss has advanced the argument that China's strategic tolerance of anti-foreign nationalist protests conveys credible signals of resolve to foreign observers.<sup>3</sup> Weiss's argument agrees with Jessica Week's work on authoritarian audience cost that like democracies, authoritarian states are also susceptible to domestic audience cost and can utilize such cost to conduct international strategic communication.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike the conventional wisdom, my theory implies that "tying hands" is a poor signal of a state's resolve. In spite of a growing number of scholarly critiques against the audience cost theory,

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<sup>2</sup> Fearon, "Domestic Audiences and the Escalation of International Dispute"; Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interest: Tying Hands Versus Sinking Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (1997), pp. 67-90.

<sup>3</sup> Jessica Chen Weiss, *Powerful Patriots*, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Jessica Weeks, "Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve," *International Organization* Vol. 62, no. 1 (2008), pp. 35-64.

questioning whether its causal mechanism operates in real crises<sup>5</sup>, my analysis shows with enriched evidence that even when domestic cost of backing down does exist, it does not always constrain a state's foreign behavior. This is because states may manipulate and alleviate domestic audience cost under the condition when they obtain the pivot supporter's assistance. Such ability obtained by states greatly discounts their credibility in intention signaling as their hands are not truly tied.

Another contribution of my theory is that, instead of dismissing the impact of domestic constraints entirely, it identifies the condition under which the domestic influence does constrain a state's foreign policy. Specifically, when the uncompromising domestic audience obtains assistance from the pivot supporter, it can actually push the state to act assertively and go to war. Such resolve for war comes not from the state, but from the nation. Once the nation obtains the ability to hijack a state's foreign policy, the resolve for war would be highly credible. Numerous historical and contemporary cases have shown that even when the foreign policy makers and executives are willing to back down in the first place, the decision may be reversed later due to the domestic pressure. Such were the cases during the 1853-4 Turkish crisis that quickly escalated to the Crimean War, during the 1846 prewar negotiations between Mexico and the United States regarding the US purchase of California<sup>6</sup>, and the failed Thai-Cambodian border negotiations in 2008 and 2011, in which the Thai leaders reversed their agreement to reach a peaceful resolution under the pressure of the domestic opposition and the military.<sup>7</sup> The nation's hijack of a state's

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance Jack Snyder and Erica Borghardt, "The Cost of Empty Threats: A Penny, Not A Pound," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 105, no. 3 (2011), pp. 437-467; Marc Trachtenberg, "Audience Costs: An Historical Analysis", *Security Studies*, No. 21, 2012, pp. 3-42.

<sup>6</sup> N. C. A Brooks, *Complete History of the Mexican War: Its Causes, Conduct and Consequences*, pp. 62-3; see also Miguel E. Soto, "The Monarchist Conspiracy and the Mexican War" in *Essays on the Mexican War* ed. by Wayne Cutler (Texas A&M University Press, 1986), pp. 66-67.

<sup>7</sup> In the 2008 case, the Thai leaders initially endorsed Cambodia's request of UNESCO inscription of the disputed Preah Vihear Temple and signed a Joint Communique with Cambodia, but withdrew such agreement after the burst of a large scale of domestic protests. See Nopporn Wong-Anan, "UPDATE 3-Thai foreign minister quits over temple



foreign policy presents a particular warning situation for foreign policy makers in other states. Being able to correctly identify the condition under which nation may push the state into a conflict helps other states prepare for the appropriate responses.

### 6.2.2 Powerful Patriots, Not Always

Furthermore and relatedly, my theory challenges the widely held notion that nationalism increases risks to international security by driving the states to adopt coercive foreign policy and interfering with concessions.<sup>8</sup> Particularly, the consensus has been applied to explain China's aggressive foreign policy in the East and South China Sea.<sup>9</sup> Admitting that nationalism does have the potential to push the state to act assertively and escalate interstate conflict, my research has shown that such war-provoking effect of nationalism works only under the condition when the media or the military is supporting nationalist demands against the state's preference. This has held true regardless of regime type, international context, or resistance groups' capacity.

Therefore, my theory suggests that nationalism may not be as powerful as many think, or at least not always. To apply my theory to the contemporary China case, I am yet not convinced that the nationalist sentiment in China can explain China's maritime foreign policy over the last decade

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row", Reuters, July 10, 2008, <https://www.reuters.com/article/thailand/update-1-thai-foreign-minister-quits-over-temple-row-idUSBKK19631820080710>; "THAILAND'S FOREIGN MINISTER RESIGNS AFTER TEMPLE Controversy", U.S. Embassy Phnom Penh, Cable 08BANGKOK2111, July 10, 2008, [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08BANGKOK2111\\_a.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08BANGKOK2111_a.html); In the 2011 case, the Thai leaders initially agreed to receive the mediation from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASIAN) during the Thai-Cambodian border conflict, but rejected it for fear of domestic backlash, see Seth Mydans, "Thailand and Cambodia Clash Again in Border Dispute", *The New York Times*, April 24, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/25/world/asia/25temples.html>;

<sup>8</sup> See for instance, Stephen Walt, "You Can't Defeat Nationalism, So Stop Trying", *Foreign Policy*, June 4 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/06/04/you-cant-defeat-nationalism-so-stop-trying/>; Jessica Weiss, *Powerful Patriots*, 2014; Douglas Woodwell, *Nationalism in International Relations: and Enmity* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Jamie Gruffydd-Jones, "Dangerous Days: The Impact of Nationalism on Interstate Conflict", *Security Studies*, 26:4, 2017, pp.698-728.

<sup>9</sup> Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford University Press, 2008); Michael Yahuda, "China's New Assertiveness in the South China Sea".

or in the future.<sup>10</sup> After all, the Communist Party of China (CCP) tightly controls its media portals and a massive coercive apparatus—including the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), the People’s Armed Police (PAP), and other internal security services—that can be used to prevent nationalism from increasing to the extent that it constrains China’s foreign policy flexibility. As for the media, management of all films, print or social media, and publications has been transferred from a government office to the CCP’s Propaganda Ministry.<sup>11</sup>

In terms of military control, the Chinese civil-military relations has inherited a distinct norm of “Party’s control of the gun” created by Mao during the Revolutionary era of 1930s and an institutional structure—the top leader of the state being the chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) commanding the PLA —that locks in the norm.<sup>12</sup> Under the Chinese President Xi Jinping, China’s party state has witnessed several developments in anti-coup strategies to ensure its control over the military. These developments include organizational reforms to ensure Xi’s oversight of the military, irregular personnel changes in the High Command and senior officer corps, intensive political indoctrination to bolster Xi’s personal authority, and the crackdown on powerful military rivals.<sup>13</sup> For instance, from 2015 to 2016, Xi achieved success in consolidating his full control over the military by eradicating two biggest military opponents--

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<sup>10</sup> This argument is in line with Quek and Johnston’s recent article. See Kai Quek and Alastair Iain Johnston. "Can China back down? Crisis de-escalation in the shadow of popular opposition." *International Security*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2018): 7-36.

<sup>11</sup> Chris Buckley, “China Gives Communist Party More Control Over Policy and Media,” *New York Times*, March 21, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> David Shambaugh, “China in 1990,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (January 1991), p. 39; David Shambaugh, "Civil-military relations in China: party-army or national military?." *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 16 (2002): 10-29; see also Amos Perlmutter, and William M. LeoGrande, "The party in uniform: toward a theory of civil-military relations in communist political systems." *The American Political Science Review* (1982), pp. 778-789.

<sup>13</sup> Defense Intelligence Agency, China Military Power: Modernizing a Force to Fight and Win, DIA-02-1706-085, January 2019, p. 16. As of January 25, 2019: [http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/China\\_Military\\_Power\\_FINAL\\_5MB\\_20190103.pdf](http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/China_Military_Power_FINAL_5MB_20190103.pdf); Javier C. Hernández, “China’s ‘Chairman of Everything’: Behind Xi Jinping’s Many Titles,” *The New York Times*, October 25, 2017.

Xu Caihou a former vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission and Guo Boxiong, a military chief of the People's Liberation Army and a former CMC vice-chairman—through the nation-wide anti-corruption campaigns.<sup>14</sup> These strategies have proven to be effective to ensure PLA's inability to constitute a separate coherent interest group to challenge the center.

The Chinese party-state's tight control of the military has contributed to a series successful crackdowns of large-scale demonstrations organized by public, from the less-threatening and non-violent anti-Japanese demonstrations in the last two decades to the highly threatening anti-government popular uprisings taking place on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1989. With no civilian-military rivalry or military insubordination at sight, the domestic nationalist sentiment is highly unlikely to constrain the foreign policy of China's leaders. I am not arguing, however, that China will not behave aggressively or initiate armed conflicts with her international rivalries. Rather, I am emphasizing that among many potential causes of war, domestic nationalism is not one of them.

### **6.3 Nationalism and the Future of the South China Sea**

The previous sections have concluded the gist of my theory and its policy implications. This section widens the empirical scope, comparing three additional Southeast Asian cases—Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines—involved in the South China Sea dispute From 2010 till now. The South China Sea dispute has become the theme of heated scholarly and policy debates since the last decade. This is not only because the South China Sea is a key strategic maritime area subject to several overlapping territorial disputes involving China and the majority of the Southeast Asian

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<sup>14</sup> An Baijie, "Top-level general expelled for graft ", *China Daily*, July 1, 2014, [https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-07/01/content\\_17627820.htm](https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-07/01/content_17627820.htm); Chris Buckley, "Guo Boxiong, Ex-Top Military Official in China, Gets Life Sentence for Graft ", *The New York Times*, July 25, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/26/world/asia/china-guo-boxiong-sentence.html>; Gary K. Busch, "Political reform and the entrenched power of China's military", *limacharlieneews.com*, <https://limacharlieneews.com/asia/china-military-pla-political-reform/>.

countries, but also because it lives in the shadow of the broader China-US conflict. After 2010, China's more assertive approach by emphasizing the South China Sea as its core national interest, increasing its frequency of naval patrols, as well as engaging itself in island-building activities has become increasingly alarming to its Southeast Asian neighbors.

The South China Sea case provides an excellent opportunity to examine the external validity of my theory. It involves three active Southeast Asian claimants spanning a full range of regime types, including Vietnam (autocracy), Malaysia (illiberal democracy), and the Philippines (liberal democracy).<sup>15</sup> Since 2010, these states have all been facing the increasingly powerful and assertive neighbor claimant—China. In spite of their concern for China's rise, all three states have demonstrated their preference of avoiding armed conflicts with China. Perhaps no state leader put it more bluntly than President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines, who believed that his country only had two options: “We talk or we fight. Philippines to fight China, it will be slaughter. So we talk. We cannot match.”<sup>16</sup> These states' preference for peaceful engagement with China was also

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<sup>15</sup> Due to the limitation on data of the Polity Score which has only been updated to 2018, this study assumes the three states under investigation have not been subjected to noticeable regime change since 2018. The categorization of regime type is based on the Polity IV dataset (a scale of -10 to +10 with -10 being full autocracy and +10 being full democracy) and the Freedom House Score (a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being the most free and 7 being the least free). Between 2010 to 2018, Vietnam had the most autocratic Polity IV score (-7 throughout) and the lowest aggregate Freedom House score (6 throughout). The rest two states were relatively more democratic. Malaysia had the Polity IV score of 6 from 2010 to 2013, 5 from 2014 to 2017, and 7 in 2018. Its Freedom House score was consistently 4 from 2010 to 2018. While it has been argued that Malaysia's 2018 peaceful election demonstrated that it has successfully transitioned from electoral autocracy to illiberal democracy, Malaysia still belongs to the mixed-category polity after 2018. Therefore, it does not fundamentally affect the test of my theory. For Malaysia's recent democratic transition, see Shadi Hamid, “What Democracies Can Learn From Malaysia”, *The Atlantic*, May 16, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/05/malaysia-democracy-najib/560534/>; The Philippines had the consistent polity IV score of 8 throughout. Its Freedom House Score was 3.5 in 2010, but maintained at 3 from 2010 to 2018. It has been argued that the Philippines has slide into illiberal democracy after Rodrigo Duterte came to power. See for instance, Richard Heydarian, *Rise of Duterte: A Populist Revolt Against Elite Democracy* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Matthew David Ordonez and Anthony Borja, “Philippine Liberal Democracy Under Siege: the Ideological Underpinnings of Duterte's Populist Challenge”, *Philippine Political Science Journal*, Vol. 39. No. 2, 2018, pp. 139-153.

<sup>16</sup> Natashya Gutierrez, “Duterte attacks US, praises China in Indonesia”, *Rappler*, September 9, 2016, <http://www.rappler.com/world/regions/asia-pacific/indonesia/english/145706-china-united-states-duterte-massacre>.

exemplified in their recent efforts to work with China on an official code of conduct to avoid clashes in the disputed waters.<sup>17</sup>

What is puzzling of the South China Sea case is that although China's behaviors in the South China Sea is expected to spark popular protests among other claimants, as were in the cases of the 2011-2014 anti-Chinese demonstrations in Vietnam and the 2012 and 2019 protests in Manila, we have not yet seen any of the state answering the domestic calls and attempting conflict escalation with China. In spite of sporadic clashes of naval vessels in the disputed water and exchanges of diplomatic condemnation between China and the Southeastern claimants, the latter have all succeeded in avoiding conflict escalation with China.

With only a few exceptions, existing research on South China Sea dispute has exclusively focused on explaining China's behaviors and largely neglected the responses from its Southeast Asian neighbors.<sup>18</sup> At least for now, the regime type argument fails to explain why states with different regime types have all managed to act with restraint towards an increasingly powerful and assertive China. Moreover, some expect nationalism most likely to get out of control in the mixed polities or states under democratic transition due to a lack of check and balances against extreme ideas.<sup>19</sup> However, among the Southeast claimants, it is Malaysia, the only state under democratic transition among the three, that has witnessed lowest degree of popular protest. Finally, Malaysia's lack of popular protest and low-profile stance also presents a challenge for the cost-incentive

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<sup>17</sup> "Explained: South China Sea dispute", *South China Morning Post*, Feb 16, 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/article/2186449/explained-south-china-sea-dispute>

<sup>18</sup> See for instance, Kai Quek and Alastair Iain Johnston, pp. 7-36; Andrew Chubb, "Chinese Popular Nationalism and PRC Policy in the South China Sea," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Western Australia, 2016; Ketian Zhang, "Cautious Bully: Reputation, Resolve, and Beijing's Use of Coercion in the South China Sea." *International Security* 44.1 (2019): 117-159. Notable exception includes: John D. Ciorciari & Jessica Chen Weiss "Nationalist Protests, Government Responses, and the Risk of Escalation in Interstate Disputes"; Peter Kreuzer, "A Comparison of Malaysian and Philippine Responses to China in the South China Sea", *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 2016, pp.239-276.

<sup>19</sup> Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*, 2000.

argument. Like the market-place-of-idea argument, the cost-incentive argument expects regimes of the middle category to be more likely to lose control of nationalism because they have higher incentives to stoke nationalism while facing high costs to repress it. However, the Malaysia's case shows not only that there is a distinct lack of a visible public reaction, but also that the Malaysian government has gone to extra lengths to avoid playing out the dispute with China through the media.<sup>20</sup>

A closer look at the three Southeast Asian states shows that the reason why they are able to maintain a conciliatory foreign policy towards China during the South China Sea dispute is because they have obtained either media or military support on their side. The theoretical framework I have presented to understand the current situation in the South China Sea also generates a prediction on the future stability of the South China Sea. It therefore intends to contribute to the broader debate on whether China's rise is going to be peaceful.

### 6.3.1 Varying Domestic Opposition, Similar State Response

This section examines three Southeast Asian states involved in the South China Sea disputes from 2010 till now and to what extent their domestic audience has influenced their responses towards China. In spite of the varying political systems they adopt, all three states have managed to maintain independence of foreign policy making from domestic influence and to avoid conflict escalation with China.

#### 1) Vietnam

Vietnam and China have been disputed over the South China Sea islands for decades. As early as 1988, the two had launched military skirmishes over the Johnson South Reef in the region of the

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<sup>20</sup> Shahrman Lockman, "Why Malaysia isn't afraid of China (for now)", *The Strategist*, April 24, 2013, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/why-malaysia-isnt-afraid-of-china-for-now/>.

Spratly Islands. While the two reestablished warm relationship due to the increasing commercial ties, tensions resurfaced in 2011 after Vietnam announced that its military would conduct new exercises in the South China Sea. In response, Chinese maritime surveillance vessels cut the exploration cables of two Vietnamese survey ships.

The maritime incident sparked nine waves of popular protests, participated by hundreds or thousands, in cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.<sup>21</sup> The Vietnamese authority initially tolerated demonstrations, but soon ordered security forces to disperse the protesters. While high-level diplomatic discussions began in June, additional waves of protests occurred from late June to August. These protests invited quick deployment of security forces who questioned and arrested the demonstrators. In spite of the popular protests, diplomatic negotiations between Vietnam and China quickly began. They two issued a joint press release in which both countries agreed to “peacefully solving the two countries’ disputes at sea through negotiation and friendly consultation” and emphasized “the need to steer public opinions along the correct direction, avoiding comments and deeds that harm the friendship and trust of the people of the two countries”.<sup>22</sup>

The most violent anti-Chinese demonstrations took place in May 2014 when China deployed an exploratory oil rig to waters near the Paracel Islands. On 11 May, about 1,000 protesters marched and demonstrated again in front of the Chinese Consulate as hundreds of other demonstrators rallied in front of the Chinese Embassy (Radio Free Asia, 2014a). In the following day, the number of protesters increased to approximately 10,000, including more than 2,000 in front of the Chinese Embassy in Hanoi and 5,000 people rallied in Ho Chi Minh City.<sup>23</sup> In addition,

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<sup>21</sup> *Radio Free Asia*, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Helen Park, “In U-Turn, Anti-China Protesters Are Told to Go Home in Hanoi”, *Time*, July 18, 2011. <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2083721,00.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Phuong Hoang, “Domestic Protests and Foreign Policy: An Examination of Anti-China Protests in Vietnam and Vietnamese Policy Towards China Regarding the South China Sea”, *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 6(1), 2019, p. 15.

about 7,000 workers demonstrated in front of Chinese businesses in the industrial zones, which was later joined by another 20,000 workers and quickly descended into violent riots.<sup>24</sup> On May 15, a group of 1,000 workers stormed a Taiwanese steel mill, beat the Chinese and attacked the police, resulted in 21 deaths and hundreds of injuries.<sup>25</sup>

With protests grew in size and violence, the Vietnamese government deployed military vehicles and riot polices to end the turmoil. Following the violent riots in May, the police arrested 600 protesters. On 18 May, authorities deployed large contingents of police to major cities to deter anti-China protests.<sup>26</sup> Protesters who attempted to rally in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City were quickly arrested. Security forces were dispatched to major intersections in both cities to inform people that such gatherings were ‘illegal’.<sup>27</sup> After the government crackdown on anti-China protests, demonstrations against the oil rig placement within Vietnam’s EEZ no longer occurred. One month after the violent protests, Vietnam received Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi in Hanoi to hold the first high-level bilateral meeting on the oil rig issue.<sup>28</sup> While the negotiation failed to reach a breakthrough, the Vietnamese officials were more conciliatory in their approach with China. In later statement, the Vietnamese Prime Minister even said Vietnam was always “grateful for the support and great help from China”.<sup>29</sup>

## 2) The Philippines

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<sup>24</sup> *Reuters*, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> BBC News, “Vietnam anti-China protest: Factories burnt”, May 14, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27403851>; Euan McKirdy, “Protestors torch factories in southern Vietnam as China protests escalate”, *CNN*, May 15, 2014, <https://edition.cnn.com/2014/05/14/world/asia/south-china-sea-drilling-duplicate-2/>.

<sup>26</sup> *Reuters*, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>28</sup> BBC News, “China media: Vietnam talks amid territorial tensions”, June 18, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Ho Binh Minh, Ben Blanchard, “China scolds Vietnam for 'hying' South China Sea oil rig row”, *Reuters*, June 17, 2014.



Like Vietnam, the Philippines under the President Benigno Aquino III from 2010 to 2016 witnessed uneasy relationship with China. From 2011 to 2015, the bilateral relationship soured greatly. In 2012, the Philippine Navy's apprehension of eight mainland Chinese fishing vessels in the Scarborough Shoal invited a series of China retaliation measures such as economic sanctions and tourism regulations. Clashes between the Philippines and China continued with the Philippines filing an arbitration case against China in the Hague in 2014 and China publicly creating artificial islands out of its outposts in the Spratlys since 2015. However, the relationship between the two states has been reoriented after Rodrigo Duterte came to power in 2016. Unlike his predecessor, Duterte purposefully distanced the Philippines from the US but has strengthened the ties with China. He admitted in multiple occasions that antagonizing China is not only unnecessary but also harmful to the Philippines' interests.<sup>30</sup>

Since the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff, the Filipinos have organized multiple anti-Chinese protests in Manila. While the protests taking place from 2011 to 2013 were allegedly tied to the Aquino government and lacked independent influence,<sup>31</sup> 2017 witnessed a shift of protests from focusing exclusively on condemning China to targeting at both China and the President Rodrigo Duterte for his soft stance.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, unlike the protests from 2011 to 2013 that were

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<sup>30</sup> Jane Perlez, "Rodrigo Duterte and Xi Jinping Agree to Reopen South China Sea Talks", *The New York Times*, Oct 20, 2016; "Philippines says any U.S. move against Beijing in S China Sea would be in its own interest", *Reuters*, Jan 13, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-philippines-usa-idUSKBN14X0Z9>; RT, "'About time we change rules': Philippines' Duterte vows to chart independent foreign policy", Oct 13, 2016, <https://www.rt.com/news/362589-duterte-us-philippines-patrols/>.

<sup>31</sup> John D. Ciorciari and Jessica Chen Weiss, "Nationalist Protests, Government Responses, and the Risk of Escalation in Interstate Disputes," *Security Studies* 25, no. 3 (July 2016), p. 579.

<sup>32</sup> See for instance "Protesters disrupt Philippine leader Rodrigo Duterte's Independence Day speech over South China Sea disputes", *South China Morning Post*, June 13, 2018, <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/2150588/protesters-disrupt-philippine-leader-rodrido-dutertes>; Isabel Guarco, "Filipinos Don't Trust Duterte to Handle China", *Foreign Policy*, July 12, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/12/filipinos-dont-trust-duterte-to-handle-china/>; Geoffrey Maitem, "Filipinos burn Chinese flags in protest against Duterte's 'weak' response to South China Sea sinking", *South China Morning Post*, 18 June, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/geopolitics/article/3015058/filipinos-burn-chinese-flags-protest-against-dutertes-weak>;

small in size, the protests in 2019 numbered over 1,000. The most recent anti-Chinese protests took place in June 2019 after the alleged sinking of a fishing boat by a Chinese vessel in the South China Sea, leaving 22 Filipino fishermen drowning.<sup>33</sup> The protesters burned the paper flags of China and condemned Duterte as being “coward”. The anti-Chinese sentiment was widely shared among the Filipinos. According to the Social Weather Survey in 2018, 4 out of 5 Filipinos repudiated the government’s policy of allowing China’s intrusion and demanded firmer responses.<sup>34</sup>

However, Duterte’s foreign policy towards China has not been affected by the domestic sentiments. He was willing to maintain a close term with Beijing by sending out overly positive signals, including a desire to pursue joint development, accept Chinese infrastructure projects, downplay the clashes, avoid military actions, and most recently ending a long-standing defense agreement with the United States which has long seen as essential to countering the rise of China.<sup>35</sup> All these gestures are made at the expense of the Philippine’s bargaining position at the South China Sea.

### 3) Malaysia

Compared to Vietnam and the Philippines, Malaysia has maintained relatively low-profile in the South China Sea dispute. Until most recently when Malaysia made new claim to an extended continental shelf,<sup>36</sup> publicized clashes between Malaysia and China over the dispute are noticeably

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<sup>33</sup> Alan Robles, “‘Duterte coward’: Filipinos’ opinions of president and Beijing government sour after South China Sea sinking”, *South China Morning Post*, June 22, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/geopolitics/article/3015601/duterte-coward-filipinos-opinions-president-and-beijing>.

<sup>34</sup> Social Weather Stations, “Second Quarter 2018 Social Weather Survey”, January 14, 2018, <https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artclisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20180714202446>

<sup>35</sup> Nick Aspinwall, “Duterte Terminates U.S. Defense Pact, Pleasing Trump but Few Others”, *Foreign Policy*, Feb 14, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/02/14/vfa-philippines-china-duterte-terminates-us-defense-pact-trump/>

<sup>36</sup> Nguyen Hong Thao, “Malaysia’s New Game in the South China Sea”, *The Diplomat*, December 21, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/12/malysias-new-game-in-the-south-china-sea/>.

rare. For pragmatic concerns to gain economic benefits, Malaysia's policy preference is aimed to avoid jeopardizing the good relations with China. Neither the Malaysian Prime Minister nor the Foreign Ministry has made even the most perfunctory statement on these matters.<sup>37</sup> Instead, they have been more inclined to downplay China's perceived assertiveness.

What also remains silent is the Malaysia public over the South China Sea issue. Unlike their counterparts in Vietnam and the Philippines, no Malaysians have taken to the street and demonstrated against China. As Lockman notes, "In contrast to how such exercises are greeted in Hanoi and Manila, the Malaysian public response has been a deafening silence."<sup>38</sup> Although the past few years saw significantly heightened Chinese activities in Malaysian-claimed waters, including patrols and military exercises, there has yet to be a group of nationalist public to oppose the Malaysian leader's stance. Thus, the Malaysian government has been able to avoid making any gesture to strain the bilateral relationship with China.

### 6.3.2 Pivot Supporter and the State's Insulation of Domestic Influence

This section presents the preliminary findings of what explains Southeast Asian states' cooperative foreign policy towards China regardless of domestic reactions. These findings support my central argument the pivot supporter helps the state to insulate domestic influence and defend state's flexibility in foreign policy making.

#### 1) Vietnam

The quick curtailment of the series of anti-Chinese protests by the Vietnamese security forces demonstrated the Vietnamese state's absolute control of the military. The Vietnamese authorities

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<sup>37</sup> Shahrman Lockman, "Why Malaysia isn't afraid of China (for now)", *The Strategist*, April 24, 2013, <http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/whymalaysia-isnt-afraid-of-china-for-now/>.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

have proven to be not shy from and capable of commanding coercive forces to quell the violent riots and deter potential protesters in an efficient way. All anti-Chinese protests ended in hours after the security forces were deployed. Moreover, in these anti-Chinese protests, the coercive forces have shown their subordination to the party-state's orders without any case of defection being reported.

Like China, the civilian control of the military in Vietnam is benefited from both the civil-military structure and the state leader's coup-proofing strategies. Vietnam adopts "the-party-controls-the-gun" system with the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam serving as the Secretary of the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party at the same time. Both the Vietnamese Army and the security forces pledge allegiance to the Communist Party. As the 2019 World Report by Human Rights Watch points out, the Communist Party of Vietnam monopolizes power through the government, controls all major political, military, and social organizations, and punishes people who dare to criticize or challenge its rule.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, like Chinese leader Xi Jinping, the Vietnamese President Nguyen Phu Trong has adopted several anti-coup strategies to ensure military allegiance since he came to power in 2011. One notable strategy was relying on a sweeping anticorruption campaign to eradicate top rivals the military and within the paramount Communist Party.<sup>40</sup>

## 2) The Philippines

During Aquino's administration, a number of protests took place in the Philippines from 2011 to 2013. These protests were allegedly tied to the Aquino government. For instance, the May 2012 protests in Manila were organized by Akbayan, a party which had received substantial funding

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<sup>39</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Vietnam: Events of 2018", <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/vietnam>.

<sup>40</sup> Time, "Vietnam Begins Life Under New Strongman President Nguyen Phu Trong", Oct 24, 2018.

from Aquino's family.<sup>41</sup> While the anti-Chinese protests during the Aquino era were relatively small in scale and lacked independence, protests during Duterte's administration displayed not only independence but also an increase in scale and violence. In spite of public condemnations, Duterte's popular approval rate has remained high. According to the Social Weather Survey, Duterte enjoys a high satisfaction rating on average than any of his predecessors from 1989. His approval rate has increased since 2019, which is higher than Aquino's highest ratings from 2010 to 2013.<sup>42</sup>

The reason why Duterte wasn't constrained by the anti-Chinese protests was largely due to his adept utilization of social media and the recent crackdown on the opposition media. The Philippines is a prime Facebook country and 97 percent of Filipinos who are online have Facebook accounts. Duterte fully took advantage of the social media to promote his policy preference.<sup>43</sup> Rappler exposed how Duterte's campaign and administration deployed an aggressive (often abusive) digital strategy, using an army of trolls against anyone asking critical questions.<sup>44</sup> Through social media, Duterte supporters attacked those who protested against China as being provoking a war with China. Anti-Chinese protesters against the recent fishermen incident at the Reed Bank were condemned as those with pretended nationalism and who "bent on (politicizing) an otherwise ordinary navigation incident into an international fracas".<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> "PNoy's Sisters are among Akbayan's Biggest Campaign Donors in 2010," *GMA News*, 25 October 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Social Weather Stations, "Fourth Quarter 2019 Social Weather Survey: Pres. Duterte's Net Satisfaction at new record "Excellent" +72", Jan 21, 2020, <https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artcldisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20200121185102>.

<sup>43</sup> Bloomberg, "What Happens When the Government Uses Facebook as a Weapon?", December 7, 2017.

<sup>44</sup> "Philippines' dictator Duterte turns on the media that helped elect him", *The Conversation*, Jan 16, 2018, <http://theconversation.com/philippines-dictator-duterte-turns-on-the-media-that-helped-elect-him-90149>.

<sup>45</sup> E.J. Roque, "Critics using Recto Bank incident to show 'nationalism': Palace", *Philippine News Agency*, June 21, 2019, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1072962>.

Moreover, Duterte administration has been engaged in suppression against the media holding oppositional views. Specifically, the government has threatened the opposition media with lawsuits and nonrenewal of franchises.<sup>46</sup> These threats have been directed at mainstream media owners such as the Rufino-Prieto family (which owns the Philippine Daily Inquirer) and the Lopez family (which owns ABS-CBN, the country's largest TV network). In January 2018, the operating license of the highly respected news website Rappler was revoked by the Securities and Exchange Commission.<sup>47</sup> While its founder Maria Ressa was charge of tax evasion, the Rappler was also alleged to have foreign owners, which is in violation of the constitution.<sup>48</sup>

Apart from removing media opponents, Duterte has also attempted to secure his policy implementation through cultivating the supporter of military leadership. He has appointed numerous former military officers from to senior civilian positions in his government. Some of them he knows when he was the Mayor of Davao.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, Duterte has courted rank-and-file soldiers and police by paying frequent visits to military bases as well as raising their salaries. Obtaining military supporter is considered by Duterte as a necessity to bolster his national security policies, including the foreign policy of embracing China.

### 3) Malaysia

The fact the Malaysian public has not mounted strong nationalist opposition against China's assertiveness or the state's soft response is largely attributed to the state's control of information. Although media freedom is constitutionally guaranteed in Malaysia, the state retains the authority

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<sup>46</sup> David G. Timberman, "Philippine Politics Under Duterte: A Midterm Assessment", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/01/10/philippine-politics-under-duterte-midterm-assessment-pub-78091>.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Alexandra Stevenson, "Soldiers in Facebook's War on Fake News Are Feeling Overrun," *The New York Times*, October 9, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/09/business/facebook-philippines-rappler-fake-news.html>.

<sup>49</sup> David G. Timberman, "Philippine Politics Under Duterte: A Midterm Assessment", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

to suspend or revoke publishing licenses of the media organizations.<sup>50</sup> During the past few years, the Malaysian government has adopted a number of information manipulation strategies to keep anti-Chinese sentiment at bay.

Specifically, the Malaysian government has prevented the public from being informed of Chinese heightened activities in Malaysian-claimed waters. While the Malaysian government issued diplomatic protests towards China, such protests were kept from media headlines. Although sometimes the public may learn from the releases in international media, the Malaysian would try to assuage the public through denials. For instance, when questioned about the January 2014 Chinese oath-taking ceremony near James Shoal, the Malaysian Navy Chief Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Jaafar denied that it had happened in Malaysian-claimed waters.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, with media assistance, Malaysia has continued to defuse the tension in the South China Sea by highlighting bilateral trust, focusing on the positive dimensions of the relationship, as well as downplaying the conflict-provoking information.<sup>52</sup>

In sum, all three Southeast Asian claimants have been able to insulate domestic influence over their conciliatory foreign policy toward China over the South China Sea Dispute. For now, the significant economic and political benefits derived from cooperating with China as well as maintaining the stability in Southeast Asia have driven these states' decisions to avoid armed conflict with a rising China. Fortunately, the nationalist sentiment has been unable to constrain the Southeast Asian states' peaceful preferences.

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<sup>50</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2018: Malaysia, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/malaysia>.

<sup>51</sup> 'China Claims its Vessels Patrolled James Shoal', 31 January, 2014, <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2014/01/31/china-claims-its-vessels-patrolled-james-shoal/>.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Kreuzer, "A Comparison of Malaysian and Philippine Responses to China in the South China Sea," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, pp. 239-276, 2020.

### 6.3.3 An Unstable Future?

While many scholars are concerned that the South China Sea Dispute among China and other Southeast Asian claimants might spark a regional or even worldwide conflict due to the rising nationalism, my theory provides a more optimistic prediction. A closer look at the Southeast Asian states shows that nationalism has yet to be able to constrain the states' foreign policy making. This is largely benefited from the states' acquisition of the pivot supporter's assistance. The Vietnamese party-state has been in tight control of the military and may well do so in the next decade. The Philippines and Malaysia have so far leveraged certain degree of control over the media. But it remains questionable if they could keep doing it. While my theory cannot predict when the pivot supporter is going to switch side, nor does it intend to predict what motivates the state leaders to go to war, it does suggest that as long as the South China Sea claimants is assisted by the pivot supporter, they are unlikely to go to war with China. Even when the conflict does occur, nationalism would not be the culprit.



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