The Faces of Chairman Mao: A Sociology of Reputation

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Abstract

Chairman Mao Zedong, the founding father of the People's Republic of China, has been dead for over 40 years, but his soul has never rested in peace. He is remembered, for various reasons, as god, hero, villain, or commodity. What factors affect the construction of Chairman Mao's reputation in different social and historical contexts? What do these different images and reputations mean to people? And how do people use and transform Mao's reputations based on their social and generational positions? These are the central research questions this dissertation aims to answer.

Based on archival study, content and textual analysis, and interviews and ethnographies conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan, and Hunan, I argue that these questions can be better unraveled through a relational and post-totalitarian framework on reputations. A *relational and processual* perspective is beneficial in understanding the various reputations Chairman Mao has as well as the relationship among these reputations. For instance, the transcendent quality maintained through social participation (rather than conviction) explains the construction of the sacred reputation. Mao's various heroic and villainous reputations changed as contexts shifted and constitute a "liminal sphere" between the profane and sacred spheres of reputations. In addition, the commodification of Chairman Mao can be viewed as a profane reputation which ordinary Chinese people can have, relate to, or make fun of in everyday life. As a result, these various reputations constitute a "liminal reputation circle" which connects the sacred, liminal, and profane.

In addition, the "liminal reputation circle" for Chairman Mao is strongly embedded in China's *totalitarian and post-totalitarian regime contexts*. For instance, comparing the personality cult of Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution and Mao's deification in contemporary China reveals that state mobilization is not a necessary nor sufficient condition for making and maintaining a sacred reputation. The study of "liminal reputations" in Mao's era and the post-Mao era illustrates that the more totalitarian a regime is, the less liminal a figure's reputations can be. Meanwhile, the study of Mao's commodified reputation illustrates the influence of the very post-totalitarian context in contemporary China—this context both enables and constrains the form and content of the commodified memory, "creating" different consumer categories with various symbolic meaning-making practices. In addition, due to the post-totalitarian social change, the generation which was "present" in Mao's China and the one born "after" Mao's China possess different attitudes towards Chairman Mao, illustrating the particular processes and mechanisms forming the "formative years." Moreover, due to distinctive symbolic ties to the communist regime and the regime's influence on the Chinese people, Chairman Mao's reputations are vastly more contested and controversial in contemporary China than those of some of his counterparts, such as Zhou Enlai and Sun Yat-sen.

By examining Mao's various reputations, this dissertation not only deepens our understanding of Chinese society, but also contributes to the general theory on reputation, memory, and culture through a relational/processual as well as a post-totalitarian sociology of reputations.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Toward a Relational and Post-Totalitarian Sociology of Reputation

Chairman Mao Zedong, the founding father of the People's Republic of China, has been dead for over 40 years, but his soul has never rested in peace. Some people view him as a hero who established the "new China," while others regard him as a villain bringing China huge amounts of suffering. Some people voluntarily build temples to worship him as a god, and still others modify his image to the other end—a very secularized commodity. Why is Chairman Mao's image so controversial? What factors affect the construction of Mao's various reputations in different social and historical contexts? What do these different images and reputations mean to people? And how do these people use and transform Mao's reputations based on their own agency?

To unravel these questions, we need a sociological perspective on reputation rather than a biographical study of historical figures. While Mao Zedong's biography does connect to his reputations, the vast variety of memories regarding Chairman Mao in Chinese society requires a very sociological understanding. For instance, we need to ask how collective memory is constructed in a particular context, how social change affects memories, how structure and agency interact, as well as how cultural production relates to cultural reception. In the Chinese context, we also need to ask how post-totalitarian change affects people's perceptions of historical figures.

In this sense, my research will engage a deep dialogue with the literature on reputations, collective memory, and culture more generally. More importantly, to think of reputation as an academic field, we need to trace both the origin, development, and current status of the scholarship on reputation. Thus, I summarize existing literatures

on reputation through four dimensions: the meaning and lineage of reputations, the construction/production of reputations, the symbolic use/reception of reputations, and the relationship between reputations and social/historical categories. Studies in these four dimensions have provided much wisdom for my project, and yet they also invite theoretical development. For instance, many existing studies tend to either focus on production or reception of reputations, but in reality, producers and receivers are often intertwined and mixed. The categorization of reputation also tends to emphasize representative reputation types in separate categories (being positive, negative, or "difficult"), rather than conceptualize reputation in a more continuous way. Thus, borrowing wisdom from current research but going one step further, I develop a more *relational and processual sociology of reputation*, which conceptualizes reputations as constituting a liminal circle including sacred, profane, and liminal categories. Through analyzing the specific mechanisms and processes of forming contested or consolidated reputations, I also analytically synthesize the relationship between cultural object and social world, and producers and receivers. In addition, since Chairman Mao's case is strongly embedded in the post-totalitarian context in contemporary China, my research also contributes to the field by putting forward *a post-totalitarian sociology of reputation*, adding to the relational and processual perspective.

In the following paragraphs, I will first lay out the lineage and status quo of the current studies on reputations, based on which I will introduce a relational and post-totalitarian sociology of reputation. I will then elaborate the data and methods for this project, including interviews, textual analysis of the Internet posters, and the examination of historical archives such as "The Chinese Cultural Revolution Database." In the final section of the introduction chapter, I will present the organization of this dissertation, introducing the major arguments of each empirical chapter.

Outline the Reputation Study

As mentioned above, current literature on the phenomenon of reputation can be summarized into four aspects: 1) the lineage of reputation study; 2) the construction/production of reputations; 3) the symbolic use/reception of reputations; and 4) reputations, social categories (class, generations, etc.), and historical contexts.

The Lineage of Reputation Study

The first problem of studying reputation is its definition and relationship to all of its near-synonyms. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, there are three definitions of "reputation," namely "the overall quality or character as seen or judged by people in general," "the recognition by other people of some characteristic or ability," and "a place in public esteem or regard: good name."[1] Despite their usefulness, the definitions in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* do not really clarify the relationship between reputation and all its synonyms, such as glory, honor, prestige, recognition, fame, esteem, and celebrity. Based on careful examination of these words, John Rodden argues that *glory* is traditionally understood as a state and especially a religious concept; *honor* is a class-based Roman concept; *fame* pertains to the number of people to whom one is known, whether many or few; *esteem* is usually defined as the quality of regard that someone holds; *recognition* is the intensity or depth of regard within a certain world; *renown* is a form of cosmopolitan recognition; *prestige* is a status concept; and *celebrity* is a democratic concept that has much to do with the transience of fame (John Rodden, 2006). Based on these clarifications, Rodden finally argues that "all of these terms pertain in some sense to a species of reputation… *Reputation* is a more *general* concept that has to do with the *perception of others*…" (Rodden, 2006). In this sense, Rodden

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[1] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reputation 3/25/14.

defines reputation as an umbrella term which includes (or at least overlaps with) all those terms mentioned above. The advantage of this strategy is that it enlarges the realm of reputation studies, and captures the many facets of this term. On the other hand, the disadvantage is that the term becomes elusive when engaging in theoretical discussions. To address this contradiction, I argue that we should have a double understanding of this term and discuss it in particular historical or cultural context. To ensure a full-blown area of reputation study, I argue that we should adopt the "broad definition," viewing reputation as an umbrella term covering all the synonyms mentioned above. In the meantime, based on the previous analysis, we can also identify a "theoretical core" which views reputation as essentially a result of interaction, an evaluation process, and recognition of subjectivity and identity, which is embedded in social contexts.

Connecting reputation study to sociology, one may find that Max Weber can be viewed as the very ancestor of the sociology of reputation, although to some extent ancestor selection and the construction of classics are a result of present considerations (Alexander, 1987; Cassano, 2009). However, considering Weber's role in elevating the importance of "status" in response to the "class explanation" in (Marxist) sociological study, it is legitimate to put Weber in the Hall of Fame of reputation studies. According to Weber, "in contrast to the purely economic determined 'class situation,' we wish to designate as status situation every typical component of the life of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honor." (Weber, 1978, p. 932). Although Weber did not use the word "reputation," he did clarify the context of meaning for the word—since the "broad definition" of reputation surely includes status and honor. In other words, Weber argues that the basis for reputation is not purely material, but more of ideational—though Weber never completely separates the material from the ideational.

Following this line of thinking, the study of reputation is strongly influenced by the sociology of knowledge, culture, history, and especially the memory studies—since reputation is a "perception of others" (Rodden, 2006). For instance, Karl Mannheim, who is one of the ancestors of the *sociology of knowledge*, connects knowledge to the "social locations and interests of individuals and groups" (Swidler & Arditi, 1994), especially generations (Mannheim, 1952). Robert Merton argues that reputations are related to the reward system and one's position in this system (Merton, 1968). According to Swidler and Arditi (1994), however, the connection of "social locations and interests of individuals and groups" belongs to the "old sociology of knowledge." For a new sociology of knowledge, one should pay more attention to elements such as social organization, formal/informal knowledge, and forms/practices of knowing (Swidler & Arditi, 1994). Yet, I would argue, both the old and new sociology of knowledge will help us understand the phenomenon of reputation. In the meantime, the study of reputation is also strongly related to the *sociology of culture*. For instance, the theoretical framework on production and reception of culture (Corse, 1997; Peterson & Berger, 1975; Watt, 1967) will help us understand how reputations are constructed. In addition to production (creator) and reception (receiver), Wendy Griswold also add the role of "cultural object" and "social world" into her template of "cultural diamond" (Griswold, 2012), which is used by Gary Alan Fine to summarize the reputation study (Fine, 2001). Meanwhile, the discussion of subculture (Willis, 1981) might also contribute to the field, especially on the symbolic use of reputations. Moreover, the classic debate on whether *memory is malleable or resistant* to social change (Olick & Robbins, 1998; Olick, 2003) also strongly influences the view on reputations, especially on the problem whether reputations are "essentially" existed or socially constructed, which will be elaborated later. Since reputations are the "perception of others" and the

"recognition of subjectivity," we may even argue that reputations are *de facto* "memories of particular identities."

Besides the literature on knowledge, culture, and memory, the study of reputation is also related to symbolic interactionism and *social psychological* theories (such as the social exchange theory). For instance, the labelling theory argues that people's identities are strongly affected by the terms/labels used to describe them (Becker, 1963), which touches the very issue of (distorted) reputation and identity. In fact, this is also related to the topic of attitude formation and the construction of "stigma" (Goffman, 1986). In addition, according to William Goode, reputations can also be used as a mechanism of social control, which is realized through the control of the exchange process (Goode, 1978).

Last but not least, when delineating the lineage of the reputation study, we may also look at the *carriers of reputation* as potential criterion for categorization. According to my review of the relevant literature, the carriers of reputation include *organizations/corporations* (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Rindova, Williamson, & Petkova, 2010; Tadelis, 1999), *the classic work or cannons* (Alexander, 1987; Corse & Griffin, 1997), *the intellectuals* (Bartley & Sylvia Erickson, 2000; Camic & Gross, 2002; Cassano, 2009; Lamont, 1987; McLaughlin, 1998; Megill, 1987; Warde, 2002), *the artists* (Lang & Lang, 1985), *the celebrities* (Fine, 2001; Lawler, 2010; Murray Milner, 2010)*, the political figures* (Fine, 2012; Fine, 2001; Schwartz, 1987, 2000), and *the ordinary people* (Goode, 1980). Corresponding to the category of the ordinary people, we can also put the reputation of the intellectuals, the artists, the celebrities, and the political figures into the category of the *reputation of the eminent*.

A necessary question following this line of thinking is: do different types/carriers of reputation share similar characteristics? Are reputations for artists,

celebrities, political leaders, or organizations following the same trajectory? The answer for these questions is both positive and negative. Since there are so many carriers, I will take the reputation of artists, celebrities, and political leaders as examples. First of all, each type of reputation is distinct in the sense of operating in *distinct "fields"* (in the Bordieuan sense) and in *distinct contexts*. Some theories argue that artistic reputation is based on the quality of the work. Political leaders very often rely on "charisma" (Weber, 1949), while "the celebrity is a person who is known for his well knownness" (Boorstin, 1971)—often an empty knownness. Indeed, as Milner argues, one crucial element for celebrities is visibility or publicity, no matter whether it is fame or infamy (Milner, 2010). Meanwhile, as Bourdieu's theories imply, actors in different fields require different skills, assimilate different rules, and develop distinctive "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1977). In this sense, the skills, rules, and habitus for artistic, celebrities, and political leaders are indeed different. Moreover, some theorists also argue that the reputation of celebrity is more of a modern phenomenon, which is strongly related to the role of media (Fine, 2001; Milner, 2010)—the historical context. In contrast, the reputations of artists and political leaders are older and more traditional.

Despite these differences, the reputations of artists, celebrities, and political leaders do share many similarities. For instance, when examining the art world, Becker found that an artist needs a sponsor to succeed (Becker, 1982), while Lang and Lang found that elements such as marketing and the access to influential social and cultural circles are crucial to achieve artistic renown and fame (Lang & Lang, 1985). In this sense, the achievement of artistic reputation is *indeed political*, especially in the Foucauldian sense. Some theorists even call this feature as the "politics of reputation" (Fine, 2001). In the meantime, the reputations of celebrities are also political due to their manipulation of the "culture industry" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972), while the

political leaders are by nature "political." Moreover, Milner argues that the study of celebrities and other types of "status system" share many common features, such as the fact that status is "relatively inalienable resource that emerges from the opinions of others" (Milner, 2010). Thus, Milner used a same theoretical framework to analyze the caste system in India and the celebrities in the US (Milner, 1994; Milner, 2010). The same logic applies to the study of political figures and artists, since they both relate to the phenomenon of status. From this perspective, the study of different types of reputations does share similar mechanisms, which is strongly related to the following summaries on the making and construction of reputations.

The Construction and Production of Reputations

After clarifying the meanings and lineage of the reputation study, the next question is: how are reputations made? In other words, what factors shape and construct reputations, and in what contexts? To some extent, this question emphasizes more on the problem of reputation production, and thus treats reputation as a form of "dependent variables."[2] In reviewing literature, I summarized three approaches in response to these questions, which include *the essentialist approach, the agent approach, and the contextual approach*.

The first approach is what I call *"the essentialist approach,"* because this approach assumes that there are some essential qualities of the work or person that largely determines the reputation. In fact, the relevant literature has used various words to describe this approach, such as the "objective" (Fine, 2001), "masterpiece," (Rodden, 2006) "ideational," "content-based," and "traditional" perspective (McLaughlin, 1998),

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[2] I do not favor the logic of dividing things into independent and dependent variables, because it will only over-simplify the reality—which is more complicated than this logic implies. However, to illustrate the point these questions convey, I use this term here for strategic considerations.

but the central idea is the same, namely that "reputation and value rest almost exclusively upon… the work of the writer" (Rodden, 1989). If this quotation mainly refers to the reputation of the classic work or cannon, then Weber's concept of "charisma" has partial basis on the quality of the reputation target. Although "charisma" to Weber can be constructed by connecting the followers to a leader, Weber also admits that charisma is "the extraordinary and personal gift of grace" (Weber, 1949) which is to some extent non-transferable. That is also why Milner argues that status is "inalienable" (Milner, 2010). Many political figures, in this sense, are regarded as "charismatic" leaders, and the essentialist approach regards these charismatic features as the one of the factors shaping the reputation of these people. In the Chinese context, Chairman Mao is definitely a charismatic leader—some authors even directly use "Mao's charisma" as the title of their book (Shou, Li, & Hua, 2003).

The second approach is what I call *"the agent approach,"* because this approach emphasizes the role of the agent or actor in constructing the reputations of particular figures or works. For instance, in his seminal work on "difficult reputations," Fine put forward the concept of "reputational entrepreneurs" (Fine, 2012; Fine, 2001), and discussed how the interaction between different reputational entrepreneurs (including family members, friends, political associates of famous people, and editors and biographers) creates particular negative or "difficult" reputations of historical figures. In his newest book on reputation, Fine discussed how a claim will adversely affect the claimant or the reputational entrepreneurs' own reputation, by which he termed as "sticky reputations" (Fine, 2012). Though a particular reputation can be difficult or sticky, it is impossible to construct either type without the presence of the "agents." This is one of the central arguments of Fine. In fact, when discussing the "democratization" of George Washington, Schwartz also touched the issue of agents.

He used the word "ideological spokesmen" to refer to "those whose portrayals of Washington reflected the values of definite sectors of society" (Schwartz, 1991). However, Schwartz believes that these "ideological spokesmen" are not ideally corresponding to the sectors of the society, and thus paying more attention the historical context—which is the third approach I will mention below. Moreover, it should be pointed out that this approach not only applies to political figures, but also to the reputation of intellectuals, artists, or other classic works and cannons (Bartley & Sylvia Erickson, 2000; Lang & Lang, 1985; McLaughlin, 1999).

The third approach is what I call the *"contextual approach."* In comparison to the agent approach, this approach emphasizes more on the role of social, historical, and cultural contexts in shaping the reputation of particular figures or works. For instance, Barry Schwartz's two writings (especially their titles) perfectly illustrate the feature of this approach. In *Social Change and Collective Memory: The Democratization of George Washington*(Schwartz, 1991), and *Abraham Lincoln in the post-heroic era: history and memory in late twentieth-century America* (Schwartz, 2008), Schwartz argues that the cultural-structural factors, such as the modernization, democratization, and disenchantment process (by which Schwartz means the post-heroic era) strongly affect the construction of Washington's and Lincoln's reputations. Yet, it should be emphasized that the "historical contexts" vary by societies. If the democratization process is one feature of the American society, then other historical factors, such as the post-communist social change and the rise of nationalism, might be the contexts for other societies—especially the former totalitarian/communist societies traditionally defined (including China). I will elaborate these factors in the later paragraphs. The same logic applies to the study of artistic reputation and canon formation. For instance, Lang and Lang (1985) argue that "artistic reputation depends not only on the quality of

the work of art and the choice of subject matter, but also on the historical and societal environment of an artist's life." In terms of canon formation, Corse and Griffin argue, that besides the attributes of the text, "the evaluative criteria," "the newly available interpretative strategies," and "the changes in the institutional and organizational environment" all affect the construction of a canon (Corse & Griffin, 1997).

It should be mentioned though, that these approaches—especially the agent and the contextual approach—are not completely opposed to each other. To some extent, both factors contribute to the process of reputation construction. For instance, besides putting forward the concept of reputational entrepreneurs, Fine also borrows the "cultural diamond" template from Griswold (Griswold, 1986, 1994), and argues that we should look at both the social world (structure) and the cultural object (reputation target as cultural object)—the vertical dimension of the cultural diamond, both the creator (based on interests) and receiver (based on relations)—the horizontal dimension of the diamond, as well as the interrelationship among them (Fine, 2001). In this sense, for the agents playing their roles, we should pay attention to the social environment they are embedded in. However, as ideal types, these three approaches still place a primary importance on the essential qualities, the agents, and the contexts, respectively. Moreover, if we regard the agent and the context approach as a *constructivist perspective*, then this constructivist perspective is contradictory to the essentialist approach.

This is inevitably related to the "malleability-persistence" debate in the study of collective memory. Using Schwartz's words, the malleability thesis (Schwartz calls this "constructionist theories") can be illustrated by Mead's and Halbwach's belief that the past is mutable, made, and remade for present use, while the persistence thesis is elaborated by Durkheim's and Shils's ideas on how collective memories outlive

changes in society (Schwartz, 1991). To solve this tension, Schwartz (1991) argues that "we should understand social change as a cumulative process that superimposes new social and symbolic structures on old ones, or that modifies these structures without replacing them." However, although this perspective is theoretically inspirational, it does not delineate the mechanism or process of this layered change. In this regard, Jeffrey Olick (2003) argues that we should adopt a "path-dependency" approach to solve this tension. In *States of Memory*, Olick argues that "whether the past passes away or not depends not only on its meanings and its context, but also on its forms and commemorative trajectory" (Olick, 2003). Thus, not only the original event, but also the commemorative trajectory and the turning points will all affect the formation of particular memories and reputations. Based on this concept, Robert Jansen analyzed the very reputational trajectories of Zapata and Sandino, and argues that salience, valence, and ownership will affect the very process of path-dependency (Jansen, 2007). Olick's ideas on "path-dependency" or "commemoration of the commemoration" are essentially delineating the *processual* feature of collective memory, which is a perspective I use for my own sociological framework on reputations.

The Symbolic Use and Reception of Reputations

Through the quality of reputation targets, the efforts of agents, and the influence of social contexts, a particular reputation might be constructed. The next question is: how do people receive and react to these reputations? What are the roles (or "functions") of these reputations for a particular society? Are people convinced by the "label" on particular figures or works? Do they use and transform these reputations based on their own agency? Although current literature on reputations focuses more on the problem of production and construction, I do find these problems important, and thus draw

wisdoms from other literature to enrich the field. Based on my literature review, I argue that the symbolic use and reception of reputations can be analyzed through two approaches, namely *the (neo) functional approach and the symbolic politics approach*.

The *(neo)functional approach* emphasizes the "need" of the society—though the word "functional" is not popular in sociology nowadays. For instance, in discussing the elementary forms of religious life, Durkheim is indeed using a functional explanation, and argues that "in the present day just as much as in past, we see society constantly creating sacred things out of ordinary ones… The simple deference inspired by men invested with high social functions is not different in nature from religious respect…" (Durkheim, 1965, pp. 243-244). Following the Durkheimian approach, Schwartz argues that George Washington is indeed a "living 'tribal' totem"—"he symbolized the bond between his society's political and religious sentiments" (Schwartz, 1987), which in other words is the need of the society.

Another line of the (neo) functional explanation is William Goode's argument that prestige can be viewed as a form of social control (Goode, 1978), though Goode might not identify himself as a functionalist. According to Goode (1978), "granting or withdrawing prestige or esteem controls the actions of both individuals and groups." This extends the functional explanations beyond the society level and down to the interactional level. Following Goode's line of thought, Patricia Taylor analyzed how communist regimes reproduce inequalities through the control of distribution of honors (Taylor, 1987). Besides these two lines of functional explanations, the functional elements can also be found in the "civil religion" thought (Bellah, 1967) as well as the "safety valve" argument (Coser, 1964), since reputations of particular figures can serve as either bonding ethos, or as targets for complaining.

The second approach on the use of reputations is what I call the "*symbolic*

politics approach." Here Murray Edelman can be viewed as a forerunner of this approach. In *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, Edelman puts forward the concept of "condensation symbols" which "evoke the emotions associate with the situation. They condense into one symbolic event, sign, or act patriotic pride, anxieties, and remembrances of past glories or humiliations, promises of future greatness" (Edelman, 1964). In this regard, the reputations of particular figures are indeed such "condensation symbols." Edelman also argues that through rituals and myths, people participate in the politics through both substantial and symbolic way, "calling their attention to their relatedness and joint interests in a compelling way" as well as dealing with the "sociological strains" such as the unemployment (Edelman, 1964). Besides Edelman, this approach is also shared by many other eminent scholars, such as Baker on "inventing" the French Revolution (Baker, 1990), Lynn Hunt on the political culture of French Revolution, and Alexander on social performance (Alexander, Giesen, & Mast, 2006). In these studies, the reputations of particular figures, such as Marianne in the French Revolution, serve as crucial symbols for various political activities, including the social mobilization (Hunt, 1984). In addition, considering the feature of late modernity, this form of symbolic politics is also reflecting an "identity politics" (Bernstein, 2005), during which people use political figures to represent their identities.

Besides Edelman's approach, the "weapons of the weak" framework (Scott, 1985) by James Scott is also illuminating. Yet, in the context of the reputation study, I would argue that reputations can be used as either a weapon of the weak or that of the elites. For instance, the elites strongly oppose to the idea of "conspicuous consumption" (which is a challenge to the elites' status) through stigmatizing the very scholar who put forward this theory—Thorstein Veblen (Bartley & Sylvia Erickson, 2000). Indeed, Weber already articulates the importance of the charismatic reputation in constructing

legitimacy (though not all types of legitimacy) (Weber, 1949). In addition, it should be mentioned, that these two approaches might overlap in some regard as well—the symbolic use of reputations to express emotions might also serve some "needs" of the society and the corresponding group.

Based on the analysis of the production and reception (symbolic use) of reputations, one may find that the traditional production/reception duality is too rigid and too reified to understand the phenomenon of reputation. For instance, when elaborating the reputational "cultural diamond," Fine argues that we should examine the relationship between the creator and receiver, because whether they share the "common values and beliefs" is crucial to the effect of reception (Fine, 2001). Yet, by emphasizing the interrelationship between creators and receivers, Fine assumes that there exist two distinct and separate categories as creators and receivers. However, due to the fast social change, especially the development of the "we-media" (Gillmor, 2006) including the blogs and Twitters, the boundary between production and reception are continuously dissolved.

There are indeed researches trying to go beyond this production and reception duality. For instance, Jeffrey Alexander puts forward the theory of "social performance," and argues that elements such as systems of collective representation, actors, observers/audience, means of symbolic production, *mise-en-scene*, and social power, should all be "re-fused" in modern society (Alexander, et al., 2006). In this sense, there is no need for us to hold strongly the boundaries between actors and observers/audience, because the performance can be seen as both the production and reception [3]. Exemplified by Alexander's theory, there are many efforts being made to transcend the

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[3] It should be mentioned that the purpose for Alexander putting forward this theory is not only to go beyond the production/reception duality but also the structuralist/hermeneutic duality. However, since the latter duality is not the emphasis of this proposal, I will not elaborate here.

production and reception duality (including Bourdieu's theories on field and practice), and my project will push the thinking another step forward by emphasizing a *relational* dimension. Moreover, inspired by the "path-dependency" framework, my study will pay particular attention to the *processual feature* when reconsidering the reputation categories.

Reputations, Social Categories, and Historical Contexts

Last but not least, reputations are also phenomena embedded in the social and historical contexts. As mentioned above, reputations can essentially be viewed as a result of interaction, and thus it is indeed helpful and necessary to consider the inter-relationship between reputations and other social categories (such as class, class, gender, and generations) within a historical context.

To begin with, the influence of *classes* on reputations should be discussed in two circumstances, one for the reputation of the eminent, and the other for the reputation of the ordinary people. As one may expect, *those eminent people* are more likely to become the target of the reputation construction, partly due to their fame, visibility, and salience (Milner, 1994; Jansen, 2007)—though the "valence" of these eminent people might vary from being positive to negative, or what Fine calls "difficult" (Fine, 2001). Meanwhile, those people who are in a higher social class (usually with more cultural capital) are also more likely to be producers, the "cultural entrepreneurs" (DiMaggio, 1982), or the "reputational entrepreneurs" (Fine, 2001). Yet, as Fine (2012) argues, these agents or entrepreneurs might also earn themselves "sticky reputations" during the process of constructing another figure's reputations. On the other hand, *for the ordinary people*, reputations can be used as a way to create or maintain the class boundary, especially through the social control mechanism elaborated by Goode

(Goode, 1978). Thus, from *a social stratification perspective*, reputations and status are classification mechanisms as Weber implied, and those in high social class are more likely (though not always) to get high social status (Weber, 1978). Using Schneider's words, "the kind of eminence a person is likely to achieve is limited by his social origin" (Schneider, 1937).

In the meantime, the relationship between classes and reputations should also be understood in the *historical* context. For instance, by analyzing *Dictionary of National Biography* and *A Study of British Genius*, Schneider argues that "the total number of persons who become famous in an area at any given time is determined by historical circumstances and situations" (Schneider, 1937), therefore "during periods of expanding opportunity many activities appear which, because of their nature, are open to persons of the laboring group in a population who have the requisite talent and inclination" (Schneider, 1937). In other words, the possibility of the ordinary people or the "laboring group" to achieve fame is essentially influenced by the historical context. Indeed, in today's globalized and digitized world, ordinary people have higher possibility to become famous, though this fame might last very short.

In addition, the reputation-class relationship is also strongly related to the *distributive justice*. According to John Rodden (2006), the distribution of reputations is related to the value of a society. For instance, in today's world, the fame of scientists are usually less significant comparing to the celebrities such as singers or movie stars, and that is because we lived in a very "age of celebrity" (Rodden, 2006). Therefore, "if we indeed can move toward greater equality—by race, class, gender—we shall in fact honor more kinds of people for more kinds of contributions to people everywhere… There will be more reputation to allocate" (Rodden, 2006). From this perspective, not only the relative amount but also the total amounts of reputations (including the

distribution of them) are indeed related to the historical context and the distributive justice.

Another important social category is *generation*, which is by nature a historical context. According to Karl Mannheim, "members of a generation are 'similarly located,' first of all, in so far as they all are exposed to the same phase of the collective process" (Mannheim, 2011). Using Olick and his colleagues' words, "generations, in his account, are constituted by memory of historical events experienced by those who were at formative ages during the event" (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, & Levy, 2011, p. 92). In other words, since the historical contexts for which different generations experience their formative ages are distinct, these generations will form what Mannheim calls "integrative attitudes and formative principles," which in turn affects different generations' attitudes and experiences of the same event. In addition, Mannheim (2011) also differentiates "appropriated memory" from "personally acquired memories," with the latter more emotionally powerful. In the case of Chairman Mao, since the younger generation never lived in the "Mao era," their "personally acquired memories" and "formative principles" are radically different from those of the older generations—this differentiation will be elaborated in Chapter 5.

Besides class and generation, other social categories, such as race and gender, also affect the construction of reputations. For instance, DuBois talks about how race affects the reputations of African Americans as well as their self-perception in *The Veil* (Du Bois, 1920), while literature on masculinity and doing gender (West & Don, 1987) also reflects the construction of a gender reputation—which is in many cases related to the values or prejudices of a society. However, since these social categories are less relevant to my project, I will leave their elaboration to future work.

The Chinese Context: A Post-Totalitarian Change

While most reputational studies derive their theories from Western societies (Fine, 2012; Fine, 2001; Schwartz, 1987, 1991, 1996, 2000), the examination of Chairman Mao's reputations requires a deep understanding of the Chinese context. Mao Zedong, as the founding father of the "new China," is a symbol for Chinese communism, while his death marks the beginning of a new era for the People's Republic. Thus, social and political change is strongly connected to the construction and reception of Mao's reputations.

Before adopting the "reform and opening up" policy in 1978, Chinese society (1949-1978) was a typical communist and totalitarian society. According to Friedrich and Brzezinski, totalitarian regimes consist of three distinct characteristics: "(1) a totalistic ideology; (2) a single party committed to this ideology and usually led by one man, the dictator; (3) a fully developed secret police and three kinds of monopoly or more precisely monopolistic control; namely, that of (a) mass communications, (b) operational weapons, and (c) all organizations including economic ones, thus involving a centrally planned economy" (Friedrich & Brzezinski, 1965; Linz, 2000, p. 65). Partially corresponding to Friedrich and Brzezinski's account of secret police, Hannah Arendt argues that the application of "terror" to subjugate mass populations is one central characteristic of totalitarianism (Arendt, 2004). Juan Linz's opinions are somewhat different from Arendt's but have much overlapping with Friedrich and Brzeinski's conception. Linz argues that "terror is neither a necessary nor sufficient characteristic of totalitarian systems, but there seems to be a greater probability that it should appear under such systems than under others" (Linz, 2000, p. 74). In addition, Linz contends that totalitarian systems tend to destruct or heavily weaken "all the institutions, organizations, and interest groups existing before…" (Linz, 2000, p. 68);

and essentially, that a totalitarian system should include three elements simultaneously, namely a monistic center of power, exclusive and elaborate ideology, and organized participation and mobilization (Linz, 2000). Comparing all these conceptualizations of totalitarianism, one may find that they all emphasize the monopoly of power and the importance of ideology to some extent. Indeed, the importance of ideology is usually viewed as the differential feature between totalitarianism and authoritarianism (Linz, 2000). According to these criteria, the Chinese regime during Mao's time (1949-1978) is a typical totalitarian system. It has an exclusive communist ideology, a monopoly of power by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and massive mobilization and organized participation, which can be illustrated by various political movements such as the Anti-Rightist Movement (1957), The Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). During this period, all aspects of the Chinese society, from its economy to people's private lives, were strongly controlled by the state. A personality cult, which Linz believes "is highly probable in totalitarian systems," also occurred during the communist period. In this sense, the Chinese society under Chairman Mao was a full-blown totalitarian system.

Things changed drastically after 1978. Compared to the regime in the Mao era, the Chinese state in the "reform era" began to loosen its control over the lives of the ordinary people, gradually adopted the "socialist" market economy, and embraced globalization and modernity on an unprecedented scale. Despite the loosening control of the economy and private life, the Chinese government never gave up its control in the political arena. The Chinese state still claimed itself as a "socialist" country, and viewed Mao's thought as defining doctrines together with Marx's and Lenin's thoughts. Facing these complex social, political, and economic features, China scholars have developed various terms to describe the nature of the Chinese state in the reform era,

such as "neo-authoritarianism" (Perry, 1993), the "socialist corporatism" (Unger & Chan, 1995), and "capitalism with Chinese characteristics" (Solinger, 1993). Considering the Chinese state's strong involvement in economic development, scholars also began to debate whether there existed a "China model" of economic development, and some scholars developed the term "developmental state" (White & Wade, 1988) to describe this connection between the state and economy. From a general political science perspective, scholars have also developed the term of "authoritarianism" or "post-totalitarianism" to describe similar regime characteristics. Dingxin Zhao succinctly summarizes Juan Linz's ideas on these two concepts:

"by authoritarian regime, Linz and Stepan refer to a political system that has no elaborate guiding ideology, but has a certain social and economic pluralism and a limited political pluralism, mainly a result of the state's weak capacity to penetrate society. A post-totalitarian regime is a decayed form of the totalitarian regime. In contrast to the authoritarian regime, this type of regime emphasizes rational decision making but is still officially committed to an elaborate ideology. It has a certain level of economic and social pluralism but a very limited political pluralism, due to the state's still-overwhelming presence" (Zhao, 2000).

Considering the nuanced meanings of each terminologies, I prefer to use the term "post-totalitarianism" to describe contemporary China after Mao. I prefer this term for three reasons. First, although the ideology element is less important than in Mao's era, the Chinese state still claims its official ideology as Marxism and never gave up its ideology education. In this sense, the Chinese state is more of a post-totalitarian regime than authoritarian regime. Also, since an authoritarian regime also includes sub-categories such as military government, using "authoritarianism" to describe China might invite a certain degree of confusion. Second, the term of "post-totalitarianism" indicates the historical continuity and connection to the previous "totalitarianism" in Mao's era, and thus can provide a temporal dimension to theorize the relationship between regime characteristics and reputations. Third, since the Communist Party is still the ruling party of China, and China has not experienced the 1989 revolution as the

former Soviet Union did, the Chinese society in some sense is not "post-communist" yet. Although it has some similarities to the post-communist countries in East Europe, the Chinese state and society also present distinctive features. Based on all these considerations, I will describe the Chinese state and society in the 1980s and after as "post-totalitarianism," that is, with *a reducing importance of ideology, a loosening control over society, and the existence of (limited) pluralism.*
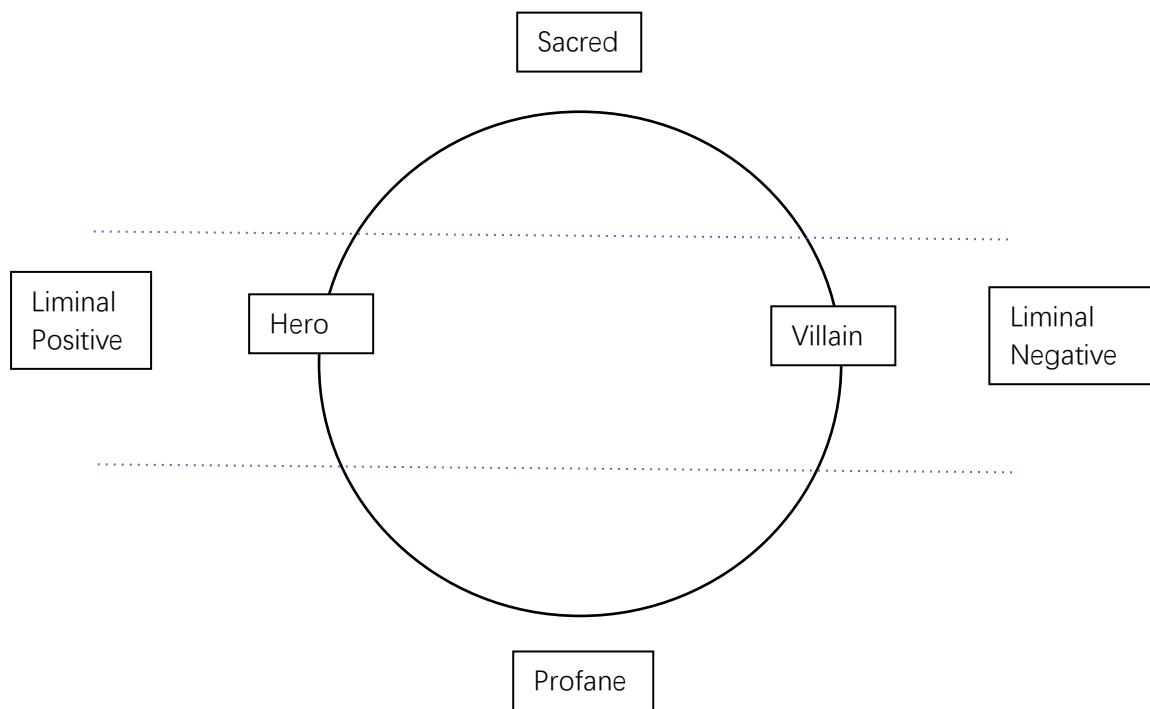
In sum, the history of China since the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949 provides an ideal and natural experimental field to study relationships between reputations and post-totalitarian social change. Communist China or the "Mao era" is characterized by an all-powerful state and a strong ideological element, while the post-Mao era or the "reform and opening up" period is characterized by less emphasis on ideology and a certain degree of pluralism. What are the differences and similarities of Chairman Mao's reputations between the totalitarian/communist China and the post-totalitarian China? How does this post-totalitarian change affect reputation construction and reception more generally? Based on the examination of these questions, my research will connect the field of memory and reputation study to the characteristics of the regime, thus contributing a post-totalitarian sociology of reputation.

Sociology of Reputation: A Relational and Post-Totalitarian Perspective

As mentioned above, current studies on reputations have provided much wisdom for our understanding of the meanings, categories, production, and reception of the phenomenon of reputations. Scholars have examined various categories such as positive, negative, "difficult" (Fine, 2001), and "sticky" (Fine, 2012) reputations, with an emphasis on the "valence" (Jansen, 2007) as a criterion for classification. Scholars have also studied the roles of agents and social contexts in constructing reputations,

paying particular attention to the problem of cultural production. While these researches have substantially developed the sociology of reputation, it also needs to be developed further. For instance, the categorizations of reputation in current studies tend to examine the "end result" of reputation construction—a positive or negative reputation is a fixed type of reputation for a fixed time period. While this analytical focus is definitely necessary and justified, a new perspective could examine the process of reputation construction as well as the relations between different kinds of reputations. Also, while the "cultural diamond" template (Griswold, 2012) correctly theorizes the roles of cultural objects, social world, creators, and receivers, the relationships between these categories could be further studied—in this sense, a relational study could *analytically synthesize* the connection between object and social world, creators and receivers. Moreover, since most studies in the field of the sociology of reputation derive their theories from Western societies, a study focusing on Chinese societies could bring new wisdom to the field.

Against this backdrop, my dissertation will put forward a new framework for the sociology of reputation, namely a relational and post-totalitarian perspective of reputations. To begin with, my dissertation will provide *a relational and processual categorization of reputation*. Based on my study of the "many faces of Chairman Mao" in China, I argue that we can think of various types of reputation constituting a "liminal reputation circle" (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: The Model of "Liminal Reputation Circle"

Borrowing wisdom from the Durkheimian ideas on the differentiation between the sacred and the profane, I argue that a reputation can fall within any position in this "liminal reputation circle." *A reputation can be sacred, by which I mean a reputation representing mysterious and awesome quality or logic transcending everyday life.* For instance, Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution received god-like worship, while some people in post-totalitarian China literally built temples to worship Mao. In the Western context, the saints of Christianity and kings with the power of "royal touch" (Bloch, 1990) are also representatives of the "sacred" category. This type of reputation is sacred in the sense that it is beyond the logic of everyday life. Yet, it should be noted that a "sacred" reputation does not necessarily mean the reputation is positive. For instance, the valence of "demon" is negative, but "demon" as a reputation also falls in the "sacred" category due to its transcendent logic beyond the everyday. That is also

the reason why this categorization of reputation is visualized as a circle rather than a line.

A reputation can also be profane, the kind that belongs to the mundane world and everyday life; it is a reputation every ordinary person can have or relate to, without reference to transcendence. For instance, in many Chinese cities, the image of Chairman Mao is re-designed and re-made into commodities. Ordinary Chinese people can buy these products, talk about the image, or even make fun of the Chairman. Other examples of profane reputation include those viewing a leader as an ordinary man or a man everybody can relate to. For instance, the image of George Washington in the later history of the US is more "democratized" and closer to that of ordinary citizens (Schwartz, 1991).

Yet, a reputation type is not fixed. The degree of being "sacred" and "profane" also varies according to situation. In other situations, a reputation can fall between the spheres of the sacred and profane—it might have some elements of a sacred reputation and some elements of a profane reputation. I call this type of reputation *a "liminal reputation." More specifically, I define it as the co-existence of various reputations that idles near, or crosses, the boundary between the sacred and profane spheres; it originates within, but often goes beyond, the profane sphere.* For instance, heroes are humans with super-human powers and characteristics. Indeed, as the Greek mythologies indicate, many heroes, such as Achilles, Hercules and Theseus, are half human and half god, or even the offspring resulting from the intercourse between Gods and humans. In the Chinese case, people used words to describe Chairman Mao such as "hero," "helmsman," "bastard," and "demon." These words or "codes" exist at the same time falling in different positions on the liminal circle—some close to the sacred sphere while others close to the profane sphere. In this sense, I treat reputations not as

fixed categories, but more as on a continuum and within a circle and that "flow" from one position to another[4].

There are two caveats regarding the liminal reputation circle. First, the sacred-profane differentiation should not be confused with the positive-negative differentiation. For instance, the "demon" image is indeed negative, but it can also enter the sacred sphere. As one commentary on Weibo (the Chinese Twitter) said: "Be quiet, you don't want to wake up that demon (referring to Mao)." In this case, Mao's body is viewed as a sleeping demon which had supernatural power. It is negative but also sacred. Second, the sacred-profane (and hero-villain) continuum is a circle rather than a line. As the code of "demon" illustrates, the villainous reputation can also enter the sacred sphere. Thus, hero and villain should not be viewed as two end points of a line. In fact, due to different situations, heroes for a party can be viewed as villains for the rival party. Therefore, circle better explains the liminal nature of these reputations. In the following empirical chapters, I will use Mao Zedong's "many faces" as an example to analyze the sacred, liminal, and profane categories of reputations.

My relational framework on the study of reputation can also be illustrated through my analytical theorization of the relationship between the reputation target (or what Griswold calls the "cultural object") and the social world, and between the

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[4] Philip Smith also used the word "sacred," "profane," "liminal," and "mundane" to characterize the "elementary forms of places" (Smith, 1999). There are two differences between Smith's argument and my account. First, according to Smith, the "liminal" is *one category in the "special place"* which is distinct and beyond the mundane and ordinary place. Yet, my definition of the "liminal" crosses the boundary between the sacred and the profane, thus overlapping with part of the "sacred" and "profane." In this sense, my definition of the "liminal" is more fluid. Second, in Smith's account, the profane refers to an evil and polluted place, and would not arouse the emotions of awe, reverence, and excitement as the sacred place does. However, my research shows that the sacred and the "profane" (in Smith's sense) an exist in one reputation *at the same time*—some of my interviewees worship the Mao mausoleum while some others "dare not" go to the place seeing Mao as a villain and devil. In this sense, the sacred and the profane are not analytically exclusive. The valence (being positive or negative) should not be the criterion to differentiate the sacred from the profane. Thus, my definition of the profane is closer to Smith's definition of the "mundane." In sum, as my empirical research on Mao's reputation illustrates, my conceptualization of the "liminal reputation circle" is more fluid, continuous, and relational, corresponding more to Durkheim's original thinking on the sacred and the profane.
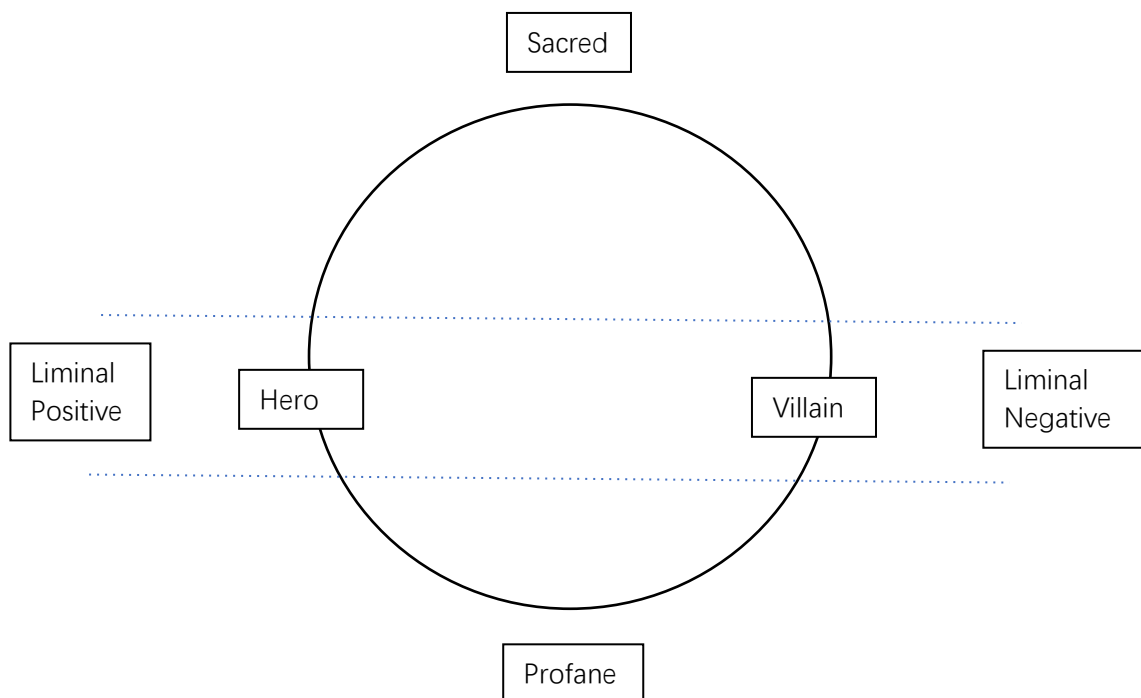
creators and receivers. For instance, in Chapter 2, I will analyze how "receivers" react

to the sacred reputation of Chairman Mao, and how their reactions and participation are

simultaneously re-producing, maintaining, and developing Mao's sacred reputation. In

Chapter 6, through the comparison between the reputations of Mao Zedong, Sun Yat-

sen, and Zhou Enlai, I put forward "indexing" and "relatedness" as two mechanisms

bridging the reputation targets and the social world, receivers and producers.

Specifically, "indexing" refers to the reputation target's symbolic ties to a particular

regime, event, or ideology, while "relatedness" refers to the degree to which the

"political regime, event, and ideology" (the "signified") has an organic connection to

various actors' life trajectories and life world in a particular field. In this sense, indexing

and relatedness are two bridges connecting the signifier, signified, and actors:

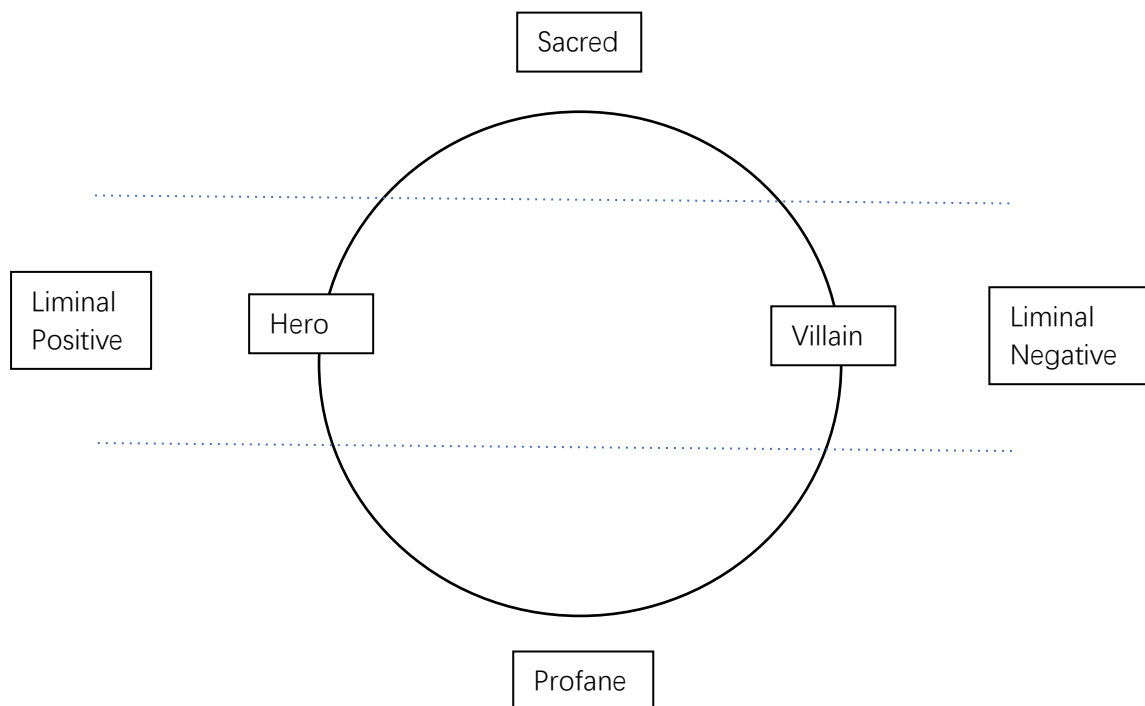 Signifier(Mao) —indexing— Signified(communist regime) —relatedness—Actors

In my empirical study of Mao's reputation, Mao is the reputation target, or "signifier,"

while what he symbolizes is the "signified"—the communist and totalitarian regime.

Furthermore, the actors (including both producers and receivers) are connected to Mao

through the signified. The different combinations of "indexing" and "relatedness" will

affect the consolidation and contestation of particular reputations. I will elaborate this

theory in Chapter 6. It should be noted, though, that I do not mean the roles of creators

(producers) and receivers should be combined all the time. Indeed, in some situations,

the analytical separation of these two categories is necessary, which can be illustrated

by my study of the commodification of Mao Zedong; yet, my research also calls for

more attention to the situation in which producers and receivers intertwine and overlap.

　　　In addition to arguing for a relational and processual perspective, my research

also aims to use the Chinese case to better examine the relationship between post-totalitarian social change and the construction/reception of reputations. For instance, in Chapter 2, I will compare Mao's personality cult, a phenomenon "highly probable" (Linz, 2000) in totalitarian regime, to Mao's deification in contemporary China, and identify the necessary conditions for making and maintaining a sacred reputation. In Chapter 3, I will examine the reputation labels/codes the state and society used during the Cultural Revolution and in contemporary China to illustrate how (a lack of) totalitarianism affects the degree of liminality for the reputations of a political figure. A hypothesis would be: a totalitarian regime allows for fewer liminal reputation codes partially due to its control of society and ideology. The visualization of the differences in the "liminal reputation circle" can be presented as follows:

Graph 2: Liminal Sphere in Totalitarian/Communist Regime

Graph 3: Liminal Sphere in Post-Totalitarian Regime

As Juan Linz pointed out, an exclusive and elaborate ideology and a monopoly of power are indispensable features of a totalitarian system (Linz, 2000). According to this logic, communist China would strongly control its definition of particular figures (especially the political leaders) through its ideological lens; it would also control the society's use or "invention" of reputation codes. Thus, *a logical progression is that the less totalitarian a regime is, the more a liminal sphere exists for previous sacred figures in the public discourse*. Correspondingly, the area for sacred sphere will also be reducing in, while the profane sphere is also highly likely to enlarge. The reasons are, for a particular person, the evaluation of this person's reputation is usually more fixed and more one-dimensional in the totalitarian regime; in contrast, in a post-totalitarian context, this person's reputations are more fluid partly due to the existence of (limited) pluralism. This phenomenon is more evident for previous sacred figures (especially

political leaders) in totalitarianism. I will test this hypothesis in Chapter 3.

In addition, I will also study the influence of post-totalitarian change through two other examples. One example is the commodification of Mao's image (see Chapter 3), since this "profane" reading of Mao can only exist in a post-totalitarian background. I will examine how societal features of a post-totalitarian setting affect this type of reputation. The other crucial example is generation (see Chapter 5), since the Chinese context produces two distinctive generations—a generation growing up in the totalitarian/communist regime (Mao's China) and a generation growing up in the post-totalitarian regime (post-Mao China). The comparison of the generational attitudes toward Mao would bring contexts (the social world) and agency into a deep dialogue with each other, and provide a processual understanding of the importance of "formative year experiences" for memory construction.

In sum, through my empirical case of Mao Zedong's reputations in China, my dissertation will put forward a relational, processual, and post-totalitarian sociology of reputation, thus contributing new perspectives to the study of reputation and memory.

Data and Methods

To address the abovementioned research questions, I combine archival study, content and textual analysis, and interviews and ethnography in the field. Correspondingly, the data for this project comes from historical archives, information and posters on the Internet, as well as texts and narratives from the interviews and ethnography.

To begin with, I use historical archives, especially *The Chinese Cultural Revolution Database* [5], to study how the state and society describe Mao Zedong during the

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[5] http://www.chineseupress.com/chinesepress/promotion/cultural-revolution-cd-new2006/e_revolution.htm. March 24, 2014.

communist "Mao era." This database is collected and edited by the Editorial Board of The Cultural Revolution CD-ROM Database in the US (headed by Yongyi Song) and the Universities Service Centre for China Studies at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. According to the introduction of the project, the "members of the Editorial Department visited Asian libraries throughout the world, collected a great many materials from private collectors, and salvaged untold amounts of original written materials."[6] In the end, they collected nearly ten thousand documents, including both official documents from the government and accounts used by Chinese citizens. This database is especially valuable because it includes the voices of the dissidents such as the writings of the Red Guards and heterodox thoughts during the Cultural Revolution—expressing such opinions during the Cultural Revolution was labelled as "counter-revolutionary" behavior and subjected to harsh punishment. Thus, the acquiring of these documents helped me to examine discourses and narratives inconsistent with those of the state discourse during the totalitarian era. In terms of the valence of these documents, my archival study examines the positive, negative, and other forms of Mao's reputations, thus presenting Chairman Mao's various "faces."

The materials for content and textual analysis not only come from historical archives, but also from channels such as contemporary Chinese government reports and posters from the Internet. More specifically, I have downloaded all the comments posted on two very popular commemoration posts (one is called "Where does the grandpa go?" and the other is *People's Daily*'s summary of Mao's achievements) from the Chinese Twitter (Weibo) account on December 26, 2013, the 120th birthday of Chairman Mao. Some of these comments praise Mao as a hero or national leader, while

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[6] http://www.chineseupress.com/chinesepress/promotion/cultural-revolution-cd-new2006/e_revolution.htm. March 30, 2014.

others view him as a villain bringing China huge amounts of suffering. I will identify the common themes among these relating to the image of the hero and villain, respectively (such as those of the founding father, a revolutionary leader, a symbol of national identity, or a dictator). Besides these comments, there were also popular articles circulated on the internet, such as "The Great Grandpa Mao." I also analyze the content of these articles and examine how Mao's reputations are constructed within them, as well as how people use Mao's image to address the then-current social problems based on their own agency—for instance, some use Mao as the symbol of equality to criticize the wealth-gap in today's Chinese society. I also analyze President Xi Jinping's commemorative speech on Mao Zedong's 120th birthday as representing the state's construction of Mao's reputations.

In addition, I conducted interviews and ethnographies in Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan, and Hunan, based on "theoretical sampling" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) logic and strategy. I chose Beijing due to its status as the political center of China; many Beijing citizens were among the first to experience all effects of political movements during Mao's China. Beijing is also a metropolitan city, attracting people from all over China to work there today, thus providing an opportunity for interviewing people of all ages, genders, generations, and provenances. Shanghai is the economic center of China, and thus provides an ideal place to study the commodification of Chairman Mao's image. For instance, the Tianzifang (田子坊) area in Shanghai is where products with various nostalgic elements are sold. It is "a major tourist attraction and has more than 200 diverse small businesses such as cafes, bars, restaurants, art galleries, craft stores, design houses and studios, and even French bistros."[7] I interviewed many sellers as well as buyers doing business in this area. I also interviewed other people in Shanghai,

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[7] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tianzifang March 30, 2014.

such as visitors to a Cultural Revolution-themed restaurant and the "educated youth" from Mao's China. In addition, I chose Sichuan as one of my fieldwork sites, since people in the rural Shu-City[8] of Sichuan voluntarily built a temple to worship Chairman Mao. This temple has also received much attention on the Internet. The site was chosen as representative of the contemporary deification of Chairman Mao. Lastly, I chose Hunan because Hunan was Mao Zedong's hometown. I visited the Shaoshan (韶山) area in Hunan, the place Mao was born, and interviewed visitors as well as tourists guides, government officials, and locals. Due to the theoretical considerations outlined above, the four sites of Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan, and Hunan are the ideal fieldwork sites to examine the various reputations concerning Mao Zedong in China.

I used the "snowball" sampling strategy together with other strategies corresponding to the field environment, and only stopped when no pattern emerged from the fieldwork (Small, 2009). For instance, I contacted former classmates and friends, the relatives/friends of these friends, and acquaintances introduced by colleagues to conduct interviews at the four sites. I also asked new acquaintances for interviews in the field, such as salespersons and buyers in the Tianziafng area of Shanghai. These interviewees were representative in the sense that they were actors in theoretical representative settings. Through one colleague of mine who was doing fieldwork in Sichuan, I acquired the contact information of builders of the Mao temple in Sichuan. After several weeks of communication, I finally gained trust from the temple builders and were allowed to interview them in the field. The temple builders even introduced relatives, friends, and neighbors who then talked to me. Over my multiple visits to the four sites in the summers of 2014 and 2015, I interviewed 21 people in Beijing, 20 in Shanghai, 16 in Sichuan (including a "focus group" interview),

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[8] I changed the name of the city to protect the privacy of the interviewees.

and 15 in Hunan. I also conducted interviews/focus group interviews with friends or acquaintances (for another 11 interviewees) who have visited Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan, or Hunan, through telephone/Skype or in places other than the four sites. In total, I talked to 83 interviewees, and these interviewees varied in terms of location, gender, generation, education, as well as other socio-economic background. It should be noted, though, that my research does not aim to conduct a quantitative survey examining the influence of particular variables (such as education or gender) when controlling for other variables, and thus does not intend to provide a "statistically representative" account. Instead, to better answer my meaning-driven research questions, I treated these interviewees with various socio-biological backgrounds as actors embedded in historical contexts and influenced by a mixture of social-biological factors. In this sense, I aimed to achieve a "*theoretical representativeness*" through examining the meaning-making processes of these actors in real-life settings.

When analyzing the data, I coded the materials and identified similar and different themes for different reputations, with the help of the qualitative analysis application Atlas.ti. By combining my archival research, content and textual analysis of materials from the Internet, as well as my interviews and ethnographies from the sites, my project will examine both the official (from the state) and unofficial (from the society in general), historical and contemporary, positive and negative, as well as secularized and deified images of Chairman Mao, thus producing a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) and "thick analyses" of Mao's reputations. In addition, these analyses can help us understand how people use Mao's image to address their daily issues or to symbolically express themselves more generally. In sum, the combination of these methods has provided me with multiple tools to explore the meaning-centered research questions of my dissertation.

Organization

I present my empirical findings in two parts. Part I (Chapters 2-4) examines the three representative types of the reputation of Chairman Mao, corresponding to the "liminal reputation circle" mentioned above. Specifically, these reputation types are illustrated by my analyses of Mao's image as god, hero, villain, and commodity—each corresponds to a particular point or sphere in the "liminal reputation circle." I also connect the post-totalitarian social change to the analysis of these "faces" and reputation categories in Part I. Part II (Chapters 5-6) examines the generational memory of Chairman Mao and compares the reputation of Mao Zedong to his counterparts, such as Zhou Enlai and Sun Yat-sen. As Karl Mannheim mentions, generation is never a biological concept; instead, it is a cultural and historical construct (Mannheim, 2011) that perfectly connects individual actors with historical background. In the Chinese context, this historical background is the post-totalitarian social change. Meanwhile, the comparison of Mao and his counterparts' reputations illustrates the very mechanisms connecting cultural object, social world, and actors. In the following paragraphs, I will introduce the major research questions, findings, and theoretical contributions of each empirical chapter.

Chapter 2 is a study of Mao's sacred reputation, that is, a reputation representing the mysterious and awesome quality or logic transcending everyday life. In both the Cultural Revolution and contemporary post-totalitarian China, Mao was given a deified status. Although the specific forms and scope of deifications might vary, Mao in both eras was treated by some people as god. What does the comparison of Mao's deification in the Cultural Revolution and contemporary China tell us in terms of making a sacred reputation? How to make and maintain such a sacred reputation? How is this reputation received by actors? Combining archival study and the interviews and ethnography I

conducted in the Sichuan and Hunan provinces, I argue that communist mobilization is not a necessary condition for constructing a sacred reputation. To endow a person with sacred status, one must construct a narrative and ritual/practice that illustrates *a logic beyond everyday life, that is, a transcendent logic and status;* more importantly, to maintain and re-produce the sacred reputation, actors (as both producers and receivers) must participate in the transcendence-building but have no need to sincerely believe in the transcendent power. In other words, *a participation in the transcendent narrative and practice is more important than believing in the deity*—after all, many interviewees admitted that they do not really believe in Mao's supernatural power. Based on this finding, my research contributes to the field by decoupling the saying, doing, and believing elements surrounding a sacred reputation.

Chapter 3 examines the liminal reputation of Chairman Mao. By "liminal reputation," I mean the co-existence of various reputations that idles near, or crosses, the boundary between the sacred and profane spheres; it originates within, but often goes beyond, the profane sphere. I use the heroic and villainous reputations of Mao as representative of the liminal reputation. These heroic and villainous reputations are "liminal" in two senses: first, as Greek mythology implies, heroes are often the combination or even offspring of human beings and gods, thus lying in the liminal sphere, crossing the boundary between the sacred and profane. Meanwhile, villains and demons are often combinations of human and animal features. In this sense, both heroes and villains are in the liminal stage, combining elements from other spheres. Second, the various labels in the heroic and villainous categories (such as "great leader," "founding father," or "emperors") coexist and fall in the different positions on the "liminal reputation circle," thus illustrating another "liminal" status. Essentially, this chapter asks: How does regime context affect the (degree of) liminality for reputations?

How to successfully make a type of liminal reputation, in the face of contradictory information? Based on the textual analysis of the archives in the *Cultural Revolution Database*, the current Chinese president's commemoration speech on Mao's 120th birthday, and the posters on Chinese Twitter accounts, I argue that *the communist/totalitarian regime invites less liminality when defining a political figure, while the post-totalitarian society allows for the existence of more liminality*—the society and public sphere in the post-totalitarian China developed much more reputational "labels" to describe Mao, many of which were not influenced by state discourse. In addition, I also theoretically summarize *five discourse techniques* in constructing a particular type of reputation in the face of other liminal and contradictory information. These techniques include *weighting, disconnecting, subliming, labelling, and enforcing*. Through these analyses, this chapter provides a new perspective on the reputation phenomenon, connecting the relational feature of reputation to post-totalitarian social change.

Chapter 4 studies the profane reputation of Chairman Mao, using the commodification of Mao's image as an example. A profane reputation is defined as the kind that belongs to the mundane world and everyday life; it is a reputation every ordinary person can have or relate to, without reference to transcendence. In post-totalitarian China, Mao's images are used and re-designed as various kinds of commodities; some of the re-formulated images are rather ironic and funny. Facing this phenomenon, I ask: what contextual factors contribute to the making of this profane and commodified reputation of Mao Zedong? More importantly, why do people consume these images and what do these images mean to people? Through my interviews with both producers, sellers, and buyers in Shanghai and Beijing, this chapter argues that the commodified "face" of Chairman Mao is not only a result of "post-

communist nostalgia," but also a form of "cosmopolitan memory" (Levy & Sznaider, 2007) and "travelling memory" (Erll, 2011); the buyers (coming from different generations) consume the Mao products for different symbolic reasons—based on these reasons, the consumers can be summarized into the four categories of "projectors," "admirers," "foreigners," and "mockers." This chapter contributes to the field of reputation study by situating the profane and commodified reputation into the very historical background of the post-totalitarian and globalized Chinese society.

Chapter 5 is a study of Mao's reputation through generational perspectives. More specifically, this chapter asks how different generations view Chairman Mao differently. What explains the generational differences of memory and reputations? What are the specific mechanisms for the "formative years" that are the critical moments forming a person's world values (Mannheim, 2011; Schuman & Corning, 2000; Schuman & Scott, 1989)? To answer these questions, I pay particular attention to two generations in China—a "present generation" with life experience of Mao's China and the "after generation" without any living memory of Mao and his time. Specifically, I argue that for the *"present generation," their memories and attitudes toward Mao are emotionally engaged and cognitively bifurcated*; they also tend to use the "nation and people discourse" as their "interpretative template" (Palmberger, 2016) to support their opinions. *For the "after generation," their attitudes toward Mao are more indifferent and diversified*. The "interpretative templates" they use are also diverse and fragmented. In terms of the mechanisms forming the "formative years," my study argues *that family background, information sources, and early life trajectory* together explain the change and consistency both within and beyond the formative years of memory construction. Information sources, for instance, are only effective within the formative years; in the later stage, people often use various ways to deny the

contradictory information they meet, and thus neutralize the influence of information sources. By examining family background, information acquisition, and early life trajectories of both the present and the after generations, this chapter deepens our understanding of the generational memory embedded in the post-totalitarian change and provides a new perspective treating the formative years as a process and interaction of multiple mechanisms.

Chapter 6 compares the reputation of Mao Zedong, Sun Yat-sen, and Zhou Enlai. Mao Zedong, the founding father of the People's Republic and the communist regime, has a highly controversial and contested reputation in contemporary China. In contrast, Sun Yat-sen, who is also a founding father (the founding father of the Republic of China and "modern China" more generally), has a rather stable and consolidated reputation. Meanwhile, for Zhou Enlai, who is also comparable to Mao due to his status as the first premier and founding member of the "new China," his reputation is also more stable and consolidated. How to explain these different reputation statuses for Mao, Sun, and Zhou? What affects the contestation or consolidation of a particular figure's reputation more generally? Based on my interviews as well as historical data, *I argue that the contestation and consolidation differences in reputation targets can be explained by two mechanisms in a particular "field," namely "indexing" and "relatedness."* "Indexing" refers to a reputation target's symbolic ties to a particular regime, event, or ideology. In this sense, the "reputation targets" (such as Mao and Zhou) are the signifiers, while the political regime or ideology are the signified. "Relatedness" refers to the degree to which the "signified" has an *organic* connection to actors in a particular field. Only when both "indexing" and "relatedness" are high or positive would a reputation become contested. For instance, Mao Zedong has a high status of "indexing" since he is the founding father of the People's Republic and the communist regime;

Mao also has a high "relatedness" to the Chinese people because the signified he symbolically ties to (the communist/totalitarian regime) has affected life trajectories and life world for both the "present" and "after" generations. As a result, actors with various social positions in the "field" of Chinese society would project their feelings about the "signified" toward the "signifier," that is, Mao Zedong. In contrast, Sun Yat-sen has a high "indexing" status as the founding father of the Republic of China, but his "relatedness" is low since the "signified" (the Republic of China regime) has no organic relationship to contemporary Chinese people's life world. Thus, Chinese people have no motivation or interest in discussing or re-producing Sun's reputation based on their current concerns. Thus, Sun Yat-sen to them is only a distant figure. For Zhou Enlai, his "indexing" status is low because he is not the representative of "Mao's China" and the totalitarian regime; yet his "relatedness" is high because his signified (the totalitarian regime) still has an organic relation to the Chinese people. Thus, when people want to find a symbol on which to project their feelings about the signified— the communist regime—they would not choose Zhou Enlai, but Mao Zedong. Since "indexing" is essentially connecting a cultural object to the social world, while "relatedness" is connecting the social world to the actors (as both producers and receivers,) this chapter contributes to the field of memory and culture by providing a more relational perspective.

In sum, through examining the many "faces" of Chairman Mao in both the communist/totalitarian regime and the post-totalitarian context, and by conceptualizing the "liminal reputation circle" and its connection to the political and social change, my dissertation not only deepens our understanding of Mao Zedong's reputations in China, but also contributes a more relational, processual, and post-totalitarian sociology of reputation.

Chapter 2: The Sacred Reputation: Chairman Mao as God

August 18, 1966.

"This morning at 5 A.M., as the sun had just spread its first beams of light from the Eastern horizon, Chairman Mao informally appeared on Tiananmen Square… Chairman Mao wore a grass-green army uniform. On the Chairman's military cap glistened a single red star. Chairman Mao crossed the Gold Water Bridges in front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace and walked directly amongst the masses. He shook hands with many of the surrounding people and further waved his hand as a salute to the revolutionary masses on the Square. At that moment, the Square boiled over, everyone raised their hands over their heads and jumped in the direction of the Chairman, loudly calling and clapping their hands. Many people clapped their palms until they turned red; many people shed tears of excitement and gladly expressed: 'Chairman Mao has come! Chairman Mao has come among us!' On the Square, tens of thousands of people loudly called:' Long live Chairman Mao! Long live! Long, long live!' One wave of hurrahs surpassed the other, shaking the sky above the capital."

--People's Daily, August 19, 1966[9]

This magnificent scene was the first-time Chairman Mao Zedong, "the great leader, great teacher, great commander and great helmsman," received enthusiastic Red Guards[10] during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Although the chairman did not deliver a speech that morning, the millions of Red Guards who attended the reception were still ecstatic to finally see the beloved Chairman Mao with their own eyes—many of them had travelled hundreds of miles to Beijing, just as in pilgrimages of the religious to the holy places of Mecca or Jerusalem. Indeed, Chairman Mao was not only standing on Tiananmen Square at this particular moment, but he was also simultaneously around the country in family shrines originally reserved for ancestor worship, standing on university campuses in the form of giant statues of his body, living in people's hearts through their recitations of the Little Red Book (the *Quotations from Chairman Mao*), and was the recipient of religious worship through all kinds of rituals such as loyalty

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[9] "毛主席、林彪、周恩来等同志接见了学生代表并检阅了文化大革命大军的游行," in *People's Daily*, August 19, 1966, I. Quoted from *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution* (see Leese, 2011: 130-131).

[10] Red guards were mainly groups of school students (especially middle and high school students) mobilized by Mao to engage in the Cultural Revolution.

dances and daily pledges and reports.

Chairman Mao's deification during the Cultural Revolution did not last long. In 1976, Chairman Mao, the great leader who was given wishes of "long life" by his people, passed away. In the following months, the "Gang of Four," whose members were considered to be the major manipulators of the Cultural Revolution, were captured and sentenced. On June 27, 1981, the CCP finally passed the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China" as an official assessment of Mao's legacy. According to this resolution, "The Cultural Revolution was defined as the greatest setback of the People's Republic since its founding in 1949, and the main responsibility [for this setback] rested with the former CCP Chairman, who 'confused right and wrong, and [confused] the people with the enemy'." (Leese 2011:249-250). The CCP also defined the personality cult as the "modern superstition." Since then, Chairman Mao has gradually been stepping down from the altar.

Nevertheless, history never tires of repeating itself. After several decades of stillness, the craze for Chairman Mao is coming back. From the mid-1990s to the 21st century, ordinary Chinese people (especially those from rural areas) began to voluntarily build temples to worship Chairman Mao in China. These temples were built in Hunan (early 1990s), Guangdong (2003), Sichuan (2006), Zhejiang, and Shaanxi provinces, among others. There has also been deification of Chairman Mao in the cities, which can be seen in the Mao amulets hanging on the front mirrors of many taxis and household cars all over China. In this sense, Mao Zedong is essentially treated as a god-like figure in both the communist/totalitarian regime and in contemporary post-totalitarian China. I designate this form of reputation as "*sacred reputation*." More specifically, in reviewing the relevant accounts on the sacredness (Berger, 1967;

Durkheim, 1961), I argue that the sacred reputation can be understood as *a reputation representing a mysterious and awesome quality or logic transcendent to everyday life.* The sacredness of this type of reputation is transcendent in the sense that the quality of this god-like reputation or the logic this reputation implies are beyond the logic of everyday life—it is a status the ordinary life cannot achieve. For instance, there is a myth that hanging Mao's amulet has the supernatural power to protect drivers' safety, which is beyond everyday logic—no one's image has such power in real life, or according to scientific logic. In this sense, Chairman Mao indeed has a transcendent sacred status[11].

If the personality cult of Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution was largely a top-down political movement mobilized by the state, what explains the voluntary deification practices and narratives in contemporary post-totalitarian China? What does the comparison of Mao's deification in the Cultural Revolution and contemporary China tell us in terms of creating a sacred reputation? How such a sacred reputation made and maintained? How is this reputation received by actors? These are the central questions this chapter aims to answer.

Since Mao's deification is a political, religious, and reputational phenomenon, I will have a dialogue with the literature in these fields, especially the debates on

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[11] I will use "sacred reputation" to frame the phenomenon of deification. As Danièle Hervieu-Léger (Hervieu-Léger 2000) says, "taken to its extreme, whatever has the slightest association with mystery, or with the search for significance or reference to the transcendent, or with the absolute nature of certain values, is sacred" (Hervieu-Leger, 2000:42). Meanwhile, according to Peter Berger, "by sacred is meant here a quality of mysterious and awesome power, other than man and yet related to him, which is believed to reside in certain objects of experience…the sacred is apprehended as 'sticking out' from the normal routines of everyday life, as something extraordinary and potentially dangerous, though its danger can be domesticated and its potency harnessed to the needs of everyday life" (Berger, 1967:26). I believe Berger's definition of "sacred" is both inspirational and easy to operationalize in empirical research. Therefore, based on Berger's thinking, I define "sacred reputation" as a reputation representing mysterious and awesome qualities or logic transcendent to everyday life. Transcendence is one key feature of the sacred reputation. According to the degree of the transcendence (or the relationship to everyday life), the sacred reputation can be viewed as a continuum with different forms. The more transcendent (more religious) category is that of "god," while the less transcendent but more liminal category is that of "hero," which will be elaborated on in Chapter 3.

charisma, personality cult, and religion. Since the reputation literature has been elaborated in the introductory chapter, I will only discuss those reputation studies that are directly related. Based on historical archives as well as the interviews and ethnographies I conducted in Sichuan, Hunan and Shanghai, I argue that there are *two elements in forming a sacred reputation*: first, for whoever the "reputational entrepreneurs" (G. A. Fine, 2001) are, one must create narratives and practices with transcendent logic and quality, such as the myth that hanging Mao's picture can protect safety; second, and more importantly, actors (as both producers and receivers) must participate in these practices and the dissemination of these narratives, though they do not need to sincerely believe in these practices and narratives. In other words, *a participation in the transcendent narrative and practice is more important than believing in the deity*—after all, many interviewees admitted that they do not really believe in Mao's supernatural power. This finding is especially important since it challenges the previous wisdom that treats belief as a crucial element in deification, charisma, and personality cult. Thus, through my study of the case of Chairman Mao, my research contributes to the field of reputation studies by decoupling the saying, doing, and believing elements surrounding a sacred reputation.

In the following pages, I will first elaborate on my analysis of the existing literature, which will be the basis on which I will put forward and apply my theory to our understanding of the deification of Chairman Mao Zedong in both the Mao era and the post-Mao era.

Charisma and Personality Cult in Cultural Revolution

Most studies on the sacred status of Chairman Mao focus on the personality cult

during the Cultural Revolution[12], which connects the phenomenon to the concept of charisma and the totalitarian regime.

The charisma account originates from Max Weber's seminal work on the three forms of authority and domination (traditional, legal-rational, and charismatic authority), but also goes beyond Weber's account and situate the concept in the Chinese context. To begin with, Weber argues charisma is "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least especially exceptional powers or qualities"(Weber, 1978, p. 241). Weber's explanation of charisma illustrates two points: first, charisma is connected with "supernatural" and "superhuman" qualities, thus representing the "transcendent logic" as a sacred reputation; second, by saying the quality is "considered" extraordinary, Weber is implying that charisma is a status believed and accepted by the receivers and followers. In other words, charisma is not purely a personal trait, but also a relationship between the reputation target and the followers. In analyzing the initial phase of charismatic movement, Robert Tucker also mentioned the importance of this relationship and argues that the "group of persons who cluster around the charismatic personality" should "accept his authority"(Tucker, 1968, p. 739). In this sense, the charismatic account often vaguely implies (if not directly elaborate) that the receivers and followers would often believe in the super-human quality of the reputation target. Yet, whether this belief exist or matter should be further studied.

In the meantime, the charismatic account also inspires the research applying the concept into the Chinese context. Many studies in this category often adopt a utilitarian

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[12] Although some studies very briefly mentioned the social-structural reasons for Mao's second ascending to the altar, such as the anti-corruption atmosphere and the uncertainty caused by social change in the late 1980s (see Barme 1996), very few literatures has systematic studies on the mechanisms of Mao's second deification.

perspective, emphasizing charisma and personality cult as a way of mobilization and construction of people's loyalty. For instance, Twiwes claims that the personality cult, as a "synthetic" form of charismatic rule, can help CCP establish legitimacy and unite the lower-level party members and the populace (Teiwes, 1984). Joel Andreas argues that Mao's Cultural Revolution is a form of "charismatic mobilization" which "mobilize people without the benefits or constraints of formal organization"(Andreas, 2007). Based on these literature as well as historical materials, Daniel Leese (2011) further argues that the "Mao cult" was initially constructed to fight against the "branding" of the Chiang Kai-shek image endorsed by the Kuomintang (the Nationalist Party), and was later used by CCP to strengthen the party unity and to secure people's loyalty and compliance. Leese also believes that the Mao cult can be understood as a phenomenon of authoritarian political communication embedded in the patron-client relationships within the power structure. In *The Deification of Mao: Religious Imagery and Practices during the Cultural Revolution and Beyond*, Stefan Landsberger vividly described deification examples (especially in the area of art) and argues that Mao's image is used to "portray the revolution;" Mao is a "super model" used (by CCP) to unite and educate people (Landsberger, 2002). While these studies used various words to describe different elements or facets of Mao's charisma, they also tend to imply that Mao's charisma can secure people's loyalty and compliance. Similar to the charisma account in general, whether followers sincerely believe in the charisma (or supernatural quality) is a question waiting for answers.

Meanwhile, theories on personality cult often emphasize a top-down perspective, which is connected to the totalitarian regime. For instance, Andreas's account on "charismatic mobilization" (Andreas 2007) and Leese's treatment of the "Mao cult" as an authoritarian political communication embedded in the patron-client

relationships both emphasize the top-down running of powers. As Juan Linz argues, mass mobilization is one indispensable feature of totalitarianism, and the personality cult is "highly probable" to occur in this type of system (Linz, 2000). In studying Fascism, Emilo Gentile also connects the phenomenon of personality cult to the feature of totalitarianism. For instance, Gentile puts forward the concept of political religion, referring to the "type of religion which sacralizes an ideology, a movement or a political regime through the deification of a secular entity transfigured into myth, considering it the primary and indisputable source of the meaning and the ultimate aim of human existence on earth"(Gentile, 2004, pp. 326-275). While these accounts are inspirational, they do not explain why the deification of Chairman Mao emerges in the post-totalitarian China and why this deification is actually voluntary and bottom-up. After all, Linz pointed out that personality cult is only "probable" but not inevitable to emerge in the totalitarian regimes. In this sense, Mao's defecation to a sacred reputation is still a puzzle to be unraveled.

Sacred Reputation and Religion

The phenomenon of deification and sacredness is also related to the idea of religion. However, the concept of religion itself is troublesome. Scholars have no consensus on what defines religion, and "have variously identified the essence of religion as the supposed fact of, or a special sensitivity to, or a belief in, or commerce with, the supernatural, the super-human, the spiritual, the sacred, the transcendent, the numinous, the wholly other, and the partially other" (Saler, 2000). In connecting religion to other arena (especially the political), scholars have also put forward the concept of "political religion" (Gentile, 2004), "civil religion"(Bellah, 1967), among many others.

Despite the chaos, most scholars of religion (Berger, 1967; Hervieu-Léger, 2000; Hunt, 2005) agree that there are at least two main approaches in defining the religion[13]. The first is the substantive approach, which focuses on identifying the necessary or essential composing factors for religion. For instance, Edward Tylor argue that we should look at the "minimum definition" of religion centered on a "*belief in* spiritual beings" (Tylor, 1871). Peter Berger believes that part of Durkheim's theory on religion can also be viewed as belonging to the substantive approach, since he emphasizes the dichotomy between the sacred and profane as the defining character of religion (Berger, 1967; Durkheim, 1961). While this approach is inspirational in identifying the elements, it is difficult to achieve a consensus on what is the "minimum definition." Considering the chaos in defining religion, there is no consensus on what constitute to the core of deification either.

Another approach is the functional approach. Durkheim is a classic representation of this approach. According to Durkheim, religion is "a unified system of *beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden*… belief and practices which unite into one single moral community…"(Durkheim, 1961). Durkheim also believes that deification represents the ideal of a society: "if society should happen to become infatuated with a man, believing it has found in him its deepest aspirations as well as the means of fulfilling them, then that man will be put in a class by himself and virtually deified. Opinion will confer on him a grandeur that is similar in every way to the grandeur that protects the gods" (Durkheim 1995: 215). Three notes should be elaborated on Durkheim's account. First, the "sacred things" are things "set apart and forbidden," which corresponds to my definition of sacred

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[13] Some scholars believe that there are other approaches. For instance, Stephan Hunt (2005) argues that Peter Berger represents the phenomenological approach to religion. However, Berger (1967) himself believe that how he defines religion belongs to the substantive approach.

reputation on its transcendent logic. Second, as Durkheim's definition implies, both belief and practice are important for "sacred things." While religion might include both belief and practice elements, it does not mean a "sacred thing" should include belief and practice at the same time. In this sense, similar to the charisma account, the role of belief should be further explored. Third, Durkheim's theory is essentially a societal and collective account. In other words, a man turns to a god because the man represents "the deepest aspirations" of the society. However, the problem for Durkheim's deification theory is, similar to many functional accounts, it assumes that the societal needs will automatically turn a man into a god without demystifying the "black box" and specific mechanisms in between[14].

There are also other theories in defining religion and deification, though their focus might be indirectly related to the Chairman Mao case. For instance, Kantorowicz's theory of "king's two bodies" (Kantorowicz, 1957) echoes Durkheim's ideas on sacred/profane dichotomy, but cannot be bluntly summarized into either the substantive or functional approach. According to Kantorowicz (1957), the king has two bodies, the "body natural" and the "body politic"; while the body natural is mortal, the body politic is eternal, sacred, and representation of the crown. Kantorowicz (1957) also explored how the secular, religious, and legal factors shape and transfer the idea in medieval society. In this sense, Kantorowicz's theory treats the king's body politic as a symbolization of the state and crown, and thus focuses more on the macro factors in

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[14] Although the substantive and functional approaches both have shortcomings, many theorists believe that the substantive approach is more practical and useful in empirical studies. Using Hunt's (2005:26) words, ""in order to achieve theoretical clarity and engage with debates regarding the nature and extent of religion in everyday life it is necessary to reiterate the significance of the substantive definition as the core historical and comparative tool." Peter Berger (1967:26) also supports this stance, and defines religion substantively. To him, "religion is the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established. To put it differently, religion is cosmization in a sacred mode. By sacred, Berger is essentially referring to a quality of mysterious and awesome power, other than man and yet related to him, which is believed to reside in certain objects of experience." Therefore, I will also use a more substantive approach in discussing the religious-like sacred reputation in this study.

making the "body politic" deified and immortal. However, as the problem implied by the functional approach, this theory emphasizes more on the macro "societal needs or conditions," and thus does not explain well about the "black box" between the society and the deified man as well as the micro- level factors.

The Sacred Reputation in Ancient China

As Chapter 1 mentioned, current studies on the construction of reputation can be summarized into three approaches, namely the essentialist approach, the agent approach, and the contextual approach. Yet, the literature review in Chapter 1 focus more on the mnemonic phenomena in the Western context and discuss memory and reputation in general. In fact, the studies of deification, especially in the Chinese context, also follows the approaches mentioned in the Introduction.

Specifically, studies of deification in Ancient China paid particular attention to the agent and contextual approaches, though they often do not directly use the concepts. For instance, Prasenjit Duara analyzed the deification of Guanyu (or Guandi), who is a general in the Three Kingdom period in ancient China, and explored how different social groups (including the state) deified Guanyu according to their different needs (Duara, 1988). Although Duara did not engage in the dialogue with memory and reputation scholars, his central arguments echo what Gary Fine calls "reputational entrepreneurs" (G. A. Fine, 2001), emphasizing people's agency in creating the deified image for their own interests. Another example in the Chinese context is Marc Matten's study of General Yuefei, who fought against the invasion of an ethnic group which later became part of the Chinese nation. More specifically, Matten examined how different dynasties (Yuan, Qing, and the Republic of China) construct the heroic image of Yuefei according to their historical needs in strengthening a national identity or in concealing

the ethnic conflicts (Matten, 2011). As Duara does, Matten did not specifically address the reputation literature but essentially emphasize both the agent's role and the historical context in creating the sacred reputation of Yuefei[15].

Despite their insights, the literatures from these studies (and the reputation study in general) also have shortcomings. For the agent approach, it has paid sufficient attention to the role of creators (or reputational entrepreneurs) but less attention to the role of receivers; more importantly, it draws a rigid boundary between the creators and receivers, and overlooks the possibility that same group of people can be creator and receivers at the same time—as my case of the Chairman Mao temple in Sichuan illustrates. For the contextual approach, it adopts a functional/utilitarian perspective, emphasizing the society's need of creating a hero or god. While this functional perspective definitely has its merits and explanatory power, it does not explain the "black box" between the societal needs and the specific deification process as well. In other words, the contextual/functional perspective provides a general background but does not elaborate the specific mechanisms of turning a man into a god.

To sum up, the studies on charisma and personality cult often imply (or do not clarify if) followers would "accept" or even "believe in" the superhuman quality of the reputation target; these studies also tend to connect the deification of leaders to the totalitarianism and thus adopting a top-down perspective. However, as the deification of Chairman Mao in contemporary China indicates, deification can be voluntarily and bottom-up, while whether actors sincerely believe in the "supernatural quality" is still

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[15] The deification phenomenon is also mentioned in the memory literature studying Western society. For instance, when examining the heroic image of George Washington, Schwartz took a Durkheimian approach and argues that Washington can be viewed as a living 'tribal' totem… [which] symbolized the bond between his society's political and religious sentiments" (Schwartz 1987:7). Although Schwartz holds ambiguous attitudes on whether Washington was viewed as a god in the traditional sense, he believes that the heroic image of Washington was created to unite the American nation and to represent the societal ideals (See Schwartz 1987).

a question to be explored. In the meantime, the studies of religion and the reputational study on the sacred figures in ancient China tend to emphasize the role of society and contexts, but somehow overlook the explanation of the "black box" and mechanisms between societal needs and specific deification practice. To address these issues, I will develop a new theoretical framework in explaining the making and maintaining of the sacred reputations.

Explaining the Sacred Reputation: Transcendent Logic and "Doing Over Believing"

Comparing Mao's deification during the Cultural Revolution and those Mao worship in contemporary post-totalitarian China, I argue that the communist mobilization in the totalitarian regime is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of turning a man into god. The reason is simple: since the contemporary China is no longer a totalitarian regime and the deification of Mao today is totally a voluntary enterprise, the top-down mobilization cannot be used to explain the contemporary deification.

Instead, I argue, to explain the making and maintaining of Mao's sacred reputation in both eras, two elements or steps are essential. First, for whoever the "reputational entrepreneurs" (Fine 2001) are, *one must create narratives and practices with transcendent logic and quality*, that is, a logic beyond the everyday life. In ordinary life, actors might use scientific logic and "common sense" to engage in everyday life tasks. For instance, if one's ill, he or she should go to hospital—that is a scientific logic; if one feels cold, he or she would drink hot water or wear more clothe—that is a common sense. In other words, these behaviors do not resort to mysterious or supernatural power or quality, thus do not presenting a transcendent logic. In contrast, if someone's ill, he or she goes to the gods and hope gods can use magic to heal him or her, that is a

transcendent logic—a logic cannot be explained by science or common sense. No ordinary people have this kind of power. That is also why the "royal touch" by a King (Bloch, 1990) also belongs to the transcendent logic. Since the sacred reputation is featured by this kind of transcendent logic, creating a narrative and practice of this kind is the essential first step to initiate the sacredness. In this sense, the first element or step is more about the origin of a sacred reputation.

Yet, the transcendent logic and quality does not come from nowhere. Through the comparison of Mao's sacred reputations in the Cultural Revolution and in contemporary China, I argue that this quality can be constructed by both top-down and bottom-up strategies—in fact, the top-down and bottom-up direction might mix in creating the final product of transcendent logic. Yet, since the state's behavior as one source for construction is constantly emphasized by previous literature (Andreas, 2007; Leese, 2011), I want to call for more attention on other construction channels, especially the (traditional) cultural repertoire which ordinary Chinese people are familiar with and frequently use. Indeed, the state actually exploit and use the cultural repertoire for its purpose, which can be illustrated by many personality cults adopted during the Cultural Revolution. In this sense, both the state strategy and cultural repertoire embedded in grass-root Chinese society are sources for "transcendent qualities and logics." Correspondingly, the "reputational entrepreneurs" thus include both the state as an actor, and those ordinary Chinese people. More importantly, these "entrepreneurs" or producers in many cases are also the receivers of previous myth and practices. Together, *the top-down state strategy and the bottom-up cultural repertoire both affect the specific forms and contents of the transcendent quality*.

The second element for making, but especially for maintaining a sacred reputation is to *participate* in the narrative and practice with transcendent quality and logic, but

58

actors *do not need to sincerely believe in the quality and logic*. As mentioned above, the studies on charisma and personality cult often (indirectly) imply that actors or followers would usually accept or believe in the super-human quality of the charismatic leaders. Yet, my research based on the two deifications of Mao indicate the otherwise. As many interviewees told me, they usually hold a rather ambiguous attitude towards Mao as god; many admitted that they do not really believe that Mao has a supernatural power. However, they visited and worshipped in the Mao temple anyway. Although there exist some real believers in both contemporary China and during the Cultural Revolution, as one interviewee I met in Sichuan illustrates, more people do not sincerely believe in Mao's supernatural power. To put it another way, *it does not matter whether an actor sincerely believes in the transcendent logic or not; what really matters is the participation in the transcendent narrative and practice*. It is the participation that maintain the sacred reputation, and make the sacred reputation "accepted" (as a form) by actors.

On the other hand, if the actors do not sincerely believe in Mao's supernatural power, what motivates them to participate in the enterprise? Similar to the diverse sources of the transcendent quality, the motivation for participation also comes from various aspects. For instance, during the Cultural Revolution, actors had to participate in Mao's personality cult due to the political pressure—if they did not participate, they would face harsh punishment. For the post-Mao China, many actors participate in the worship of Mao because they are not satisfied with the social issues in contemporary Chinese society, such as the corruption or "moral decay." Still others participate in the worship out of the habit of Buddhist temple visiting, or only confirm to other people's behaviors as the group pressure. In this sense, the motivation for "doing without believing" could come from both the macro-level social contexts as well as those more

meso or micro factors such as the confirmation to cultural settings of Buddhist temples.

By elaborating the mechanism of "transcendent logic," including both its connection to everyday life and the factors/cultural repertoire influencing the form and content of the logic, this chapter disclose the "black box" between the "societal needs" and the specific image of Mao's sacred reputation; By emphasizing the role of participation over conviction and belief (or "doing over believing"), this chapter explored and tested the long-lasting assumption that a personality cult and charisma imply the followers' belief and acceptance of the charismatic leader. In the following paragraphs, I will use both the personality cult during the Cultural Revolution and Mao's deification in contemporary China as examples to illustrate the mechanism of making and maintain a "sacred reputation."

Mao's Sacred Reputation during the Cultural Revolution[16]

Although Mao Zedong's charisma already began to emerge in the 1950s, the apex of Mao's sacred reputation (or personality cult) emerged during the Cultural Revolution since the 1966. As the "four great" implies, Chairman Mao is viewed as the "the great leader," "great teacher," "great commander," "great helmsman," "red sun," and Chinese people's savior and Messiah. While many historical studies have elaborated the specific events and roles of major leaders (such as Lin Biao and Jiang Qing) in promoting the cult (Harding, 2011; H. Y. Lee, 1980; Leese, 2011), my study will focus more on how the transcendent logic emerged and how ordinary people participate in the making and maintaining of Mao's sacredness.

As mentioned above, the first indispensable element is to build a transcendent

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[16] The historical evidence for this section comes from several sources, such as the Chinese Cultural Revolution Database, my interviews, and particularly the cases mentioned by Daniel Leese (2011) in his book on "Mao cult."

quality and logic through narratives or practices. The most influential transcendent narrative during the Cultural Revolution, or what Urban called "miracle of Chairman Mao"(Urban, 1972), is probably the story of Zhang Qiuju: "Zhang, a thirty-seven-year-old woman of lower-middle-class peasant descent, had been brought to the military health department of unit 4800 in Beijing by her husband in pedicab with a womb swollen like a balloon. After listening to the odyssey of the couple and *the failure of well-known specialists to treat her illness*, PLA[17] surgeons on 23 March proceeded with the operation. 'In the operating room, today *all four walls were covered with Chairman Mao posters and Chairman Mao quotations*…marking the room appear especially bright.'[18] *Muttering Mao quotations, Zhang entered the room…*" (Leese 2011:193; also see Urban 1972) When she went out of the room, a ninety-pound tumor was successfully removed and Zhang was fully healed. According to this story, none of the previous "well-known specialists" can treat Zhang's illness; only when Zhang went to a room with Mao's portraits and when she "mutter Mao quotations" can her illness be treated. From a scientific logic or common sense, the pictures on the wall has no relationship at all to curing one's illness. Thus, through these mysterious and magic power, Mao's transcendent quality was constructed.

Besides the Zhang story, there are many other stories and narratives describing Mao's transcendent power and quality. For instance, after receiving the Mao Zedong thought-inspired treatment, some deaf-mute children began to speak, successfully reciting many Mao quotes (see Leese 2011:194). In another popular song called "The East is Red," Chairman Mao is compared to the "red sun" and "big savior" of the Chinese people:

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[17] PLA refers to the People's Liberation Army.

[18] The quotation here within the quotation is from a book edited by a PLA party branch named as "无限忠于毛主席革命路线就是胜利" (*Being Boundlessly Loyal to Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line Means Victory*) 北京：北京军区政治部/后勤部, 1968, 26

"The east is red, the sun is rising.
From China comes Mao Zedong.
He strives for the people's happiness,
Hurrah, he is the people's great savior!
(Repeat last two lines)

Chairman Mao loves the people,
He is our guide
to building a new China
Hurrah, lead us forward!
(Repeat last two lines)

The Communist Party is like the sun,
Wherever it shines, it is bright
Wherever the Communist Party is
Hurrah, the people are liberated!
(Repeat last two lines)"[19]

Although Chairman Mao and CCP have always argued that people are the ultimate force pushing history forward, the image of Chairman Mao here is in every sense a "Messiah." In this case, while it might be particular musician who created the song and lyrics, the large scale of production and dissemination of the song was no doubt a state-project, illustrating the state's role as a "reputation entrepreneur."

Comparing with the narratives, there are even more examples of practices illustrating the transcendent quality and logic, such as the daily pledge and report, the recitation of the Little Red Book, the loyalty dance, and the Mango worship, among others. In terms of the creators or "reputation entrepreneurs," they are also coming from all aspects of the Chinese society, including both the state, the PLA, and the traditional culture, and the "inventions" of ordinary Chinese people. The daily pledge and report is one good example of the transcendent logic. This daily ritual is also called "asking for instructions in the morning and reporting back in the evening" (朝请示晚汇报). It was first mentioned "in June 1976 as part of the military training experience conducted

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[19] The translation of the song is based on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_East_Is_Red_(song). November 15, 2015.

at Shijingshan Middle School in the suburbs of Beijing" (Leese 2011:195), and lasted mainly between 1966 and 1971. Every day in the morning, before the opening of the factory, government, shops, schools, and also before the peasants set out to work, people would stand and bow to the picture of Chairman Mao on the wall, reciting the "instructions" from the Little Red Book (or *The Quotations from Chairman Mao*), wishing "the great leader, great teacher, great commander and great helmsman" long and healthy life. In many cases, people would also sing the praising songs such as "The East is Red" and "Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman." Upon finishing the whole day of work, people would again gather in front of the picture of Chairman Mao, examined one's own words and deeds in the day, and potentially asking Chairman Mao's forgiveness and instructions. These practices, in every sense, can be compared to the religious worship found in many religions. Who created this style of ritual? As the historical archive illustrates, it was first mentioned as a part of the military training for students in the Shijingshan Middle School, and was only later adopted by the government and spread nationwide. In this sense, the "reputation entrepreneurs" are a collectivity combined with both bottom-up and top-down elements.

The daily pledge and report is also related to the Mao image worship at home, because the pledge and report ritual is always conducted in front of the Chairman Mao picture. Although people hang pictures of great person all the time throughout history, the Mao image worship is especially deified. To begin with, when people tried to "buy" Mao's pictures, they never used the word "buy." Instead, they would use "*qing*" (请)—meaning invite or welcome the god to their own houses. The same word *qing* is also used when people get statues of Buddha or other gods to the temple. Meanwhile, when Chairman Mao was "invited" home, he would stand in the family shrine usually reserved for worshiping the ancestor—ironically, since the Cultural Revolution aimed

at destroying the "feudal and old cultures," the family worshiping practices were forbidden. When Chairman Mao's picture was hanged on the wall, one should not use other things to cover the whole or part image, as a way to express their reverence.

Another example of the deification practice is the so called "mango worship." In August 1968, the Pakistani foreign minister Mian Arshad Hussain visited China and sent dozens of mangos to Chairman Mao as gifts. To show his support to the "Worker Peasant [Soldier] Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Team" (工农兵毛泽东思想宣传队), Chairman Mao sent these mangos to the teams in Tsinghua University in Beijing. When the people received these precious gifts from the Chairman, they began to utter "*near-biblical rhetoric: these are not simple mangos, they are rain and dew; they are the sunshine*" (Leese 2011:220). The *People's Daily* specifically published a news report on this, and the report is entitled as "Every mango is full of deep kindness—every heart longs for the red sun: The time after the incredibly happy news had spread that Chairman Mao offered a precious gift."[20] At first, the mango was draped on a table covered with red cloth and was sent to Tsinghua University. However, the mangos will rot. Therefore, people waxed the mango and *placed it on a shrine*, with the outsider carved with words such as "long live Chairman Mao." Many more replicas were also made to meet the demand for a national display of the mango; after all, the mango was "the first tangible objects they had received from Mao" (Leese 2011:220). In the following days, the mangos were displayed and worshipped from university to work units, from Beijing to Henan, Guangdong, Yunnan, and many other parts of China[21]. In this story, the "near biblical rhetoric," the shrine preserving the "tangible objects" from

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[20] See the report in *People's Daily*, August 8, 1968. The title is translated by Daniel Leese (See Leese 2011).
[21] The relevant information can be found on the Internet:
http://www.360doc.com/content/13/0628/09/8102575_296070441.shtml, November 15, 2015;
http://news.dayoo.com/guangzhou/201504/21/139995_40964642.htm; November 15, 2015.

Chairman Mao (as if the relic from the Buddha), as well as the public display all illustrate the transcendent quality required to build the sacred reputation[22].

It should be noted though, that the construction of the sacredness not only comes from the state apparatus, they are also from cultural repertoire which ordinary people are familiar with. In this sense, even for Mao's first deification during the Cultural Revolution, it is not entirely an end-product of the top-down state mobilization and project, thus challenging the current wisdom on this issue. For instance, the loyalty dance, which is one ritual "worshipping Chairman Mao," was indeed spontaneously "invented" based on Yan'an *yangge* dances (秧歌) (Holm, 1991). Another example is how people use Mao's image. "For a short time, the habit of carrying large, framed Mao pictures around the neck came to be regarded as the ultimate expression of loyalty…especially in peripheral regions with a strong Buddhist tradition such as Tibet and Inner Mongolia" (Leese 2011:212). In this sense, people in Tibet and Inner Mongolia were obviously using their cultural repertoire from the past (the Buddhist tradition) to accustomed to the new worship. Moreover, when people "invite" Chairman Mao's pictures to their home and put it in the shrine originally used for worshipping ancestors, this is also when the old cultural repertoire works.

The second element for a sacred reputation is the social participation, though this participation does not require participants' sincere belief in the sacredness of the reputation target. For Mao's deification during the Cultural Revolution, many people do believe in Mao's charisma—such as Zhang Qiuju who was magically healed by Mao's image and Mao's thought, and those who voluntarily put Mao's portraits in the

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[22] For every sacred thing, there is a taboo. For instance, there are records showing that one peasant was punished because he accidentally used the newspaper with Chairman Mao's image on as the toilet paper (see Leese 2011:207). Moreover, "in Baishui County, Shaanxi province, 517 persons were struggled against because of various deviations from the acceptable rules of speech and behavior" (Leese 2011:207).

family shrine. Yet, there are also many people who do not really believe in Mao's sacredness. Since the non-believers face tremendous political pressure and consequences, many of them would hide their doubt while stories of non-believers were not heavily recorded. However, I still found several examples. For instance, according to the Ankang County (in Shaanxi province) Gazetteer, one peasant publicly questioned the notion that Chairman Mao could literarily live for ten thousand years, as many of the slogans claimed during the Cultural Revolution. As a result, this peasant was executed to death on June 29, 1970 (see Leese 2011:174). Another example Liu Wenhui, who is ordinary factory worker during the Cultural Revolution. He questioned Mao's sacred status as a "savior" in the testament before he committed suicide during the Cultural Revolution:

"Mao, as a historical figure, has his achievement for the Chinese people. However, he turned into the reactionary aspect after 1955. While the world is changing, *he still arrogantly regarded himself as correct and savior*. As a result, both the international and domestic policies are in chaos and risk. *He is now the bane of our nation!*"
<div align="right">--The Testament/Last Will of Liu Wenhui, March 20, 1967.</div>

By saying Mao was a "bane," Liu Wenhui is indeed a non-believer of Mao's charisma during the Cultural Revolution.

Although many Chinese people have some doubt about Chairman Mao's charisma and sacred reputation during the Cultural Revolution, most of them still participated in the personality cult voluntarily or involuntarily to avoid the political persecution, partially out of fear and partially to follow the political trend. For instance, Mr. Fang was a former "educated youth" during the Cultural Revolution. When I interviewed him in Shanghai, he talked about his experiences of singing the red song (such as the "East is Red") both now and then. He said: "*yes, of course we sing the 'red song'! What else can we sing?* ...I think we should sing the song like 'Unity is Strength', but we should also sing 'The International'! *The lyric of 'The International' is good,*

right? There is no savior in the world!" As Mr. Fang mentioned, part of his reasons to sing the red song, many of which featuring Mao's sacredness, is because they do not know "what else they can sing." Fang also mentioned the song of "The International"— by pointing out the lyric that "there is no savior in the world," Fang is implying that Mao is not a savior and does not have the sacredness in him. While Mr. Fang and Liu Wenhui are denouncing Mao's sacredness and are the real non-believers, many more of the Chinese citizen during the Cultural Revolution might be termed as "formalists"— they do not question Mao's sacredness but also not believe in Mao's charisma heart and soul; what they do is mainly to participate in the personality cult without thinking about the problem of belief. In this sense, it is their participation that maintain Mao's charisma and deification during the Cultural Revolution nationwide. Thus, doing is indeed more important than believing, and participation more important than conviction.

In sum, Mao's deification during the Cultural Revolution perfectly illustrates the two elements: to begin with, for whoever the reputation entrepreneurs are, including both the state apparatus, the army (PLA), the middle school, or the ordinary Chinese people, they together constructed the transcendent quality and logic through various of narratives and practices. These narratives and practices include red songs, myths about the healing power of Mao, the daily report ritual, the loyalty dance, the mango worship, the wearing of the Chairman Mao badge, and many others. On the other hand, there are also social participation to maintain Mao's sacred reputation. Historical archives and my interviews illustrate many dissident's questioning about Mao's sacredness, more people during Mao's era just "formally" participated in the personality without thinking about the problem of belief; they participated in the enterprise partly out of fear, as Hannah Arendt's description of totalitarianism (Arendt, 2004), partly out of respect, and partly out of confirmation to the social trend.

Mao's Sacred Reputation in the Post-Totalitarian China

While Mao's deification during the Cultural Revolution is largely a state project nationwide, Mao's sacred reputations in contemporary post-totalitarian China is more voluntary and takes various of forms. For instance, ordinary Chinese people have voluntarily built temples to worship Chairman Mao today, and these temples can be found in Hunan (early 1990s), Guangdong (2003), Sichuan (2006), Zhejiang, and Shaanxi Province. In this section, I will use my interviews and ethnography conducted in the Sichuan Chairman Mao Temple as the major example and other deified narratives and practices in Hunan and other places as secondary examples to illustrate the two elements in making and maintaining the sacred reputation.

The most widely deified narrative regarding Chairman Mao in contemporary China is probably Mao's magic power of protecting drivers when accidents happen. According to Geremie Barme (Barmé, 1996, p. 22) as well as other sources, this myth originated from South China in 1991. In this myth, "the driver of a vehicle involved in a serious traffic accident in Shenzhen that left a number of people dead survived unscathed because he had a picture of Mao on the dashboard. Another version of the story claims that the accident occurred in Guangzhou and a whole busload of people were protected by Mao's image" (Barme 1996:22). Since then, this urban legend translated into sacred practices for many taxi drivers in Hunan as well as in other cities. For instance, when I interviewed Mr. Ling, a taxi driver in Hunan, he said the following words:

"According to my knowledge, there are more than 10 people (of my friends) doing that. In fact, I would say most taxi drivers here in my city will hang the amulet of Chairman Mao in their cars…We hang Mao's statue in the car for two reasons, the first is to commemorate Mao, and the second is to protect us from hazards (for safety)."

As illustrated by this urban legend and practices, the myth about Mao can protect

drivers' safety is indeed a type of transcendent logic. According to the scientific logic, it is the good habit of driving that avoid potential risks; an amulet on the dashboard would not bless the taxi drivers—in many cases, it might actually block the drivers' views of the traffic. Thus, this myth about Mao illustrates the very first element of constructing a transcendent sacredness.

Another widely shared deified story is about Chairman Mao's statue in Hunan. In 1993, which is the 100th birthday of Chairman Mao, the statue was transported from Nanjing to Shaoshan, Hunan—Mao's very hometown. However, when the statue arrived in the Jinggangshan area in Jiangxi Province, which is the mid-point between Nanjing and Shaoshan, the trucks were stalled for no reason. The drivers checked the engine as well as other mechanical parts but found no problems at all. Everybody was confused by this incident. Suddenly, the leader of the transportation team said "Jinggangshan is the revolutionary base where Chairman Mao stayed for a long time, maybe Chairman Mao wanted to stay here for the night! Maybe we should wait here and give some time to Chairman Mao!" Magically, when the team woke up the next morning, everything was back to normal and the team successfully went back to Hunan. Moreover, when the statue was installed in December on the commemorative square of Shaoshan, the azalea bloomed all over the mountains nearby—while this type of flower normally blooms only in March or April. There are also myths happening in Mao's hometown of Hunan in the 1950s. For instance, according to the locals, Chairman Mao visited Shaoshan in 1959. When he took pictures with the local people, he put one hand on the shoulder of a boy and another on a girl, and this boy and girl finally get married when they grow up! Thus, many people also come to Hunan to worship this Mao statue for marriage—another illustration of the transcendent logic.

Besides the myth and urban legends in southern China and Hunan, people

(especially peasants) in many parts of China also began to worship using their ways, especially by building temples to worship Chairman Mao—this time Mao is indeed a god in the pantheon. Among all the Chairman Mao temples mentioned by the media, the Mao Temple in Sichuan Province received one of the most Internet coverages. Therefore, I chose the Sichuan Mao Temple as my fieldwork site, and spent the summer of 2014 and 2015 there, interviewing the temple's builders as well as the worshippers.

Graph 4: The outdoor scene of the Chairman Mao Temple in Sichuan

Graph 5: A woman worshipping Mao

Graph 6: The interior scene of the Chairman Mao Temple in Sichuan

Graph 7: People worshipping in the Temple with Mao's picture on the wall

The Chairman Mao Temple in Sichuan is located in a family backyard belonging to the Yan[23] family. Mr. Yan's parents (especially his mother) are very devoted Buddhist believers. With the help of their neighbors, they began to build the temple in the 1980s, first as a re-construction of the temple worshipping a god from

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[23] The name has been changed to protect the anonymity of the interviewee.

Buddhist tradition. As time goes by, they began to build a side temple specifically for worshipping Chairman Mao, and finally finished the Mao Temple in 2006. On the outside walls of the Mao temple, there pasted the traditional Chinese couplet and top scroll. The tope scroll says "*the son of heaven, a public spirit for all, long live Chairman Mao!*" The couplets pasted on the two columns are carved with golden words respectively saying "fight for the nation; rule the nation; everyone supports him" and "fight for the nation; rule the nation; everybody loves him." Inside of the temple, one may see the golden statue of Chairman Mao in the middle, with the statue of Zhou Enlai and Zhu De sitting aside. The ears of the Mao statue were also prolonged, which is a typical indication of gods commonly used in Buddhist temples. The red characters below Mao's statue are translated as: "Never forget the man who dug the well when you drink; Never forget Chairman Mao when you lead a happy life." Interestingly though, together with the Mao statue standing many other gods, including both gods from the Buddhist and Taoist traditions. Also, the phrase "a public spirit for the all" (天下为公) has an origin in one ancient Chinese classic called *The Book of Rites* (《礼记》), and has been recently used by Sun Yat-sen, who is the founding father of the Republic of China. These decorations of the Chairman Mao illustrate two things: first, by saying Mao Zedong is "the son of the heaven," and by literally building the god-statue in the temple, Chairman Mao is indeed a sacred god in contemporary China; second, for whoever the "reputation entrepreneurs" are, though they are not from the state apparatus for sure, they frequently used the *traditional Chinese cultural repertoire* as a way to construct Mao's sacredness.

People also participate in the deification of Mao by visiting the temple and worshipping Mao, for protection and blessing. The temple is usually open on the first day and 15th day of each lunar month—which is corresponding to Buddhist tradition.

On the morning of the opening day, people (especially old people) will come here and buy some candles and joss sticks. They burnt these candles and joss sticks and put them in the shrine facing each temple (the main temple and the side temple). Then they will bow to the gods and silently pray to the gods, from east to west, south to north—because they believe that gods exist everywhere. Many worshippers will also contribute incense money to the temple. One of the worshippers I met with is coming back here to fulfill her promises. She prayed from the god including Chairman Mao, wishing her son-in-law to pass the civil-service examination, and now her son-in-law indeed passed the exam! Therefore, she bought and fired some firecrackers in the temple as a ritual thanking the gods.

Besides this believer, there is another woman Mrs. Shen, who claims that she can communicate with Chairman Mao when sleeping. She usually led a group of old women and come directly to the Chairman Mao temple in the afternoon. She was definitely the opinion leader. When they performed the rituals worshipping Chairman Mao, she was the one to speak. She will speak loudly about the follower's name, the family members in the follower's home, and ask Chairman Mao for specific blessings. Besides Mrs. Shen, many other worshippers also argue that Chairman Mao can protect people's safety, because "*Chairman Mao was never hurt during the revolutionary years!*" This is indeed a transcendent logic—they argue Mao can protect their safety because Mao himself was never hurt during the revolutionary years! This connection would never find evidence in modern science!

Although there are sincere believers of Mao's supernatural power, such as Mrs. Shen mentioned above, more people hold an ambiguous view towards Mao's power. They treat Mao and other gods as "*general gods*," which do not differentiate with each other. In this sense, *their religious belief is less important than their religious practice*.

Once they conducted the religious and worshipping practice, Chairman Mao has already enjoyed a deified status. This is partially corresponding to Turner's argument that ritual separate the scene from everyday life, presenting a "liminal" stage through which one can go to the sacred sphere (Turner, 1969). For instance, I talked to one of the visitor, Mrs. Bao, wondering what she is praying for:

Q: What did you pray for from Chairman Mao?
A: For safety and protection…
Q: Do you really believe that Chairman Mao has that kind of power?
A: *Well, I don't know. It is a wish… I am here so I should worship him and other gods…*
I also talked to Mrs. Zhen, another visitor to the temple:

Q: Are you specifically coming here to pray to Chairman Mao?
A: No, since gods are all here, I will pray all the gods. *When you visit one's house, you should say hello to all the people in the house…*
Q: Do you pray to the Chairman Mao the way as you do for other gods?
A: Yes, *they are all the same…*

From these conversations, one may find that the worshippers themselves often hold ambiguous attitudes towards Mao's supernatural power. For them, worshipping is more of a wish, and it does not hurt to worship one more gods, since "all gods are here." Also, by comparing worshipping gods to saying hello to people in the house, Bao is partially deconstructing the sacredness of these gods. It seems that gods are like your friends, who you go their houses and chat with them. Do you "friends" have supernatural power? They are not sure, but it does not hurt to have a try! In this sense, *these visitors are only participating in the deification of Chairman Mao today, but not necessarily with a belief in its sacred power*. Through their participation, Mao's sacredness is made, maintained, and re-produced. In this sense, *these visitors are both creators and receivers*.

It should be noted though, the historical context does provide a background against which the general admiration of Mao becomes possible. After several decades of development in the "reform and opening up" era, many social problems emerge. According to Geremie Barme, "corruption, nepotism, and economic ineptitude led to

widespread disgruntlement… Mao, a strong leader who in the popular imagination was above corruption and a romantic unfettered by pettifogging bureaucratic constraints, was for many the symbol of an age of economic stability, egalitarianism, and national pride" (Barme 1996:15). Against this backdrop, Chinese people began to have a romantic nostalgia towards Chairman Mao and his time, thus setting the macro historical context for the re-emergence of Mao popularity. However, this general nostalgia towards Mao can translate into various forms of commemoration, such as the commodification of Mao (see Chapter 4), and the views seeing Mao as a hero (see Chapter 3). Yet, for a reputation target to achieve sacredness, the two elements of transcendent logic and "participation over conviction" are still needed.

In sum, the narratives and practices surrounding Mao's sacred reputations in contemporary China have perfectly illustrated the central arguments of this chapter. First, the transcendent quality and logic are indispensable for creating a sacred reputation, which is similar for Mao's deification during the Cultural Revolution. Second, comparing to the "Mao cult" in the totalitarianism, the "reputation entrepreneurs" today are mainly from the grass-root Chinese society rather than the state apparatus (though Mao's deification in the 1960s is not entirely a state project either). This also illustrates that the top-down state mobilization is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for making a sacred reputation. Third, as the visitors to the Sichuan Mao temple indicate, many of them are both creators and receivers at the same time. By participating in the worshipping activities, they are receiving Mao's sacredness from previous memory work but also maintaining and re-producing Mao's sacred reputations.

Conclusion and Discussion

What makes a sacred reputation? How is a sacred reputation maintained and reproduced? Through comparing the "Mao cult" during the Cultural Revolution and Mao's deification in contemporary China, this chapter argues that two elements are indispensable in making and maintaining a sacred reputation. To begin with, for whomever the "reputation entrepreneurs" (G. A. Fine, 2001), being the state, the army (PLA), or ordinary Chinese people, they all need to create narratives and practices with transcendent quality and logic—a logic beyond the everyday life. In contrast to previous studies' focus on the top-down state mobilization during the Cultural Revolution (Andreas, 2007; Leese, 2011), this chapter argues that the mass mobilization in the totalitarian system is not a necessary condition for the construction of sacredness; in fact, even for the Cultural Revolution period, Mao's deification has incorporated many bottom-up "inventions" relating to China's traditional cultural repertoire. Besides the transcendent logic, a sacred reputation also require that actors participate in the enterprise of deification. As my analyses of Mao's deification in both eras illustrate, many Chinese citizens do not really believe in Mao's charisma or sacredness. Yet, they still patriciate in the deified narratives and practices, for various kinds of reasons—out of fear, respect, or confirmation to the peer pressure. In this sense, doing is more important than the belief; participation of the deification is more important than the conviction of the deity.

By arguing doing is more important than believing, my study contributes to the field of reputation study by clarifying the role of belief. Previous wisdoms from charisma and personality cult often imply (if not directly elaborate) that a charisma exists only through the acceptance by the followers (Tucker, 1968; Weber, 1978). Yet, these studies do not elaborate on what "acceptance" means, and many of them indirectly

imply that followers sincerely believe in the superhuman charism by the reputation target. However, as my research illustrates, while there exist many sincere believers, there are also people (sometime more in numbers) that do not believe but participate anyway. Moreover, by delineating the specific mechanisms in constructing the sacredness, such as the construction of transcendent logic, the exploitation of cultural repertoire, and social participation, my study discloses the "black box" between the "societal needs" and the specific deification of reputation targets. Moreover, by emphasizing actors' roles as both creators and receivers, such as those visiting the Mao temple, this chapter also contributes to the reputation study by rethinking the "agents" for the memory work.

While this study is based on the case of Chairman Mao, my theoretical arguments on the transcendent logic and "doing over believing" can potentially apply to other situations or societies. For instance, Marc Bloch discusses the French King's touch for healing the scrofula and the British case for cramp rings (Bloch, 1990); by emphasizing the "magic healing power" of the king, Bloch was also talking about the transcendent logic necessary for sacredness. For the personality cult in North Korea, many people might also voluntarily or compulsorily participate in the worship of leaders without necessarily believing in the sacredness of the leaders.

Chapter 3: The Liminal Reputation: Chairman Mao as Both Hero and Villain

"Dear Chairman Mao, your greatness is far beyond what I can write with my little pen; Your kindness is far beyond what I can tell in my whole life. You are the shining red sun, spreading the light into the heart of every working man in the world!"

--Du Gao, *Thoughts after Studying Chairman Mao's "Four Greatness"*[24], 1969

"Mao Zedong will always be the sinner of our nation! He is not qualified to rule the country. His rule is wrecking the country and hurting the people! The only correct thing he did in his life is to die in 1976…"

--An anonymous comment on the *Weibo* (Chinese Twitter) site, December 23, 2013[25]

Probably no one is more controversial than Mao Zedong in contemporary China. For some people, Mao was a hero who embodied super-human spirit and wisdom, bringing hope to the nation; for others, Mao was a villain or demon, bringing suffering to China and its people. In some historical periods, such as the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong was viewed mainly as a charismatic leader and savior; while in other times, such as in contemporary China, Mao's images are more complicated and sometimes contradictory. In this sense, Mao's reputation has never been settled, and rather is more controversial today than before; Mao can be a hero, but he can also be a villain, a perpetrator, a victim, or a demon *at the same time,* making for a rather fluid and liminal reputation[26].

Besides the fluidity and co-existence between different types of reputations, the

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[24] 杜高，1969，《向毛主席请罪，向毛主席宣誓——学习毛主席"四个伟大"材料后的感想》, quoted from the Chinese Cultural Revolution Database.

[25] The original post was soon deleted after December 23, 2013. Yet I copied and downloaded all the comments before they were deleted by *Weibo.*

[26] This is also different from Philip Smith's conceptualization of the "liminal space," which mainly belongs to the "special category;" the liminal space to Smith is one category of space and thus cannot be viewed as being sacred and profane at the same time (Smith, 1999).

liminal status is also reflected in the concept of hero and demon *per se*. Indeed, as the Greek mythologies indicates, many heroes, such as Achilles, Hercules and Theseus, are half human and half god, or the very offspring resulting from the intercourse between Gods and humans. As Bernhard Giesen argues, these heroes are often "imagined as warriors of superhuman force, *liminal* figures who could cross the boundary between everyday life and the realm of gods and demons."(Giesen, 2004, p. 15). The same applies to the demonic reputations, because demons are usually viewed as "half humans and half animals, or…human by bodily nature, but animals by the lack of reason and morality"(Giesen, 2004, p. 50). In this sense, both hero and demon are originating but also going beyond the profane world. In this sense, the liminal reputations are thus located at some point between the sacred and profane reputations, if we view the latter two as two end points on a round continuum.

In this chapter, I will use Mao Zedong's heroic and villainous reputations as a case to study the "liminal reputation," by which I mean *the co-existence of various reputations that idles near, or crosses, the boundary between the sacred and profane spheres; it originates within, but often goes beyond, the profane sphere.* More specifically, this chapter askes: what contextual factors make Mao's reputation heroic or villainous? How does the regime context affect the (degree of) liminality of reputations? How to successfully make a type of liminal reputation, in the face of contradictory information? As mentioned in Chapter 1, the evaluation of Mao's reputation is strongly connected to characteristics of the regime. Compared to the post-totalitarian system, the totalitarian regime features a monopoly of power and strong control of ideology and society (Linz, 2000). Thus, *logic follows that the less totalitarian a regime is, the more a liminal sphere exists for previous sacred figures in the public discourse*

To better unravel these questions and to test the abovementioned hypothesis, I will have a theoretical dialogue with the studies on reputations, heroes, regime contexts, and the techniques of justification. While reputational studies have correctly pointed out the importance of contexts in making reputations, the specific meanings of context should be clarified. In the Chinese case, I argue that the most important contextual factor is the regime change from totalitarianism to post-totalitarianism. More specifically, I will examine how the Chinese state and society view Chairman Mao differently in different regimes (the state-perspective, society-perspective), and how the characteristics of state-society relations in two regimes affect the degree of liminality for Mao's reputations. In other words, I use the state/society perspective to "operationalize" and test the influence of regime characteristics.

Based on the analysis of the *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database* and the commemoration posts on *Weibo* (the Chinese Twitter) celebrating Mao's 120th birthday, my study found that the abovementioned hypothesis is very much supported: the reputational "labels" (or codes) the state and society used to describe Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution are much fewer in number than in contemporary post-totalitarian China; meanwhile, since the state had a much stronger control of ideology and society, the reputational "labels" the society used also corresponded more to the state discourse in the period of totalitarian China. On the other hand, by analyzing various discourses through these documents, this chapter also summarized five discourse techniques in dealing with contradictory information in successfully making a heroic or villainous reputation (as examples of liminal reputation.) These discourse techniques include: *weighting, disconnecting, subliming, labelling, and enforcing*.
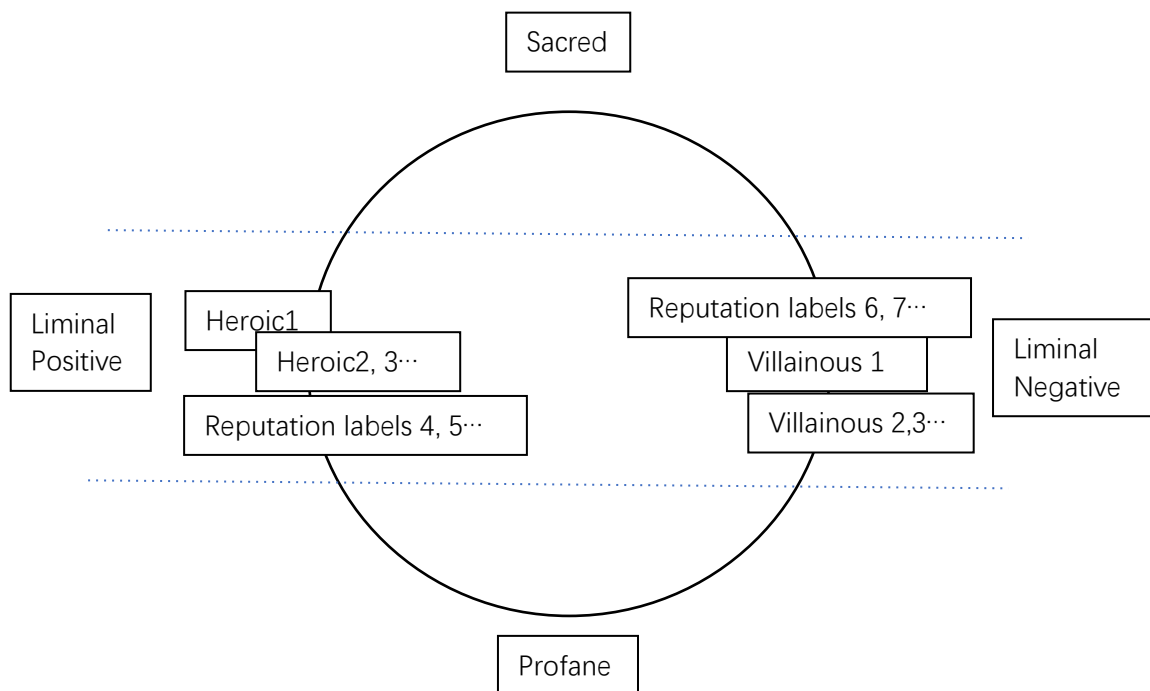
In the following paragraphs, I will first review relevant studies, based on which I will put forward and explain the hypothesis regarding the liminality-regime context

relations. I will then use Mao's heroic and villainous reputations as examples and the state/society perspective as analytical approaches with which to examine the hypothesis and elaborate on my theoretical findings.

Heroes and Villains as Liminal Reputations

As mentioned above, heroes and villains (or more appropriately, demons) are concepts with liminal duality[27]. Heroes are often viewed as human possessing super-human ability, especially as the offspring of gods and human beings; Demons are often viewed as half-man and half-animal, or as a human being possessed by devils. In this sense, both heroes and demons are the crossing the boundary between the sacred and profane. Yet, since "heroes" and "villains" (rather than "demons") are often paired together to refer to the contradictory images or reputations, I will summarize the *coexistence* of the variety of reputation labels with different degree of sacredness as the "heroic" and "villainous" reputations. Thus, the heroic and villainous reputational labels can be viewed as particular points on the "liminal reputation circle:"

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[27] Besides the duality of heroes and demons, there are also other approaches for a sociological study of heroes. One representative approach is the functional or Durkheimian approach, emphasizing heroes and villains' roles in bonding the community. According to this approach, the hero represents the ideal or the utopia of a community (Durkheim, 1961), and helps in increasing the community solidarity (Coser, 1992). The similar logic on the "unification of group" is also identified by Georg Simmel (Simmel & Wolff, 1950). On the other hand, the villains also strengthen the community (Ducharme & Fine, 1995), largely by exemplifying the moral boundaries of a society (Erikson, 1966). The functional perspective on heroes and villains also includes the study viewing hero making as a way of social control. Using William Goode's words, the "celebration of heroes" represents a manipulation of prestige—"granting or withdrawing prestige or esteem controls the actions of both individuals and groups"(Goode, 1978, p. 15). Following this perspective, Patricia Taylor analyzed how honors and prestige are used to reproduce inequality under Communism (Taylor, 1987). As a counterpart of this phenomenon, the villainous reputation is viewed as a punishment, through which the social control is strengthened.

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                    ┌─────────┐
                    │ Sacred  │
                    └─────────┘

┌──────────┐   ┌─────────┐         ┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────┐
│ Liminal  │   │ Heroic1 │         │ Reputation labels 6, 7···│   │ Liminal  │
│ Positive │   └──┬──────────┐     └────┬──────────────┐       │ Negative │
└──────────┘      │ Heroic2, 3···│        │ Villainous 1 │       └──────────┘
              ┌───┴────────────────┐  ┌──┴───────────────┐
              │ Reputation labels 4, 5···│  │ Villainous 2,3···│
              └────────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘

                    ┌─────────┐
                    │ Profane │
                    └─────────┘
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Graph 8: The Model of "Liminal Reputation Circle"

As illustrated by Graph 8, the dotted lines indicate the boundaries between the sacred sphere, the liminal sphere, and the profane sphere. Yet I used dotted lines rather than solid lines because the boundaries between these spheres are not fixed or clear-cut as the word "boundary" implies. Correspondingly, the area between the dotted lines symbolizes the degree of liminality for a particular reputation target. The bigger the area is, the more liminality there is, and thus the coexistence of more liminal reputations. On the other hand, the left side indicates the positive reputational labels, such as all variants of the heroic reputations, while the right side indicates the negative labels. It should be noted though, the positivity does not equal to the sacred, and the negativity does not equal to the profane. As the example of demon and devil illustrates, although these categories are evil, they still enjoy a transcendent and sacred quality, invoking people's emotion of awe and reverence. The heroic and villainous reputational labels are thus corresponding to the particular points on the black line constituting the circle.

Depending on different degree of sacredness, the reputational codes in the liminal area are differentiated by their distance to the sacred end of the "liminal circle."

The Totalitarian and Post-Totalitarian Context: Constructing Hypotheses

In Chapter 1, I have laid out the major characteristics of the totalitarian and post-totalitarian regimes—the totalitarianism is featured by the monopoly of power, mass mobilization, and a strong control of ideology and society, while the post-totalitarian society is characterized by a reducing importance of ideology, a loosening control of society, and the existence of (limited) pluralism (Linz, 2000; Zhao, 2000). While it is true that the these two categories are not reified entities and there exist intra-state and intra-society relations (Perry, 1994), it is still useful to use the state and society as analytical tools to examine the characteristics of the totalitarian and post-totalitarian regimes. In the Chinese context, the totalitarian regime is corresponding to the communist era under Mao Zedong's control, while the post-totalitarian regime is the "reform and opening up" period after Mao died.

Since the totalitarian state will strongly control the elaboration of ideology and the autonomy of society, a natural logic is that the definition of particular people (especially political leaders) is also controlled by the state. In other words, it is the state who define a person's reputation, and this person's reputation is also more fixed and one-dimensional based on its correspondence to the official ideology. In contrast, for a post-totalitarian society, since the state has loosen the control of the society and has reduced the importance of ideology, the society (including various actors) will have more agency and freedom in defining a particular person; as a result, this person's reputations are also more fluid and "liminal." Thus, two hypotheses can be developed:

Hypothesis 1: The less totalitarian a regime is, the more liminal sphere (and thus the coexistence of more liminal reputational labels) exists for a political figure in the public discourse. (see Graph 2 and Graph 3 in Chapter 1)

Hypothesis 2: The less totalitarian a regime is, the more likely for the society to develop its own reputational labels/codes for a political figure.

Graph 2 and Graph 3 (see Chapter 1) are the visual representations of the hypotheses 1. Although the hypotheses describe a process or continuum rather than a status, for the sake of analytical convenience, I will choose and compare the representative periods standing for the totalitarian and post-totalitarian regimes. In the Chinese context, the representative period for totalitarianism is the Cultural Revolution, while the period for post-totalitarianism is the contemporary China. Since the 120th birthday of Mao Zedong is a time the state and society publicly discuss and commemorate Mao Zedong, I chose Chinese president's commemoration speech of Mao and other posts on the Internet at the same time as data sources to examine the post-totalitarian China. According to the logic laid out in the hypotheses, in the contemporary Chinese society, there will be more reputational labels and codes describing Chairman Mao (hypothesis 1), and the particular reputations the society uses will be less influenced by the Chinese state discourse (hypothesis 2).

Techniques of Justification

For a particular reputation to be successfully constructed, one need to deal with the contradictory information. This is true for the sacred reputation, but is more important for a "liminal reputation" which is constantly crossing the sacred-profane boundaries. This issue is the second research question this chapter aims to answer.

Current literature in memory and reputation studies have provided wisdom in this regard. For instance, when studying how Benedict Arnold was transformed from a hero into a villain, especially a traitor, Lori Ducharme and Gary Alan Fine put forward the

concept of "demonization" and "nonpersonhood" to summarize the techniques of constructing an evil reputation (Ducharme & Fine, 1995). More specifically, "demonization" refers to "a process in which ambiguities of moral character are erased, so that the commemorated figure is seen as fully, intensely, and quintessentially evil;" while "nonpersonhood" "describes, not the erasure of the whole person, but the denial of the virtuous aspects of self in the villain's commemoration"(Ducharme & Fine, 1995). During the process of demonization and nonpersonhood, the agents will attack both the biography and motives of the reputation object. In addition, Barry Schwartz also mentioned processes (though not exactly techniques) in constructing more heroic reputations. These processes include "revelation," which is the "propagation of God's word", and "adoration," which is "perceptible observances and other external manifestations" of God's holiness and glory (Schwartz, 1987).

Besides the discussion of heroic and evil reputations, there are also theories on techniques of constructing memories or general claims in other contexts. For instance, when examining the commemoration of the past in Federal Republic of Germany, Jeffrey Olick mentioned the possibility of normalizing the German past through "relativization" (Jeffrey K. Olick, 1999). In studying the justification of criminal behaviors, Sykes and Matza made a list of "techniques of neutralization," which include the denial of responsibility, the denial of injury, the denial of the victim, the condemnation of condemners, and the appeal to higher loyalties(Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Yet, as Ducharme and Fine mentioned in their article, the demonization and nonpersonhood are only two of many techniques in constructing an evil reputation (Ducharme & Fine, 1995). They did not intend to put forward a comprehensive list of the techniques. To some extent, the demonization and nonpersonhood are more of a result of evil reputation construction than the process of it. Meanwhile, while Schwartz

mentioned some of the processes in constructing a national hero, he does not elaborate specific discourse techniques in making a particular type of reputation. Based on this literature, this chapter will also analyze more specific techniques, especially those constructing a heroic reputation with the villainous elements presented.

Notes on Data and Methods

While I have discussed the data and methods for the whole dissertation in Chapter 1, it is necessary to elaborate the particular sources for the study of chis chapter, especially the particular categories of historical archives and the specific posts on the Internet.

Specifically, I will use two sources as representative of state and society attitudes towards Mao Zedong in Mao's era and the post-Mao era respectively. For the Mao's era (1949-1976), my study will mainly use the primary documents from the *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*, which are collected by Yongyi Song and his colleagues, and published through the Universities Service Centre for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong[28]. Due to the availability of the materials, I will use the primary documents (especially the report by the state agency or the newspaper such as *People's Daily* and the *PLA Daily*[29]) in the "personality cult" category of this database to study the both state's and society's (but mostly the state's) construction of Mao's reputation, representing Mao's era and the totalitarian regime; I will also use the materials in the "heretical thoughts" category of this database (including the confession letters, personal diary, testament, etc.) to study the society's construction of Mao's reputation, in a totalitarian context.

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[28] The Database can be accessed through http://ccrd.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/. February 27, 2016.
[29] The *PLA Daily* refers to the *People's Liberation Army's Daily*, which is one major newspaper in promoting the personality cult of Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution.
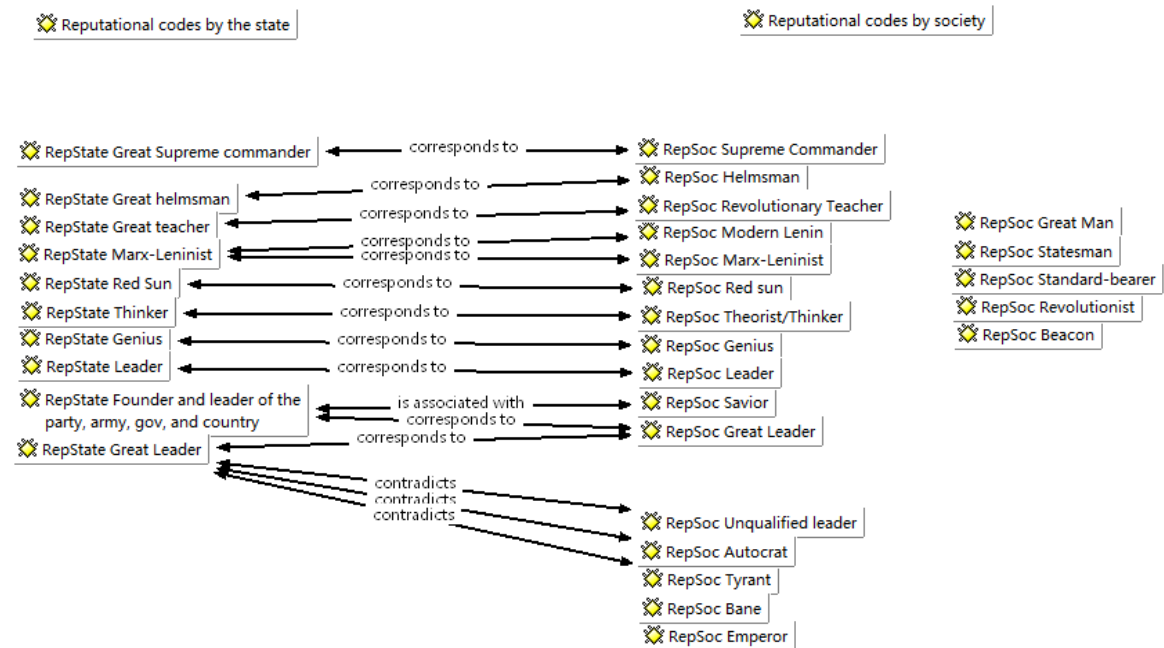
For the current stage or the Post-Mao era, I will use President Xi Jinping's commemorative speech in Mao Zedong's 120th birthday as representing the state's discourse on Mao's reputation. Meanwhile, for the voices of the society, I will analyze all the comments posted on the two very popular commemoration posts celebrating Mao's 120th birthday on the Weibo website, which can be viewed as the Chinese Twitter. The first post is a commemoration post by the *People's Daily*, the most authoritative newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, and the second post is called "where does the Grandpa go?" Both posts received hundreds and even thousands of comments, some of which viewing Mao as hero while others viewing him as villains. All these posts were downloaded on December 25, 2013, Mao's 120th birthday. Unfortunately, due to the media censorship, all these posts were deleted and cannot be accessed today. In the following paragraphs, I will test the abovementioned hypotheses and answer the research questions on Mao's liminal reputations.

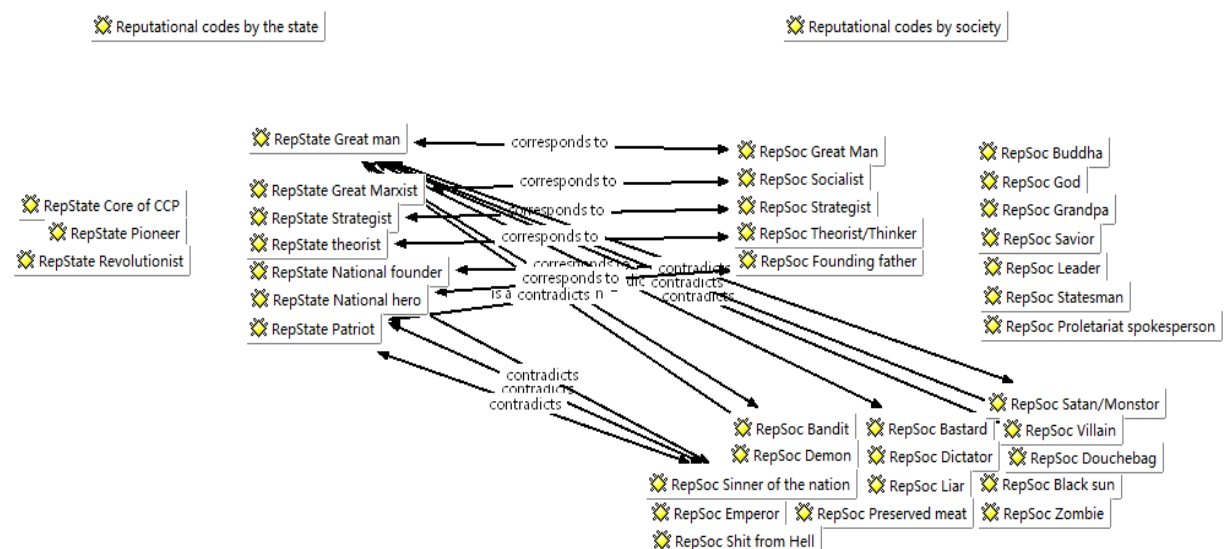**Test of the Hypotheses: Regime Context and the Liminal Reputations**

As Hypothesis 1 indicates, if a regime is less totalitarian, there will be more reputational labels/codes exist (thus more liminal sphere) for a political figure. Thus, *if this logic stands, the total (heroic and villainous) reputational labels the state and society developed and used will be less in number in the totalitarian Mao era.* In the meantime, according to Hypothesis 2, a totalitarian regime has stronger control of the society and ideology, and thus the society will develop less reputational labels/codes which are not consistent with the state discourse. In the Chinese context, it means that *in the Mao era, the society's use of reputational labels and codes to describe Chairman Mao will be more likely to correspond to the state discourse*.

To explore the abovementioned relationship, I will use the exact words (without

abstraction and generalization) the state and the society used in their original contexts as indicators to study the existence of reputational labels in both the Cultural Revolution and the post-totalitarian contemporary China.

Graph 9: State-Society Reputational Labels/Codes in Cultural Revolution

Graph 10: State-Society Reputational Labels/Codes in the Post-Mao era

The comparison of Graph 9 and Graph 10 illustrate the number of unique reputational labels/codes the state and society used in each era. As the left portion of Graph 9 shows, the reputational labels/codes the state used in constructing the heroic image of Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution include "great supreme commander," "great helmsman," "great teacher," "Marx-Leninist," "Red Sun," "thinker," "genius," "leader/great leader," and "founder and leader of the party, army, government, and country." At first glance, the words such as "teacher" and "commander" are categories normal people can be; Yet, under close examination, the word "great teacher" and "great commander" were reserved to designate Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution—no one else dare to use the label of "great teacher" to call others or oneself. In this sense, the majority of reputational labels the state used in Mao's era are actually belonging to the "sacred sphere," with exceptions of "Marxist-Leninist," "thinker," and "founder and leader of the party, army, government, and country." In this sense, the Chinese state used 10 reputational labels to designate Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution, and only 3 among them are "liminal" reputations.

On the other hand, the reputational codes the society used, which are illustrated by the right portion of the graph, include all the codes the state used, as well as other positive codes such as "great man," "statesman," "standard-bearer," "revolutionist," "beacon," and negative codes including "unqualified leader," "autocrat," "tyrant," "bane," and "emperor." Although the society during the Cultural Revolution did has developed some reputational labels, the new positive labels are strongly influenced by the style of languages used by the then-current state. Among these distinctive labels, the words of "beacon" and "standard-bearer" have strong sacred features; the codes of "great man," "statesman," "revolutionist," "tyrant," "autocrat," "emperor" belong more

to the liminal categories; while the terms such as "unqualified leader" and "bane" are more of profane reputations, though the boundary between the "liminal" and the "profane" is hard to drawn. In this sense, there are 6 distinctive liminal reputations the society used, and the total number of liminal reputational codes the state and society used is 9. If we calculate call categories of reputational codes (including all sacred, liminal, and profane reputations), then the total number the state and society used is 21. While this number could not exhaust all reputational codes emerging in the Cultural Revolution, this analysis based on all historical documents in the "personality cult" category and the "heretical thoughts" category of the *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database* does reflect the degree of liminality for Mao's reputations during that period.

In the meantime, as Graph 10 shows, the reputational codes the state used (illustrated by President Xi Jinping's commemorative speech) in the pot-totalitarian era (or the reform regime) include "great man," "great Marxist," "strategist," "theorist," "national founder," "national hero," "patriot," as well as the "core of CCP," "pioneer," and "revolutionist." Comparing to the state discourse during the Cultural Revolution, the contemporary Chinese state used far less sacred reputational codes—terms such as "red sun" or "savior" have disappeared from the president's speech. These codes the state used today are still positive, and yet belonging more to the "liminal" category of reputations. In this sense, the state used 10 liminal reputational codes in total to describe Mao Zedong.

Besides the 5 overlapping codes ("great man," "socialist," "strategist," "theorist/thinker," and "founding father,") the society used far more reputational codes to designate Chairman Mao in the post-Mao era. These codes and labels include: "buddha," "god," "grandpa," "savior," "leader," "statesman," "proletariat spokesperson," "bandit," "demon," "sinner of the nation," "emperor," "shit from hell,"

"bastard," "dictator," "liar," "preserved meat" (referring to Mao's corpse presented and shrined in Chairman Mao's Mausoleum in Beijing), "Satan," "monster," "villain," "douchebag," "black sun," and "zombie." While the society also used sacred words such as "buddha," "god," "savior," and "Satan," there are much more liminal reputational codes for the society. Among the abovementioned codes, "leader," "statesman," "proletariat spokesperson," "bandit," "demon," "sinner of the nation," "emperor," "shit from hell," "dictator," "preserved meat," "monster," "villain," "black sun," and "zombie" can all be categorized into the liminal category, making the number of liminal codes 14. For the remaining codes such as "bastard," "liar," and "douchebag," one can argue that they belong more to the profane sphere. In this sense, the state and society in contemporary China used 19 liminal reputational codes (excluding the repetitive terms) and 31 reputational codes in total to designate Mao Zedong.

While one can never exhaust all the reputational codes and labels the state and society use in both the Mao era and the post-Mao era, the analysis of all the documents in the "personality cult" category and the "heretical thoughts" category of the *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database* and the most popular posts commemorating Mao's 120th birthday on the Internet presents a good indication of the general situation or "social ethos" regarding the liminal reputations of Chairman Mao. As the above analyses illustrate, in the Cultural Revolution, the state and society developed 9 liminal reputations and 21 reputations to designate Mao; while in the post-totalitarian contemporary China, the state and society used at least 19 liminal reputations and 31 reputational codes in total to describe Mao—many of which are developed independently by the society. In this sense, *hypothesis 1 is indeed supported*—the less totalitarian a regime is, the more (liminal) reputational codes (and thus more liminal sphere) exist for a political figure.

Hypothesis 2 is also supported by the evidence showed in Graph 9 and Graph 10. As Graph 9 illustrates, among all the 21 reputational codes, 10 codes were used by both the state and society, which include "great supreme commander," "great helmsman," "great teacher," "Marx-Leninist," "Red Sun," "Thinker," "Genius," "Leader/Great Leader," and "Founder and leader of the party, army, government, and country." These codes and labels are all positive, which is influenced by the doctrine and the official ideology in Mao's era. In contrast, the society only developed limited number of codes. Among these relevant independent codes, five of them are also praising Chairman Mao. In this sense, the state discourse not only provides particular reputational codes and labels for the society but also largely determine the content and value of these codes. In the post-Mao era, in contrast, the society developed far more independent codes to describe Mao. Among all the 31 unique codes, 21 codes are not corresponding to President Xi Jinping's speech, which is representative of the state discourse on Mao in contemporary China. Moreover, among these 21 codes independently developed by the society, most of them are negative, including codes such as "bandit," "demon," "sinner of the nation," "emperor," "shit from hell," "bastard," "dictator," "liar," "preserved meat," "Satan," "monster," "villain," "douchebag," "black sun," and "zombie." In other words, comparing to the Cultural Revolution era, the heroic reputational codes in the post Mao era are less in number, while the villainous reputational codes are experiencing a sharp increase. In this sense, *the second meaning of liminality is also confirmed—the coexistence of various and sometimes contradictory reputational codes is indeed more possible in the post-totalitarian context*. In sum, based on the comparison of the state-society relations in using and developing the labels to describe Mao in both eras, *hypothesis 2 is also supported*—indeed, the society's use of reputational labels and codes to describe Mao

is more likely to correspond to the state discourse in the totalitarian regime[30].
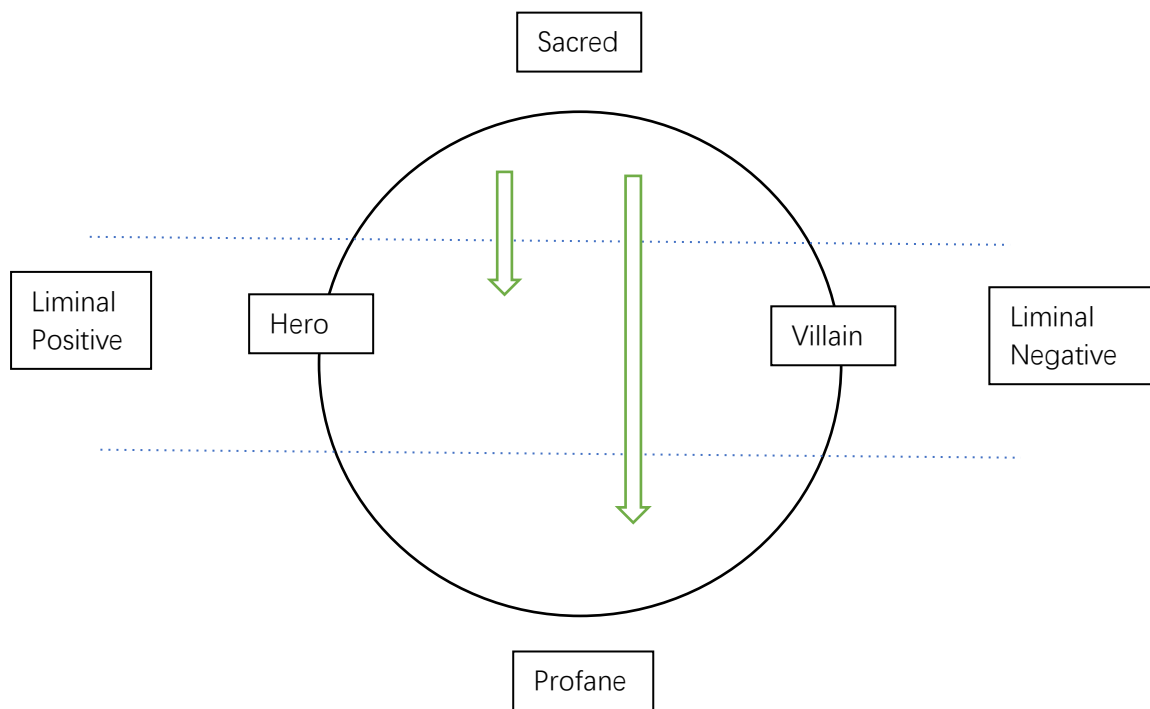
It should be noted though, that the Chinese Communist Party is still the official ruling party of China, and thus the Chinese state and society is more of post-totalitarianism than post-communism. The ideology still plays a role in China, and correspondingly, Chairman Mao is still valued by the official discourse, though not in a sacred manner. In this sense, the post-totalitarian feature of the Chinese state also contributes to Mao's falling from the sacred to the liminal sphere—Mao is largely not sacred anymore because the role of ideology is vastly reduced; yet Mao still enjoys some sacredness and thus fall into the liminal sphere, corresponding to the continuous existence of ideology in a post-totalitarian society. On the other hand, since the post-totalitarian state has loosened its control over the society and allowed for the emergence of (limited) pluralism, the society began to develop various reputational labels based on people's own ideas and agency. In this sense, the hypotheses regarding the change of liminality of reputations are indeed a result of post-totalitarian social and regime change[31].

Moreover, three caveats should be clarified. First, the analysis of this section mainly deals with the reputations of previous sacred figures, Chairman Mao being an ideal case. In other words, other types of reputations indeed existed for particular

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[30] While the state in the reform era still viewed Chairman Mao predominately positive and heroic, more negative and villainous reputational codes are used by the society. These codes include "bandit," "bastard," "Satan/monster," "villain," "demon," "dictator," "sinner of the nation," "liar," "black sun," "emperor," "preserved meat," "zombie," and even "shit from the hell." To some extent, it also illustrates the reducing importance of ideology in the post-totalitarian era.

[31] From a chronological perspective, the reputational codes and labels the state and society used do present a historical continuity. While many codes inherited from the Mao's era, the state used less codes such as "red sun," "savior," and "great commander," partially corresponding to the declining importance of ideology. In this sense, both similarities and differences exist for how the Chinese state and society used the reputational codes and labels. For instance, the similarities include the state's continued construction of Mao as a hero and the similar heroic codes used by the society in the two eras; The differences include the state's less emphasis on charismatic feature of Mao and the society's increasing use of villainous codes. Yet, since this historical change and continuity are beyond the test of the abovementioned hypotheses, I will not elaborate in this chapter (for more details, please see the Appendix).

figures during Mao's totalitarian era, and yet the transformation of these reputations through regime change is beyond the scope of this chapter. In this sense, this chapter is more about the "reputation of the eminent" rather than the "reputation of the ordinary." Second, by "previous sacred figures," I not only refer to those positive and sacred figures but also negative but sacred figures. For instance, some "enemies" were described as demons or even devils themselves. For this group of people, they had negative but also sacred reputations. After the post-totalitarian social change, the reputations of many "class enemies" were also changed, becoming more liminal especially through the newly invented positive reputations. Although these "enemies" were usually less sacred than Chairman Mao, they did present some sacred features— in this sense, the sacred and liminal differentiation is also relative. Third, since this chapter is mainly analyzing the relationship between regime contexts and the liminality of reputations, it does not directly speak to the changing role of profane spheres. Yet, considering the blurring boundary between the liminal and profane reputation as well as the logic behind the abovementioned hypothesis, *the area of the profane sphere for political figures' reputations is also likely to increase in a post-totalitarian context (Hypothesis 3).* In this sense, the changing relations between the sacred, profane, and liminal sphere of reputations can be visualized through the following graph:

Graph 11: The "Downward Movement" of Previous Sacred Reputations by Post-

Totalitarian Change

As shown in Graph 11, after the post-totalitarian social and regime change, it is highly

likely that a previous sacred reputation will become both more liminal and more profane,

thus presenting the reputational changes as a "downward movement." If we

conceptualize the relationship between the sacred, the liminal, and the profane as three

parts constituting a totality, then in this situation, the "proportion" of the sacred area in

the totality will decrease while the "proportion" of the liminal and profane areas will

increase. Yet, since the change of the profane sphere is beyond the scope of this chapter,

future research should be invited to examine the hypothesis 3 as well as the "downward

movement" hypothesis.

The Techniques for a Liminal Reputation

As mentioned above, the second question regarding the liminal reputation is:

how to successfully make a liminal reputation when contradictory information is presented? While the state's strong control of ideology and the media censorship do affect the successfulness of making a hero or villain, this section focuses more on the specific discourse techniques in making a particular liminal reputation.

Relatively speaking, a hero is more difficult to make comparing to a villain. Since the degree of heroness is partially related to how close this "hero" stands to the sacred sphere, the pure transcendent sphere. Thus, a leak of negative elements will dramatically pollute the heroic image, leading to the failure of a hero. No wonder Chairman Mao would have said, "it is easy to be a good man for one time, but it is difficult to be a good man for a life time." That is also the reason why a hero "dying young" usually receives higher honors— "dying young" provide the hero less chance to illustrating the profane and human part. Due to these very reasons, Giesen argues that heroes often are doomed to fail (Giesen, 2004). In contrast, a villainous (but not demonic) reputation is relatively easier to make, because imperfection is the routine of the profane world. The profane is routine and inevitable, while the sacred is an effort. Due to these considerations, I will mainly analyze the techniques of constructing a hero, but many techniques are also applicable to constructing a villainous or even demonic reputation—both heroes and villainous are categories of liminal reputations.

Based on my discourse analysis of both the state's and the society's narratives, I found five techniques especially important in making a hero. These techniques include weighting, disconnecting, subliming, enforcing, and labelling. Both the state and society use these techniques. In addition, while constructing a villain might also use these five techniques, there is one technique is especially unique for constructing a villain, especially during the totalitarian years. This technique is called "contradicting" or "attacking the red flag by waving the red flag"(打着红旗反红旗). In the following

paragraphs, I will first lay out the five discourse techniques in making a hero, and then discuss the application of these techniques as well as the unique discourse technique for making a villain.

Weighting. Weighting is the technique emphasizing that the heroic aspect outweighs the villainous aspect and thus should be viewed as the major/defining character of the reputational target. This technique is one of the most often used techniques in constructing a hero. Here are the two narrative examples illustrating this technique:

"It cannot be denied that comrade Mao Zedong did make a detour on the road of socialist construction, and he did make serious mistakes during the 'Cultural Revolution'… Yet, as comrade Deng Xiaoping said, the achievement of comrade Mao Zedong is primary, while his mistakes are only secondary."
--President Xi Jinping's Address in Celebrating Mao Zedong's 120th Birthday.

"What happened to China's education today? Mao has 99 feats and only one fault, and yet one fault obliterates all the feats? Xi Dada[32], I believe that you can make the Chinese education better!"
-- One Commentary on the Weibo (Chinese Twitter) posting under People's Daily Weibo Account, December 26, 2013.

The first narrative quoted from President Xi Jinping's address can be viewed as the official discourse by the state, while the second narrative is a representative post from the society. Both posts used the technique of weighting: the state believes that Mao's achievement outweigh his mistakes, while the Weibo commentary argue Mao's 99 feats are more important.

Disconnecting. Disconnecting is the technique that attributes the villainous aspects or misconducts to factors not belonging to the reputational target. In this sense, the hero is not responsible for the misdeeds or mistakes (if not all) he made. This also echoes what Sykes and Matza called "the denial of responsibility" (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

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[32] Xi Dada is the nickname of President Xi Jinping, used favorably by those people who support him.

This technique is also frequently used by the state and society:

"To construct socialism in China's social and historical context at that time is like to climb a high mountain which few people have been. There is no precedent example. All climbers need to overcome the obstacles and to open the road. While comrade Mao Zedong does have his personal responsibility for the mistakes he made in his later years, what are more important are the complicated international and domestic social-historical factors."
--President Xi Jinping's Address in Celebrating Mao Zedong's 120th Birthday

"There are many great men in history, but not very many perfect men. Considering China's environment at that time, it is difficult for a leader like George Washington or Mohandas Gandhi to emerge. What we have a not-perfect but great man!"
-- One Commentary on the Weibo (Chinese Twitter) under the post "Where does the Grandpa go?" December 26, 2013.

In both cases, the mistakes Mao Zedong made are attributed to the "social-historical context." Although these posts acknowledge Mao's mistakes, they also believe that Mao should not be the only person or the major person responsible for these mistakes. Through this attribution, the heroic image of Mao Zedong is sustained.

Subliming. Subliming is the re-evaluation of the mistakes made by the hero. Through subliming, the mistakes themselves are somehow consecrated. Two narratives illustrate this technique:

"As comrade Deng Xiaoping said, the achievement of comrade Mao Zedong is primary, while his mistakes are only secondary. His mistake lies at his violation of his own and correct aspect. His mistakes are the mistakes made by a great revolutionist and a great Marxist."
--President Xi Jinping's Address in Celebrating Mao Zedong's 120th Birthday

"For Mao's merits and demerits, whether they are weighted as seven to three or as six to four, theoretically speaking, he is standing on a higher departing point."
-- One Commentary on the Weibo (Chinese Twitter) under the post "Where does the Grandpa go?" December 26, 2013.

According to the logic in these two quotations, not everybody can make such heroic mistakes. These mistakes are the mistakes of a hero. Even though they are indeed mistakes, they are simultaneously heroic.

Comparing with the techniques of weighting, disconnecting, and subliming, which are focusing on logically dealing with the contradictory elements, the following

two techniques are more coerced and arbitrary. These two techniques include labelling and enforcing.

Labelling. Labelling is the technique not only deals with the contradictory discourse, but also attacks the "reputational entrepreneur" and agent behind. It questions the motivation of the agent, and very often put a negative label (such as biased or conspiratorial) on these agents. This also relates to Syke and Matza's idea of "condemnation of condemners"(Sykes & Matza, 1957) and Ducharme and Fine's idea about constructing a demonic reputation by attacking the motives of the reputational target (Ducharme & Fine, 1995). One difference though, is Ducharme and Fine's theory is about attacking the reputational target himself/herself, while the "labelling" here is more about attacking the agent or "reputation entrepreneur" who construct a particular reputation. In other words, since "you" are biased and conspiratorial, you are not trustworthy and your discrediting words of the hero is not grounded.

"The people who defame Chairman Mao include several categories. The first category is the people with the vested interests. They are afraid of people's wakening, and fear to lose their interests. The second category is the admirers of the 'public intellectuals.' They are the typical Chinese idiots, who are betrayed by the public intellectuals and still count the betraying money for them. The third category is those who know very few about history. They follow what other people say. Fourth is the offspring of those 'bad elements" (the landlord, the anti-reactionary, the rights, and the bad people) at that time."
        -- One Commentary on the Weibo (Chinese Twitter) under the post "Where does the Grandpa go?" December 26, 2013.

"Any person who denies this history and denies Mao's achievements is without moral consciousness."
        -- One Commentary on the Weibo (Chinese Twitter) under the post "Where does the Grandpa go?" December 26, 2013.

As illustrated by these two narratives, through the technique of labelling, the people who defame Mao are labelled as biased, not moral, fearing people, benefiting from the unfair system, or just stupid. Thus, your words of defaming Mao Zedong should be ignored or even condemned.

Enforcing. Enforcing is arguably the most violent and illogical way to construct a hero. It is an arbitrary judgement without recourse to any logical reasoning. Thus, it is a coercive judgement and an end of discussion.

"No matter you admit it or not, his greatness is there and is always there! His light will illuminate more and more people as time flies!"
        -- One Commentary on the Weibo (Chinese Twitter) under the post "Where does the Grandpa go?" December 26, 2013.

"For Chairman Mao, you can study him or criticize him… But you have to be respectful, be grateful, and remember his greatness. *That is the bottom line of all.*"
        -- One Commentary on the Weibo (Chinese Twitter) under the post "Where does the Grandpa go?" December 26, 2013.

Although the people admire Mao knows that there exist negative elements, they chose to ignore them and coercively make the judgement: Chairman Mao is a hero no matter what! This logic is sometimes used by the state as well, which is illustrated by lyrics of the famous song during the Cultural Revolution. The lyric is as follows: "The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution is good, is good, is good!"

Weighting, disconnecting, subliming, labelling, and enforcing are the five techniques in dealing with the profane/negative aspects to make a hero. Yet these techniques can also apply to the construction of a villain. For instance, Liu Wenhui, who is ordinary factory worker during the Cultural Revolution, said the following words:

"Mao, as a historical figure, has his achievement for the Chinese people. However, he turned into the reactionary aspect after 1955. While the world is changing, he still arrogantly regarded himself as correct and savior. As a result, both the international and domestic policies are in chaos and risk. He is now the bane of our nation!"
                                --The Testament/Last Will of Liu Wenhui, March 20, 1967.

In this narrative, Liu Wenhui used weighting as his major technique in constructing Mao's villainous reputation. Although Liu admitted that Mao has some achievements, but these achievements are only secondary.

However, there is one strategy of constructing a villain/debunking a hero,

deserving our special attention due to its uniqueness, especially in a totalitarian context. Due to the coercive control of the discourse in the totalitarian state, many dissidents dare not voice their opinions straightforwardly. As a result, many dissidents adopt a strategy, which can be called "*contradicting*" or "*attacking the red flag by waving the red flag*" in the Chinese case. In other words, these dissidents begin with acknowledgement of the correctness of the state discourse, but then use this discourse to attack the *de facto* behaviors of the state, finding the inconsistency or contradiction in the state's discourse and behaviors.

Here are the two examples of contradicting or "attacking the red flag by waving the red flag."

"You teach us to use dialectics to view things. According to the dialectics, everything can be divided into two aspects. Do you use this method to look at yourself and your thoughts, which is the Mao Zedong Thoughts? If so, that is good. If not, then there is a danger of metaphysics."
-- The Letter to Chairman Mao Zedong, written by Fu Shi'an, February, 1967.

"I don't understand… Why Mao Zedong, when he was young, fought so forcibly against the social shackle, but once he rules the country, he put even harsher social shackle to our generation?"
-- A Letter to his girlfriend from Wang Shenyou, a college student in East Normal University, November 18, 1976.

For both narratives, the authors begin with the correctness of Mao Zedong's words or behaviors, and then criticized Mao using the standards or rules set by Mao himself. Through disclosure of the contradiction in Mao's words and deeds, Mao's heroic image was debunked and transitioned to a villainous reputation.

Conclusion and Discussion:

Through examining Mao's heroic and villainous reputations, I coined the term of liminal reputation, that is, the co-existence of various reputations that idles near, or crosses, the boundary between the sacred and profane spheres; it originates within, but

often goes beyond, the profane sphere. I choose the heroic and villainous reputations as examples to study the liminal reputation. The heroic and villainous reputations are "liminal" in the two senses: first, as Greek mythology implies, heroes are often half-god and half-man, while demons or villains are often half-man and half animals; in this sense, both heroes and villains are in the liminal stage combining elements from the sacred and profane spheres; Second, as Chairman Mao's reputations illustrate, heroic reputations and villainous reputations regarding a same person can *co-exist at the same time*; depending on the distance to the sacred or profane sphere, these reputation categories fall in different positions on the "liminal reputation circle," thus illustrating another "liminal" status.

Meanwhile, as previous reputational studies pointed out, social and historical contexts matter (Schwartz, 1987, 1996, 2008). In the Chinese context, the social change from the totalitarian to the post-totalitarian regime is arguably the most important contextual factor. Based on my analysis of Mao's reputations during the Cultural Revolution (as the representative totalitarian regime) and in contemporary China (the time of Mao's 120th birthday as a representative post-totalitarian time), this chapter tested two hypotheses and developed these hypotheses into more theoretical arguments regarding the relationship between regime contexts and the liminality of reputations. More specifically, this chapter argues that less totalitarian a regime is, the more a liminal sphere exists for a political figure; also, since the totalitarian regime strongly controls the ideology and society (Linz, 2000), a society will be less likely to develop its own reputational labels/codes for political figures in a totalitarian regime. In other words, the post-totalitarian regime will have more degree of liminality for reputations; the area of the "liminal sphere" in the "liminal reputation circle" will also be larger in a post-totalitarian society. In this sense, my research contributes to the contextual

approach of reputation studies by situating the social context in China's modern history, and putting forward a post-totalitarian and liminal sociology of reputations.

While this chapter focuses more on the liminal sphere of reputation, the analysis of the abovementioned hypotheses does have an implication for the sacred and profane spheres. As illustrated by the Mao case, after the post-totalitarian transformation, the reputation of previous sacred figures will become more liminal. Correspondingly, the sacred sphere will often shrink. Although the profane sphere through post-totalitarian change is not the subject of study in this chapter, according to the similar logic behind the "liminality hypothesis," it is highly likely for the profane sphere to increase its size in a post-totalitarian context as well. In this sense, after the regime change, the sacred sphere of reputations will usually shrink, while the liminal and profane areas will probably enlarge—thus constituting a "downward movement" in which more reputational codes will be "dropping down" from the "transcendent sphere" to the liminal and profane spheres. To some extent, since the boundary between the liminal and the profane is hard to draw, the "downward movement" considering the liminal and the profane as a whole might be more appropriate to describe the transformation of sacred reputations in a post-totalitarian society. Yet, considering the lasting influence of ideology, the study of liminal sphere does have distinctive significances—since the state has not fully jettisoned the sacred reputation of its previous leaders, the liminal sphere for that leader is more likely to be enlarged in a post-totalitarian society rather than in a post-communist context in which the leader was fully abandoned. Yet, due to the limit of materials and comparative studies, these hypotheses regarding the "downward movement" and post-totalitarian/post-communist differentiation should be further studied by future research.

In addition, based on the analysis of both the state and society discourse, this

chapter also summarized and theorized five discourse techniques in dealing with contradictory information and in constructing a particular liminal reputation, especially the heroic ones. These techniques include strategies of weighting, disconnecting, subliming, labelling, enforcing, as well as the unique "contradicting" (or "attacking the red flag by waving the red flag") for making a villain. While previous reputation studies have touched on this issue (Ducharme & Fine, 1995), my research provides a more comprehensive analysis of the discourse techniques in constructing reputations.

While my research is based on the case of Chairman Mao, it does speak to other sacred political figures in totalitarian regimes[33]. For instance, during the personality cult of Stalin in Soviet Union (as a totalitarian regime), the evaluation of Stalin is more fixed and one dimensional, largely defined by the communist state. The society would have less autonomy in developing other reputational labels. However, after Stalin died, the degree of totalitarianism is reduced (though it was still a totalitarian society in Soviet Union), Khrushchev delivered a secret speech on Stalin and initiated some liberal reforms; since then, more reputational labels and codes regarding Stalin were developed. As the Soviet Union experienced the 1989 revolution, the liminality of Stalin's reputation increased more. In this sense, although the post-communist Russia is not identical to the situation in the post-totalitarian China, the changing reputation of Stalin represents partial similarity regarding the liminality of reputations.

In sum, by conceptualizing reputations in a liminal way and by connecting the regime contexts to the liminality of reputation, my research will not only deepen our understanding Mao's reputations in the changing Chinese society but also contribute to a more relational and post-totalitarian sociology of reputations.

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[33] As mentioned in previous analysis, my research in this chapter focuses more on "the reputation of the eminent," especially political leaders, rather than "the reputation of the ordinary." While my findings have an implication for the study of the latter, the transformation of the latter category should be further studied by future research.

Chapter 4: The Profane Reputation: Chairman Mao as Commodity

One afternoon in the summer of 2014, I stepped into the Tianzifang (田子坊) neighborhood, a modern art and crafts enclave in the central district of Shanghai. This neighborhood was and still partially is a residential area featuring the Shanghai Shikumen style, but now is more of a tourist site with all kinds of boutique shops, bars, and restaurants, attracting visitors from all over China and across the globe. After wandering for a while, a small shop caught my eye due to its display of small crafts featuring Chairman Mao. One of the crafts was an ashtray (see Graph 12). It was made of glass and painted red on the bottom—red being a typical color representing the communist "red" China. On the bottom of it was the standard Mao portrait featuring the chairman wearing a green military uniform. Eight Chinese characters were inscribed below the portrait, which can be translated as: "A whole world out there; a great achievement ahead"[34] (广阔天地，大有作为)—a political slogan Chairman Mao used to call for the "educated youth" to participate in the great movement of "up to the mountain and going to the countryside" (上山乡下). Yet, ironically, this magnificent slogan and the grand portrait of Chairman Mao were now featured in a disposable and insignificant tiny commodity called an "ashtray." In addition to the ashtray, there was also a lighter featuring Mao. It had the same red color and Mao portrait and slogans. More interestingly, coincidentally (or not), the lighter top could be opened along a line which divided Mao's face into halves. Thus, an interesting scene emerged: once you opened the lighter, Mao's "mouth" would open to shoot flames; once you wanted to

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[34] There are different translations of this slogan. Some translate the phrase as "The vast world can develop one's ability to the fullest," while some others translate it as "A vast world where much can be accomplished." Corresponding to the sentence structure of the Chinese characters, I translate it as "a whole world out there; a great achievement ahead."

extinguish the cigarette, you had to literally stamp on Mao's "face" and leave Mao's "face" dirty due to the cigarette ash! An interesting and ironic scene indeed, but similar acts during totalitarian China (especially in the Cultural Revolution) would definitely lead to severe punishment or even execution. The ironic images were not only presented on the ashtray. Placed next to the ashtray was a stack of playing cards, two of them featuring Mao Zedong—one had the standard Mao portrait with green military uniform while the other featured an older Mao, standing and smiling (see Graph 13). The Mao playing cards *per se* might invite no ironies, but the shop owner consciously or unconsciously put the Mao playing cards with other playing cards, especially those featuring pornography stars from Japan. Standing together, it looked like Chairman Mao was smiling at those porn stars who were almost naked save for some skimpy garments. Out of curiosity, I asked the shopkeeper about his products: "Do you think this kind of display of Mao's image on the playing cards and the ashtray is disrespectful of Chairman Mao? ..." The shopkeeper was a man roughly around 40 years old. He was surprised that I would ask this question, and stared at me, silent for five seconds, probably searching for words, and finally said "Hehe, only you think that way…" From this scene and this moment, I knew that Mao Zedong's reputation was a full-blown profane reputation for many people in contemporary China.

Graph 12: The Mao Ashtray   Graph 13: The Mao Playing Cards

Comparing to the sacred reputation which centers on the transcendence of everyday life, and the liminal reputation which idles near or crosses the boundary between the sacred and profane sphere, *the profane reputation here refers to the kind that belongs to the mundane world and everyday life; it is a reputation every ordinary person can have or relate to (or even make fun of), without reference to transcendence.* Similar to other types of reputations, the profane reputation is itself a continuum, which includes all kinds of sub-types of the profane. For instance, a leader with a profane reputation can be viewed as an ordinary citizen, such as in the images of George Washington after the democratization turn (Schwartz, 1991). A profane leader can also be viewed as incompetent (if not evil), such as in the case of Warren Harding (G. A. Fine, 2001). Thus, one with a profane reputation can be a victim, a liar, a servant, or any other mundane label; it can be a positive or negative reputation, depending on the specific situation.

In this chapter, I will mainly examine Mao's commodification, as only one, but an important, type of profane reputation. The commodified images of Mao are profane,

because they are "signifiers" ordinary people can use, relate to, or even make fun of. They do not have the transcendent status that the deified reputation does. Moreover, the commodified type of profane reputation is also important in the sense that it would never exist in the totalitarian China of Mao's time; in other words, the production and consumption of this type of reputation is strongly embedded in a contemporary China which is essentially a post-totalitarian, commercialized and globalized society.

To be fair, besides the Chairman Mao playing cards and ashtray, there are many other types of commodities featuring Mao. For instance, many people go to theme restaurants featuring the decor of Mao's China; people wear T-shirts which have Mao's images or other communist elements such as the red star on them. In this sense, the "commodified Mao" is more than Mao's image itself, it is a symbolic channel through which consumers express various attitudes towards the past in Mao's era. *What factors contribute to the making of this profane and commodified reputation of Mao Zedong? Why do people consume these commodities of Mao? What do these commodities and images mean to people?* These are the central questions this chapter tries to unravel.

The literature on consumer society and post-communist nostalgia has partially answered these questions, but mainly in a different context—that of the former socialist countries in Europe. Corresponding to the literature on memory and reputation, the post-communist nostalgia studies have inspirationally emphasized the importance of social contexts (such as the feeling of "failed utopia" or the strain facing the vast transformation) and the agentic role in promoting nostalgia (such as profit-making through the nostalgia industry) (Bartmanski, 2011); yet, these contextual factors mainly focus on the domestic factors embedded in the Eastern European context, while the literature in general tends to view nostalgia as a defensive mechanism. In the meantime, the literature on the "posthumous life" of Chairman Mao's image tends to focus more

on the production side of the commodification phenomenon, and overlooks the reception side—especially consumers' meaning making process that is embedded in the post-totalitarian regime context.

To explore the research questions and to fill the gaps in existing literature, I will use my fieldwork (including both interviews and participant-observation) in Shanghai as my primary case to study Mao's commodified reputation. I chose Shanghai because it is the economic center of China, and has the largest display of commodified images of Mao. As a modern metropolis, Shanghai is also the most secularized and thus serves well to my study of the "profane" reputation. Tianzifang is one of the very famous areas which use nostalgia as the selling point to attract visitors, and thus could be the ideal location for my study. Besides the Shanghai case, though, I also include interviews I conducted in other places (such as Beijing), as my secondary sources.

Based on these analyses, I argue that besides the domestic situations, global elements also strongly contribute to the production of Mao's commodified images and reputations. The "profane and commodified Mao" is a post-communist nostalgia in a way, but is also a cosmopolitan (Levy & Sznaider, 2007) and travelling memory (Erll, 2011). Also, from the agentic perspective, the initiation of the "commodified nostalgia" is more of a contingency than intentional political or economic calibration. From the perspective of reception or consumption, I argue that the people who consume Mao's commodified images can be summarized into four categories: "projectors," "admirers," "foreigners," and "mockers." For each category, the symbolic meanings people attach to the "commodified Mao" also differ. For instance, "projectors" basically project their feelings and memory about their "good young days" into the image of Mao, since their youthful days took place in Mao's China. "Admirers" use Mao's commodities to express their ideas and ideals, and thus have put one foot into the sacred sphere.

Meanwhile, the "foreigners" and "mockers" have no living memory of Mao's era, and either view China's past as a "foreign country" or use the newly-invented image of Mao to symbolically voice their present concerns (partly thanks to the pluralism in the post-totalitarian context). In this sense, the consumption of Mao's "commodified and profane reputations" also illustrates a generational perspective embedded in the post-totalitarian social changes.

Consumption and the Post-Totalitarian Change

As mentioned by scholars of politics (Friedrich & Brzezinski, 1965; Linz, 2000), the totalitarian regime has a strong control over ideology and all aspects of life including the economic activities. Friedrich and Brzezinksi (1965) straightforwardly pointed out that a centrally planned economy is one differential feature of totalitarianism comparing to other regime types. This is also the case in Mao's China. Due to its emphasis on communism, the Chinese state largely abolished the market and the consumption beyond the livelihood level, viewing the latter as a characteristic of capitalism. Also, due to the shortage of supply, Chinese citizens basically had nothing to consume. In this sense, the consumption practice is largely a phenomenon emerging in the post-totalitarian China.

Yet, there is one popular "commodity" in Mao's China, especially during the Cultural Revolution—the badge of Chairman Mao. In the apex of the personality cult, almost every Chinese citizen would wear a Mao badge. In her anthropological study of the "biography of the Chairman Mao badge," Melissa Schrift argues that the badges adopted lives that outlived the initial intentions of their creators—the badges are used as a gift change and reciprocity, a (political) status attainment, or as a shield against the attacks on the political loyalty (Schrift, 2001). However, since people wore the badge

to show their love, support, and admiration of the great leader and the "savior of Chinese people," the Mao badge is hardly a "commodity"—it is more of a totem belonging to the sacred sphere. The sacredness of the Mao badge can also be illustrated by those who "polluted" or inappropriately used the Mao badges and images during the Cultural Revolution—these people would usually receive harsh punishment and even execution. In this sense, the Mao badge is belonging more to the sacred sphere rather than the profane sphere, though the contemporary consumption of the Mao badge is a different story.

In contrast to the totalitarian era, the contemporary China is witnessing a "consumer revolution" (Davis, 2000). After adopting the "reform and opening up" policy in 1978, the Chinese state began to gradually changed its economy to a "socialist market economy" and began to embrace capitalism and globalization in an unprecedented scale. As a result, a "consumer revolution" (Davis, 2000) emerged in urban China, and it is strongly affecting the relationship between the Chinese state and society. According to Deborah Davis, "millions of daily commercial exchanges not only calibrated the flow of material goods; they also nurtured individual desires and social networks that *challenged official discourse and conventions. The political regime remained intact, but relationships between agents of the state and ordinary citizens had changed*" (Davis, 2000). In other words, corresponding to the analysis of the post-totalitarian regime, the contemporary Chinese state has loosened its control of the society and thus giving ordinary citizens more agency in public and business life; also, since the post-totalitarianism allows for the existence of (limited) pluralism, ordinary Chinese citizens can now challenge the official discourse and conventions, especially in the economic sphere. That is also why Davis called the consumer arena as a "more lightly censored terrain" and why this terrain nurtured a "horizontal" relationship

between citizens rather than a "vertical relationship of obedience" in Mao's China (Davis, 2000). In this sense, the consumption in contemporary China is more liberating than constraining, especially in terms of the political significance[35].

Against this background, the Chairman Mao badge (as the relic from history), together with other Mao images, has experienced a posthumous life. For instance, in the book *Shades of Mao*, Geremie Barme conducted an overview description of various usages of the Mao-image, especially in the 1990s, such as pulping of the Mao pictures, building the Chairman Mao mausoleum to honor the nation, and the use of Mao image to open restaurants and make money (the so called "heritage industry") in Mao's hometown (Barmé, 1996). That is also why Barme argues that the "Mao cult"[36] in the 1990s is indeed a "money cult"(Barmé, 1996). In addition, Francesca Dal Lago also examined this phenomenon, used the term "personal Mao" to refer to all kinds of practices relating to how the Mao-icon was reshaped in contemporary Chinese art, especially in the 1990s (Lago, 1999). Yet, similar to Barme and other scholar's study of the Mao image, Dal Lago's study of the "personal Mao" also focuses more on the production of the Mao image, rather than exploring the consumer's meaning making process regards to the Mao image and memory. Thus, in this chapter, I will focus on

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[35] Indeed, there are many debates on the role of consumption as "liberating" or "constraining." According to the constraining perspective, the consumers are "dupes" which do not have much choice and are usually deceived by the dominant ideology to consume products. For instance, Horkheimer and Adorno argue that although there seems to exist many different cultural products—essentially they all follow the same logic of the capitalist dominant ideology; the consumers are passive and do not have real choices(Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972). On the other hand, according to the Birmingham school, the consumers are not all passive and have their own agency in using the products as a way of experiencing or challenging the dominant cultural meanings. For instance, Janice Radway's study of women reading romance illustrates that women are not passive; instead they use the romance reading to "manage their pleasures and identities within patriarchal relations."(Radway, 2009; Schor & Holt, 2000). In the Chinese context, Pun Ngai studied the young migrant workers and argues that their consumption is more of a form of capitalist exploitation (Ngai, 2003), echoing the constraining argument by the Frankfurt School. Yet, Deborah Davis argues that "consumers retain the possibility for fantasy, resistance and empowerment" and thus we should adopt a more "polyvalent and stratified reading" of consumption(Davis, 2005).

[36] Scholars use the term "Mao cult" for different meanings. While Barme used the term to refer to the revival of Mao's image and personality in the 1990s, other scholars, such as Daniel Leese, used the term to refer to the personality cult of Mao during the Cultural Revolution. See (Leese, 2011).

both the production side and the reception side of the Mao commodification, and embed consumers' meaning making process in the post-totalitarian context.

The Post-Communist Nostalgia: Contexts and Agents

Although the contemporary China is not exactly a "post-communist" regime, the social, economic, and partially political reforms in the post-totalitarian China represent some and partial features of the post-communist regimes in the East Europe. In this sense, the literature on "post-communist nostalgia" can also provide wisdom for our understanding of the Chinese case. Specifically, the post-communist nostalgia refers to the nostalgia towards the communist part in East European countries after the excitement of the 1989 "revolution" passed. Since the citizens of the former Soviet Union wanted so badly to get out of communism, why does this kind of nostalgia appear? As one may expect, nostalgia is seldom about the real past. Through reviewing the studies by Bartmanski (2011) and others, I argue the contextual and agentic perspectives are two main perspectives in explaining the post-communist nostalgia, corresponding to the memory study traditions. The contextual perspective focuses more on the social, cultural, and historical contexts or conditions under which the nostalgia became possible. For instance, the "failed utopia approach" mentioned by Bartmanski claims that "the meaning of nostalgic commitments stems from suddenness of the bankruptcy of communist mythology"(Bartmanski, 2011). In other words, the nostalgia to this approach is a reaction and disappointment to the failing of the "modern mass utopia" (Scribner, 2003) or the failing of a material expression of the communist dreamworld(Buck-Morss, 2002). The "strain approach" in Bartmanski's review is also a contextual explanation, though it emphasizes more on the existential dimension. For instance, in *Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym argues that nostalgia is essentially an

"inevitable defense mechanism in a time of historical upheavals" (Boym, 2001, pp. xiii-xiv) and "the heroic refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time" (Boym, 2001, p. xv). Boym further differentiates between the "restorative" and "reflective" nostalgia, with the former emphasizing "the transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home" and "absolute truth" and the latter focusing on the "ambivalences of human longing" and delays of the homecoming (Boym, 2001). As illustrated by the tension between these two types (or two aspects) of nostalgia, the historical upheavals are essentially manufacturing an ambivalence, an existential crisis, or a "strain" to every powerless person[37]. Besides these two approaches mentioned by Bartmanski, there are many other studies which can also be put into the category of "contextual explanation." For instance, in studying the post-socialist Russia, Holak, Matveev, and Havlena argue that the post-communist nostalgia is related to the "loss of security" (Holak, Matveev, & Havlena, 2007). In another study of the German "Ostalgia," Berdahl argues that this "ostalgia" is an opposition to the Western hegemony (Berdahl, 1999). Even Bartmanski's own theory on the role of post-communist nostalgia as providing a communal sense of continuity belongs to this approach (Bartmanski, 2011). To be fair, the studies mentioned here are often overlapped in their focus on "strain" or "failed utopia," but they all speak to the social, cultural, and historical context after the post-communist transformation.

The second perspective in explaining the post-communist nostalgia focuses on the role of agents. For instance, Bartmanski mentioned the "social deficiency approach" in his article, which emphasizes the "agentic role of memorial entrepreneurs," especially the deficiencies of the political and education institutions (Bartmanski, 2011).

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[37] Although Boym's theory does speak to the existential crisis facing the post-communist change, I have reservations on Bartmanski's definition of her theory as purely belonging to the "strain approach."

Another approach mentioned by Bartmanski (2011) is the "culture industry approach,"
which analyzes how particular agents exploit the "strangeness of a world that no longer
exists" (Cooke, 2005) for economic profits. This is also what Ewa Domanska framed
as the commercial "domestication of the past" (see Bartmanski, 2011). However, I do
have some reservation on Bartmanski's choice of the name for this approach; especially
it has the same name to the famous piece by Horkheimer and Adorno. Although this
approach and Adorno and Horkheimer's piece have the same name, the meanings of
"culture industry" are entirely different. In Horkheimer and Adorno's piece, the culture
industry presents itself mainly as a collective hegemony, while the term used here
focuses more on the profit-making motivation of the agents. To avoid the confusion
and to better summarize the literature, I prefer to use the "agent perspective" to refer to
this line of study on the post-communist nostalgia[38].

While the post-communist nostalgia literature has provided much wisdom, there
are several pointes should be noted, especially regarding the Chinese case. First, the
studies of the post-communist nostalgia are mainly based on the situation in Europe,
which has officially jettisoned the communist past since 1989. Yet, China is still a
communist or socialist country and has never officially discarded communism. In this
sense, we cannot directly use the post-communist nostalgia theories to explain the
Chinese reality. Second, the current study on the post-communist nostalgia is inward-

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[38] In Bartmanski's (2011) review article, he also developed his own approach in studying post-communist
nostalgia, which he terms as the "iconological approach." However, this approach to me is more about the
methodology rather than the reasons to explain the emergence of the nostalgia. Using this approach, I
would argue, that one may develop both the contextual and agent explanations, though Bartmanski's
argument on the continuity belongs more to the contextual. It should be noted that I am not arguing that
this approach is not useful. In fact, I believe this methodological approach is very helpful, and I myself
might use part of the iconological analysis in this chapter. Indeed, many scholars have conducted
interesting studies using this or similar methods, which can be illustrated by the studies of music, movies,
and textbooks in the two edited volumes by Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gillie(Todorova, 2010; Todorova &
Gille, 2010). Yet, this approach is more about methodology, and I do not regard it as a third category
besides the contextual and agent perspectives.

looking, searching explanations mainly from the domestic contexts; it thus overlooks the role of global and cosmopolitan elements in initiating and promoting the commodified nostalgia industry. Third, similar to the literature on Mao's posthumous life in China, the current literature of post-communist nostalgia focuses more on the production side of the problem, and thus overlooks the detailed meaning-making practices by the real people. In this chapter, I will use the commodification of Chairman Mao as an empirical case to fill in these theoretical gaps.

Production of the Mao Commodity: Post-Communism or Cosmopolitanism?

As mentioned above, the Chinese society in the post-totalitarian era has witnessed a "consumer revolution" which is strongly related to the global capitalism. While the term of "post-communist nostalgia" has attracted and oriented people's attention to the domestic contexts and its connection to the communist past, the Chinese case strongly illustrates a contextual force that is beyond the domestic factors. More specifically, I argue that while the commodification Mao does present some features of the post-communist nostalgia, such as the defensive mechanism to the fast social change and the use of communist symbol to make money, this commodified and profane image of Chairman Mao is not only a (partial) "post-communist" nostalgia but also a "cosmopolitan"(Levy & Sznaider, 2007) and "travelling" (Erll, 2011) memory—the global elements strongly contribute to the commodification of Chairman Mao in contemporary China.

More specifically, borrowing wisdoms from Levy and Sznaider, I regard "cosmopolitan memory" as "the internalization taking place within national societies"(Levy & Sznaider, 2007); also, by "travelling memory," I use Erll's definition and refer the concept as "an abbreviation for the fact that in the production of cultural

memory, *people, media, mnemonic forms, contents, and practices are in constant motion*"(Erll, 2011). My study of the commodification of Chairman Mao perfectly illustrates the features of these travelling and cosmopolitan memories. As the interviews conducted in Shanghai illustrates, many producers (the element of people in Erll's definition) of the Mao image in contemporary China are actually from other countries; while the particular forms and contents of the Mao commodities provide a "communist feature," they also affected by styles and elements from the Western societies—some of the forms are the Western re-inventions based on the original Chairman Mao and communist images and elements.

The Utopia Café[39] in Tianzifang is a perfect example illustrating the global elements. This Café features a socialist style of decoration, and is one of the most popular cafes in the area of Tianzifang. There are three icons which are featured on the wall: the image of Lei Feng who is a communist hero in Mao's era—Mao has personally called upon people to "learn from Comrade Lei Feng" (see Graph 14); the image of a foreign worker wearing a socialist-style green hat (see Graph 15); and a group of female workers gathering and studying a book (see Graph 16)—probably the *Quotations of Chairman Mao*. Moreover, the waiters and waitress there wear a green hat, which is a typical style in Mao's era. Despite these socialist elements, they mainly serve coffee and Western dishes like sandwiches.

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[39] This is the pseudo name I made for the Café.

Graph 14: The Lei Feng Image   Graph 15: The Foreign Worker Icon

Graph 16: The Utopia Café and the Female Workers Image on the Wall

I talked to the staff in the café and finally got in touch with the café owner. To my surprise, the café owner is not a Chinese. He is actually a business man from

Australia who has enterprises not only in China but also in other countries. When I asked Mr. Walk, the café owner, why he chose this style to decorate his café, he said the following words:

A: At first, we have *North Korean* propaganda. I had a gallery of North Korean. *I got it from a French friend*. We also sell the posters. Then it evolves to the cultural revolutionary kind of Chinese art, *Russian*, communist propaganda, then I decided to scrap all the propaganda style and don't want to associate with the Mao rhetoric going on as I grow as a person and I understand more how that affects China, I know that is not the right thing to do. Then I really speak to the Gongren (工人, worker), that is what it is about, it is about the workers. You can see the pictures on the wall, which is about factory, with big whistlers, to celebrate the workers. Do you see that man? That is a combination of the Australian blue-collar worker, normally its collar is blue. *This is blue-collar Australian, but done it in a Chinese and a communist propaganda way* (see Graph 15)

As Mr. Walk mentioned, the decoration of the Utopia coffee is not purely Chinese or communist. The previous version of the decoration has the elements borrowed from North Korea and Russian, and even this idea is coming from his French friend. A more important illustration of the global elements is the symbol of their café, which is the "combination of the Australian blue-collar worker" and the Chinese communist style (see Graph 15). In this sense, both the forms and contents of the "communist nostalgia" are actually influenced by the Australian and Western styles.

I am still curious about the details for the design and decoration, and thus asked Mr. Walker whether the crew for designing is Chinese. Mr. Walk replied saying that the crew is composed by many different people, "Chinese, American Chinese, English Chinese, Russian Chinese, Chinese Chinese"… Obviously, the designers are not only local Chinese, but also include people from all over the world. In fact, one manager of his café is actually from Philippine. In this sense, the people who constitute and produce the "communist nostalgia" are also from abroad—illustrating another element in Erll's conceptualization of "travelling memory."

The importance of international or global elements is also supported by my

interview with a Chinese artist, who claims that he designed the "ObaMao" T-shirt.

Graph 17: The ObaMao Image

Here is my conversation with Mr. Gao, the artist:

Q: Since when does the Mao products become popular?
A: The earliest should be 2006, or 2007? I can't remember well. *For the earliest time, it is all the foreigners doing this*, in Zhabei [a district in Shanghai]. Zhabei, you know, is one of those places gathered by the foreigners, they design these things… *Seriously, the foreigners are pretty important for spreading these things…*

From this quotation one may see that the Chinese artist is also acknowledging the role of foreigners in promoting the Mao-style products. According to Mr. Gao, the foreigners' influence is not only seen in Shanghai, but also in Beijing (including the South Luogu Lane; 南锣鼓巷) and other places. Comparing to the Chinese, the foreigners have much less psychological burdens to make fun of the communist leader. That might be one major reason why they started and participated in the modern reinvention of Mao Zedong. Together with the Chinese counterparts, the foreigners are also participating in the enterprise of remembering Chairman Mao, and thus become one crucial element in producing the "commodified Mao." In this sense, it is safe to argue that the nostalgia industry in China today is not only a (post-) communist

nostalgia but also a cosmopolitan memory.

It should be admitted that, despite the "internalization" of global elements, domestic politics and social contexts do affect China's socialist nostalgia and the construction of "commodified Mao." Among all the reasons identified by Bartmanski (2011), the "failed utopia" is the most frequently mentioned reason to explain China's nostalgia about Mao. For instance, when we continued chatting, Mr. Gao expressed his disappointment of the present:

"Many people are yearning for the past, it is not saying that the Mao era is good, but at least people would not complain in the Mao era, right? At least at that time, you don't have the *pollution*! Look at the issue of *food safety*, it is so absurd! People add the chemical of melamine into the milk powder! *It is absurd*! For many things, the government should do but they don't do!... So many *corrupted* officials are spending the public funds, and the ordinary people *do not have much security…*"

Mr. Gao complained various social problems in China today, ranging from the food security, corruption, the high housing prices, to the social inequality, all of which are not problems in Mao's era! In this sense, people have a romantic attitude towards Mao because they are disappointed to the world after the collapse of the communist utopia. Repeatedly, I heard similar explanations and complain from various interviewees, illustrating their dissatisfaction of the present. However, it should also be mentioned that when I asked them if they would rather live in the Mao's era, almost nobody said that they would want to go back! This corresponds to Boym's theory on the "reflective" aspect of nostalgia (Boym, 2001) which is a contradictory delaying of homecoming. In this sense, the Chinese nostalgia to the communist past does share some similarities with its (East) European counterparts, though China's farewell to the past is not as clear-cut as the latter countries.

The "intention" or motivation of the production should also be noted. While current literature on the post-communist nostalgia often emphasize the *intentional* use of communist symbols to make money, my case study illustrates that the initiation of

the modern reinvention of Mao image is not necessarily an intentional one; there is much contingency, resulting from producers' value choice rather than intentional interest pursuing. In other words, while there do exist producers and sellers who are intentionally use Mao's image for economic benefits, some of the producers chose the Mao style for more contingent reasons or out of their aesthetic taste to the communist past—they only happen to make money through this enterprise.

For instance, Mr. Walk, who is the owner of the Utopia Café, emphasized that he chose the style for neither political nor economic reasons. Here is my dialogue with him:

Q: What motivates you to choose this style?
A: Because I like it. Because I just like the style. For people living in the West, they don't see it every day. We have propaganda through the media, but not done it eloquently and tastefully, design wise… *I don't have any political motivations, or any reasons other than I just like the design. I am not thinking I am gonna sell more coffee if I do this propaganda style. I was in the middle of nowhere,* because you have to remember, at that time there is only the French concession and these buildings didn't exist. We are the first one in this area… This has to be discovered.

As Mr. Walk emphasized, he didn't intentionally use this style to attract more consumers. When he opened the café around 2000, the Tianzifang area was not highly developed and there was no such popularity of the communist style. He also emphasized that his action is not for political purpose, which to him is a needed clarification in the Chinese context—after all, China is still a communist or socialist country, while the Mao image has spurred so much controversies in contemporary Chinese society. *That is also a phenomenon corresponding to the post-totalitarian social context—the state still claims itself as communist while the official ideology on Mao is reduced but not diminished.*

This contingency is also found in Chinese artists, such as Mr. Gao, who is the designer of the "ObaMao" image. I conducted the interview in his working studio, and there are many pictures and products with the communist style, many of which are the

real products saved from the Mao era. I asked him if he designed particular styles to make money, or to make fun of Chairman Mao, he said:

"not at all! You cannot make sure that the market will welcome your design. I was just like follow my heart, *very random*. But it turns out good, many people like it!"

As illustrated by this conversation, assuming the "capitalist" motivation (to make money) is not enough to explain the commercialized nostalgia. While the images of "profane Mao" and communist styles have their implied meanings, the initiation of this trend might be a contingency rather than political or economic consideration, from the agent perspective.

It can be argued though, that denying "design for money" might be related to the idea that purely pursing economic benefits is not an honorable behavior in both China and the Western societies. As Bourdieu pointed out, the "art for art's sake"(Bourdieu, 1984) is often viewed as a defining character for an artist' status. However, even though Mr. Gao only said these words to maintain his status as an artist, this very denying illustrates Gao's intention to purse things beyond the economic benefits. On the other hand, since Mr. Walker is a professional business man, he has no intention to pretend to be an artist, thus there is much less need for him to resort to the "art for art's sake" narrative.

In sum, as my interviews in Shanghai imply, the production of Mao commodities is not only a (partial) "post-communist nostalgia"—in the sense that people use Mao as a defensive mechanism for the social problems in contemporary China, but also a "cosmopolitan" and "travelling" memory—both the producers and specific forms and contents of the Mao commodities includes elements from the Western countries. If we regard the spread of Mao's fever during Cultural Revolution to the Western societies (such as France) as the first "travel" of Mao's memory, then Shanghai's incorporation of these Western elements in re-inventing Mao can be viewed

as the second "travel" of the Mao memory. It should also be emphasized that, since the post-totalitarian Chinese state has loosened its control of ideology, the Mao image can thus be publicly consumed in the very heart of China's economic center.

Consumption of the Mao Commodity: Four Categories

Why do people "buy" various products with the "profane and commodified Mao" images? Why does this consumption mean to them? These are the other central questions this section tries to answer. Based on my interviews and ethnography conducted in Shanghai, I argue that *people consume the Mao commodities for different symbolic purposes; and based on the different symbolic meaning making processes, the consumers can be summarized into four categories*, namely "projectors," "admirers," "foreigners," and "mockers." In the following paragraphs, I will elaborate each category with examples.

Projectors: Mao as Mnemonic Bridge

The first consumer category of Mao's commodities is what I call "projectors." Projectors are usually born around the 1950s and thus have a living experience of Mao's era; many of them are the former "educated youth" whose life trajectories are strongly affected by Mao's political movements, especially the Cultural Revolution and the "Educated Youth" Movement. In other words, the Mao's era is corresponding to their youth period, while youth is always good and full of sweet memories—even that is during Mao's totalitarian China. Using their words, they have "no regrets about their youth" (青春无悔) even they were sent to the frontier and countryside for labors. In this sense, the Mao commodities and symbols are more of a "mnemonic bridge" which connects them to their very youth period; they project their romantic feelings towards

124

the "good young days" into the image of Chairman Mao. Yet, is should be noted that, projectors' consumption of the Mao and communist images does not necessarily mean they love Mao. More often than not, they tend to have a pro-negative attitude towards Mao—after all, many people are the victims of Mao's political movements in the Cultural Revolution. In this sense, projectors separate the form from the content—while they consume Mao's images (as forms) they do not necessarily identify with what Mao calls for (as the content). Thus, their consumption of the Mao commodities and images are a projection of feelings.

Mr. Fang is such as a "projector." He was born in 1949, and was later being sent to Heilongjiang as an "educated youth." After going back to Shanghai and retired, he became an enthusiastic organizer for "educated youth" activities in the city. Mr. Fang told me that some of their activities include singing songs from the Mao era and eating in restaurants featuring the Mao images and symbols. I talked to him about these activities, and Mr. Fang said:

"yes, we also sing the 'red song'! What else we can sing? I think we should sing the song like 'Unity is Strength', but we should also sing 'The International'! The lyric of "The International' is good, right? There is no savior in the world!"

As Mr. Fang mentioned, although the "red song" like "East is Red" (东方红) is essentially praising Chairman Mao (see Chapter 2), they sing the song because these are the songs people learnt when they were young—otherwise, "what else can [they] sing?" Yet, Mr., Fang also emphasize the song of "The International." By citing the lyric of the International, Fang is essentially implying that Mao is not a savior of China. In our later conversation, he even blatantly argues that Mao is "the last emperor of China!" From this dialogue, one may find that projectors' nostalgic consumption of the "commodified Mao" is only their projection to the good "young" days. This finding is also supported by my interview with Ms. Jiang, a customer manager of a Mao-style

restaurant in Shanghai. As Ms. Jiang mentioned, some customers, especially those above 50 years, will come to the restaurant and enthusiastically talk about the decoration style, which is featuring the 1960s and 1970s. One phrase these customers frequently use is "in our times…", illustrating their emotional feelings to their "good young days."[40]

Although the majority of the projectors are those born and grow up in Mao's era, there is a minority group of "projectors" who is constituted by young people, roughly in their twenties. This population does not have direct experience of the Mao era, but they do have a memory of the legacy of the communist style during their childhood. For instance, Ms. Yan, a college student in Shanghai, told me that she like these styles, because she "has an impression that these things are what [her] parents used when [she] was very very little." Ms. Yan continued talking about her impression about that era, referring to all kinds of communist legacies, such as the enamel cups and green military uniforms. As for their memory towards Chairman Mao, many of these young projectors (as Ms. Yan illustrates) do not have particular emotion towards Mao—after all, they have no living experience of Mao's China at all. In this sense, they are also separating the form of Mao commodities from the original content these commodities can imply.

In sum, although there are both old and young generations falling to the category of "projectors," the majority of this category is those have a real experience of Mao's China, especially those "educated youth." In addition, one difference remains between the old and young generations. The old generation usually likes more "authentic" Mao

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[40] In addition, by gathering together and recalling the "good young days," especially through all kinds of "friendship associating" activates, the "educated youth" are also making a collective identity. As the phrase of "youth without regret" illustrates, they are proud of their identity as "educated youth," while the consumption of the Mao style, especially their knowledge about the Mao style, became a marker of their identity.

style or socialist elements, such as those Cultural Revolution-theme restaurants, while the younger generation loves more about the modern reinvention of Mao's images. Despite this difference, *both the old and young "projectors" regard the "commodified Mao" as a "mnemonic bridge" to their early days, but does not necessarily support the meanings of the Mao symbols. To them, the form and the content are separated*.

Admirers: Mao as Utopia

The second consumer type is the "admirers." These admirers do not separate form from content, and used the Mao image to represent their ideas about utopia—usually the Chairman Mao version of utopia. These admirers usually are not satisfied with their current status, and many of them are victims during the reform era. For instance, due to the post-totalitarian regime change, the state-owned enterprises and companies have experienced huge social changes; many former employees of these enterprises have to be laid off due to the market-orient reforms. As Ching-Kwan Lee's study mentions, many of these "victims" used the Mao image as a way for mobilization for protests (C. K. Lee, 2000). Although the laid-off workers are only one example, two common features for the "admirers" include: they are often unsatisfied with the status quo, and correspondingly, they tend to support Mao's version of utopia.

Mr. Li is such an "admirer." He has been wearing the Chairman Mao badge for 40 years, and is now a "red collector" in fond of collecting various old things from the Mao era. Here is my conversation with Mr. Li:

Q: Do you wear the Chairman Mao badge every day?
A: Yes, as I always said, I insist my belief. Some people ask me, saying "Teacher Li, why do you wear the Mao badge?" or "why would you think of wearing the badge?" I said that wearing the badge is a symbol! What symbol? It illustrates that I haven't changed my *belief*!... Every time my behavior deviates from the reality, I will think that I should not do this thing, because the Chairman Mao badge is on me! *It stands for justice, the guidance of the correct thought*!... You won't do bad things when wearing the Chairman Mao badge!

As this conversation illustrates, Mr. Li's wearing of the Mao badge is an ideal illustration of his identification with the meaning the Mao badge implies, which to him is "justice and guidance of the correct thought." We continued our conversation, and Mr. Li began to complain all the social problems today, such as the food security, the environmental pollution, the inequality, the trend of being "laid off," among others. He criticized these problems at the same time he praised Chairman Mao:

"Who is Chairman Mao? Chairman Mao is the representative of people, the representative of socialism, and the representative for a correct road!...*Look at today! We deviated from Mao's correct road*. Look at the consequences: *people are not this country's master anymore, and the workers are getting laid off…*"

By contrasting the negative consequences in contemporary China (such as being "laid off") to the "correct road" during Mao's era, Mr. Li is essentially arguing that Mao's version of society is the ideal and correct model, that is, the utopia. In this sense, contrasting the "projectors," admirers do not separate the form and image of Mao from the content—they support Mao's idea heart and soul and use Mao's utopia to voice their dissatisfaction with the reform era.

It should be admitted though, that the word "consumption" might not be exactly appropriate to describe the behavior such as wearing the Mao image. Indeed, to Mr. Li, the Mao badge is not only a commodity which one can buy from the market, it is also a sacred object to him. Similar situations happen when I interviewed taxi drivers in Hunan. These drivers would often buy (or "qing"请/ "inviting" using their words) the Chairman Mao amulet and hang it on the front mirror to protect their safety. In this regard, the consumption of Mao products for them has a potential to transform Mao's reputations from the profane to the liminal or sacred spheres.

In sum, the "admirers" are usually born and grew up in Mao's era, and thus having a living memory of Chairman Mao and his China. In contrast to the "projectors,"

the "admirers" do not separate the form and image of Mao from the original content these images imply; the Mao products to them is a symbol illustrating their ideas about an idealized society. While "projectors" often hold a negative attitude towards Mao due to the sufferings they experienced in Mao's China, the "admirers" are often the beneficiaries in Mao's era but victims in the reform era. As a result, they use the image of Mao both to express their ideals of Mao's utopia and to voice their dissatisfaction of the present.

Foreigners: Mao as Foreign Temporality

As the phrase "the past is a foreign country" illustrates, the category of "foreigners" consume the Mao products following the similar logic of buying souvenirs from a trip to a foreign country. Since the "foreigners" are mainly those young generations without living memories of Mao's era, they essentially treat the Mao image as a symbol for a different temporality and different country. Specifically, I divide the "foreigners" into two sub-categories: the "real" or the "foreign foreigners" who visited China as tourists and those "Chinese foreigners" who treat Mao's China as a different country[41].

The "foreign foreigners" view the Mao image as a symbol representing China. Indeed, Mao is one of the few people these "foreign foreigners" know about China. To them, Mao represents the real or their imaginary "communist China." Here is the conversation between me and Jack, who is a student from the US and visited Shanghai through a language program:

Q: Why did you buy these things (the Mao products)?
A: The campus we went has a tall statue of Mao, so our class is talking about this, and

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[41] There is a difference about how "foreign foreigners" and "Chinese foreigners" consume—the "foreign foreigners" are more omnivore, willing to buy all kinds of Mao products including those high-profile products such as T-shirts, while the "Chinese foreigners" prefer the low-profile and less serious Mao products.

teachers are using those poses. After that, I was like, this is a really a thing, I can't forget these moments and I need something tangible about that…

…

It kind of makes this idea that I always had, but never seem real to me. It kind of made it real. I have these things that I got from Tianzifang, and got from China, and I has the real direct connection to a history that up till that summer is never real to me. It's like, something that was so foreign… Like I watched the Kung Fu movie, but China didn't really exist for me… But when I have these things, it is real.

…

This is China. This is something from China!

From this dialogue, one may see that the Mao products make Jack feels "real." As Jack said, "it kind of makes this idea that [he] always had, but never real to [him]." The Mao products meet his imaginary (could be accurate or inaccurate) ideas of China. To him, the "commodified Mao" is indeed something representing China. Therefore, in the end of the conversation, he directly announced "this is China"!

To be fair, the Mao products are not the only souvenirs the "foreign foreigners" want to take home. According to my interview with Ms. Ming, a salesperson in a craft shop in Tianzifang, many "foreign foreigners" also like to purchase "those products with Chinese characteristics," such as the products featuring dragon, Peking Opera, classic antiques, among others. While the specific products can vary from Chairman Mao to dragon, one common thing among these products is their signification of China.

The second type of "foreigners" is what I call the "*Chinese foreigners*," who are usually young people with no living experience of Mao's China. In this sense, the Chinese foreigners are also *time travelers*, because the Mao era to them is a totally different temporality, a different country. This country presents a sharp contrast to the Post-Mao era they are living in today. Therefore, they share part of the curiosity possessed by the "foreign foreigners," since both treat Mao's China as another country.

This "foreign" mentality can be illustrated by "Chinese foreigners'" curiosity towards the Mao era. Here is the conversation between me and Ms. Zhen, a young journalist in her twenties.

Q: You mentioned that these stuffs are interesting, there are many things in the world which are "interesting," but why do you think these products (with Mao and socialist style) attract you?
A: Because they are *beyond your imagination*! I didn't expect anybody will make that stuff… It has a dramatic *tension* or contradiction, because it appears in this world!... When you look at these things, you will feel that these are the things in my parents' era. It is somehow *mysterious*.

The words Ms. Zhen used, such as "beyond imagination," "tension," "mysterious,"

illustrate that Ms. Zhen is not familiar with the Mao era, which is a huge contrast to the

current world she is living. Therefore, she bought these products as if they are from

another country. These products to her are the souvenir in her "time travel" back to the

Mao era.

I found similar feelings in my interview with Mr. Zhang and his wife, both

graduate students in their late twenties. They visited a Mao-style restaurant in Shanghai,

which is decorated by various images featuring Mao and the "educated youth"

movement—the theme of Cultural Revolution is only mildly implied since it is still

sensitive topic in the "post-totalitarian" but not "post-communist" China. The waiters

and waitress there also dress as if they were the "red guards" or the "educated youth"

during the 1960s and used particular words only used in that era.

Graph 18: The Mao-style Restaurant

Graph 19: Young Girls Taking Selfies in the Mao-style Restaurant

Here is the conversation between me and the Zhang couple on their recent trip to the

restaurant:

Q: Why would you go to this restaurant for dinner?
A: We searched on the Internet to see if there is anything good to eat nearby. Then we
saw the introduction of this restaurant. Many people commented saying that they were
shocked by the restaurant, because once you went inside, the waiters and waitress would
call you "comrade." It is very interesting…
Q: What do you mean by "interesting"?
A: Firstly, *it is very rare I guess. Today you will not be called "comrade*," unless you
are really "comrade" (laughing…) (The Chinese words of "comrade" are also used to
refer to the gay people). Secondly, I think this is kind of *curious*, and we want to see
how "*shocking*" it is… It is kind of *exciting*…

In this conversation, Mr. and Mrs. Zhang mentioned a series of words such as

"shocking," "curious," and "exciting." The Mao style presented itself as a relic or

symbols standing for a time and space they are not familiar with, a time and space that

is vastly different from today's world.

Thus, for both the "foreign foreigners" and the "Chinese foreigners," the Mao

products are mainly a symbol representing the communist China—a foreign country

and temporality towards the generation growing up in the post-Mao Chinese society.

Mockers: Mao as Sarcastic Channel

"Mockers" is arguably the most interesting category among those who consume the commodified reputation of Mao Zedong. In the totalitarian China, the image of Chairman Mao and other socialist symbols are so sacred that nobody dares to pollute or make fun of. Yet, as the contemporary China goes to the "post-totalitarian" phase in which the society has certain degree of autonomy and pluralism, the commodification of Mao as well as the "mocking" of Mao's images became possible.

Similar to the "foreigners," "mockers" are those people who are born in the post-Mao era, and thus having no living experience of Mao's China. Yet, they can still sense the sensitivity regarding the issue of Mao. In this sense, the emergence of "commodified Mao," especially those ironic and funny images of Mao, presented a chance for them to "break the rule" and step into somewhat "forbidden" areas. However, since this generation generally has no interested in who Mao really is in history, their use of Mao is more for contemporary emotion expressions. Through consuming the modern re-invention of Mao's images, especially those sarcastic images, "mockers" are essentially to express their feelings in contemporary Chinese society—these feelings can relate to complaining about salary, the exhaustion in work and live, the powerlessness, the cynical mentality, or the deconstruction of official ideology and grand narratives. In this sense, the "mockers" is also a group with variations within—some more actively exploit the Mao images to deconstruct official narrative while some others are less intentional and mainly use Mao to express their daily frustrations.

Ms. Zhen is a college graduate who had bought various Mao commodities, especially the notebooks and coin purse with "fake words" from the *Quotation of the Chairman Mao*. These words are fake because they only resemble the Mao quotations in forms but vastly different in contents. When I asked her why she bought these

products, she said the following words:

A: Because that is funny! ... Everybody knows what it stands for! It stands for that era, how to say, it is kind of *sensitive*… When my parents saw these things I bought, they laughed and said that if it were the 1960s and 1970s, I would be captured!
Q: Why did they say that?
A: *Because it is making fun of the leader, making fun of the party; it is a reactionary behavior!* When I visited the Shanghai Expo in 2010, I was so worried that the security guy will find this notebook and throw it away when searching my bags! But fortunately, he did not say anything. That period of time is kind of *sensitive*…

Ms. Zhen mentioned the word "sensitive" twice in her short answer. She also clearly knew that the "commodified Mao" products she bought are making fun of the power, and thus could be viewed as "reactionary." Yet, she still bought these products. Thus, even if her behavior is not intentionally subverting the state ideology, it is indeed *de-constructing* the ideology.

On the other hand, the reasons why Ms. Zhen can feel this "sensitivity" is because she knew that "making fun of Chairman Mao" is violating the Communist Party's official ideology. In other words, *the post-totalitarian context in contemporary China creates an interesting and somehow contradictory scenario:* since ideology is still playing a role (though reducing role) in a post-totalitarian context, consumers know clearly that the sarcastic consumption of Mao is in a grey area and not "politically correct;" on the other hand, since there is certain degree of pluralism in contemporary China and the state is not strictly controlling ideology, consumers can still buy the Mao products and "make fun of the leader." In this sense, the Chinese state is keeping one eye open and one eye closed, and the mockers can enjoy this excitement in "walking on the boundary."

The "de-constructing" effect of the deviants can also be supported through my talk with Ms. Ming, the salesperson in Tianzifang. According to her, these people (the mockers) do not really buy the products for its substantial function, but for the "words and characters" written on the products! Here is what she said during the interview:

"you know, when they buy these things, they do not look at the images, well, part of them look at the images, but *mainly for the words*! If the words are funny and special, they will buy it!"

I continued to ask her what she meant by "funny and special," she said that that is kind of *contradictory*, because "*at that time [referring to Mao's era], [people] will not say words like those on the products today*!" In other words, although these "commodified Mao" products resemble the socialist style, their meanings are vastly deviant from the traditional or state ideology.

Graph 20: The "Quotations from Chairman Mao" on the Enamel Cup   Graph 21: "To Serve People's Money"

Above are two examples illustrating the meaning of "buying for the words." The left picture shows the enamel cups used almost in every household in Mao's era, but the images and words on the cups are entirely modern. For instance, the words on the cup with Mao's image (see Graph 20) say "Chairman Mao said, every relationship without the final goal of marriage is a form of bullying and harassment." As far as I know, Chairman Mao has never said these words. Thus, although the image above these words portrays a Mao style picture, the words present more of a "modern" re-

construction and re-invention. The picture on the right (see Graph 21) featuring the coin purse is more representative in terms of its "mocking" character. One of Chairman Mao's famous political slogans is "to serve the people." This is still an official slogan frequently used by CCP today. Yet, the words on the coin purse with the Mao image added one character and vastly changed the meaning of the phrase. The new meaning is now "to serve RMB"—RMB is the official name of Chinese currency which literally means "people's money" in Chinese. "To serve the RMB" means simply "to serve the money"! For the coin purse above the Mao purse, the words are "to serve the beautiful women." Obviously, the meanings of these words are vastly deviant from the official political ideology, and are boldly making fun of the image of Mao Zedong—a phenomenon would never exist in the totalitarian China.

Some mockers are more political active. For instance, I talked to Ms. Jia, a "mocker" living in Beijing. I asked her if she had ever bought the Mao commodities in South Luogu Lane (南锣鼓巷) or the "798" artist enclave, the places in Beijing resembling the Tianzifang area in Shanghai, she said the following words:

A: Not recently. If I am in a bad mood that day, I will buy these products to *vent my anger* (laugh)… But I did buy the Mao products when I was in high school. I bought a T-shirt in South Luogu Lane, and the T-shirt features the picture of Chairman Mao shaking hands with the Red Guards. The way he waved his hands look exactly like *Hitler*! And below the image writes the words "sailing the seas depends on the helmsman"!
Q: Why would you buy it when in high school?
A: It is to *ridicule* him! Just like the profile picture of my WeChat account (a Chinese SMS app), it is a Chairman Mao blowing bubbles! I really like to *ridicule* him!

In this short conversation, Ms. Jia used "ridicule" twice, and clearly mentioned that she will use Mao's image to "vent her anger." Due to her personal experience, she is very unsatisfied with the communist system, and treats Mao as a symbol of the evil. In this sense, Ms. Jia represents a sub-category of mockers who intentionally exploit the Mao images to deconstruct the official ideology.

In sum, although there are variations in terms of activeness, one common feature of the mockers is that, they will use the re-invented (and often sarcastic) images and products of Chairman Mao to express their feelings towards the contemporary Chinese society—ranging from everyday frustration to deconstruction of the official ideology. Moreover, mockers know clearly that their symbolic consumption is "walking on the boundary" since "making fun of the leader" is not "politically correct" but the Chinese state seems quite tolerate this consumption practice. In this sense, the "mocking" consumption of Mao as particular and the commodification of Mao as general is strongly embedded in the post-totalitarian context in contemporary China.

Conclusion and Discussion

What factors contribute to the commodification of Chairman Mao? Why do people consume these Mao products? How does the commodification of Mao inform our thinking on profane reputations and China's particular regime context? Based on the interviews and ethnography conducted in Shanghai and Beijing, I argue that the production of the "commodified Mao" only partially represents the features of post-communist nostalgia—after all, China has never officially jettisoned its communist tradition. In addition to the domestic factors, such as people's frustration with the social issues in the reform era, global elements strongly contribute to the production of Mao's commodified and profane reputations[42]. As illustrated by Mr. Walker and many other interviews, both the form, content, and the people participating in the production are influenced by global elements; it is in this sense that I argue the Mao's commodified

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[42] As Krishan Kumar mentioned, after 1989, "it is time for sociologists to put the emphasis on the other side, to consider the global system as a whole and the way it is shaping developments within nation-states" (Kumar, 2001: 242). In this sense, the rise of the global society and global capitalism influenced both the post-communist countries in Europe and the post-totalitarian society as China. Thus, the Chinese context and the former communist states share similarities but also differences.

and profane reputation in contemporary China is also a "cosmopolitan" (Levy & Sznaider, 2007) and "travelling"(Erll, 2011) memory.

Meanwhile, based on my interviews with consumers, I argue that the there are four representative categories of Mao's commodities. Specifically, the "projectors" regard Mao's images and products as a mnemonic bridge to their youth period. The "admirers" use Mao's image to voice their dissatisfaction of the reform China and call for the Mao version of utopia. In contrast to the "projectors" and "admirers," the "foreigners" are those born in the post-Mao China and thus sees the totalitarian/communist past in Mao's era as a foreign country and temporality. Similar to "foreigners," the "mockers" are also born in the post-Mao China, and they consume the (sarcastic) images of Chairman Mao to symbolically express their various feelings regarding contemporary China, ranging from daily frustration to the deconstruction of official ideology. Yet, it should be noted that these four categories are only ideal-types; in reality, one can have both the mentality of "foreigners" and "mockers," while the degree of "admiration" or "foreignness" also vary within each category.

While my analyses of the production and consumption of Mao commodities have answered relatively separate research questions, they share one important similarity, that is, both the production and consumption are strongly embedded in the post-totalitarian context in contemporary China. As mentioned above, a post-totalitarian state is characterized by three elements: an existing ideology with reducing importance, a loosening control of the society, and the existence of (limited) pluralism (Linz, 2000; Zhao, 2000). Since China officially adopted the "reform and opening up" policy in 1978, the totalitarian Chinese society has been transformed into a society with market economy, global capitalism, and a consumer revolution (Davis, 2000). Against this background, the commodification of Chairman Mao became an enterprise accessed

by ordinary Chinese citizens. Due to the reducing importance of ideology, Chairman Mao can now be a target for artistic re-invention, and people can freely buy, consume and even make fun of the leader. Yet on the other hand, consumers also feel the sensitivity that "making fun of Mao" is not "politically correct" according to the official ideology, and thus ironically feeling the excitement of "walking on the boundaries." In this sense, the post-totalitarian regime characteristics both enabled and constrained the form and content of the commodification of Chairman Mao in contemporary China.

Last but not least, since ordinary Chinese citizens today can freely consume various kinds of Mao commodities, Chairman Mao became a person or symbol that everybody can relate to—one can make a "time travel" to the past through Mao's image, or distort Mao's words for pleasure (as in the coin purse), or even make fun of Mao as a way to deconstruct the official ideology. In this sense, the "commodified Mao" is not a sacred object that everyone is too afraid to disrespect or pollute; it belongs to the mundane world and everyday life and does not resort to transcendence; it is in this sense a full-blown profane reputation. Yet, as the case of "admirers" illustrate, the profane status of Mao's commodities is not fixed; it can transform into the sacred sphere as contexts change, thus illustrating the very idea of "liminal reputation circle."

Chapter 5: Chairman Mao from a Generational Perspective

August 2nd in 2014 was a good day to Mr. Tian and his newly wed wife Ms. Xu. On this day, the young couple took wedding photos with various themes to celebrate their new marriage, as most young Chinese couples do. Ms. Luo, who was Mr. Tian's mother, would not miss such a big day and thus accompanied the new couple to the photography shop. Things went smoothly. Ms. Luo said that every costume the young wife chose was just "great." However, this happy and relaxed atmosphere froze when Ms. Xu decided to choose a green military costume representing the Red Guard style featured in Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution. "Mom, what do you think of this costume?" Ms. Xu asked. Ms. Luo did not reply. Instead she suggested other styles to Ms. Xu. Here was the moment the young wife and the mother-in-law had a conflict. Ms. Xu did not want to concede. Ms. Luo called her husband, Ms. Xu's father-in-law, and asked him to talk to Ms. Xu. The father-in-law seemed to be a serious man, and finally said to Ms. Xu: "If you want to marry my son, don't choose that costume!" Hearing this, Ms. Xu finally gave up her choice. During dinner, Ms. Xu had a candid conversation with her parents-in-law, and finally found the reason: the old couple's parents had been brutally persecuted in Mao's Great Cultural Revolution in the 1960s[43].

This story illustrates the indispensable role of generations in examining reputations. Empirically speaking, different generations often have diverse understandings of a political figure and his time. As the abovementioned case represents, Aunt Luo's generation and the young generation had contradictory attitudes towards Mao and his time, which almost spurred a generational conflict. Theoretically speaking,

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[43] This is based on a news story reported by the Huashang Newspaper (华商报) on August 7, 2014. I translated and rephrased the story without modification of plots. This story can be accessed through http://bbs.tiexue.net/post2_8236799_1.html (accessed October 30, 2016).

generation also matters because generation is a landscape through which the actors, the political and social context, and the reputational subjects heavily interact; it is also a medium through which the production of reputation meets the reception and audience. Moreover, since reputation and memory are time-sensitive categories, generation becomes an indispensable perspective to understand the phenomena.

Against this background, I will examine how generational positions affect people's perceptions of a particular figure and the corresponding historical events. More specifically, my study will ask, especially in the Chinese context, how different generations view Chairman Mao differently? Does memory of Chairman Mao transmit from the old generation to the young? More theoretically, my research will ask, what explains the generational differences in memory and reputations? If the formative years are indeed crucial to form memories, as many scholars argue (Mannheim, 2011; Schuman & Scott, 1989), what are the specific mechanisms for the formative year memory construction? What explains the change and persistency within and beyond the formative years?

In the rest of the chapter, I will first lay out the theoretical foundations on the problem of generations, through which I will present my research questions and theoretical frameworks. Based on the interviews I conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hunan, I argue that for the "present generation", that is, the generation with life experience of Mao's China, the memories and attitudes towards Mao are emotionally engaged and cognitively bifurcated. The "interpretative template" (Palmberger, 2016), or what Mannheim termed as "interpretative principle"(Mannheim, 2011), that the "present generation" uses is centered on the "nation and people discourse." For the "after generation," the generation born in post-Mao China and thus having no living memory of Mao, the attitudes towards Mao are more indifferent and diversified. The

"interpretative templates" they use are rather diverse and fragmented. In terms of the particular mechanisms surrounding the formative years, my research argues that family background, information sources, and early life trajectory together explain the change and consistency within and beyond the formative years of memory construction.

Generation Imprinting and Generational Positioning

Generation is a social and cultural rather than biological unit (Mannheim, 2011; Jeffrey K. Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, & Levy, 2011, p. 92). Karl Mannheim, the very first thinker who provides a sociological account on generation, pointed out, "the fact that people are born at the same time, or that their youth, adulthood, and old age coincide, does not in itself involve similarity of location; what does create a similar location is that they are in a position to experience the same events and data"(Mannheim, 2011). Mannheim continued to argue, "early impressions tend to coalesce into a natural view of the world. All later experiences then tend to receive their meaning from this original set, whether they appear as that set's verification and fulfilment or as its negation and antithesis"(Mannheim, 2011). Mannheim's account illustrates two interrelated characteristics of generation: one, it is the common experience of historical events rather than biological age that group people as generations; two, the formative years are the defining moment that form particular generation's "natural view of the world"(Mannheim, 2011).

Based on these two accounts, later scholars of memory and generation advanced Mannheim's ideas into more developed theories of "generation imprinting" and "generational positioning." The "imprinting" character of generations is mainly formed and reflected in the formative years. For instance, when surveying the Americans about "the national or world events or changes over the past 50 years," Schuman and Scott

found that "different cohorts recall different events or changes, and these memories come especially from adolescence and early adulthood" (Schuman & Scott, 1989). In another study carried out in the Russian context, Schuman and Corning argue that adolescence and early adulthood constitute a critical age for acquiring knowledge of public events, based on which they further identified the influence of gender and education on the knowledge reception during the critical age; a cognitive sophistication might develop through the education during the formative years (Schuman & Corning, 2000). Yet, Schuman and Corning also argue that there is a period effect "on all or almost all cohorts alive at the time of the event: they all would be more knowledgeable than cohorts born after the event had ended" (Schuman & Corning, 2000), though knowledge does not equal to personal memories in Schuman and Corning's account. In other words, early life experiences still exert a strong influence on people's *memories* towards particular historical events or figures. This theory is also corresponding to the life course study which examines life-long process but still emphasizes the importance of formative years for later life choices and values (Macmillan & Copher, 2005; Mortimer & Shanahan, 2007).

When historical events occur, not all people involved are in their formative years. How people of different age and different "stages of life" react, interpret, and reinterpret the events? How do they view the past, present, and future, after experiencing (or not experiencing) the events? These are the questions the "generational positioning" theory tries to answer. In her study of the Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina (Palmberger, 2016), Monika Palmberger differentiates three types of people: the first Yugoslavs, last Yugoslavs and post-Yugoslavs. The first Yugoslavs are those strongly affected by WWII, which provides them an "interpretative template" to re-interpret and understand the later histories; "the post-Yugoslavs present their relatively young age as a 'shield'

that has protected them from bad experiences (during the war)"(Palmberger, 2016, p. 39); the last-Yugoslavs have a direct experience of the war in the 1990s but no experience of WWII, and "they need to re-orient themselves in the new post-war socio-political context"(Palmberger, 2016, p. 38). Through these analyses, one may find that the formative years are still important, which is corresponding to the theories of "generational imprinting." More specifically, Palmberger (2016) argues that the formative year experience of historical events will provide an "interpretative template" through which actors can interpret and re-interpret events in the past, present, and reorient their life for the future. This is also what Mannheim (2011) referred to as the "natural view of the world" which serve as the original set for late verification or negation. In this sense, the theory on "generational positioning" depicts both how people in different "stages of life" respond to events and how formative years influence particular "interpretative templates" people use for later events.

While the theories on "generation imprinting" and "generational positioning" provide much wisdom, there are still questions remaining. For instance, both theories emphasize the importance of formative years, but what are the specific mechanisms constructing the formative-year "interpretative templates?" What factors matter in the formative years? While Schuman and Corning have touched on the issue of "cognitive sophistication" when analyzing the role of "critical age" (Schuman & Corning, 2000), more mechanisms and factors should be examined. Moreover, while current theories have correctly pointed out the defining role of formative years, this period of life is often, if not all, viewed as a moment rather than a process. What explains the change and persistence within (and beyond) the formative years? A more processual perspective will help us unravel this question.

In the following analysis, I will follow the theoretical agenda set by the "generation

imprinting" and "generational positioning" theories, but also go one step further by explicating the specific mechanisms and factors in explaining the process (change and persistency) within and beyond the formative years.

The Present/After Generation and the Process of Formative Years: A Theoretical Framework

Based on my empirical research on the Chairman Mao memory in China, as well as by borrowing wisdoms from current literature, I argue that due to the post-totalitarian transition, the generational positions in China include a "*present generation*" which has a direct experience of the communist China and Chairman Mao and an "*after generation*" which has no direct memory of Mao and his time. This "present" and "after" or absent differentiation provides a theoretical platform through which we can examine the interaction between mnemonic socialization (Zerubavel, 1996), communist regime change, and generational positions (Palmberger, 2016). This theorization also deepens our understanding of the influence of "settled" and "unsettled" time(Swidler, 1986) on memories and historical figures' reputations.

Specifically, I argue that due to their personal involvement, or what Mannheim termed as "personally acquired memory"(Mannheim, 2011), the *present generation's* attitudes towards Chairman Mao are *cognitively bifurcated*—some love and praise Mao while others hate and harshly criticized Mao. Yet, no matter what particular evaluation is, the people belong to this generation have two similarities, that is, they are both *emotionally engaged* and both adopt a "*nation and people discourse*" as their interpretative template, no matter it is praising or criticizing Chairman Mao. This generation will often base their evaluations on whether Mao benefits the nation and the people. In contrast, due to their lack of personal experience during Mao's China, *the after generation usually have an indifferent and diversified attitude towards Mao*. They

are emotionally detached from Mao and his time and base their evaluations of Mao on a variety of criteria. In this sense, the interpretative templates the after generation uses are also diversified and fragmented.

Corresponding to the "generation imprinting" theories, the two generations' attitudes towards Mao are strongly shaped by their formative year experiences. However, this does not mean that there is no change of opinions *during* the formative years, especially when we view the formative years as a process rather than a thing. My research on the memory of Mao illustrate that opinions during the formative year does change, and the influencing factors that largely construct people's later attitudes towards Mao include three aspects: the family background, information source, and the early life trajectory.

The family background provides an "initialization" for people's memories towards histories. If we compare a newborn infant to a white paper, then the family background provides painting raw materials and tools for the white paper. The parents or great parents' class background and their experiences during Mao's China will initiate the children's first impression of the world, though often vie an indirect way. In many cases, due to the traumatic experience and the repressed memories of Mao, the old generation did not want to discuss the Chairman, while the later generations are largely lacking interests in the old time, thus leading to a lack of direct communication between the two generations. Although the family background does not often (if not always) provide a direct "communicative memory"(Assmann, 2011), it does influence the children through what Hirsh called "postmemory" (Hirsch, 2008), that is, an indirect but deep transmission of traumatic memories from the preceding generation which often constitute memories in the later generations' own right (Hirsch, 2008).

In the meantime, the *information source* does affect people's memories and

attitudes towards historical figures, but only within in the formative year process. As my later analysis will illustrate, the information un-authorized by the government people get from a variety of channels (especially through the Internet) often change students' opinions on Chairman Mao, once the great person they know through the textbooks. However, the influence of the information source does not apply to the later years beyond the formative period. For many members of the "present generation," the contradictory information they get today is only noise. They will use a variety of cognitive methods to disregard, repudiate, and deny the information and thus hold their current opinions on Mao.

Comparing to the family background and information source, *the early life trajectory* might be the most important factor influencing people's attitudes towards Mao and their opinions on histories in general. The present generation's full exposure to Mao's all kinds of political movements, such as the Red Guard movement and the Educated Youth movement, provide them a "personally acquired memory"(Mannheim, 2011) that does not change thereafter. Those were adversely affected by Mao's "perpetual revolution" often (if not all) hold a negative attitude towards Mao, while those were not adversely affected often hold very positive attitudes. In this sense, the early life trajectory (together with the information source) also affect the particular interpretative template they use for understanding the histories. The after generation's early life experience, such as if they attend college, if they work for private companies or governments, also affect their ideas about Mao and his time.

Thus, through differentiation between the present and after generations and through analyzing how family background, information source, and early life trajectory together shape the generational perceptions and the corresponding interpretative templates, my research will complete the current theories on generational positioning

and imprinting, thus providing a processual perspective on formative years accompanied by communist transition.

The Present Generation: Engagement and Bifurcation

As mentioned above, the present generation are those born around 1949, and thus had a full exposure to all kinds of Mao's political movements, such as the Red Guard movement and the Educated Youth movement during the Cultural Revolution. Thus, they are also called "the red guard generation,"(Yang, 2016) "the *zhiqing* generation" or "the lost generation" (Bonnin, 2006; Bonnin & Horko, 2013). Due to their personal involvement, their attitudes towards Chairman Mao are extensively and emotionally *engaged*: some love and worship Mao, while some others hate Mao from the bottom of their hearts. Corresponding to this love-hatred divide, this generation's cognitive evaluation of Chairman Mao is also bifurcated (thus a double "bifurcation")—some view him positively while others view him extensively negatively. Due to the influence of the information they get and the (limited years of) education they have, they also tend to use a "nation and people discourse" as the base for their evaluations of Mao.

The Negative Memory

Standing on the one extreme of the bifurcation are those people who suffered from Mao's political movements and thus hate and heavily criticize Chairman Mao. The people constituting this sub-category of the "present generation," or what Mannheim termed as "generation unit"(Mannheim, 2011), are often adversely affected by Mao's movements, especially the Red Guard and the "Educated Youth" movements. Many people witnessed or even experienced the brutal persecution during the Cultural Revolution, and many were sent down to the rural area to "receive reeducation from

the middle and poor peasants" in the 1960s. Not everyone got the chance to get back to cities, no mention to attend the college. For those of people who did return, their precious and youthful days are buried in the hard work in the rural area or frontiers.

Mr. Fang is a former "educated youth" who holds a strong negative opinion on Chairman Mao. Mr. Fang was born into a "reactionary" family in 1949 in Shanghai. Both his parents were elementary school teachers. Yet, his father was labelled as "bad element" due to his organization of a trip together with female students to a local park, for normal school activities. After this trip, his father was accused of doing bad things, which was not real, and thus being sent to a correction facility in Qinghai for "reform through labors"—basically a prison without legal sentences. His mother was also persecuted because she was a former member of the Kuomintang Party—the former ruling party in Republic of China defeated by the Communist Party and fled to Taiwan. During Mao's Cultural Revolution, Fang personally witnessed the Red Guards breaking into the house and looting their belongs due to his bad class background. Later during the Cultural Revolution, Fang was sent to Heilongjiang as an "educated youth," but even this hard experience is possible only after his begging—a background like him is difficult to be sent to the good farm in Heilongjiang. Mr. Fang stayed in the farm until 1980, and thus missed the chance to go to college as well.

When I talked about Chairman Mao with Mr. Fang, he was very agitated and said: "Mao Zedong, he was essentially an emperor! You know, when Mao was 17, he wrote a poem, saying 'Spring is coming, I do not voice, no insect voice'![44] See? He said which insect dare to voice? This is unimaginable! *Isn't evil? Isn't barbaric?* Yes, this is how I would evaluate him! Mao Zedong is the real last emperor of China!"

By comparing Mao to an emperor, Mr. Fang contends that Mao is violating the democratic trend in the world, and ruling the country as a dictatorship. Yet, Mr. Fang also admitted that his opinions changed during his early years. He once read all the

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[44] "春来我不先开口，哪个虫儿敢支声"

writings Chairman Mao has published, and admired Mao very much. But as time went by, he found more and more contradictory information, the "real things" using his words, and realized how Mao's behaviors bringing suffering to the nation—

"why do you want to be an emperor? Do you [referring to Mao] want to advance the society or just being your emperor? They once said 'conquer the nation, rule the nation[45]. *'Ruling the nation is not serving the people!* 'Ruling the nation' is pure for pleasure! This must be criticized!"

By arguing Mao is a feudal emperor and dictator, and by emphasizing it is not really "for the people," Mr. Fang is essentially using a "nation and people discourse" as his *interpretative template*—this became the cornerstone for his evaluation of Mao, while his personal stories become a footnote of the stories by "the people."

Mr. Fang's story also illustrates the *mechanism of the formative years*. As mentioned above, Fang's father was a "bad element," and his mother was a former Kuomintang party member. This "bad" family background provides an initiation for Fang seeing the world. Mr. Fang mentioned to me that he "trembled" when he heard that his father was sent to the correction center, and since then has hold a very negative attitude towards Mao. Although Fang mentioned that he had read all the Chairman Mao writings, the later contradictory information he received further shackle the good belief and strengthen his bad attitudes towards Mao. "It's not real, and they are lying!" As Fang said to me. Besides the family background and information source, his personal experience during the Cultural Revolution, especially his home being looted by the Red Guards and his long years in Heilongjiang as "educated youth" further strengthen his bad memory of Mao.

Mr. Fang is not alone. Mrs. Nan, also a member of the "present generation," share many Fang's comments on Chairman Mao. Although Mrs. Nan was born in a

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[45] "打天下 坐天下"

better class background than Fang and was not sent down to the countryside or frontiers as an "educated youth," her personal experience during the Cultural Revolution also adversely affected Mao's reputation in her mind. Born into a working-class family, Nan fortunately joined army in the 1960s, envied by many people, and became a military servant for high-level veteran cadres. Many of these veteran cadres are among the first group of communist leaders who established the country. When I talked to Mrs. Nan about Chairman Mao, Mrs. Nan said:

"Well, I personally really have no good impression of Mao. I was born in 1951. When I began to know things, I don't feel those emotions of 'being emancipated.' When the Great Leap Forward occurred, I was 7. I have a deep memory that at that time, you know the 'backyard steel campaign', every house had to hid its tools made of iron… In 1962, I was 11. That's around the "three years of natural calamity", we had nothing to eat. So I went out to dig the wild vegetables with my mom. I feel that *my generation has never had a good day under Mao*!"

Mrs. Nan's bad feelings about Mao does not come from his childhood memory alone. Her military service during the Cultural Revolution is one of the turning points changing and making her current attitudes towards Mao. Mrs. Nan said:

"We were around the veteran leading cadres. You know we were waitress. We worked in the veterans' house. These veteran cadres are not like what they [referring to Mao and his followers] say. I don't see any reactionary behaviors at all. They did not have the so-called conspiracies! *I found the persecution towards them are not fair*! What Mao has done during the Cultural Revolution is really *hurting the nation and hurting the people*![46]"

By citing the Great Leap Forward and the Great Famine, by saying that her generation "has never had a good day under Mao" and Mao is essentially "hurting the nation and the people," Mrs. Nan is also drawing a "nation and people discourse," emphasizing how Mao brings sufferings to the nation. This also illustrates her strong negative feelings towards Mao.

Although Mrs. Nan comes from a better class background than Mr. Fang, Nan's

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[46] 祸国殃民.

story also illustrates the combining explanatory power of the family background, information source, and early life trajectory. Her working-class background provides her a neutral or even positive memory towards CCP in the beginning, and largely shields her from the Red Guard's looting during the Cultural Revolution. She also joined the army which allow her avoid more harsh experiences in the countryside or frontiers. If there were no other life-changing events, it is very likely for Nan to grow up as a person who admire Chairman Mao. Indeed, many people who avoid the "sent-down movement" and secured a good career through joining the army did have very positive views towards Mao. However, for Mrs. Nan, her early life experiences in serving the high-level veterans is one of the turning points. She witnessed the persecution of these veterans, who are alleged to commit the "reactionary conspiracies." As a waitress working in their house, Mrs. Nan saw nothing could possibly be linked to "reactionary conspiracies." This shackled her original belief in Mao and make her wonder about the legitimacy and fairness of the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, many people mentioned that their disappointment and disillusion about Mao and his "perpetual revolution" by events such as the fall of Lin Biao in the later stage of the Cultural Revolution. For Nan's case, although the family background provides an initial impression about CCP and Mao, her early life trajectory very much changed her opinions on Mao.

The Positive Memory

Standing on the other extreme are those people who love and admire Chairman Mao. While they are also emotionally engaged with what Mao stands for, their evaluations are sharply different from those who hate Chairman Mao, thus presenting as the other side of the attitudinal "bifurcation." Compared to the abovementioned generation unit, the people who love Mao often have a good family background and do

not have traumatic experiences during Mao's political movements. While some of them were also sent down to the rural areas or frontiers during the "educated youth" movement, more of them had a better career and life such as joining the factory or army. For those who did went to the rural areas and frontiers, they usually come back to cities very quickly, possibly no longer than two or three years. Thus, their lives were not adversely affected much by Mao's will and policies.

Mr. Li was such an admirer of Chairman Mao. He was born into a revolutionary family in 1949. His mother joined the revolution cause well before the establishment of the People's Republic. Thus, he heard a lot of revolutionary stories from his mother during the childhood. When the trend of the Cultural Revolution hit, he participated in the "red guard movement" and travelled to Beijing through the "great alliance movement" to "see Chairman Mao"[47]. When the "red guard movement" faded away, he was not sent down to the countryside or rural areas far away from home. Instead, he was fortunate to join the factories in Shanghai, becoming a worker—an admired role by many Chinese at the time. When I interviewed him in Shanghai, he was wearing a bright "Chairman Mao badge" on his chest, as he says he has done every day for the past 40 years. We discussed a variety of issues regarding Chairman Mao. Mr. Li enthusiastically said:

"Who is Chairman Mao? *Chairman Mao is the representative of people, the representative of socialism, and the representative for a correct road!...* Chairman Mao united people. When this country unites rather than stays as a tray of loose sand, it will create tremendous power! Why does the new China successfully invent the nuclear bomb in only 15 years, while the Western countries spent several decades or even hundreds of years? The reason lies in that! *We Chinese used only a very short time to make something that Western countries could not do*, even after hundreds of years! That is the greatest part of Chairman Mao!"

Besides talking about Mao's achievements, Mr. Li also expressed his ideas about Mao's

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[47] Mao Zedong received and met the Red Guards in Tian'anmen Square for eight times during the Cultural Revolution.

mistakes and the present situation:

"For the mistakes, it only accounts for a *tiny* portion. If you infinitely magnify the mistake but ignore Chairman Mao's major achievements, *you are purely 'pouring dirty water' on Chairman Mao*, what is good about that? Chairman Mao has sacrificed so much to establish the country, nobody can negate his achievements! ... Look at today! We deviated from Mao's correct road. Look at the consequences: people are not this country's master anymore, and the workers are getting laid off…"

By connecting Mao to the nation's great achievements, by comparing China to the Western countries, Mr. Li is also using a "nation and people discourse" as his major interpretative template. In this sense, although Mr. Li and Mr. Fang hold contrasting attitudes towards Mao, the interpretative templates they use are quite similar. This is also corresponding to Mannheim's ideas that once the "natural view of the world" forms, "all later experiences then tend to receive their meaning from this original set, whether they appear as that set's verification and fulfilment or as its negation and antithesis"(Mannheim, 2011).

In the meantime, Mr. Li's story is also illustrating the mechanism of formative years. Born into a "revolutionary" family, Mr. Li has heard a lot of revolutionary stories from his mother, providing him an initial impression of Mao's "great cause." During the most turbulence years of the Cultural Revolution, Mr. Li was not sent down to the countryside and thus largely avoiding the adverse experiences caused by Mao. Thus, for Mr. Li, his early life trajectory did not change the initial impression his family background gave me, and since then hold rather positive attitudes towards Mao. One particular interesting point is how he treated that contradictory information. Once his opinions on Mao was formed, he would use a variety ways to deny the contradictory information. For instance, he said that Mao's mistakes are only "tiny," and argue that those who criticize Mao is "purely pouring dirty water on Mao" and labelling them as having evil or stupid motivation. This strongly illustrates that *the information source is only influential within but not beyond the formative years*.

Mr. Hai is another admirer of Chairman Mao. He was born into a Beijing peasant family in the 1950s. During the Cultural Revolution, he participated in the Red Guard movement but was not sent down to the countryside as an "educated youth." Instead, he joined the army in Henan province and later was recommended to the college—at Mao's revolutionary years, only people from good class background would have chances to be "recommended" to colleges. Retiring from the army, Mr. Hai worked in the government for a quite long time, until nearing retirement to start his own business in media industry. As he directly claimed:

"for our generation, *we are direct beneficiaries* of the new China! In 1949, our parents went to Beijing from the rural areas, so we could have the chance to go to the college! ... So I would say Chairman Mao has four greatness! There are many things to illustrate this, but the most important thing is: Chairman Mao spent 22 years, led about 20 people, *and finally conquered the country and establish a new country!* Very few people in history can do this! This one point already illustrates his greatness!"

Besides this "rational" comments on Mao's achievements, Mr. Hai also mentioned one incidence that he saw two people of his age saying bad words about Mao. He could not stand this and approached them, saying "*what you eat is from the Communist Party, what you get is from the Communist Party, the house you live is also from the party, how could you curse Chairman Mao here?!*" From these words and incidents, one may see that Mr. Hai is not only cognitively praising Mao but also emotionally engaged in defending Chairman Mao!

Similar to Mr. Li, Mr. Hai was born with a good class background, which provides a more pro-government initiation. As Mr. Hai mentioned, thanks to Chairman Mao, he could have the chances to attend the college while his family could move to cities. During the Cultural Revolution. Mr. Hai was not experiencing traumatic events and thus his initial impression of Mao largely remains. When confronting the contradictory information, especially Mao's mistakes, Mr. Hai says that these things are "historical events," and "every dynasty would have to occur," thus denying Mao's

personal responsibilities.

In sum, for the present generation, their attitudes towards Mao are sharply bifurcated—some hate and heavily criticize Mao while others love and admire Mao. Yet, these groups also share two similarities, that is, they are both emotionally engaged in the topic and are often using a "nation and people discourse" as their base for evaluation of Mao. Their bifurcated stances could be explained by three elements during the formative years. The family background provides an initial impression of Mao, which will persist if they do not encounter events or acquire contradictory information during their formative years. Yet, if they encounter the latter two, especially during the Cultural Revolution, they tend to change their initial stance "aligned" by the family background. However, once their attitudes towards Mao formed, the contradictory information will not change their attitudes.

The After Generation: Indifference and Diversification

The after generation is a generation without any "personally acquired memory" (Mannheim, 2011) of Chairman Mao and his time. They were born around the 1980s or after who grew up in the reform era when Chairman Mao had already died. Comparing to the present generation's emotional engagement, their attitudes towards Mao are more indifferent and diversified—they generally know much less about Mao than the previous generation; they do not care very much to know Mao; and they have diversified (sometimes ambiguous) evaluations of Chairman Mao. In this sense, they usually do not have extreme stances or love-hate relations to Mao and his time. In addition, corresponding to their diversified opinions on Mao, the interpretative templates they use to evaluate Mao are also fragmented and diversified.

Indifference

Ms. Wu is a saleswoman in a shopping area in Shanghai. She was born into an ordinary family in Anhui Province in 1991. Her father works in a factory while her mother works as a maid. After the middle school, she directly moved to Shanghai for work instead of continuing the high school due to a lack of good performance in schools. Thus, when I met her in Shanghai, she has already been working as a saleswoman for 7 or 8 years. Although she has changed the organization for work several times, she has always been doing the sales job in Shanghai. In this sense, her experience is relatively simple, without any living experience of Mao's China. I asked her impression about Mao directly, and she replied: "*Well, I don't really have a thought or impression about Mao. He is kind of great? But really, my feeling towards him is very plain*." "What do you mean by plain? Do you have a more positive or negative view towards him?" I continued to confront. Ms. Wu said:

"some people say he is good, and some people say he is bad. In my impression, I don't have a particular thought. They say Chairman Mao is doing wrong things in the Cultural Revolution, and a lot of people die. But in the war-time, Chairman Mao's strategy is right. *So, I don't know. I guess my impression of him is a very ordinary impression*."

From these words, one may find that Ms. Wu do not know the details about Mao and do not really care about Mao. The word "kind of," "plain," and "ordinary impression" illustrate her ambivalence towards Mao. As my later conversation with her continue to illustrate, as a saleswoman in the commercial and capitalist Shanghai, Ms. Wu's life is indeed detached from Mao and his time.

Ms. Wu's indifference to Mao can also be explained by the formative year process. In terms of family background, both of her parents come from rural area and belong to the working class. Their memory of Mao's China only began to form in the later years of Mao, while the rural area the parents is not the major are the Cultural Revolution hit. In this sense, the family background does not give Ms. Wu a clear

initiation on how to look at Mao. As her later conversation with me illustrates, her ideas about Mao mainly come from the history textbook, which did not elaborate Mao's mistakes during the Cultural Revolution. Due to her limited knowledge and limited time, Ms. Wu did not climb China's "Great Fire Wall" to see the forbidden and often contradictory information on the Internet, and thus is not exposed to these contradictory information as well. More importantly, as a salesperson in Shanghai, she lives in a fully commercial and post-totalitarian society, which is sharply different from Mao's China. All these factors contribute to her indifference towards Mao and his time.

This indifferent stance on Mao is not limited to those people who are only middle school graduates. I also found similar responses from students graduated from good universities. For instance, Ms. Zhen is a young journalist graduated from a famous university in Shanghai. She was born into a business family in 1987, also belonging to the "after generation." When I asked her about Chairman Mao, especially his mistakes, she said "*I don't have any opinions*." "You don't have any opinions?" I repeated her answer as a question. She said:

"I don't…Because we have never experienced that era. When we grow up, *it is already a different society*; We are not under Mao's leadership anymore… *We won't discuss Mao Zedong in daily life with friends either*. I just 'know' him. That's all…"

Indeed, as Ms. Zhen directly pointed out, Mao is far from their daily life, and they have every reason to feel detached and indifferent towards the Chairman.

Although coming from an urban family, Ms. Zhen shares Ms. Wu's stance on Chairman Mao. When I discuss the influence of her parents and other information, Ms. Zhen said:

"When I was a kid, I do not hear my parents talking about these things [referring to Mao and his time] very often. I won't actively look for that information as well. *My family does not have that atmosphere to talk about that.* When you grow up a little and attended the elementary school, you will know a little but these things through the history education, mainly positive. But to tell the truth, *the teachers won't talk a lot about that*, you know. It won't be very deep…"

From this quotation, one may find that for Ms. Zhen, his family was not brutally hit by the Cultural Revolution. The business family also lacks interest in discussing politics. Thus, the initiation on Mao's memory is already vague. After attending school, due to the sensitivities, both the history textbook and the school teachers won't discuss the details of Mao's time, leaving more ambiguity to the students. More importantly, as Ms. Zhen said, "it is already a different society." The living world of the "after generation" presents a natural detachment from thinking Chairman Mao and his time.

Diversification

While the "after generation" is mostly indifferent towards Chairman Mao, it does not mean they do not have any comments on the Chairman. As some people hold relatively more positive attitudes towards Mao, as illustrated by the "kind of great" answer from Ms. Wu, some others hold a more negative or complicated views towards him. Mr. Wei was a college graduate in Beijing. He was born into a revolutionary family around 1980. His great parents joined Mao's revolution even before the establishment of the new China. Yet, Mr. Wei's life is largely detached from the revolutionary years. After graduating from an elite university in Beijing, Mr. Wei worked as a writer for media companies. When I asked his opinions on Mao, he said:

"well, he is a *political strongman*. This word is not a praise or a complimentary. It is an objective evaluation from my heart. Political strongman can be explained by many different aspects. For instance, he is smart, but he is also decisive, cruel, and determined when it comes to the political fight against enemies. These are all meanings of political strongman…"

By using the word "political strongman," Mr. Wei is not giving a black or white answer. This reply is thus vastly different from the "present generation" who often gives either a very positive or negative comments on Mao. In this sense, the *interpretative template* Mr. Wei used is also not based on a "nation or people discourse" but more of efficacy of political strategies.

The process of formative year experience is also evident in Mr. Wei's case. As Wei mentioned, while his great-parents (the "before generation"—the generation whose formative years are far before the Cultural Revolution) hold a positive view to Mao, his parents (as the "present generation") hold a more negative and critical view towards Mao. "What is your role and take?" I asked Mr. Wei. Mr. Wei smiled and said: "*I am a by-stander!*" This "by-stander" answer not only illustrates Wei's indifferences, but also reflects his ambivalent attitudes, partially affected by the contradictory family background—the great parents join the communist revolution while his parents suffered from the Cultural revolution. Yet, Mr. Wei also mentioned the influence of the contradictory information he got, especially during the college years. Wei talked about one book his father brought home from Hong Kong:

"It is a book written by Mao's personal secretary. My father bought it, and I also read. You could imagine how that book is to a child! *It is subversive and paradigm shifting* (颠覆性的)！*Totally subversive.* At first, I did not want to believe. You know, the good impression of Mao you had for a long time. The image described in this book is just so distant from the previous impression [through school education]!"

Although Wei did not mention the name of the book, an educated guess would be a memoir written by Mao's personal doctor, Li Zhishui, which subvert Mao's great images in many people's head. In this case, the contradictory information Mr. Wei received from the book (as well as the university education which he later emphasized) largely changed his opinions on Mao during the college years. Yet, when he graduated from college and began to work in societies, he says that the society is more complicated than the ideal thoughts he nurtured in college. Thus, he holds a more rational (not necessarily good or but) attitudes towards Mao. Using his words, that is the "political strongman."

The diversified opinions on Mao is also illustrated by my talk with Ms. He, who was a student studying in the US. She was born in the 1980s. Her father was a civil

servant while her mother works as a university teacher. After completing her study in a famous university in Nanjing, she went to the US to further her doctoral education. When I talked to her about Mao, the answer she provides somehow surprised me. She said she hold a negative attitude towards Mao, and one of the major reasons is from the gender and family perspective, which is seldom mentioned by the present generation. Ms. He said:

"I think he is really a person *without good moral character!* His attitude towards his families… I think he is a really a *jerk* (渣男). He did not hold a long love for each of his wives. He *deflowered and discarded (始乱终弃) every wife*, and he is not good to his children."

While rumors about Mao's personal lives did circulate during the people belonging to the present generation, very few of the people in this generation will use this as one base to evaluate Chairman Mao. In contrast, partially corresponding to her education background, Ms. He essentially uses family value as one interpretative template she draws to evaluate Chairman Mao.

The mechanisms for the formation of formative years also apply to Ms. He. As He mentioned later in the conversation, her experience in the college strongly affect his opinions on Mao. While her middle school friends usually hold a more neutral or positive views towards Mao, her "enlightenment" in the college made her more critical than many of her middle school friends. The college experience is one important corner stone in her early life trajectory, which is also evident in Mr. Wei's case. The feminist ideas she received through high education also makes her more critical of Mao's personal life, and contribute to her adoption of the "family and moral character" as one important interpretative template to evaluate Chairman Mao.

Ms. He's case is also a good illustration of the pattern of the *inter-generational interaction.* As we also discussed if the previous generation (especially his parents) has a strong influence on her opinions, Ms. He said:

"My father is a civil servant working for the government. Staying in the institution for many years, he should know the problems of the party. But I think he does not have the vocabulary to talk about it. My mother did not want to talk about Chairman Mao either."

As a result, the inter-generation transmission of memory of Mao is very limited. This is also supported by my interviews with the present generation. For instance, when I asked Mr. Fan, a former educated youth who criticizes Chairman Mao, if he talked about Mao to his son, he replied: "no, they do not care about politics. I feel that the *1980s generation does not care about politics*. My son has no interest in listening to my stories… *We have a generation gap*." In this sense, the "communicative memory" (Assmann, 2011) between the two generations is largely lacking, partially due to the present generation's repression of memory, and partially due to the after generation's lack of interests.

Yet, Ms. He did mention the "feelings" her generation receives from the previous generation's nuanced reaction to the history in Mao's China. She joked:

"I think the history teachers (in middle or high schools) are probably the 'reactionary' enlightenment of China! From the high school, our history teacher began to talk about the Great Famine, the Cultural Revolution, etc. We found that he could continue these contents. So he said we skipped it, you [referring to the students] just read yourself. I feel like the students are quite sensitive. *From the attitude of the teacher, we can sense that there is something hidden behind*."

As Ms. He said, the students are sensitive. Although they are not quite sure what is missing, but their interaction with the previous generation makes them feel that "there is something hidden behind." This is also corresponding to what Hirsch termed as "postmemory"(Hirsch, 2008). In this sense, *the inter-generational transmission of memory between the present and after generation is more likely through the form of "postmemory" rather than the "communicative memory*."

In sum, for the after generation, their attitudes towards Mao is more indifferent and diversified. While the family background did exert influence on their initial impression of Mao, the information they achieved through college and the Internet, and

their early life trajectory including college and career exert more impact on their opinions on Mao. Since their lifeworld is strongly embedded in capitalism, commercialism, multiculturalism, and post-communism, their lack of interest in Mao and a more fragmented and diversified "interpretation template" become a very natural result.

Conclusion and Discussion

How do generational positions affect people's opinions on Chairman Mao in the Chinese context? Do people's memories of historical figure and events change within and beyond the formative years? What factors explain the influences of the formative year process on generational memories? While current theories on "generational positioning" and "generation imprinting" have provided much wisdom, they do not constitute the complete answers for these questions. While Palmberger's research has studied how first-Yugoslavs, Last-Yugoslavs, and Post-Yugoslavs remember WWII and the war in the 1990s (Palmberger, 2016), the Yugoslavs' case focus on the traumatic memory of war and does not relate to the topic of post-communist transition. Also, while the "generational imprinting" theories (Mannheim, 2011; Schuman & Corning, 2000; Schuman & Scott, 1989) have correctly pointed out the importance of formative years, which is supported by my own research, more details regarding the *specific process and mechanisms* in forming the formative years are still needed.

Based on my interviews conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hunan, I argue that we can understand Chairman Mao's reputations through the perspectives of two generations: the "present generation" who have "personally acquired memory"(Mannheim, 2011) of Mao's "perpetual revolutions" and the "after generation"

who was born in a post-Mao China and thus with no living experience of Mao and his time. This differentiation is also corresponding to two transitions—one generation grows in the communist China while the other grows in the post-totalitarian and capitalist China; one grows when Chairman Mao was still alive while the others mainly grow up in a post-Mao world. Through intensive interviews, I found that the present generation's views towards Chairman Mao are emotionally engaged and cognitively bifurcated—some love and highly praise Chairman Mao while some others hate and heavily criticize Mao. The strong emotional engagement sometimes make the memories to Mao a form of repressed memory—there is indeed an avoidance of the topic when I conducted the interview. On the other hand, the after-generation's attitudes towards Mao are largely indifferent and diversified, corresponding to their life-world situation. In addition, the present generation's interpretative template for evaluating Mao, positively or negatively, is drawing a "nation and people discourse," which is strongly related to the "vocabulary" they acquired in the formative years. After all, "serving the people" type of propaganda is one of the most frequent words they hear in Mao's China. In contrast, the after generation's interpretative templates are more fragmented and diversified, again corresponding to their life-world situations.

These generational differences are explained by the process and mechanisms of the formative year experiences, namely the family background, the information source, and the early life trajectory. 1) To begin with, the family background provides an initiation, an alignment, or a "start-up" for people to have a first impression of Mao and the world. Thus, those who are from good class background usually begin their life with good memory of Mao. While this initial memory might be directly told by previous generations, it is more likely for later generations to acquires this memory through the form of "postmemory"(Hirsch, 2008) instead of direct "communicative

memory"(Assmann, 2011). This is partially due to the present generation's avoidance and partially due to the after-generation's lack of interests. Yet, the family background only provides a starting point. 2) The later information sources and contents people acquired through their formative years might very much change their original views towards Chairman Mao, as illustrated by cases in both the present and after generations. However, if the contradictory information is provided after the formative years, such as my conversations with the present generation today, people might deny the contradictory information and withhold their ideas. In this sense, the information source and content is only effective during the formative years, especially during the school years. 3) Among all three factors, the early life trajectory, such as joining the army, being sent down to the countryside in the school age, attending colleges, and starting a career, is probably more important than the family background and the information source. If there is no life-changing event, that is, events vastly changing the trajectory or a "road" one is heading to, one's original ideas from the family background might well be sustained; yet if life-changing events do occur, such as the Sent Down movement in the Cultural Revolution, this experience will modify the previous ideas people formed through family background and information sources. In this sense, the formative year is also a process with both changes and persistency.

Although my theory on the process and mechanisms of formative years is developed through the Chinese context, it does have a potentiality to apply to other contexts. For instance, many former communist societies also tend to employ a collectivized ideology, especially when these societies were in the communist phase. For the "present generation" in these societies, it is very likely for them to use a "nation and people discourse" to evaluate historical figures. For the "lost generation" in the US in the 1960s, their early life trajectories might very much change their original

impressions they acquired through the family background. In this sense, my research

contributes to a more general theoretical framework which essentially considers social

and regime changes and essentially treats the formative years as a process and the

interaction of mechanisms.

Chapter 6: Chairman Mao and his Counterparts

"Wise and great, *and* heinous and monstrous (英明伟大、罪恶滔天)! This is what I would say about Chairman Mao."

--Mr. Man, 2015

"My impression of Premier Zhou Enlai is quite positive. I have never heard anything negative about him! The kind of person he is, what he did… it gives me a very positive impression!"

--Ms. Lin, 2015

"I don't know if it is because there is a lot of negative information about Mao. For people like Sun Yat-sen and Zhou Enlai, there is far less negative information. So my impressions of Zhou and Sun are quite vague, probably gentler and more positive. Their images are pretty gentle."

--Ms. Zhen, 2015

Chairman Mao Zedong is a complicated man. As Mr. Man pointed out, Mao is viewed as "wise and great" for some people, or "heinous and monstrous" for others, or "wise and great, *and* heinous and monstrous" for the same person. Ever since Chairman Mao died in 1976, the controversies around him have not stopped. As my previous chapters illustrate, for different reasons, people view Mao as god, hero, villain, or even commodity. Mao's reputation and memory is heavily contested in contemporary China.

While Premier Zhou Enlai shares many similarities with Chairman Mao, Zhou's reputation presents an interesting contrast. Zhou was a loyal comrade of Mao Zedong. He followed Mao since the revolutionary years, and was also a founding member of the People's Republic of China. After the foundation of the "new China" in 1949, he became the first premier of the People's Republic of China, until his death in 1976— the same year Chairman Mao died. While both Zhou and Mao were leaders of the communist new China, Zhou's reputation is more consolidated. As Ms. Lin told me in 2015, her impression about Zhou is "quite positive"—she "has never heard anything negative about him." This impression is also supported by my other interviews. Among all the people I talk to, with or without living experience of Mao's era, the majority

expressed similar "gentle and positive" opinions on the premier. Thus, Premier Zhou Enlai enjoys a quite uniform reputation.

Sun Yat-sen is another figure comparable to Mao Zedong. Sun was also a founding father—the founding father of "modern China." He established the Nationalist party, overthrew the Qing dynasty, and founded the Republic of China in 1912, which was the regime before the People's Republic of China. As my interview with Ms. Zhen illustrates, echoed by my other interviews, Sun's reputation is quite "gentle," using Zhen's word. People usually view Sun as a historical figure distant from them, but hold a positive memory towards him. In this sense, Sun's reputation is similar to that of Zhou, which is far less contested than Mao.

Since both Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou are the founding members of the People's Republic, both maintained the communist system in the pre-reform China (or "Mao's China"), and coincidently, both died in 1976, then why is Zhou's reputation more uniform and consolidated than Mao's? Also, since both Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong are founding fathers of a political regime and government, why is Sun's reputation so "gentle" while Mao's reputation is so contested? From a theoretical perspective, what affects the contestation or consolidation of a particular figure's reputation?

To answer these questions, I will borrow wisdom from current theories on memory and reputation, especially the studies examining the role of "entrepreneurs" in the production and appropriation of reputations (G. A. Fine, 2001; Robert, 2007), and the role of context in producing particular images of historical figures(Schwartz, 1987, 1996, 2000). While these theories have correctly pointed out the importance of contexts, agents, and the production of memory, my research will go one step further by breaking the divide between production and reception, contexts and agents. More specifically, I

argue that the contestation and consolidation difference of reputation targets can be explained by two dimensions in a particular "field"(Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993), namely the mechanism of "indexing" and "relatedness." "Indexing" refers to reputation target's symbolic ties to a particular regime, event, or ideology. In this sense, the "reputation targets" (such as Mao and Zhou) are the signifiers, while the political regime or ideology are the signified. "Relatedness" refers to the degree to which the "signified" has an *organic* connection to actors in a particular field. Only when both "indexing" and "relatedness" are high or positive would a reputation become contested. In the following paragraphs, I will first lay out the theoretical foundations, based on which I will elaborate my contestation-consolidation theory based on the comparison of the reputations of Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Sun Yat-sen.

Categorization of Reputations and Framing of the Questions

Based on different criteria, reputations can be grouped and studied into different categories. One criterion is what Robert Jansen called "valence"(Robert, 2007), meaning that a reputation can be positive, negative, or neutral. According to this criterion, Barry Schwartz's classic studies on the reputation of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln fall into the pro-positive side (Schwartz, 1987, 1996, 2000, 2008), while Gary Alan Fine and his colleagues' studies of Benedict Arnold, Warren Harding, and John Brown fall into the pro-negative side (G. A. Fine, 2001). Fine (2001) developed a specific term of "difficult reputation" to name these pro-negative reputations. More specifically, Fine argues that a difficult reputation can be divided into three sub-categories. The first sub-category is the "real" negative reputation which "attributes negative traits or characteristics to an individual"(G. A. Fine, 2001, p. 10). Sometimes, the ties of these attributes are so strong that anyone who wants to change

the "valence" of these negative attributes will lead to his own reputation damaged. Fine called this phenomenon as "sticky reputation"(G. Fine, 2012). The second sub-category is the "contested type," which is in the process of being formed or re-formed(G. A. Fine, 2001). The third sub-category is the "subcultural reputations" which are "solidified differently by conflicting subcultural groups"(G. A. Fine, 2001, p. 11).

Besides the valence of reputations, there are other dimensions of categorization. For instance, Jansen also discusses the aspects of "salience" and "ownership." Basically, "salience" refers to the status of a reputation as important or unimportant, while "ownership" means who owns or "naturalizes" the "association between the symbol and their systems of meanings"(Robert, 2007). On the other hand, based on the different "carriers," a reputation can also be "artistic" (G. Lang & Lang, 1985; G. E. Lang & Lang, 1988), "intellectual" (Bartley & Sylvia Erickson, 2000; Camic & Gross, 2002; Cassano, 2009; Lamont, 1987; McLaughlin, 1998; Megill, 1987; Warde, 2002), and "organizational" (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Rindova, Williamson, & Petkova, 2010; Tadelis, 1999), among others.

Scholars framed distinctive research questions corresponding to these categorizations. Representative questions are: what are the characteristics of particular types of reputation? Do they have distinctive features compared to other types? What made a reputation positive or negative? Interestingly enough, while these questions explored important issues regarding reputations, relative less focus is paid on the mechanisms of contested reputations, except for Fine's explanation through the fight between "reputation entrepreneurs" (G. A. Fine, 2001). More often than not, the previous mentioned categories of reputation are looking at already formed reputation— no matter this reputation belongs to the positive, negative, artistic, or intellectual categories. In this sense, more questions in current reputation studies look at the "result"

or end product of reputation construction, but why are some reputations so contested while others consolidated? To better answer this question, we need to conduct a comparative study examining the differences between contested and consolidated reputations.

Reputation through the Cultural Diamond Perspective

While current scholarship has developed various perspectives to study reputation, most perspectives and their elements can be summarized by Wendy Griswold's cultural diamond template (Griswold, 1994). According to Griswold, the cultural diamond includes four elements, including the cultural object, social world, creator, and receiver (Griswold, 1994). Gary Alan Fine adopted this model and put it into the reputation study. In the book of *Difficult Reputation*, Fine (2001) elaborates the model and argues that the cultural objects focus more on the facts, or the "good to think" for reputations; the social world emphasizes the power of structure, especially how institutions such as schools shape the narratives; the "creators" act based on the power of interest and would put forward claims of particular reputation based on creators' own interests; the "receivers" act based on the relations and would echo the creators if they share common values and beliefs.

Among these four elements, the role of creators and context are emphasized, corresponding to the more studied aspect of *reputation production*. As social constructionist theories pointed out, the "fact" is based on and subjected to the construction and interpretation of social world. Thus, most sociologists would not take the "essential qualities" of the cultural objects for granted and would not attribute a particular reputation solely to the "qualities" of cultural objects. Meanwhile, since many reputation studies ask "what makes a reputation" and often base their research on

historical archives written by elites and the creators of reputations, the impacts of social context and creators in making reputations are more emphasized. For instance, when studying the changing images of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, Barry Schwartz argues that the social context, such as American civil war, the progressivism, the coming of the "post-heroic age," largely affect the reputation change of Washington and Lincoln (Schwartz, 1987, 1996, 2008). While Schwartz also touched on the issue of creators through his analysis of "ideological spokesman"(Schwartz, 1991), Gary Alan Fine's concept of "reputation entrepreneurs"(G. A. Fine, 2001) speaks more to the importance of creators. According to Fine, "reputational entrepreneurs include family members, friends, and political associates of famous people, and editors and biographers. Each reputational entrepreneur has an interest to advance by making claims about the target"(G. A. Fine, 2001, p. 21). In this sense, Fine treats the competition between "reputation entrepreneurs" as a battle field, while the result (or valence) of a reputation depends very much on the result of the "fight." Therefore, a reputation's consolidation results from the "absent or fail" of the competing entrepreneurs(G. A. Fine, 2001). Following these approaches, Robert Jansen further argues that the reputation entrepreneurs might exploit previous "memory work" and change the "valence, salience, and ownership" of a particular reputation, detailing reputation entrepreneurs' specific "memory work" and strategies (Robert, 2007).

As mentioned above, these studies have provided much wisdom to the study of reputation, and yet they focus more on the *production* rather than reception of the reputation. Creators' role receives more attention than the role of "receivers" in current scholarship. However, as more and more people can voice their own opinions through various channels in contemporary era, the role between production and reception, creators and receivers, is very much blurred. Although the cultural diamond template

treats the four elements (cultural objects, social world, creators, and receivers) as analytical separated, *more synthetic and relational perspectives* incorporating both production and reception should be adopted.

Indexing and Relatedness: A Relational Theory on Reputation

To address the abovementioned gaps in reputational studies, I argue that we should develop a *synthetic and relational* perspective that analytically incorporate production and reception, context and agent, social world and the cultural objects. Based on my empirical study comparing the reputations of Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Sun Yat-sen in the Chinese context, I developed a relational theory on reputation, centering on two important dimensions of indexing and relatedness. This theory also helps to answer my research question, namely why some reputations are contested and volatile, while some others are stable and consolidated. In the following paragraphs, I will first lay out my theoretical framework, and then elaborate its application through my case in the Chinese context.

Indexing. Indexing refers to reputation target's symbolic ties to a particular regime, event, or ideology. While this symbolic tie might have its basis in the "qualities" of the cultural objects, such as a structural position the reputation target posits, it is often a result of social construction. In this sense, the basis of indexing is also path-dependent, influenced by previous memory work. Yet, no matter whether this symbolic tie is related to a structural position or not, the symbolic tie "indexing" established should be perceived and recognized by both current creators and receivers. In this context, the reputation target is the "signifier" while the particular regime or ideology is the "signified." For instance, Mao Zedong is the founding father and the first Chairman of the People's Republic of China. This position helps to establish the

symbolic tie between Mao and the communist regime he established. Mao in this case is the signifier, while the communist regime is the signified. Meanwhile, Mao as a symbol for the "Mao Zedong thought" or Maoist ideology is very much a social construction, and yet it was recognized by ordinary Chinese people. In sum, *if the reputation target has a strong symbolic tie to the "signified," being a political regime, event, or ideology, then we can regard that the reputation target has a positive or high status of indexing*. Re-examining the cultural diamond template, one may find that indexing can also analytically bridge the connection between cultural object and the social world through the symbolic tie, thus providing a more synthetic and relational perspective.

Relatedness. Relatedness refers to the degree to which the "signified" has an *organic* connection to various actors' life trajectories and life world in a particular field. I use the word "organic" in Pierre Nora's sense. Nora argues that in *milieu de memoire*, history and memory are incorporated in daily life, while in *lieux de memoire* and modern society, memory has been separated from people's daily life and need to be remembered through things such as rituals, festivals, archives, and museums (Nora, 1997). My use of the word "organic" is closer to the situation in *milieu de memoire*, in which what the reputation target symbolizes for (the signified) has a strong influence on actors' life trajectories and life world, rather than only being a name in the textbook. For instance, the communist regime (signified) that Chairman Mao is indexing to might influence a majority of people's life trajectories—some of them being persecuted during the Cultural Revolution, some were sent down to the countryside, and still others benefited by their good class background. In this sense, the signified Mao symbolically ties to has an organic relation to the actors.

In the meantime, the concept of relatedness is also field specific. I use the word

"field" in the Bordieuan sense. According to Bourdieu, a field is a setting in which agents with various social positions, habitus, and capital (social, economic, and cultural) interact, while the social positions are affected by habitus and capital and are affecting agents' further interaction (Bourdieu, 1984). The concept of "relatedness" is field specific for two reasons. First, a reputation might be more meaningful to a particular field but not very much to other fields. For instance, Chairman Mao Zedong's reputation is more meaningful in the political field but not very much in the field composing of music writers. Second, and more importantly, actors' various social positions, together with the cultural, social, and economic capitals, might increase or decrease actors' perception of the relatedness—since relatedness is never a purely objective "fact." For instance, an actor with more cultural capital and more knowledge about Chairman Mao might have harsher critics on Mao than a person born after Mao's era or without college education. Whether or not an actor has experienced the suffering in Mao's China is also related to his position in the field of Chinese society—if we regard the whole Chinese society as a field. In sum, *if more actors' in the field are affected by what the reputation targets symbolizes for (the signified) in terms of life trajectories and life world, we can regard the degree of relatedness is high*. By adopting the concept of relatedness, the connection between creators and receivers are bridged, since actors in the field might be the creators and receivers at the same time; the connection between social world and creators/receivers are also bridged since relatedness also includes agents' relationship to the signified in the social world.

Through indexing and relatedness, a relational theory on reputation can be developed. I use this theoretical framework to explain the contestation-consolidation differences of reputation targets.

Situation	Indexing	Relatedness	Reputation stability	Example
1	+	+	contested	Mao Zedong
2	+	-	consolidated	Sun Yat-sen
3	-	+	consolidated	Zhou Enlai
4	-	-	consolidated/forgotten	

Table 1: A Relational Theory on Reputation

Based on my empirical study comparing Mao Zedong, Sun Yat-sen, and Zhou Enlai, I argue that *a reputation is contested only when both "indexing" and "relatedness" are positive or high*. For situation 1, the reputation target has a positive/high indexing status, that is, actors commonly view the reputation target as the symbol for a particular regime. In this case, actors' opinions on the regime might project to the very signifier, which is the reputation target. More specifically, actors might experience frustration, pleasure, or trauma under the political regime, and these feelings actors acquired in their life world might be translated to their attitudes to the reputation target—if they perceive this connection between their life experience and the regime as real. Yet, if this connection does not exist or is not perceived (situation 2), then actors might have no interest in evaluating the reputation target in the first place. They might take what is told them by previous memory work (such as textbook) for granted, thus creating no contestation regarding the target's reputation. For instance, for an American citizen, he or she might regard Mao as a representative of China (high indexing), yet since his or her life trajectories are not strongly affected by Mao, he or she might have little interest in discussing and evaluating Mao Zedong. Their opinions might very much correspond to what they have learnt from the textbook—an already consolidated reputation. For situation 3 and 4, since actors generally do not view the reputation target as symbolizing for something else (such as a regime or ideology), no matter if they have an organic relation to the signified (situation 3) or not (situation 4), they would not use that reputation target as a projection for their feelings towards the signified, being a particular regime, event, or ideology. It should be noted though, in reality, the status of

indexing and relatedness (especially relatedness) are not fixed in "yes or no" type of answers. The degree of the relatedness usually affects the degree of contestation of a particular reputation. In the following paragraphs, I will elaborate situation one to four, using the case of Mao Zedong, Sun Yat-sen, Zhou Enlai, and Zhang Zuoxiang respectively.

Mao Zedong's Contested Reputation: High Indexing and High Relatedness

Mao Zedong was the founding father and the first Chairman of the People's Republic of China, as well as a founding member of the Chinese communist party. During the revolutionary years, Mao led the communist party and successfully defeated the Kuomintang (also known as the Nationalist party) which was the ruling party of the Republic of China. On October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong stood up on the Tiananmen Gate tower, and officially announced: "The central government of the People's Republic of China is officially established today! *Chinese people now begin to stand up*!" The "standing up" narrative is probably one of the most important collective memories Chinese people have regarding the establishment of the new country. Since then, Mao Zedong has always been viewed as a symbol for the People's Republic. The years Mao ruled over China (1949-1976) were often referred to as "Mao's China" or "Mao's era." In this sense, *Mao enjoys a high indexing status which connect him to the new country and the communist regime*. In addition, Mao is also indexed to the political movements he initiated, such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, which brought China great famine and sufferings. Some scholars have also named the Cultural Revolution as "Mao's last revolution" (MacFarquhar & Schoenhals, 2009) or "Mao's perpetual revolution." Thus, *Mao was also highly indexed to the Maoist ideology and the events of political movements*.

Mao's high indexing status was widely recognized by Chinese people, which are evident in my talks with various interviewees. For instance, Mr. Lin, a college student studying in an elite university in Beijing, said the following words when I asked him for his first impression about Chairman Mao:

"my first impression is definitely the [concept of] 'Chinese people now begin to stand up!' Mao led Chinese people with varieties of ethnic background… It feels that the Chinese people are the master of this country since then…"
Clearly, Mr. Lin connects Mao to the new country.

This stance is not only shared by Mr. Lin, who was born in the 1990s, but also shared by people have living experiences in Mao's China. For instance, when I talked to Mr. Li about the differences between the 30 years of "reform and opening up" in the post-Mao era and 30 years of Mao era, Mr. Li said:

"For our new China, we can only talk about 60 years. The flag of the Communist party is still there, *Chairman Mao's portrait is still on the Tiananmen Square*, the communist party's flag is still waving, the status of our communist country is not changed. So I only talk about 60 years, not 30 years!...Chairman Mao as the great leader of our Chinese nation, he is more than qualified!"

These words from Mr. Li are full of metaphors. By saying "Chairman Mao's portrait is still on the Tiananmen Square," Mr. Li is essentially arguing that our country is still "the People's Republic of China" and the ruling party is still the communist party. Thus, he connected Mao's image (the Mao portrait on the Tiananmen Square) to the communist regime.

Mao Zedong also has a high status of relatedness, especially through the "signified" of the political regime and events. To begin with, Mao established the "new China" which affects billions of Chinese whose life is later involved in the communist regime. According to Hu Yaobao, the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party in the 1980s, about "100 million people—roughly half the urban population and virtually all those of working age—were treated 'unjustly' during the Anti-Rightists Campaign, the Cultural Revolution, and other Maoist movements"(Harding, 2011).

Meanwhile, according to the trail of the Gang of Four (a leading group during the Cultural Revolution) in 1980 and 1981, "2600 people in literary and art circles, 14200 cadres and teachers in units under the Ministry of Education, 53000 scientists and technicians in research institutes, and 500 professors and associate professors in the medical colleges and institutes under the Ministry of Public Health were all 'falsely charged and persecuted,' and that an unspecified number of them died as a result"(Harding, 2011). If we take into account the victims of the Great Famine followed by the Great Leap Forward, the people sent down to the countryside as the "educated you," and the "bad" class background persecuted in land reform and other political movements, then billions of Chinese people's life trajectories were vastly changed by Mao and the political regime and events he signifies. Even for those who were born in the post-Mao China, their life trajectories are also indirectly affected by Mao since their family background and parents' career very much affect their life chance. Moreover, in contemporary China, the new leadership is revoking many Mao-style languages and policies, making Mao ever more related to contemporary Chinese politics. Mao's face, images, and words are also constantly appearing in younger generations' life world as well. Thus, the status of Mao's relatedness is definitely high.

Mao's high relatedness is also perceived by my interviewees, especially those who have experienced Mao's China. For instance, When I talked to Mrs. Nan, a retired veteran who joined army and witnessed the persecution of many former government officials during the Cultural Revolution, she said the following words: "for the evaluation of Mao Zedong, this is so difficult, especially when the offspring of those former leaders are still living… For me, I really don't want to talk about that, that is my bottom line…" We continued to talk, and I asked one specific thing instead, that is, if she has visited Chairman Mao's Mausoleum in Tiananmen where Mao Zedong's body

179

was placed. Ms. Nan said she did not. "Why not?" I asked. Ms. Nan replied: *Because I dare not to… I am afraid, and I dare not go…*" Indeed, many interviewees I encountered expressed similar reluctance, deny, and avoidance when talking about Mao, illustrating Mao's strong relatedness to their personal life. For many of the interviewees, they themselves or their parents and friends were brutally persecuted in Mao's era. Many of them lost the chance to go to college, to get a decent job, or even just to live a normal life. Thus, their life trajectories and life world were strongly affected by the signified Mao indexed to. Mao's relatedness can also be robust and indirect. For instance, many interviewees argue that they have a good impression of Mao because Mao's era has no problems such as prostitution, corruption, pollution, or money fetishism which are very common in contemporary China. Mao's era presents itself as a reference or comparison of the status quo. In this sense, the relatedness is reflected not only in the actors' life trajectories but also their perceptions in the life world.

Mao's relatedness is also perceived by those who are born in the post-Mao era, although the personal life trajectories of this post-Mao generation are often less or indirectly influenced by Mao's China. For instance, when I talked to Ms. Li, who is a graduate student studying in the United States, she said the following words:

"Like the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, including our present, I think my generation can still sense the influences of these things. For instance, if there would be no Cultural Revolution, my parents could go to college; if he [referring to Mao] did control the population in the 1950s, my generation need not to have the burden to take care of four elders and one or two kids. I think what he did could influence several generations."

From this quotation, one may find that Ms. Li still perceives Mao's relatedness to her, though that relatedness is not through her personal life trajectories directly. Although the degree of Mao's relatedness to Ms. Li's generation is less than the generation growing up in Mao's era, indicated by young generation's lack of interest in knowing Mao, Mao's organic influence can still be perceived by some groups of the post-Mao

180

generation. Thus, generally speaking, if we look at the Chinese society with both people born in the Mao era and those born in the post-Mao era as a whole, we can see that Mao still enjoys a very high relatedness in contemporary China.

Due to the combination of the high indexing and high relatedness, Mao's reputation is highly contested in contemporary China. The logic is as follow: since Mao signifies the communist regime and all the political movements initiated by the regime (the indexing process), actors (Chinese people) will project their various feelings and experiences in these movements towards the symbol of Chairman Mao (the relating process), leading to a very contested reputation of Mao Zedong. This contestation of reputation is not possible without either indexing or relatedness. If the indexing does not stand, people will not choose Mao as a target to vent their anger or to express their gratitude; if the relatedness does not stand, people have no interest in discussing the reputation of the symbol at all. Meanwhile, if we regard the whole Chinese society as a field, then we may find that some actors in the field are beneficiary from the signified— some of them were recommended to college due to their "good" class background during Mao's era for instance; some actors in the field are victims of the signified— many were persecuted during the Cultural Revolution. Thus, the degree of the relatedness is very high for the actors in the field of Chinese society. We may visualize the process of contested reputation as follow:

Signifier(Mao) ——+—— Signified(regime, movements)——+——Actors

We may imagine the combination of *indexing (between signifier and signified)* and the *relatedness (between signified and actors)* as a two-phase bridge. Only when both bridge parts are clear can a person travel from one end to the other. To put it in another way, the actors would project their experiences and feelings influenced by the signified (relatedness) on the signifier (indexing), which is the reputation target if the target can

signify the signified. Thus, the social positions of these actors might very much influence how actors view the reputation target, positively or negatively (see Chapter 2 to Chapter 5).

This process forming the contested reputation of Chairman Mao can be illustrated by my interviews. For instance, Mr. Hai, mentioned in Chapter 5, is an admirer of Chairman Mao. He was born into a Beijing peasant family in the 1950s, and was recommended to college during Mao's era and later joined the army and government. When he explained why he admires Chairman Mao, he said:

"for our generation, *we are direct beneficiaries of the new China*! In 1949, our parents went to Beijing from the rural areas, so we could have the chance to go to college! ... So I would say Chairman Mao has four greatness!"

Two points can be examined from this quotation: first, Mr. Hai was the beneficiary of the policies in the "new China", and thus hold a positive attitude towards the communist regime. This is the process of "relatedness." Second, Hai essentially treats Mao Zedong as the representative and symbol of the "new China." Mr. Hai uses the fact that they are "directly beneficiaries of the new China" to illustrate that Mao has "four greatness," thus essentially connecting Mao to the new China and the new regime. This is the process of "indexing." Through these two steps, Mr. Hai's positive views towards the new regime are directly projected into his views towards Mao.

Yet, Mr. Hai is only one individual case illustrating the process. We should also take the factor of field into account, since the degree of relatedness is partially dependent on the social positions of actors in the field. More often than not, a policy will translate to both beneficiaries and victims, leading to different social positions in a field. If Mr. Hai stands for those who benefited from Mao's China, there are also people who are the victims of Mao's regime. Mrs. Nan is a representative of those victims. When I talked to Mrs. Nan about Chairman Mao, Mrs. Nan said:

"Well, I personally really have no good impression of Mao. I was born in 1951. When I began to know things, I don't feel those emotions of 'being emancipated.' When the Great Leap Forward occurred, I was 7. I have a deep memory that at that time, you know the 'backyard steel campaign', every house had to hid its tools made of iron… In 1962, I was 11. That's around the 'three years of natural calamity,' we had nothing to eat. So I went out to dig the wild vegetables with my mom. I feel that *my generation has never had a good day under Mao*!"

Interestingly enough, when I asked Ms. Nan about her opinions on Mao, she did not talk about Mao directly. Instead, as this quotation illustrates, she began to talk about her life experiences, especially the suffering she and her family experienced during the Mao era. In other words, Ms. Nan is using her feelings and opinions formed during the communist period of China as her basis to evaluate Mao, thus illustrating the same two-phases of process. Yet, since Mrs. Nan had different life trajectories, different social positions, and different knowledge, her opinions on Mao is vastly different from that of Mr. Hai.

The social positions can also vary according to other dimensions, such as education or cultural capital, though I do not aim to conduct a "controlled variable" analysis. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter 2, I visited Sichuan where a peasant family voluntarily built a temple to worship Chairman Mao. The peasant temple builders are sincere Buddhist, and they very much use their knowledge in traditional Chinese and Buddhist culture to express their opinions on Mao. Yet, their behaviors were seriously confronted by Mr. Gao, a highly-educated engineer who visited the temple the same day as I did. Gao confronted the peasant builders and said: "it is contradictory that you put Chairman Mao in this temple! Do you know that Mao was opposed to the 'superstition'?... Also, do you know what Mao did during the Cultural Revolution?" Clearly, Mr. Gao hold a rather negative attitude towards Mao while the peasant builders are sincere Mao worshipers. Mr. Gao's high education and relatively abundant knowledge might expose more negative information about Mao and provide

him with more critical thinking abilities.

As illustrated by the cases of Mr. Hai, Mrs. Nan, Mr. Gao, as well as the Mao temple builders, actors in the field hold rather different attitudes towards Mao (the signifier) and what Mao stands for, such as the political regime and movements (the signified). As a result, Mao's reputation is highly contested. This contestation is evident in both my interviews and the posts on the Internet or historical archives. For instance, the words describing Mao found in my interviews include (but not limited to) "dictators," "evil," "emperor," "great leader," "founding father," among others. Moreover, as Chapter 3 illustrates, the posts found on the Internet as well as those from the historical archives have treated Mao as "helmsman," "revolutionary teacher," "savior," "statesman," "autocrat," "bane," and "tyrant." In this sense, Mao is indeed one of the most controversial reputations in contemporary China.

In sum, Mao symbolizes the communist regime, the new China, and all the political movements under the communist regime, and thus has a high status of indexing. In the meantime, since a majority of Chinese people, with all kinds of social positions, were directly or indirectly influenced by the communist regime (the signified), their attitudes and feelings about the regime are largely projected on the symbol/index of the regime, that is Chairman Mao Zedong. That is the very mechanism explaining Mao's contested reputation in contemporary China.

Sun Yat-sen's Consolidated Reputation: High Indexing and Low Relatedness

Similar to Mao Zedong, Sun Yat-sen is also a "founding father"—the founding father of modern China and the Republic of China, the regime before the People's Republic of China. Sun Yat-sen founded the Kuomintang Party (also known as the Nationalist Party), and led a series of fight against the Qing Dynasty. His effort inspired

many revolutionaries. Through Sun and his colleague's efforts, the Qing Dynasty was finally overthrown, and Republic of China was founded in 1912. Sun Yat-sen was elected as the first president of Republic of China. Since then, Sun has always been viewed as the "forerunner of revolution" and the founding father of modern China, a status recognized by both the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang Party, though the two parties are political rivals during the civil war. Sun's status of founding father is also recognized by both mainland China and Taiwan, though the two governments do not recognize each other as a legitimate country. Despite these differences between the two sides of the Taiwan strait, Sun Yat-sen's status as founding father is widely recognized by Chinese. In addition, as his political philosophy for the party and for the new nation, Sun Yat-sen put forward the famous "three principle of people," which includes nationalism (民族), people's rights (民权), and people's livelihood (民生). Thus, Sun Yat-sen not only has a high status of indexing as the founding father but also a high status of indexing to the ideology of "three principles of people."

Sun's high status of indexing is widely recognized by my interviewees. For instance, Mr. Pan, a college student in Beijing in his early twentieth, told me his opinions about Sun Yat-sen, after our conversation about Chairman Mao. Mr. Pan said:

"I think Sun Yat-sen is similar in some way to Chairman Mao, but I do not get in touch of much information about Sun, so I don't really know very much… I only know that he was *a forerunner of revolution,* and he led people for revolutions."

Mr. Man, a writer working for media company in his thirties, also expressed similar opinions:

"For Sun Yat-sen, I don't have much feelings. *You know his ideas of 'three principle of people,'* but… Sun Yat-sen is like, a person or a portrait which will be present in every year's national day parade, indicating that *we are all protégés of Sun Yat-sen,* but except for that, Sun is not really present in politics…"

Mr. Pan and Mr. Man's comments on Sun Yat-sen have two common features: first, they both know who Sun Yat-sen is, through all those indexes such as "forerunner of revolution," "three principle of people," and the founding father image ("we are all his protégés"), and thus strongly confirming Sun's high status of indexing. However, they also illustrate a second commonality, that is, both Mr. Pan and Mr. Man admit that they "do not have much feelings" and "do not know very much" about Sun Yat-sen, which is implying Sun's low status of relatedness.

Sun Yat-sen's low status of relatedness is understandable. Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, and after his death, his legacy including the Nationalist Party and the Republic of China was inherited by Chiang Kai-shek, who hold the position of president/leader of the Republic of China until 1975. 24 years after Sun's death, the Nationalist Party was officially defeated by the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Zedong. The Nationalist Party had to flee to Taiwan instead. Since then, Mao overthrew all the political structures the Nationalist party established, initiated all kinds of political movements including the Cultural Revolution, and essentially remade China a socialist and communist regime. In this sense, all the signified Sun Yat-sen indexed to, such as the political system of the Republic of China and the ideology of "three principle of people," no longer have an *organic* relation to ordinary Chinese people. For people who are still living, their life trajectories and life world are not heavily influenced by Sun Yat-sen and what Sun stands for. Thus, in terms of relatedness, Sun's status is low.

In addition to Mr. Pan and Mr. Man's comments, Sun's low status of relatedness can also be illustrated by my other interviewees, including both of those born in the Mao era and those born in the post-Mao China. For instance, Mr. Nan, a military veteran and the husband of Mrs. Nan who was mentioned above, said the following words regarding Sun:

"Oh, Sun Yat-sen, *this is too far. Only the history class will talk about him.* Or on May Day or the National day, Tiananmen will present the portrait of Sun Yat-sen. So how big is Sun's influence on China? This is… very *ambiguous*. I don't know how to say. Sun Yat-sen's strategies for establishing the country, I think it is mentioned somewhere, but *I am not very clear…*"

Although Mr. Nan was born in Mao's era, several decades before Mr. Pan and Mr. Nan, his impression about Sun Yat-sen resemble younger generation's view. By saying Sun is "too far," "ambiguous," and "not very clear" to him, Mr. Nan is essentially arguing that Sun Yat-sen and the signified Sun indexed to has no organic relationship to his personal life. Indeed, almost all people I interviewed expressed similar ambiguous ideas about Sun, referring Sun as a figure distant from them, though everybody knows him.

In this case, Sun Yat-sen represents the second scenario: a high indexing status and a low relatedness status. The high indexing status makes Sun a symbol if people want to talk about "modern China" and the Republic of China, but this is only one condition for a contested reputation. Another condition is a high status of relatedness. Since the signified (Republic of China and the "three principles of people") Sun Yat-sen indexed to has no organic influence on contemporary Chinese people, the people (or actors) have no interests or personal motivations to discuss or change Sun's reputation. Instead, people tend to accept the reputation which has already been made from previous memory work—for instance, what the history textbook says, as Mr. Nan mentioned. We can visualize the situation Sun Yat-sen's case stands for as follow:

Signifier(Sun) ——+—— Signified(modern/Republic of China)—— - ——Actors

For Sun's case, although the indexing is high—the bridge from the signifier to the signified is clear, the relatedness is low—the bridge from the signified to actors' life trajectories and life word is blocked. As a result, actors tend to take the target's previous constructed reputation without further debates. That is why Sun Yat-sen's reputation is more stable and consolidated than Mao Zedong, and also why actors generally treat Sun

as a distant but highly known person.

Zhou Enlai's Consolidated Reputation: Low Indexing and High Relatedness

Although Zhou Enlai was not a "founding father," he shares some similarities with Mao Zedong as well. Zhou followed Mao in the revolutionary years, and helped Mao defeat the Nationalist Party and finally established the People's Republic of China in 1949. Since then, Zhou Enlai was the first Premier of the new China until his death in 1976, which is the same year Mao Zedong died. During the years of Cultural Revolution, Zhou was partially attacked, but he still holds the position of premier and actually protected many people from being persecuted in Mao's "great revolution." Although Zhou Enlai's role in the early days of People's Republic of China is indispensable, he did not enjoy the high indexing status as Mao did. For instance, when people think of the establishment of the new China, people will recall the moment Mao announced that "Chinese people now begin to stand up;" when thinking of the communist regime before 1976, people (and scholars) will name it "Mao's China" or "Mao's era" rather than "Zhou's China." Thus, although Zhou Enlai is an important person in modern Chinese history, he does not enjoy a high status of indexing.

Zhou Enlai's low status of indexing is evident in my interviews. In contrast to those comments on Mao, which often connect Mao to personal stories in Mao's era (see Mrs. Nan), interviewees' comments on Zhou often focus on Zhou as a person rather than as a symbol for the communist regime. For instance, Mr. Li, the Mao admirer who joined the Red Guard movement during the Cultural Revolution and later became a worker in a Shanghai factory, said the following words:

"Premier Zhou makes me touched. As the premier of a big country, he still stands with the people. When he worked in the state council, he eats the same thing with the people. *Seeing rice dropped on the table, he would pick the rice up and continue to eat*. In the big character posters, we can see *how hard Premier Zhou works and how frugal the*

premier was."

By emphasizing the hard work Zhou was doing, and how frugal the premier was, Mr. Li is essentially evaluating Zhou through his personal traits.

This stance on Zhou Enlai is not only mentioned by Mr., Li, a person born in the Mao era and admires Mao, but also by those people who hate Mao and those born after Zhou and Mao died. For instance, Mr. Wan, a former "educated youth" who is not Mao's fan, hold a very positive view on Zhou and emphasizes his personal achievements as well: "I always admire Zhou Enlai very much. I feel like that *Zhou was the most difficult person* during the Cultural Revolution. Against such bad situation, *he has to personally maintain the policies and economy of this country*." Mr. Bo, a graduate student studying in the United States said: "*Zhou Enlai is a good man*. He did everything well, domestic policies, foreign affairs… *He was also very handsome*!" Through these conversations, one may find that people tend to hold a positive view on Zhou Enlai, and this positive view often focuses on his personal traits. None of my interviewees actually regard Zhou as the representative or symbol of the communist regime or the events such as the Cultural Revolution. In this sense, Zhou's indexing status to political regime or ideology is low.

However, Zhou Enlai's status of relatedness is high, which is similar to Mao Zedong but contrast to Sun Yat-sen. To begin with, Zhou Enlai was among the leadership of the Chinese communist party, and substantially contributed to Mao's ruling of the China. Zhou also helped to build and maintain the communist system which affects billions of Chinese. Mao's signified (the communist regime) is only possible with Zhou Enlai's contribution. In this sense, Zhou should also partially be responsible for people's sufferings during Mao's China. However, since Mao was the symbol of the communist regime, Chinese people tend to project their feelings of the

regime into the target of Mao Zedong. Instead, for Zhou Enlai, more people will remember his personal roles in Mao's era, such as keeping the nation on track and protecting people during the Cultural Revolution. For instance, Mr. Wan, mentioned above, said the following words:

"There is a saying, that without Zhou Enlai, China will suffer more, especially during the Cultural Revolution. You know, in the Cultural Revolution, everybody is devoting to the so called 'revolution,' and there was no way to do the construction. It was Zhou Enlai who maintained the economy and protected many old cadres…"

Mr. Bo, the graduate student studying in the US, expressed a slightly different opinion, though also speaking to Zhou's relatedness. While Bo also views Zhou positively, he pointed out Zhou's role in maintaining the communist system—the signified Mao indexed to. For instance, Mr. Bo said:

"Well, Zhou was obedient. Because Zhou was obedient, so he helped Mao Zedong to maintain [the country] for such a long time. *If he were not obedient, then Mao Zedong cracked, the communist party cracked, then the society would be different…* Yet I still view him positively, because his position did not allow him to do alternative things."

Mr. Bo's comments are illustrative. As Bo mentioned, if Zhou Enlai did not help Mao to maintain the communist system (the signified Mao indexed to), then many sufferings Chinese people experienced could be avoided. Thus, Zhou's status of relatedness is indeed high.

However, since Zhou is not viewed as the symbol for the communist system (low indexing), actors would generally not project their life-world feelings with the communist system (relatedness) into the reputation of Zhou Enlai. Instead, actors would project their feelings to the person with highly indexed symbol for the communist system, and this person is Mao Zedong[48]. Thus, the visualization of Zhou's consolidated reputation is as follow:

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[48] I do not hold a value judgement here. I am not analyzing who should be responsible for the sufferings in the communist system. Instead, I am more interested in the particular processes of the indexing and relatedness mechanisms.

Signifier(Zhou) —— - —— Signified(communist regime)—— + ——Actors

In Zhou's case, the bridge from signifier to the signified is cut off, while the bridge between the signified and actors is unblocked. However, for a reputation to be contested, both bridges have to be clear. Thus, Chinese people would usually not use their personal experiences in Mao's era to support their ideas on Zhou. Instead, they tend to take the transmitted reputation of Zhou from previous memory work, similar to the case of Sun Yat-sen.

Consolidated but Forgotten Reputation: Low Indexing and Low Relatedness

The fourth scenario is the combination of low indexing and low relatedness. I leave the blank in Table 1 blank because a reputation target falling into this category is often forgotten and thus not presenting in people's collective memory. Since this reputation target is forgotten, his or her reputation is highly likely to be consolidated. The logic is as follow: if one has a low indexing status to the signified, being a political regime or ideology, then actors will not project their life world feelings with the regime or ideology into the reputation target; also, if the relatedness of the signified to the actors in the field is low, that is, the regime or ideology does not affect most people's life trajectories and life world, then actors will have no motivation and interest to discuss the regime and ideology at the first place. Thus, a combination of low indexing and low relatedness will lead to a consolidate and forgotten reputation. The visualization of this process is as follow:

Signifier—— - —— Signified—— - ——Actors

I dug one name from the forgotten category in history to illustrate this point. Zhang Zuoxiang (张作相) was an important member of the Fengtian warlord clique (奉系军阀), which existed in the early years of the Republic of China. Zhang Zuoxiang

was born in Liaoning Province in 1881, and was a loyal follower of Zhang Zuolin (张作霖), who was *the warlord* leading the Fengtian clique. Zhang Zuolin's son, Zhang Xueliang, was a very important person in modern Chinese history, because Zhang Xueliang kidnapped Chiang Kai-shek, Sun Yat-sen's successor and the president of the Republic of China, during WWII. This incident is called Xi'an incident. Although the Zhang family and the Fengtian clique had a crucial role in modern Chinese history, Zhang Zuoxiang is forgotten by Chinese people. Since Zhang Zuoxiang is only one member, though important member, of the Fengtian warlord clique, people would not view him as the symbol for the warlord regime (low indexing status); Zhang Zuolin's name would be more likely to be viewed as an index to the warlord regime due to his position as the leader of the Fengtian clique. In the meantime, since the warlord years are too distant from contemporary Chinese, the warlord system has no real organic relationship to Chinese people's life trajectories and life world. Thus, the status of relatedness is also low. As a result of this low indexing and low relatedness combination, Zhang Zuoxiang is largely forgotten from Chinese people's collective memory.

Conclusion and Discussion

Mao Zedong, Sun Yat-sen, and Zhou Enlai are probably among the most important names in modern Chinese history. Since both Mao Zedong and Sun Yat-sen are "founding fathers"—one for the People's Republic of China and one for the Republic of China, why is Mao's reputation so contested while Sun's reputation is more consolidated? In the meantime, both Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai are important leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and People's Republic of China, why is Mao's reputation so controversial while Zhou's reputation is not? What explain the contestation-consolidation differences of reputations? To address these questions, I

borrowed much wisdom from current theories on culture and reputation, especially the contextual and agent perspectives in studying reputation construction (G. Fine, 2012; G. A. Fine, 2001; Robert, 2007; Schwartz, 1987, 1996, 2008). The cultural diamond perspective, which includes the cultural objects, social world, creators, and receivers, also provide inspiration (Griswold, 1994). However, as the cultural diamond indicates, current theories on reputation tend to separate (though analytically) the roles of creators from receivers, the production from reception. As creators and receivers in contemporary age are more and more interwoven, I argue that we need to analytically synthesize the abovementioned four elements into a more relational perspective.

Comparing the reputations of Mao Zedong, Sun Yat-sen, and Zhou Enlai, I developed this relational theory on reputation, centering on indexing and relatedness as two explanatory factors. More specifically, I define "indexing" as reputation target's symbolic ties to a particular regime, event, or ideology. In this sense, the "reputation targets" (such as Mao and Zhou) are the signifiers, while the political regime or ideology are the signified. I define "relatedness" as the degree to which the "signified" has an *organic* connection to actors' life trajectories and life world in a particular field. Only when both indexing and relatedness have a positive or high status, can a reputation be contested; otherwise, the reputation is more likely to be consolidated or even forgotten. For instance, Mao Zedong was the founding father of the People's Republic of China, and thus highly indexing to the communist regime; in this case, Mao is the signifier and the communist regime is the signified. In the meantime, since the communist regime and the political movements such as the Cultural Revolution have a strong influence on people's life trajectories and life world, Mao also has a high status of relatedness. If we look at the Chinese society as a field (in the Bordieuan sense), then the communist regime has differential influences on the people (actors) with different

social positions, which are affected by factors such as class and education background. Correspondingly, Chinese people (actors) with different social positions would have different attitudes on the communist regime, and these attitudes will be projected to the symbol of the communist regime, making Mao Zedong a contested figure in contemporary China. In contrast, although Sun Yat-sen also has a high status of indexing (founding father of the Republic of China,) the Republic of China as the signified has no organic relationship to contemporary Chinese people, thus leading to a more consolidate reputation of Sun transmitted from previous memory work. For Zhou Enlai, although his relatedness is high since he and Mao together contribute to the maintaining of the communist China, Zhou has a low index status to the regime. People will usually view Mao rather than Zhou as the symbol for communist China, partially because Mao was taking the position of the Chairman and being the founding father. Therefore, people's feelings of the communist China will usually not be projected on Zhou Enlai. For the fourth scenario, if a reputation target has a low indexing ability and low status of relatedness, he or she might very likely be forgotten by collective and public memory.

It should be noted though, that although I use the positive (+) and negative (-) signs in my table illustration (see Table 1), I do not mean that the status of indexing and relatedness is fixed in "yes or no" answers. Instead, a reputation target might be indexed to different "signified", and the "signified" might have different levels of relatedness but still belong to the high status. For instance, Mao is not only indexed to the communist regime but also to the "Mao Zedong Thought" as the official Maoist ideology, and yet the regime and the ideology might have different meanings and relatedness to Chinese people as actors. That being said, *the subtypes of "indexing" and "relatedness" should be further conceptualized* in the future work.

Although my theory is based on the comparative reputation study in the Chinese context, it does apply to other fields and contexts. As mentioned above, the concept of relatedness is strongly related Bourdieu's idea of "field" (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993). When I examined the case of Mao, Sun, and Zhou, I treated the whole Chinese society as a field—the Chinese people as actors in this field hold different social positions and carry different economic and cultural capitals. Their different positions and relations to the communist regime (the signified) is one element in explaining the contestation of Mao's reputation. We may also use other contexts and fields to test this theory. For instance, in the Russian context, both Tsar and Stalin have a high status of indexing—Tsar signifies the Russian Empire and dynasty while Stalin signifies the communist regime. However, comparably speaking, Stalin's reputation is more contested than Tsar in contemporary Russia and East Europe. The reason rests on the different levels of relatedness—The Russian Empire and dynasty (Tsar's "signified") has no organic relations to contemporary Russian and East European citizens while the communist past (Stalin's "signified") still does. Moreover, Russian and East European citizens' social positions might also affect their opinions on the reputation target—a Georgian citizen might have different life-world relations to Stalin comparing to a Ukraine citizen, leading to a contested memory of Stalin in the field of former Soviet Union countries.

Intellectual field can serve as another example to illustrate my theory. For instance, to re-establish the fame of Alvin Gouldner as the "first sustained responses to Robert K. Merton's call" for a middle-ground sociology of knowledge, Camic and Gross made two steps of efforts: "First, we briefly consider the argument of *Enter Plato* [Gouldner's work] against the backdrop of other mid-twentieth-century works in the sociology of knowledge and related areas, arguing that Gouldner's study was one of the

first sustained efforts to heed Robert K. Merton's call… Second, in light of this reading, we offer a *contemporary* sociological appraisal of *Enter Plato*, considering its positive and negative lessons for sociologists of knowledge and ideas at the present time"(Camic & Gross, 2002). Camic and Gross' two steps perfectly illustrate the mechanism of indexing and relatedness in my theory. Their first step is to connect and establish Gouldner's link to the Merton style of sociology of knowledge, which is the indexing process; the second step for them is to "offer a contemporary sociological appraisal" which is essentially increasing Gouldner's relatedness to the contemporary intellectual field. Through these processes, Gouldner's reputation is recovered from the forgotten category and re-emerged into the debates regarding sociology of knowledge. In fact, the similar mechanism can also be found in Cassano's piece on "choosing Thorstein Veblen as ancestors"(Cassano, 2009) as well as Michele Lamont's study of Jacques Derrida's fame in France and US (Lamont, 1987).

In sum, through theorizing the indexing and relatedness as two mechanisms, my research contributes not only to our understanding of the different reputations of Mao Zedong, Sun Yat-sen, and Zhou Enlai in the Chinese case, but also helps to understand the contestation and consolidation processes of reputation, and analytically bridges the cultural object and social world, creators and receivers, and production and reception, thus contributing to a more relational thinking on reputations.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Discussion

Scholars of history and political science have contributed much wisdom to our understanding of Chairman Mao Zedong, especially his biography, his political thought, his role in communist China, and his political legacy (Bernstein, 2006; Burgess, 2004; Karl, 2010; Leese, 2011; Meisner, 2006; Schram, 1994; Terrill, 1999; Townsend, 1977; Wei, 2011; Womack, 1982). Although "Chairman Mao" is indeed the most frequently mentioned name in my dissertation, my research is not a biographical study of the chairman—it is not about what Mao did in history or what kind of person he really was. Instead, through a sociological examination of Mao Zedong's reputations, my study aims to explore what Mao symbolizes, and how these symbolic meanings changed as China transformed from a totalitarian state into a post-totalitarian and post-Mao society. More specifically, my research asks: what (contextual and agentic) factors contributed to the production of various images of Mao, ranging from god and hero to commodity and villain? What do these images and reputations mean to people? And how do people use Mao's memories and reputations for their respective symbolic purposes? In other words, through the study of Chairman Mao's reputations, my research aims to achieve a more sociological understanding of how reputations are made, maintained, and received, and how these processes are connected to larger socio-historical backgrounds.

In this concluding chapter, I will first briefly summarize my research findings, based on which I will situate this study within larger theoretical pictures, especially focusing on its connections to other types of reputation studies, other methodological approaches, and the relationship between China studies and general sociological theories.

Findings: Chairman Mao's Faces and Counterparts

Combining the studies of historical archives, contemporary government reports, online posters, as well as interviews and ethnographies conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan, and Hunan, I analyze representative categories of Mao's reputations: the sacred, liminal, and profane reputations. In both communist China and contemporary China, Mao was regarded as a god-like person; Mao was called the "red sun" and a "savior" during the Cultural Revolution, while people today voluntarily build temples to worship Mao. Thus, state mobilization should not be a necessary or sufficient condition for making a sacred reputation. Instead, my research shows that the making of a transcendent quality and logic through narrative and practice together with social participation (rather than believing and conviction) are the main mechanisms in making and maintaining a sacred reputation.

Mao also has a profane and commodified reputation, which is only possible in a post-totalitarian Chinese society. As mentioned by scholars of politics (Linz, 2000; Zhao, 2000), the post-totalitarian regime has loosened its control over ideology and society, and thus there exists a certain degree of freedom and pluralism. Since adopting the "reform and opening up" policy in 1978, China has embraced the market economy and global capitalism on an unprecedented scale. Corresponding to this, I find global elements strongly contributed to the production of Mao's commodified images; in this sense, Mao's commodified reputation pertains to a "cosmopolitan" (Levy & Sznaider, 2007) and "travelling" (Erll, 2011) memory. In the meantime, Chinese people consume these Mao commodities for different symbolic purposes—the "admirers" use Mao's symbol to call for a utopia; the "projectors" regard the Mao image as a mnemonic bridge to their youth; the (Chinese) "foreigners" buy the Mao commodities as "souvenirs" from a foreign country and a foreign temporality; while the "mockers" exploit the

modern re-invention of Mao's image and products to symbolically express their feelings towards the contemporary era—ranging from the daily frustration to the deconstruction of official ideology. In this sense, the commodified Mao inhabits a kind of reputation ordinary Chinese people can discuss, possess, or even make fun of, thus becoming a full-blown "profane" reputation.

Mao's reputations are not fixed. Between the sacred and profane spheres, there is a "liminal sphere" of reputations. In other words, many reputational labels have some elements of sacredness and some elements of the profane, lying across the sacred-profane boundary. For instance, Mao can be a hero who is a man with super-human abilities, or a villain with demonic powers; more importantly, Mao can be a hero and villain *at the same time*. Comparing the "reputational labels" people use in the Cultural Revolution and in contemporary China, I find that the regime context strongly affects the degree of liminality (or the area of the liminal sphere) of reputations—the more totalitarian a regime is, the less of a liminal sphere there is for reputations; correspondingly, the more totalitarian a regime is, the less likely a society would develop its own reputational labels. In this sense, a political figure such as Mao would have more liminal and fluid reputations in a post-totalitarian society.

Besides the analysis of the sacred, liminal, and profane reputations, my dissertation also studies Mao's reputations through comparative perspectives. By comparing different generations' attitudes towards Mao, I find that the "present generation" (those growing up in Mao's China) has an emotionally attached and cognitively bifurcated opinion on Mao—they either love or hate Chairman Mao due to their personal life trajectories; the "after generation" (those growing up in the post-Mao era) has more detached and diversified opinions on Mao. In contrast to the "nation and people" narrative used by the present generation, the after generation's "interpretative

template" (Palmberger, 2016) for understanding Mao and the world are also diversified. Forming a dialogue with the generational imprinting theories (Mannheim, 2011; Schuman & Corning, 2000), I argue that family background, information sources, and early life trajectory together explain the processes and mechanisms constructing the "formative years" which are crucial for actors' memories and values.

Last but not least, my research also compares Chairman Mao to his counterparts, namely Zhou Enlai, the first premier of the People's Republic of China, and Sun Yat-sen, who is the founding father of the Republic of China. While Mao, Zhou, and Sun share similarities, why is Mao Zedong's reputation so controversial? Based on interviews and historical archives, I argue that two conditions together explain the consolidation-contestation differences of their reputations. Only when a reputation target has high symbolic ties to a particular regime, event, or ideology (which I call "indexing") and high "relatedness" between the entity (a regime, event, or ideology) and actors' life trajectories would a figure have contested reputations. For instance, Mao has a high "indexing" ability due to his strong symbolic ties to the communist regime, and a high "relatedness" to contemporary Chinese citizens due to the political regime's strong influence over China, actors (Chinese people) with various backgrounds and social positions who would project their feelings towards the political regime onto the reputation of Chairman Mao, thus making Mao's reputation heavily contested. In contrast, neither Zhou Enlai nor Sun Yat-sen had high statuses in both "indexing" and "relatedness."

The Relational and Post-Totalitarian Sociology of Reputation and its Applications

Through the empirical studies of Mao's sacred, liminal, and profane reputations and the generational and comparative analyses of the memories of Mao, I put forward

a relational and post-totalitarian sociology of reputation. While classic reputation studies have examined positive reputations such as those of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln (Schwartz, 1987, 1991, 1996, 1997, 2008) and negative or "difficult reputations" such as those of Warren Harding and Benedict Arnold (Ducharme & Fine, 1995; Fine, 2001), they tend to focus on elaborating the features of these particular figures or reputations. While these classic studies have provided much wisdom, I aim to use my Mao case to conceptualize and categorize reputations in a more *relational and processual* manner—after all, as the Mao memory illustrates, a figure can be a hero, villain, demon, god, or commodity at the same time, thus making the reputation categories rather liminal and fluid. Borrowing wisdom from Durkheim (Durkheim, 1995), I divide reputations into three spheres: the sacred sphere which illustrates a transcendent quality and logic, the profane sphere which connects to the everyday life, and the liminal sphere lying around or crossing the boundary between the sacred and profane. In this sense, the various reputations of Mao become "dots" on a continuum, and this continuum can constitute a circle in the end, because negative reputations such as those of a demon and devil can also enter the sacred sphere. Thus, the sacred and profane do not correspond to the positive and negative categories. Based on this "liminal reputation circle" (see Graph 1 in Chapter 1), I argue that we should not reify a particular reputation into a fixed category; instead, this liminal approach to reputations can help us better understanding the features as well as the changes of different reputational forms and contents.

Another contribution of this dissertation, I argue, is its connection between the regime context and the (relational/processual) study of reputations. As mentioned in previous chapters, current studies on reputations and memories often base their cases in the Western context (if not all). While there are studies on East European or former

Soviet Union countries, especially through the "post-communist" perspectives (Judt, 1996; Sanford, 2007; Zhurzhenko, 2011), these studies do not explain the particular Chinese regime contexts. In other words, although China has experienced unprecedented social change, from Mao's totalitarian state into a more open and "capitalist" contemporary era, the Chinese state has never officially jettisoned its communist past as his Eastern European counterparts did. Ideology still plays a role, and the communist or socialist political system still maintains its power. In this sense, China is not a "post-communist" society, and thus presents itself as a combination of communist, socialist, "post-communist," and even capitalist elements. Thus, *the Chinese society becomes an ideal case to study how post-totalitarian social change affects reputation production and reception*. For instance, based on my studies of the Mao's reputations in China, I find that the post-totalitarian regime strongly affects the degree of liminality of reputations—the more totalitarian a regime is, the less liminal a reputation will be. In other words, in the totalitarian context, a particular figure's reputation would be more fixed and one-dimensional, often depending on its relationship to the official ideology. Also, the post-totalitarian context both constrains and enables the production and consumption of the Mao commodities—due to the existence of ideology, consumers feel a sensitivity to "mocking" Mao's images; but since the ideological control is not strongly enforced, consumers can also make fun of Mao and walk on the grey areas between the communist "political correctness" and the "pollution" of Mao's images. In fact, the generational differences of how Chairman Mao is viewed and remembered are also strongly embedded in the totalitarian and post-totalitarian regime contexts.

Although my study of Mao's reputations is based on the Chinese context, the relational and post-totalitarian perspectives can also be applied to many other fields or

contexts. For instance, the emphasis on the "indexing" and "relatedness" mechanisms (as relational bridge between cultural object, contexts, producers, and receivers) can potentially speak to intellectual fields or artistic fields. As mentioned in Chapter 6, to re-establish the fame of Alvin Gouldner and to bring Gouldner back to the contemporary sociological field, Camic and Gross first connect and establish Gouldner's work to the Merton style of sociology of knowledge ("indexing"), and then "offer a contemporary sociological appraisal" which essentially increases Gouldner's relatedness to the contemporary intellectual field (Camic & Gross, 2002). Meanwhile, although the contemporary Russian society is different from the Chinese context, it presents partial features of "post-totalitarianism"[49]—as the relational and processual perspective suggests, the degree of "totalitarianism" also changes along a continuum. Thus, the Soviet Union in Stalin's time and in Khrushchev's era might differ in terms of the degree of "totalitarianism." For Stalin's reputation, as mentioned in Chapter 3, during the personality cult era in Soviet Union, the evaluation of Stalin is more fixed and one dimensional (absolutely positive), while after Khrushchev's liberal reform and his secret speech on Stalin (less totalitarian), or after 1989 (even less totalitarian), the reputations of Stalin also become more contested, thus illustrating more liminality and fluidity.

Sociology of Reputation as Plural

While my research on Chairman Mao's reputations presents a relational and post-totalitarian sociology of reputation, I do not mean that this framework is a comprehensive or even the only framework to study reputations.

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[49] Besides Russia, Vietnam can also be viewed as a comparable case. As a communist state, Vietnam has also experienced vast social and political transformation in recent years, and yet has never officially jettisoned communism and the communist party. In this sense, Vietnam is also a "post-totalitarian" society.

To begin with, the study of reputations in this research focuses more on what I call "*the reputation of the eminent*" rather than on the "*reputation of the ordinary.*" As my case illustrates, Chairman Mao Zedong is an important figure to China; his ideas and ideals have influenced the political, social, cultural, and almost every aspect of contemporary China. Although my project is more concerned with how people view him (rather than delineating his biography), it is dealing with the memories of an eminent person. There are other studies on reputation which focus on reputation's social roles for ordinary people or in ordinary life. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter 1, William Goode sees reputations as methods of social control (Goode, 1978). According to Goode (1978), "granting or withdrawing prestige or esteem controls the actions of both individuals and groups." In other words, the allocation and distribution of particular reputations (such as prestige and honor) is helpful in regulating unwanted behaviors and promoting behaviors corresponding to morality and norms. Following Goode's ideas, Patricia Taylor analyzes how communist regimes reproduce inequalities through the control of distribution of honors (Taylor, 1987), thus situating "the reputation of the ordinary" in a communist context. Indeed, the control of reputation as a manner of social control also happens in China, especially in the communist era. The Chinese state (together with other communist states) has long been striving to make "the socialist new man" (Cheng, 2009), which is an honorable reputation according to the communist ideology. The "three good students" (being good at morality, academic performance, and labor) honor is also used to regulate the behaviors of primary-school and middle-school students, even in contemporary China. Moreover, there are studies on reputations in indigenous societies, such as those examining the concept of "face" and "mianzi" (面子) in Chinese culture (Hu, 1944; Hwang, 1987). In this sense, future

research on the "reputation of the ordinary" is invited[50].

Meanwhile, if we divide sociological studies into the *variable-centered approach and the meaning-centered approach*, my research belongs more to the latter approach. To clarify, by "variable-centered approach," I refer to the sociological studies that focus on explaining the influence of a particular independent variable or variables on the "dependent variables," usually through controlling for other confounding variables. This approach is more common through the statistical and quantitative studies. A study of Mao's reputation under this approach could examine how gender, social class, and education affect people's attitudes towards Mao respectively, through establishing statistical models as is usual. While this approach is valuable in its own right, the approach I adopt for this dissertation is more of a meaning-centered enterprise. In other words, I regard actors (or "carrier groups" of Mao's memory) as real people with various social, cultural, and generational positions, and examine how they interpret what Mao symbolizes, in a real historical context. Since a real historical context is always embedded in a network of "variables" and meanings, my research aims to understand (in a Weberian sense) the complexity of this embeddedness, rather than focusing on the pure influence of particular variables. It should be noted though, by adopting a meaning-centered approach, I do not mean that the variable-centered approach is less suitable to study reputations in general. In fact, the examination of the pure influence of variables such as gender, social class, and education is indeed important in understanding the actors' opinions on Mao. Yet, these research questions the variable-centered approach tries to answer are beyond the task of my dissertation.

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[50] Besides the literature on reputations of human actors, there are also studies on "corporate reputations"(Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Gray & Balmer, 1998; Roberts & Dowling, 2002). Yet, due to the limit of space, I will not elaborate the field in this dissertation.

China Studies and General Theory

My study of the reputations of Chairman Mao also reflects the tension between China studies and general sociological theories. China studies is traditionally viewed as belonging to the category of "area study," which is often regarded as data heavy but lacking theoretical dense. Here emerges the dualism: area studies are about description, while sociology or political science as disciplines are about explanation and theorization; the area study is in the "consumption domain" of knowledge while disciplinary studies are in the "production domain" (Perry, 1999). Ironically though, the studies based on the American context (or "American area study") are treated as enjoying universal significances (Pye, 2001). Yet, as my study of Mao's reputations shows, the dualism between China studies (or area studies) and the general theory should be broken. Using Lucian Pye's words, "instead of opposing each other the two need each other if there is to be true intellectual progress. Elegant theoretical formulations need to incorporate the substantive richness of area studies to give them the body and substance expected of true knowledge. As for the other side, area studies needs the challenge of generalized concepts and theories in order to escape being just a collection of esoteric facts" (Pye, 2001). In other words, China studies can and should turn from a "consumption domain" to the "production domain" of knowledge (Perry, 1999). Meanwhile, we should also break the dualism between "description" and "explanation" in general. Although the approach I have in this dissertation is more discipline oriented, I believe that a description embedded in meanings (or "interpretations") can also be an explanation (see Reed, 2011)—a meaningful description taking historical times and spaces into consideration is often the first step towards a general theory. Thus, in the last section of the concluding chapter, I want to emphasize the significance of my study for both China studies as an area study and the

general sociological theory.

As Barry Schwartz argues, collective memory is both "a model *of* society—a reflection of its needs, problems, fears, mentality, and aspirations" and "a model *for* society—a program that defines its experience, articulates its values and goals, and provides cognitive, affective, and moral orientation for realizing them" (Schwartz, 1996). The memories and reputations of Chairman Mao also serve these roles to the Chinese society. On the one hand, the sacred, profane, and liminal reputations of Mao are the products *of* society. For instance, the projectors project their nostalgic feelings towards their young days onto Mao, while the "present generation" use Mao to express their opinions on the communist regime. The various reputational labels the Chinese netizens use also illustrate the society's lasting worry and anxiety regarding the things Mao symbolizes—the totalitarian system, the personality cult, and especially the Cultural Revolution, which became a national trauma for the Chinese society. This also strongly divided the Chinese public sphere—some leftists and conservatives are unsatisfied with the reform policy and lack of safeness in a changing China and thus see Mao as their utopia, while liberals are worried about another personality cult or Cultural Revolution returning. That is also why the Chinese society is so fiercely invested in defining the meaning of Mao—both parties want to use Mao as a model *for* society, whether a positive model or negative model. Some people also intentionally exploit and mock the Mao image (especially in the modern re-invention) to call for a path different from the Maoist road. In this sense, understanding the meanings of Mao's reputations (as I have done in this dissertation) becomes a crucial step to better understanding the changing Chinese society.

On the other hand, I also use the Mao case to produce theories with general significance. As mentioned above, the Chinese society is one that has experienced post-

totalitarian change; since the Chinese context is different from both the Western democracies and the post-communist countries in East Europe, the study of reputational phenomena can deepen our understandings between the (totalitarian) regime context and reputations in general. Also, since Chairman Mao is a complicated symbol with various reputational labels affixed to him at the same time, thus crossing sacred, profane, and liminal spheres, Mao becomes an ideal example to analyze the relational and processual features of reputations. In the meantime, general sociological theories also inform my thinking on the Chinese case. For instance, the conceptualization of "cosmopolitan memory" (Levy & Sznaider, 2007) and "travelling memory" (Erll, 2011) are indeed useful to understanding the commodification of Chairman Mao.

In this sense, my study of Mao's reputations resides in both a "consumption domain" and a "production domain" of knowledge, and this dissertation as a whole is both an effort to understand Chinese society in particular and to contribute to theories on reputation, memory, and culture more generally.

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