

**MAINSTREAM WAR FILMS: A SOFT POWER TOOL FOR
CHINA'S PROMOTION OF CHINESE NATIONAL
IDENTITY AND PATRIOTISM**



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ภาพยนตร์สงครามในกระแส : ซอฟท์พาวเวอร์ (Soft Power) ของประเทศจีนในการ
ส่งเสริมอัตลักษณ์ประจำชาติ และความรักชาติของชาวจีน



วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาโทศึกษาศาสตร์มหาบัณฑิต
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พื้น จาง : ภาพยนตร์สงครามในกระแส : ซอฟท์พาวเวอร์ (Soft Power) ของประเทศจีนในการส่งเสริมอัตลักษณ์ประจำชาติ และความรักชาติของชาวจีน. (MAINSTREAM WAR FILMS: A SOFT POWER TOOL FOR CHINA'S PROMOTION OF CHINESE NATIONAL IDENTITY AND PATRIOTISM) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : วราภรณ์ นิตราธิชาด

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งเน้นศึกษาภาพยนตร์ในฐานะซอฟท์พาวเวอร์ (Soft Power) ในการส่งเสริมอัตลักษณ์ประจำชาติ และความรักชาติของชาวจีนโดยใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัย 2 แบบ คือ

(1) ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพผ่านการวิเคราะห์การเล่าเรื่องของภาพยนตร์ในกระแส จำนวน 3 เรื่อง ได้แก่ **Wolf Warrior, Operation Red Sea** และ **Battle at Lake Changjin** ผลการวิเคราะห์การเล่าเรื่อง พบอัตลักษณ์ประจำชาติ 5 ประการที่นำเสนอผ่านมิติทางชาติพันธุ์ วัฒนธรรม และการเมือง คือ ความรู้สึกในการเป็นเจ้าของและความรู้สึกผูกพันกับรัฐชาติ ความรู้สึกในการเป็นเจ้าของและความรู้สึกผูกพันกับสถาบันทางการเมือง ความรู้สึกผูกพันกับส่วนรวม ความรู้สึกผูกพันกับประวัติศาสตร์ร่วม และความรู้สึกว่าตนเองแตกต่างกับประเทศอื่น ๆ นอกจากนี้ ภาพยนตร์สงครามในกระแสยังได้นำเสนอรูปแบบความรักชาติ 5 ประเภท คือ ความรักชาติและเพื่อนร่วมชาติ ความรู้สึกภักดีต่อสถาบันทางการเมือง ความรู้สึกภาคภูมิใจในรัฐชาติ ความกังวลต่อความอยู่ดีมีสุขและความผาสุกของชาติในอนาคต และความยินยอมในการเสียสละความอยู่ดีมีสุขของชาติและเพื่อนร่วมชาติ

(2) การวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาสารรูปเพื่อตรวจสอบการรับรู้ของผู้ชมที่มีต่ออัตลักษณ์ประจำชาติและความรักชาติ ผลการวิเคราะห์พบว่าข้อความส่วนใหญ่เกี่ยวกับอัตลักษณ์ประจำชาติและความรักชาติที่ถูกถ่ายทอดในภาพยนตร์ได้รับการรับรู้เป็นอย่างดีจากผู้ชม

งานวิจัยนี้พบว่ารัฐบาลจีนได้ใช้ภาพยนตร์สงครามในกระแสเป็น ซอฟท์พาวเวอร์ (Soft Power) เพื่อส่งเสริมค่านิยมและอุดมคติที่รัฐบาลต้องการสื่อสาร และทำได้ดีในบริบทภายในประเทศจีน

นอกจากนี้ การวิจัยยังพบการใช้กลยุทธ์การวางกรอบ (Framing) และกำหนดวาระข่าวสารของสื่อ (Agenda Setting) ในการสื่อสารของรัฐบาลผ่านภาพยนตร์สงครามในกระแส ในขณะที่เดียวกัน รัฐบาลก็ยังคงเพิ่มการควบคุมสื่อสังคม เพื่อให้หน่วยงานเฝ้าระวังของรัฐบาลสามารถเผยแพร่อุดมคติดังกล่าวได้ดียิ่งขึ้น

Kracauer กล่าวว่า "ภาพยนตร์ของประเทศนั้น ๆ สามารถสะท้อนความคิดของคนได้ตรงกว่าสื่อศิลปะแขนงอื่น ๆ" จากกรวิเคราะห์ภาพยนตร์ในฐานะสื่อที่ใช้สื่อสารอุดมคติต่าง ๆ ของชาวจีน ได้แสดงให้เห็นถึงลักษณะเฉพาะของอัตลักษณ์ประจำชาติและความรักชาติของชาวจีน ซึ่งเป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่งต่อการทำความเข้าใจสังคมจีน ค่านิยมทางสังคม และสถานการณ์ของสื่อสังคมในประเทศจีน และที่สำคัญงานวิจัยนี้ยังเสริมความรู้ด้านประสิทธิภาพของซอฟท์พาวเวอร์ (Soft Power) ในบริบทภายในประเทศ ซึ่งเป็นประเด็นที่ยังไม่ได้ศึกษาอย่างกว้างขวางจากนักวิจัยด้านความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศ

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Fan Zhang : MAINSTREAM WAR FILMS: A SOFT POWER TOOL FOR
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PATRIOTISM. Advisor: Dr. WARAPORN CHATRATICHART

This study focuses on cinema as an agent of soft power in promoting Chinese national identity and patriotism. This study used two research methods. First, a qualitative method of narrative analysis was used to examine three new mainstream films, *Wolf Warrior 2*, *Operation Red Sea*, and *The Battle at Lake Changjin*. The narrative analyses found that five types of national identity were identified using ethnic, cultural, and political dimensions: (1) belongingness and identification with the nation-state; (2) a sense of belonging and identification with the political institution; (3) a sense of identification with collectivism; (4) a sense of identification with shared history; and (5) a sense of differentiation from other countries. Moreover, five types of patriotism were identified: (1) love of the nation-state and compatriots; (2) loyalty to the political institution; (3) pride in the nation-state; (4) special concerns for the well-being of the nation-state's future; and (5) willingness to sacrifice for the well-being of the nation-state and compatriots.

The second research method was summative content analysis, used to investigate the film's audience reception of national identity and patriotism. Research findings indicate that most messages of national identity and patriotism portrayed in the films were well-received by audiences. Moreover, the study also found that the Chinese government used Chinese mainstream films as a soft power tool to promote values and ideologies and perform better in the domestic sphere. In addition, while wielding soft power, framing and agenda-setting strategies are also used. Meanwhile, the state's increasing control over social media provides an effective position for the government's watchdog department to disseminate certain ideologies.

As Kracauer pointed out, "the films of a nation reflect its mentality in a more direct way than any other artistic medium." An analysis of the transmitter of Chinese ideologies shows the use of specific images depicting Chinese national identity and patriotism, which can help understand Chinese society, social values, and social media scenarios. Moreover, this study supplements studies on the effectiveness of China's soft power in the domestic sphere, a topic rarely discussed in international relations studies.

Field of Study:	Strategic Communication Management	Student's Signature
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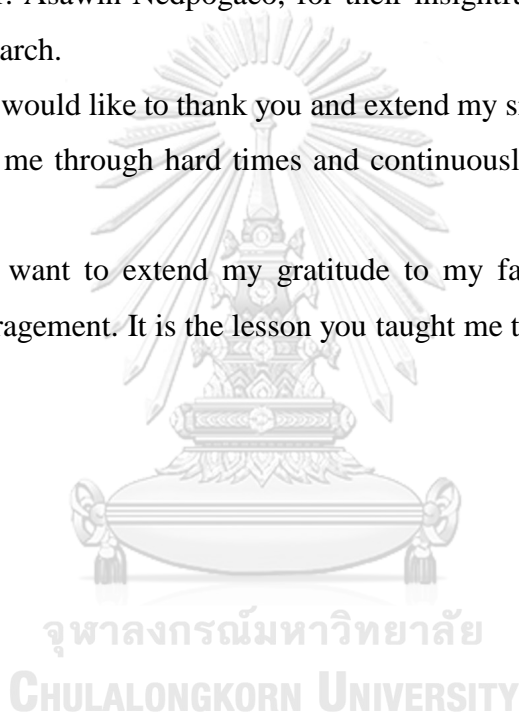


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Significance of the Study

'Who am I?' is a complex and permanent question for human beings. Many philosophers are trying to answer this question from a philosophical perspective. It is ultimately a question of a person's identity (Erikson, 1994). However, the concept of 'identity' is also a complex question built on many aspects, such as family dynamics, unique features, social and political circumstances, and historical factors (Tatum, 2000). Erikson (1994) also proposed that identity is not only a concept from an individual dimension but also can be studied from collective and social dimensions.

Moreover, national identity is a collective concept that can be considered the most critical component of a person's identity. It also plays a vital role during the formation of modern society and the political world. While an individual has a specific and solid identity toward the nation, one's idea or imagination of a nation will be flourished while a nation can be maintained and grow. The growth of a nation cannot be done without positive and supportive circumstances. Thus, fostering a positive attitude toward a nation and government is also necessary to maintain the legitimacy of the governing institution. Researchers also point out that national identity is essential to supporting the existence and development of a nation-state (Y. Jia., 2005); especially in the globalization environment, national identity has increasingly become a vital solution to cope with the crises and challenges brought by globalization.

Viewed history, a turbulent and separated historical period can be found in China. From 1842 to 1898, the monarchy of the Qing dynasty ceded Hong Kong to Britain through 3 conventions (Convention of Nanjing in 1842, Convention of Beijing in 1860, and Convention Between Great Britain and China Respecting an Extension of Hong Kong Territory in 1898). In 1887, the monarchy of the Qing dynasty ceded Macao to Portugal via Sino-Portuguese Friendly Trading Protocol. Furthermore, later, in 1949, Kuo Ming Tang lost the civil war and escaped to Taiwan. All of these

historical events bury the troubles of the national identity crisis of modern China. Besides, with the development of globalization, the ideologies of western liberalism, socialism, capitalism, etc., are rushed into China and collide with the doctrines proposed by the government of China. The collision of Chinese and western ideologies causes a series of belief crises, such as a crisis of faith in socialism (xinxin weiji), the crisis of belief in Marxism (xinyang weiji), and the crisis of trust in the party (xinren weiji) which also called three belief crisis (Gregory P Fairbrother, 2003). Some researchers believe that the 'three belief crisis caused the Tian'an men demonstration, and the crisis of ideologies of the country, a patriotic education campaign and Chinese patriotism have been carried out (Zhao, 1998).

Patriotic Education Campaign is a political education campaign that mainly targets Chinese youth and officially started in 1994. Many researchers point out that the primary purpose of this campaign is to disseminate the political ideology of the communist party of China and maintain its legitimacy (Zhao, 1998). To cope with the crisis in Hong Kong starting in 2019, Hong Kong's legislators also asked to strengthen patriotic education in Hong Kong (Times, 2022). Patriotism, as one of the mainstream values in Chinese society, has officially and systematically been propaganda through patriotic education campaign for many years (J. Wang., 2017), and the government has considered Chinese patriotism as a tool to solve the crisis of ideology (Zhao, 1998). Many researchers have studied patriotic education campaigns from the perspectives of education and political science (Zhao, 1998, Fairbrother, 2003, Wu, 2012). However, weak relations can be found between this campaign and students' national attitude and their perceptions (Gregory P. Fairbrother, 2010; Wu, 2012).

As a channel of the patriotic education campaign, the film also steps into the vision of researchers. Cinema, as a type of mass media, has been studied by many researchers from various fields. Mercer (1953) pointed out two essential functions of cinema: discovery and communication. With its discovery function, cinema is widely deployed in law, sports, and biological science. For communication, cinema is utilized as an educational channel to communicate skills, information, attitudes and incentives, and appreciation. Meanwhile, as one of the essential parts of media culture, cinema plays a role in offering materials to shape audiences' values,

behaviors, identities, and even ideologies. (McKernan, 2002) also illustrated that cinema as an official propaganda tool had started since the first world war and was mainly used toward home and neutral audiences.

In the Chinese film industry, the mainstream film is a genre that cannot be ignored. It plays a vital role in disseminating the political ideologies of the ruling party. The success of *Wolf Warrior 2* makes it become a phenomenal film in Chinese film history. The term 'Wolf Warrior' was once used to describe impassioned patriots. Later, *Operation Red Sea* and *The Battle at the Lake of Changjin* also experienced great success in box-office sales, which can be considered the success of wielding soft power in domestic circumstances. Furthermore, many scholars consider these three films the representatives of new mainstream films (Chen, 2017; Yin & Liang, 2018)

Soft power is a concept introduced by American political scientist Joseph Nye, developed to cope with the problems of foreign policy, culture, and political values. It is broadly discussed, absorbed, and accepted by China for culture. Political values are essential agendas for Chinese domestic propaganda. Viewing vehicles for implementing soft power, culture industries, and entertainment are considered the most potent vehicles (George, 2016). Moreover, some researchers have found that film influences nationality through storytelling and pictures of the nation (Berezhnaya & Schmitt, 2013). For example, the film '*The Battle at Lake Changjin*' is the latest patriotic war film played in China, which advanced ticket sales reached 5.695 billion Chinese Yuan, breaking the ticket sale records of Chinese films. Many schools and public sectors organize their students and employees to watch this film as a method to implement patriotic education.

Moreover, Anderson (2020) believed that there was an imagined community whose existence could be implied totally via language, especially poems and songs. Such nationalistic literary inventions could display political love and patriotism. Some researchers also found that cinema played a core role in building national imagination. The effect of war films on the formation of national identity is widely studied in different national backgrounds, such as in the knowledge of French, Russian, and Korean films (Burgoyne, 2010; Hou., 2009; L. Jia., 2002; X. Wang., 2016). However,

rare researchers draw attention to how national identity and patriotism are constructed by patriotic war films in China, especially by the recent hot patriotic war film. Thus, this study will fill the gap in the context of China and supplement materials to flourish research in the cinema and construction of national identity and patriotism in China, as well as to argue the role of cinema in implementing soft power inside a country.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1) What is the patriotism expressed by selected patriotic war films?
- 2) What is the national identity expressed by selected patriotic war films?
- 3) What are the audiences' reception of patriotism and the national identity of selected patriotic war films?

1.3 Research Objectives

- 1) To explain the patriotism expressed by patriotic war films.
- 2) To explain the national identity expressed by patriotic war films.
- 3) To explore the audiences' reception of patriotism and national identity of selected patriotic war films.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study has searched for the top 10 ticket-sales movies in Chinese film history and found that the Battle at Lake Changjin (2021), Wolf Warrior II (2017), and Operation Red Sea (2018) are patriotic war films, which rank 1st, 2nd, and 8th on the list (IMDb, 2022). Thus, this study will use these three films as research objects to deploy a qualitative method of narrative analysis to analyze these three films to explain the national identity and patriotism portrayed by the films. Then, this study

will conduct a qualitative content analysis method to analyze the concepts of national identity and patriotism constructed by the audiences.

1.5 Operational Definitions

Nation in this paper refers to a political community that consists of all Chinese people (with no regard to different ethnicities) who share the same historic territory, myths, history memories, mass and public culture, economic system, and juridical rights and obligations.

National identity in the context of China, in general, refers to a sense of belonging, identification, and agreement of Chinese people toward the Chinese nation and its political institution, including Chinese culture, political and social values, political ideologies, political institutions, and so on. Meanwhile, it also refers to a sense of differentia toward other nations.

Patriotism in modern China refers to a sentiment of love, loyalty, pride, and supportive behaviors toward the nation, the political institutions, and the political ideology adopted by the Chinese communist party.

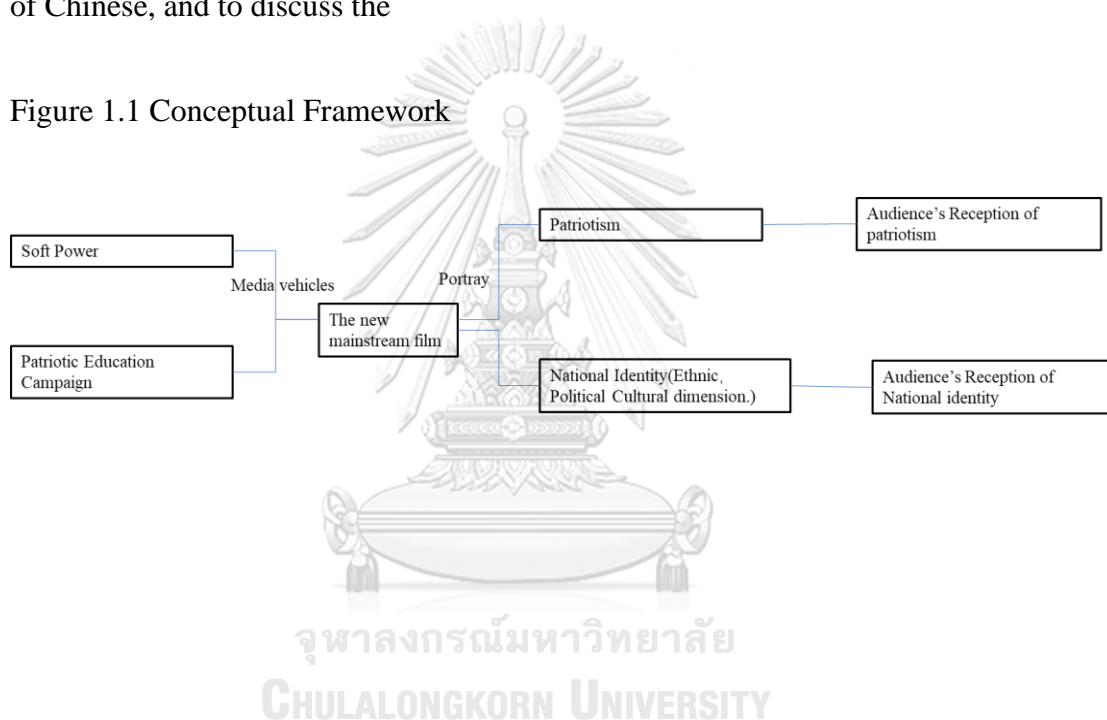
Soft power in this study refers to the ability of a country to attract others' attention and generate others' preferences. In other words, soft power aims to elicit audiences' attraction and identification via a non-coercive method. Compared to the sources of hard power, which are war, weapons, coercive diplomacy, etc., the origins of soft power are often considered culture, political and social values, and foreign policies. And it not can be used in international circumstances and in the domestic environment to help a government prove its legitimacy and national cohesion. A country can wield its soft power via the methods of agenda-setting and framing.

1.6 Research Framework

This study considers soft power and patriotic education campaign as strategies the Chinese government uses to communicate with the Chinese people to maintain its

legitimacy and enhance national cohesion. As a media vehicle of soft power and patriotic campaign, the mainstream film is selected as a research object to convey the message that soft power and patriotic education campaign send to the audiences. And this study aims to study what are patriotism and national identity portrayed by the film via conducting a narrative analysis of the films. In order to study the audience's reception of patriotism and national identity after they watch the films, this study adopts qualitative content analysis of audiences' reviews on the most famous social media platform Douban Movie, to discuss what is the national identity of patriotism of Chinese, and to discuss the

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework



1.7 Benefits of the Study

Taking the most recent event (war between Russia and Ukraine) into consideration, Ukraine used to be a component of the Soviet Union, and the reason why Donbas and Lugansk want to be independent and run into Russia's arms is intriguing. Moreover, to some extent, it reveals the national identity problems in Ukraine. Referring back to the protest in Hong Kong in 20, it also reflects the national identity dilemma in China.

For a country, soft power is a non-coercive method to win attractiveness from others. A better understanding of how to use soft power to promote national identity and patriotism to maintain legitimacy and enhance national cohesion is the demand of all countries who love peace. Thus, discussing the effect of film in constructing national identity and patriotism helps build up the consciousness of the nation-state to enhance national cohesion and reduce instability.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The core of this research is to understand what kind of national identity and patriotism are portrayed by the films and what are audiences' reception of them. In order to well understand the key variables—national identity and patriotism, this chapter will begin with the concept of the nation to reveal the essence of national identity and patriotism. Besides, This research also aims to shed light on the role of China's soft power in promoting national identity. As a selective tool to study China's soft power, the new mainstream film will also be introduced in this chapter. Moreover, the patriotic education campaign is the most important campaign that the party launched to maintain its legitimacy and disseminate the ideology. Thus, it will be illustrated in this chapter as well.

2.1 Nation, Identity, National Identity

The concept of national identity is emerging along with the concept of nation and nationalism. In the beginning, it was a research concept in history. However, with the changing external and internal political environment, this concept gained attention from sociology and political science researchers, especially during the upheaval of eastern Europe and the fall of the Soviet Union (Anthony D Smith, 1991).

Before discussing national identity, it should be understood that it is a type of collective identity—one of the components of a person's identity (Anthony D Smith, 1991). From the terminological structure of national identity, it is easy to figure out that the foundation of national identity is built on the concept of nation and identity. Thus, it is necessary to understand these two concepts better.

2.1.1 Nation

In the western world, philosophes defined the nation as a human community that lived in a territory with specific boundaries and complied with the same law and regulations. (Anthony D Smith, 1991) proposed that the western definition of the nation profoundly influenced the formation of the modern concept of nation. It

revealed that the components of the concept of the western nation include a historic land with specific boundaries, a legal and political community, the equally legal and political relationship of community members, and shared culture and ideology (Anthony D Smith, 1991). Among them, a historic land referred to a place where community members' ancestors were born and lived, which reserved the community's historical memory. Only community members who had self-consciousness could understand and inherit those memories. And all resources on this land should be owned by all members,

The concept of nation in the non-western world has its meaning, which differs from the concept of nation in the western world. The main difference is that the focal point of the non-western concept of nation is put on the community of origin and original culture. From a western perspective, the concept of nation is optional; an individual can choose the nation he wants to belong to. However, from a non-western perspective, the concept of nation is fixed. People in non-western may always think he is an inseparable part of their original nation, even if he has already physically moved out from their historic land (Anthony D Smith, 1991). The concept of nation in the non-western world is built on an imagined blood relationship. Members in such a community can trace back their origins to the same and assumed ancestor. Hence, (Anthony D Smith, 1991) proposed another model to describe this phenomenon called an ethnic nation. (Anthony D Smith, 1991) illustrated that the components of the ethnic nation were blood ties, mass mobilization, dialects, customs, and traditions.

2.1.1.1 Theories of Nation's Origin

The concept of the nation has widely been discussed in academia, and many researchers have devoted themselves to explaining the nation's origin. Viewing the explanation provided by researchers, the theories of the birth of a nation can be categorized into four types:

Nationalist Theory

Nationalists assumed that the concept of the nation had been rooted in human history since the beginning, which can be considered a natural order. The theoretical

foundation of this theory is based on a primordial view of ethnicity, and this view resonated with Michael Ignatieff and Walter Connor's opinions as well (Wan & Vanderwerf, 2010).

Perennialist Theory

The perennial theory is proposed by Anthony D. Smith (1995). He stated that a nation is an immemorial concept, albeit the forms of the nation might change with the changes in circumstances, and particular nations might dissolve over time. Still, the identity of a nation is unchanging. Besides, Smith did not support that nation is a natural order. Hence, in his view, individuals can select their nation, and later generations can create or add new things to it based on their ancient ethnic foundations. In this view, the past plays a vital role in forming a nation. Therefore, Smith defined the nation as a named group of people who shared the same historic territory, myths, history memories, mass and public culture, economic system, and juridical rights and obligations.

Modernist Theory

The leading scholar who held this opinion is Gellner (2008); he proposed that nation and nationalism were products of modern industrial society, which emerged after the French Revolution in *Nation and Nationalism*. In modernists' view, the concept of a nation is irrelevant to the past and can be built without the involvement of ethnic history. However, the nationalists who support this theory are free to use heritages from ancient ethnic groups. In *Nation and Nationalism*, Gellner described that nationalism was created in the background of the transformation of agricultural society into an industrial society. In this process, with the demands of industry and capitalism, people's literacy was improved, and economic regulations and logic of standardization, urbanization, bureaucratization, and homogenization were accepted by ordinary people.

Along with these changes, a high culture emerged, which referred to a universal semantic system. Moreover, Geller also proposed that modern political institutions were born to disseminate high culture. Current political institutions

facilitated the dissemination of high culture, which combined people in a more intensive pattern and created nationalism. Thus, Gellner defined nationalism as a political principle in which political and ethnic units had to be unified. Furthermore, he proposed that nation is created in such a nationalistic atmosphere (Gellner, 2008).

Post-modernist Theory

The central core of the post-modernist aspect is that the nation is an imagined political community, which was proposed by Benedict Anderson and well accepted by modern researchers. For post-modernists, the past is more problematic; they believe the nation is the product of current cultural conditions and will freely select past elements to invent, create and mix in their imagined political community. In other words, the present makes the past in its image (Anthony D. Smith, 1995). Besides, in *Imaged Community*, Anderson (2020) emphasized the power of media to create an imagined community. Strangers who read the same books or magazines began to have intersections, and co-nationals imagined community was created. Anderson believed the formation of the western nations was triggered by such intersection and imagination.

Besides, the concept of the nation can be separated into broad and narrow ways. In general, the term nation is used to represent a political community that has independent dominion. It includes the city-state in ancient Greece, the empire in ancient Rome, the tribe in Africa, the feudal dynasty in ancient China, and the nation-state in modern society. From a broad view, the concept of the nation not only refers to the nation-state but also to all polities that emerged before the modern nation-state. In a narrow sense, the term nation is used to describe the new concept of the nation-state which emerged in recent times. The concept of a nation-state refers to a political community that owns independent dominion and inherits united ethnic culture from the past. However, the combination of cultural, ethnic groups, and political communities is just one representation of the nation-state. It still has another potential representation (Jiang., 1998).

In this study, a narrow concept of the nation will be adopted. Thus, Nation in this paper refers to a political community that consists of all Chinese people (with no regard to different ethnicities) who share the same historic territory, myths, historical memories, mass and public culture, economic system, and juridical rights and obligations.

2.1.2 Identity

The term 'identity' derives from the Latin word 'Idem', which means the same or the equal thing. Moreover, questions related to self-identity have puzzled philosophers for many years, such as who am I, where do I come from? An individual's self-identity includes many aspects, such as gender, class, religion, and nation. Jiang. (1998) argued that the connotation of identity could be divided into three dimensions. In the first dimension, identity refers to oneness and sameness, and philosophers proposed that if we compared the circumstance of one thing at a specific moment and place with the circumstance of such thing at another specific moment and place, we could easily find identity and diversity of such thing (Locke & Perry, 1975). In other words, some commonalities might be found among things in different moments and spaces. In the second dimension, identity refers to identification and belonging. Identification is a process of identifying one's identity, which is also the process of differentiating one from others. In other words, an individual finds his individuality through the identification process (Jiang., 1998).

Furthermore, belongingness refers to the process in which a person finds his commonness with others to find his collectivity. These two dimensions of identity are also mentioned in the Merriam-Weber dictionary (Merriam-Weber, 2022), and are the dimensions that are being widely discussed. The third dimension of identity refers to a status of approval and agreement, which is easily found in Chinese dialogues, for the Chinese meanings of identity, approval, and agreement are all referred to as *rentong* (认同). Thus, the term identity in Chinese is also related to the expression of personal will, which expresses an individual's positive attitude toward an object (Jiang., 1998).

Besides, since the 1960s, identity is well studied by many researchers in various academic fields, such as sociology, psychology, cultural studies, political

sciences, and so on. The American psychologist Cooley proposed the concept of looking glass self at the beginning of the 20th century. In this concept, Cooley (1998) claims that the self-identification of a human being comes from interaction with society. He believes that when people interact with others, people will always think of others' comments on themselves and form self-perception from this process. Cooley emphasized the interactive relationship between individuals and society in his theory. Inspiring by Cooley's theory of looking glass self, Mead (1913) conducted an argument on the concept of 'I' and 'Me'. He illustrates that communication and symbolic interaction are essential in developing self-image. In other words, social interaction is one of the ways for a human to gain self-perception to form their social identity.

Moreover, many researchers also developed their own opinions on identity, which resonated with the three dimensions of identity and the concept of looking glass self. For example, Kelman (1958) proposed three processes of attitude change, and identification is the second stage of attitude change. In his opinion, identification reflects that one's identity achievement depends on others or other groups, which represents a positive attitude toward other people or groups. Psychologist Erik Erikson (1993) indicated that identity or identification represents a feeling of knowing oneself well or having a clear mind on future goals and the acknowledgment attained from trusted people. Furthermore, he also revealed that identity formation is a continuous process from the infant to the aging stage. Jenkins (2014) argued that identification should be defined from two levels: identification and differentiation. The consistency of one's identity with a specific group also reflects its differences with other groups, resonating with the idea of the second dimension of identity.

As a type of self-identity, national identity plays the same role as other identities, which is to answer the question of 'who am I', and many national theorists believe that national identity is a significant part of an individual's collective identity (Jiang., 1998). Anthony D Smith (1991) also points out that national identity is the key to unlocking the door of understanding the significant influence and mobilization ability of nationalism as a political power. Hence, this paper will choose a national identity as one of the research objects to investigate how specific methods shape it.

2.1.3 National Identity

Based on the concept of identity, the concept of national identity can be explained in 3 aspects (Jiang., 1998). In the first aspect, national identity represents the identity of a political community, which is the same as the previous political community. National identity, in this aspect, relates to the issues of continuity and sameness of a nation (Jiang., 1998). Taking China as an example, in this aspect, China's national identity refers to the problem of sameness between modern China and ancient China. Is modern China the same country as ancient China? The second aspect of national identity relates to an individual's identity. It refers to the sense of belonging and identification of an individual with a political community (Jiang., 1998). This dimension is the primary dimension researchers used when they discussed national identity. For the third aspect, national identity talks about the expectation, which refers to the expectation of members toward the political community they belong to or the selection of their membership toward the political community they want to belong to. Hence, in summary, (Jiang., 1998) assumes that national identity is a psychological movement to describe the identification of an individual toward a nation and to describe a nation's identity to ask the question of who am I at the national level.

Based on theories of the concept of nation, Jiang. (1998) developed three dimensions of national identity, which are ethnic identity, cultural identity, and institutional identity. Ethnic identity refers to the identity derived from blood relationships or a subjective sense of sameness of an individual toward a specific ethnicity. Cultural identity is the belonging triggered by shared collective memories, customs, and historical traditions. Viewing examples such as China, Egypt, and Britain, it is easy to find that the longer the history is, the stronger the cultural identity. Moreover, the emergence of cultural identity often depends on land with a specific territory, in other words, homeland. Institutional identity refers to the political identity that derives from the agreement of an individual toward specific politics, economy, and social institutions. Institutional identity is widely used by countries which are lack history to trigger a sense of belonging among their members, such as America and Singapore.

In addition to the three dimensions proposed by Jiang, Huntington and Dunn (2004) raises the four dimensions of national identity: ethnicity, race, culture, and politics. He thinks that the roles of these four dimensions will change along with the development of American society. He found that the characteristics of ethnicity and race are melting, and the characteristics of culture are becoming obscure; the characteristic of politics is enhanced on the contrary. In other words, in America's national identity, the political identity gradually begins to hold the central position. Furthermore, Jones and Smith (2001) surveyed 23 countries to determine two influential national identity factors: ascribed/objective and civic/voluntarist. Their study resonates with cultural and political dimensions of national identity. Except for the western scholars, eastern scholars also define national identity in their ways. Liu. (1998) proposes that the critical elements of modern national identity are political identity and cultural identity. They trigger one's loyalty to the nation-state. His opinion also resonates with Huntington and is supported by Xiao. (2010). Xiao considers that the political identity is an agreeable identity of a citizen toward his country and the cultural identity is a citizen's attributive identity toward his country.

In addition, some researchers also generate a brief definition of national identity as a collection of cognitions and emotions that represent the relationship between individuals and their nation (Barrett & Davis, 2008; Blank & Schmidt, 2003). Moreover, Tartakovsky (2011) developed components of national identity based on Barrett (2005) research, which are as follows:

- 1) A self-identification with a specific nation.
- 2) A sense of belonging to a specific nation as part of one's identity
- 3) Positive or negative emotions toward a specific nation, such as national pride or national shame.
- 4) National stereotypes toward a collection of members who belong to one's own country or other national community.
- 5) A subjective experience of inclusiveness and the perception of oneself

are similar to other group members, along with critical group-defining characteristics.

- 6) One's opinions toward a specific nation regarding its current focus and matters.
- 7) Understanding and allegiance of culture, values, and common legal rights and duties of a specific nation.

In summary, the components of national identity proposed by Barrett and Tartakovsky are generated from empirical studies. Their theory connects the concept of national identity in a theoretical aspect with the concept of national identity in the individual's subjective aspect, which attempts to provide a measurement approach for the concept of national identity. However, Barrett's empirical study is mainly conducted on 6-15-year-old children. As other researchers argue that epistemological work needs to be conducted prior to engaging in national identity empirical research (Checkel, 2006). Thus, whether it is suitable to deploy such components to describe the national identity of all members, including children, adolescents, and adults, is still dubious and needs more studies to investigate. Moreover, Moscovici (1988) and Davis (1999) point out that national identity may vary under the psychosocial situation while concerning the matter of multiple nationalities (Tartakovsky, 2011).

Combined the concept of national identity with the current situation in China, albeit China has 56 different ethnic groups, just as a famous song in China singing, "All 56 ethnic groups are parts of the family of the Chinese nation", the term Chinese nowadays is used to describe all Chinese no matter what ethnic group does an individual belong to. Therefore, this study proposes that national identity in the context of China generally refers to a sense of belonging and identification of Chinese people with the Chinese nation, which also can trigger a sense of differentia toward other nations. While digging into details, Chinese national identity can also be separated into cultural and political dimensions. Viewing from the cultural dimension, national identity for Chinese refers to a sense of belonging that is triggered by shared collective memories, myths, emblems, mass and public culture, values, customs, and

historical traditions, and such content should be reserved in a specific territory which recognized as a homeland by Chinese. While speculating from the political dimension, Chinese national identity refers to a sense of agreement toward the political system, ideology, judicial rights, and obligations.

2.2 Nationalism

National identity is often confused with two related concepts, which are nationalism and patriotism. The concept of national identity has been widely studied after the emergence of the concept of 'nation-state' in the modern era. But the concept of patriotism and nationalism has caught the eyes of academia for centuries. In modernist theorists' opinion, the concept of the nation breeds in the atmosphere of nationalism (Gellner, 2008). However, some researchers think nationalism and patriotism are closed concepts, and when they are used in daily life and academic field, they are hard to be separated. Some researchers use the empirical research method to investigate their degrees of them in America and design questionnaires to measure them (Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Q. Li & Brewer, 2004). From their results, there is an interrelationship that can be found between patriotism and nationalism. Thus, to understand patriotism well, it is necessary to have a good understanding of nationalism.

Some researchers think nationalism can be dated back to the late 18th century (Anthony D Smith, 1991; Viroli, 1995). In general, nationalism refers to loyalty to the nation (Viroli, 1995). Furthermore, it is generally used as an attitudinal concept to illustrate a sense of emotional attachment held by people when they identify their membership toward a specific nation and as a behavioral concept to describe the behavior taken by members of a nation in looking for attaining or sustaining some types of political sovereignty (Nielsen, 1998; Wan & Vanderwerf, 2010). Moreover, from the classic aspect, the terminology of nationalism refers to an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation,' (Connor, 1978; Cox & Rustow, 1968; Deutsch, 1966). However, in order to figure out

the reason why nationalism, as a political power, has such a significant influence on the members of a nation, it is wise to analyze nationalism from a broader perspective, which focal point is considering national identity as a collective cultural phenomenon (Anthony D Smith, 1991).

In *Nations and Nationalism*, Gellner (2008) proposes that nationalism is a political principle that considers political units should be in accordance with ethnic units. In Gellner's opinion, a nation should build up its state while a state should attempt to unify its members as the same nation. As he mentioned, when the expression mode of nationalism is a type of emotion or movement, this principle can be well used to define it. Nationalist emotion refers to indignation or satisfaction brought up by violating or fulfilling such a principle. As for the nationalistic movement, it is triggered by nationalistic emotion. In Gellner's theoretical structure of nationalism, the two essential parts are willingness and culture. Among them, willingness stands for active attachment, identification, loyalty, and unity, while culture stands for shared thoughts, symbols, modes of communication, and behavior in the community. Besides, in Gellner's opinion, culture plays a vital role in nationalism. Cultural homogeneity is one of the required elements for nationalism, and in modern society, culture replaces the position of monarch, land, or religious belief in ancient patriotism or nationalism and becomes the object that nationalistic members are loyal. Furthermore, in the *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, Barnard and Spencer (2009) defines nationalism based on Gellner's theory, nationalism is the political doctrine that holds humanity can be divided into separate, discrete units (nations) and that each nation should constitute a separate political unit (state).

Furthermore, many scholars characterize nationalism into two patterns which are ethnic nationalism and civil nationalism (Wan & Vanderwerf, 2010), while civic nationalism is often referred to as patriotism. As Miller (1995) states, most scholars have accepted a dichotomy between civic (or political) nationalism and ethnic (or cultural) nationalism. Civic nationalism posits that national identity is the central core of developing political ideals, while ethnic nationalism postulates ethnic groups as the

basis of nationhood. Based on previous knowledge of nationalism, this study will move to the part of patriotism.

2.3 Patriotism

The concept of Patriotism has been rooted in human history for a very long time, and its trails can be found in ancient poems, historical works, and masterpieces of philosophers. Whether in western or eastern countries, ancient patriotism is a kind of moral virtue that consists of a sentiment of love and loyalty to their country. Thus, before specifying the patriotism of the Chinese, it is necessary to shed light on the concept of patriotism that is well discussed in the academic field.

Along with the development of nationalism, in the 19th century, patriotism had become a tool used to serve the nation-state. Since then, it has become hard to tell patriotism and nationalism apart (Pan, 2008). Due to researchers cannot clarify a solid distinction between patriotism and nationalism, cross-utilization of the concepts of patriotism and nationalism can easily be found in many works (Mišćević, 2019).

2.3.1 Patriotism in General

The word ‘patriotism’ is derived from the word ‘Patria’, which generally refers to the fatherland, and was used to indicate the country. From a macro perspective, the fatherland relates to the land that his ethnicity or religion sanctifies. From a micro angle, the fatherland is linked with the soil his family inhabited (Viroli, 1995). Thus, the affection for a ‘given’ land or territory can be considered the foundation stone of the concept of patriotism, which is also the dictionary definition of patriotism (Primoratz, 2009). In addition, along with the development of external circumstances, the concept of patriotism evolves. In the early stage of the Industrial Revolution, devotion to the customs and traditions of one’s country, pride in its history, and dedication to the country's well-being were joined into the concept of patriotism (Pan, 2008).

However, many researchers think this simple explanation of patriotism is not enough to disclose the essence of patriotism. To give a proper and accurate definition

of patriotism, researchers from the field of history, philosophy, social science, and political science have engaged in elaborating on patriotism on this basis of the former foundation, and the political connotation has been added to the concept of patriotism. Stephen Nathanson (1993) defines patriotism as an attitudinal and affective concept that involves:

- 1) Special affection for one's own country.
- 2) A sense of personal identification with the country
- 3) Special concern for the well-being of the country.
- 4) Willingness to sacrifice to promote the country's good.

Though such elaboration provides a clearer insight into patriotism, Van Hooft and Primoratz have suggestions on it. Van Hooft (2009) and Primoratz (2009) point out that in the definition of patriotism, there is no apparent distinction between love and special affection, and Hooft gives his argument from the perspective of the object of such love, while Primoratz brings up his opinion from the point of expression of the love. In Hooft's view, the notion of 'country' is ambiguous, and using the word 'love' to name the relationship whose psychological function is to establish an individual's identity as a citizen is improper. Thus, he proposes an idea of political patriotism, which involves the identification with one's political identification, and the object of patriot allegiance is a political community (Hooft, 2009). In Hooft's definition, political patriotism is considered as citizens' loyalty to their political community, which resonates with Canovan's thought that patriotism refers to citizens' political loyalty to their shared polity (Canovan, 1996; Van Hooft, 2009). While Primoratz brings up the thought of involving special concern in the concept of love, for if one's love of his country cannot be expressed in a special concern, he can hardly be recognized as a patriot. Hence, Primoratz briefs patriotism as love of one's country, identification with it, and special concern for its well-being and that of compatriots (Primoratz, 2009). Moreover, based on 'Patria', Viroli pointed out, compared with ancient patriotism, modern political patriotism adds the elements of

identifications with *respublica*, common liberty, and the common good. Thus, he defined patriotism as a love for the republic (Viroli, 1995).

Furthermore, some researchers consider patriotism as members' positive and benign attitude toward their nation-state, which includes a sense of affection, pride, and attachment. At the same time, nationalism reflects a sense of superiority that individuals consider their country and its culture to be better than others and can dominate other countries and cultures. Moreover, the research conducted by Blank and Schmidt (2003) in Germany supports this idea. However, Pei (2003) points out that it is hard to tell these two concepts apart from the perspectives of psychology and behavior and their effect on policy. Besides, some scholars have some criticism on normative issues of patriotism. Tolstoy considers patriotism a stupid and immoral concept, for patriots consider their own country better than all other countries and encourage patriots to protect their national interests at any expense, including war (Primoratz, 2009). Kateb (2000) supports in his work. Viewing the statement of Tolstoy, the interchangeable use of nationalism and patriotism can be found easily.

As this study mentioned, the concepts of patriotism and nationalism have many overlaps, for both have commitments to a territorial object: country, or nation, special concern for its well-being, and a willingness to scarify one's self on its behalf (Poole, 2016). Gellner (2008) also thinks that nationalism is a kind of patriotism with some essential characteristics, such as cultural homogeneity and literate members without personality traits. This means members' cultural styles are flowing and changeable that do not belong to their second group but belong to the overall unit. Nevertheless, theoretically speaking, compared with patriotism, some scholars think nationalism includes superiority over other nations, which is not involved in the concept of patriotism.

In summary, Patriotism, an emotional or attitudinal concept, generally refers to love and loyalty to a political community (nation-state) and its culture, which includes the special concern for the development of the nation-state, the willingness to attach to the nation-state actively, willingness of identifying with the nation-state's culture actively and even the willingness of sacrifice for the nation-state. In other

words, patriotism can be considered as a sense of devotion of an individual toward a specific nation-state and supportive behaviors toward specific nation-state decisions.

2.3.2 Patriotism in The context of China

Whether we view it from the culture, customs, and ideological perspectives, the eastern world and the western world have many differences. Thus, viewing patriotism in the context of China is necessary. The last part of this paper studies patriotism from a broad sight. This part will shed light on patriotism in the context of China.

2.3.2.1 Patriotism in the Era before the Establishment of the People's Republic of China

Similar to the general conception of patriotism, Chinese patriotism is also territorial. It also refers to the love of the fatherland. However, with the influence of Confucianism, in traditional Chinese philosophy, the love invokes by patriotism is Caritas. From this perspective, ancient patriotism in China promotes the idea that all members share the world equally. The ancient patriotism represents not only the love of the country but also the love towards all compatriots and the collective interests of all members who identify themselves as subjects of this country (Zhao., 2019). Besides, the differences between ancient and modern concepts of the nation-state have been discussed previously.

Mencius used to say the root of the world (*tian xia*) is in the state, the root of the state is in the family, and the root of the family is in cultivating oneself, which reflects the Confucianism combines individuals, family, state, and the world into a continuum. Thus, J. Xu. (2015) concluded that an ethnic-cultural-political community had been formed by the system of enfeoffment and loyalty in feudalistic China, and the relationships among community members can be considered kindred as well as monarch-subject relationships. Moreover, the concept of nation or state is always connected with a specific dynasty whose core is the emperor. Therefore, the love or loyalty of a nation-state in ancient China also includes the love and loyalty to the monarch. However, some researchers criticize that ancient China's patriotism is not

the patriotism researchers discuss nowadays since ancient Chinese misunderstood the nation's concept, so their patriotism object mingles nation-state with the monarch (Zhu., 2012). However, the formation of every concept has its circumstance and particular context and will evolve with the change in external circumstances and context. Thus, it is plausible to consider that the love and loyalty to an ethnic-cultural-political community and monarch is the particular context of patriotism in ancient China.

As Taylor (2002) mentioned, a great disembedding will happen in transitioning from a traditional society to a modern one. As time went into the modern age, with the hit of western guns and ideologies, the Chinese feudalistic system was threatened by the western system, and traditional feudalism was challenged by democratism, western liberalism, and modern political science. China experienced a great disembedding. With the May Fourth Movement outbreak, also known as the New Cultural Movement, western ideologies, such as Democratism, Capitalism, Marxism, and Individualism, rushed into China and broke the perception links of family and state, state and the world for Chinese intellectuals. From then on, the concepts of nation and country turned to be aligned with the general perception of the world. Love and loyalty to the monarch had been stripped of patriotism, and people realized that China was an independent country like all western countries. The core of patriotism changed from the monarch to the nation and country itself (J. Xu., 2015; Zhao., 2019).

2.3.2.2 Patriotism in the Era after the Establishment of the People's Republic of China

The establishment of the People's Republic of China marks that China has gotten rid of the situation of the colonized and become an independent country. China has stepped into a new historical era, while the Communist Party of China (hereinafter referred to as CPC) has become the legal and political institution to govern China since 1949. However, the movement of the Cultural Revolution, the Tian'anmen Square protests of 1989, and the upheaval of the Soviet Union made the party realize that the lack of political indoctrination among the young generation was an urgent

problem that needed to be solved. Therefore, the concept of Chinese patriotism was carried out.

In 1983, the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee and the Central Committee of the CPC issued a document called *the Suggestions on strengthening the dissemination and education of patriotism*, in which it pointed out that Chinese patriotism was not merely the love toward the nation-state itself, but also the acknowledgment of socialism that chosen by all members in the country. The document *the Outline on the Implementation of Patriotic Education* issued by the Central Committee of the CPC in 1994 stated that the guiding philosophy of patriotism was the theory of socialism of Chinese characteristics and the primary lines of the CPC. Also, in the latest government document which called *the Outline on the Implementation of Patriotic Education for a new era* issued by the CPC central committee and state council in 2019, it added the fulfilling the Chinese dream and the great rejuvenation of China as well as adding Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era into guiding thoughts of patriotism. Therefore, it is evident that the objects of Chinese patriotism in the People's Republic of China are the nation, the party, and socialism.

However, some scholars proposed that China's concept of patriotism should be considered state-led nationalism, for the Chinese government deliberately confuses the concept of patriotism, nationalism, socialism, and communism (Zhao, 1998). Tilly (2004) explained that rulers who spoke in the nation's name successfully demanded their people to identify with the nation and place collective interests over individual interests. Although some researchers and media practitioners assert that Chinese patriotism is a variant of nationalism (Fifield, 2019; Gary, 2012; Zhao, 1998), the Chinese government has never endorsed nationalism officially. As Chairman Jiang Zeming illustrated in 1990, "the patriotism that China advocates by no means parochial nationalism" and "patriotism and socialism are unified in China nowadays (Zhao, 1998). Meanwhile, to disseminate the concept of patriotism widely and effectively, a patriotic education campaign has been carried out officially in China since 1994.

2.3.3 Patriotic Education Campaign

Throughout the history of China, whether in ancient times or nowadays, spreading its political ideologies have become one of the vital tasks of governing class during its governance, and schools have played an essential role in this process. In B. C. 127 years, Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty banned hundreds of philosophers, venerated Confucianism, and established the official school *Taixue* to teach students Confucianism, considered the public school in Chinese history. After that, this mode was passed by every dynasty in China's history. In the last part, the study briefly discussed patriotism in the context of China, and the patriotic education campaign as a propaganda campaign to spread the concept of patriotism was carried out officially in 1994. However, the precursor of the patriotic education campaign can be traced back to 1949, when the new China was established.

Many researchers believe that the motivation of the Chinese government to establish patriotic education is to cope with the outside changing circumstances or threats toward the legitimacy of the party. Martin (1975) studied the content of textbooks in Chinese elementary schools and found that the Chinese government tried to break the link between Confucian traditions by promoting socialist behaviors and values. Gregory P Fairbrother (2003) pointed out that Chinese political education was a designed political indoctrination that benefited the government, and changes in the content of political education reflected the changes in political ideologies, policies, and leadership in the country.

Gregory P Fairbrother (2003) supported that schools were called upon to build people's knowledge, attitude, and behavior toward society and the nation-state and strengthen reform of people's political attitude through political education, which includes ideological-political education (*sixiang zhengzhi jiaoyu*), moral education (*daode jiaoyu*) and patriotic education (*aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu*). However, Gregory P Fairbrother (2003) and Wu (2012) also found that patriotic education from school and textbooks only have a weak effect on students' perception and national attitude.

Though school is the main channel of this campaign, the promoting channels of this campaign also include other media, such as newspapers, cinemas, tv-series, tourist points, etc. Moreover, the film is considered another critical channel to disseminate patriotism. Four years later, in September 1993, a ‘*Circular on Carrying Out Education of Patriotism for Primary and Secondary Schools Through Out the Country via Good Films and TV Series*’, which aimed to improve students’ knowledge of history, national condition, Chinese tradition, and culture, to elicit a sense of patriotism and to build correct values, beliefs, was jointly issued by the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, State Education Commission, State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television, and Ministry of Culture (Zhao, 1998). The Circular recommended 100 good films for students in primary and secondary schools whose contents include anti-aggression of imperialism (main content), the revolutionary tradition of the CPC, education of socialism, biography of historical heroes and heroines, Chinese culture, etc. After implementing this circular, almost 95% of target students in Beijing had been organized to watch the recommended films by May 1994, and students wrote more than 1.5 million reviews to share what they learned from the heroes and heroines in the films (Zhao, 1998). Furthermore, the recommended list of good films is expanding over time. Later, in 2010, *Guiding Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on promoting the prosperous development of the film industry* (hereinafter referred to as *the Guiding Opinions*) were issued by the general office of State Council, and the film became an important tool to carry out the patriotic education campaign. *The Guiding Opinions* encourages the film company to carry out public service by showing the film in public areas such as the community in urban and rural areas, factories and mines, school campuses, military camps, squares etc.

Moreover, the *Guiding Opinions* suggests including the films used to deploy patriotic education campaign into primary, secondary, and vocational school teaching plans. And public expenses of the local government will cover the cost of showing films for the patriotic education campaign. Therefore, the film has become a vital dissemination channel of patriotism. This study will select the film as a research

object, and in order to understand this campaign and the content of Chinese patriotism clearer, it is essential to know content of this campaign.

2.3.3.1 Content of Patriotic Education Campaign

The government has issued three documents related to the patriotic education campaign since 1983. The latest official document, *the Outline on the Implementation of Patriotic Education for a new era* (hereinafter referred to as the outline), was issued in 2019. It specifies the general requirements and contents of the patriotic education campaign in the new era, which are summarized as follows (People'sDaily, 2021):

1. General requirements:
 - 1) Adhere to the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the critical thought of "Three Represents", the Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. Strengthen the "Four Awareness" and "Four Self-confidence" (Be self-confidence on the road, theory, system, and culture with Chinese socialist characteristics.), fulfill the "Two Upholds", and focus on cultivating successors. Insist on patriotism always, and focus on cultivating patriotism, s the ambition to strengthen the country, and practicing. The trip to serve the country makes patriotism the firm belief, spiritual strength, and conscious action of all Chinese people.
 - 2) Adhere to realize the China Dream of great rejuvenation.
 - 3) Adhere to the unity of loving the party, country, and socialism.
 - 4) Adhere to maintain the unity of the country and nation
 - 5) Adhere to the principles of fostering and building patriotism among the next generations.
 - 6) Insist on being based in China and facing the world.

2. General content

- 1) Educating party members and people about Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era;
- 2) Conducting in-depth education on socialism with Chinese characteristics and China's dream;
- 3) Completing in-depth education of national conditions and situations;
- 4) Vigorously fostering national spirits (whose central core is patriotism) and promoting the underlying trend of times (whose central core is reform and innovation);
- 5) Educating people about the history of the party, the nation, and the reform and opening up;
- 6) Educating people with refined traditional Chinese culture;
- 7) They are disseminating the thoughts of national reunification and national unity;
- 8) They are strengthening the education on national security and national defense.

Besides, the outline also mentioned that the target group of this campaign is all Chinese, especially the youth. Furthermore, the dissemination channels of this campaign are schools (main channel); bases of patriotism education and national defense education; national ceremonies and etiquettes; national holidays; natural landscapes and significant construction projects; newspapers, broadcast, cinemas, and mass media (including online and offline); advanced models as national heroes; literary works and Internet (including all social platforms and new techniques) (People Daily, 2019).

Hence, combined with the actual circumstances of China, it can be summarized that patriotism in modern China refers to a sentiment of love, loyalty, and

pride, supportive behaviors toward the nation, the party, and the political ideology adopted by the governing institution. It also can be divided into two dimensions which are cultural and political. For the cultural dimension, patriotism refers to a sense of special affection, pride, and identification with Chinese mass and public culture, shared history, customs, traditions, and historical territory. From the political dimension, patriotism refers to a sense of allegiance and agreement toward the nation, the party, and political ideologies, and special concerns and devotion to supporting the wellness of the country, the party.

2.4 Soft Power

With the rise of China, topics related to China's soft power have gained considerable attention from academia. Joseph Nye proposed the concept of soft power in 1990, which most researchers consensually accept. This concept has been well accepted by China's leaders and has become a part of the official lexicon of the communist party of China (Edney, 2015). In Nye's definition, soft power refers to *"the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading and elicit positive attraction to obtain preferred outcomes, and it can be conveyed by culture, political and social values, foreign policies."* (Nye, 2021). Nye also notices the importance of information technologies in decreasing the cost of communication worldwide. Thus, he advocates cultivating soft power with entertainment and media via passive methods.

Meanwhile, other scholars also illustrate soft power from other angles. Some thinkers like Foucault, Bourdieu, and Gramsci have discussed a state's soft power as an influence, attraction, and allure (Mattern, 2005). Besides, some researchers also point out that soft power has been rooted in Chinese theory for a long time. For example, Confucianism mentions that attraction and respect can be gained from benevolence and understanding; Sun Tzu also points out that winning the hearts and minds of the enemy is better than winning a war (Ding, 2010). Moreover, some of them also notice the differences between China's soft power and Nye's soft power. While Nye proposed the concept of soft power, he emphasizes using it to deal with

external interactions with other states. However, (Edney, 2015) points out that China's soft power is closely related to domestic politics. She argues that China's soft power has an intense color of Chinese characteristics. It is not only deployed to shape the Chinese international state image but also has the potential to enhance the party's legitimacy and national cohesion. Thus, on the foundation of Nye's definition, Chinese scholars proposed soft power in the Chinese context, which refers to culture, ideology, the China model of development, the international system, and the international image (Men, 2013).

Based on extant works, studies of how China projects its soft power have been found in international relations, political sciences, public diplomacy, and media and communication (H. Li, 2018). Edney (2015) connects soft power with regime security, including the legitimacy of the Communist Party of China and national cohesion, and she also mentioned the use of soft power in defending China's cultural security. H. Li (2018) points out that soft power is associated with 'telling good Chinese stories' in Xi's tenure, and Xi proposes the slogan of 'innovation' and 'new narratives' for foreign publicity, which reveals that 'soft power in China is also closely combined with the renovation of media and propaganda strategies. Moreover, Shambaugh (2015) researches how the concept of soft power is perceived differently in the U.S. and China and states that China's soft power is not only strengthened by the economy, culture, education, military, diplomacy, etc. but also enhanced via the use of media. Furthermore, Rothman (2011) reveals that policymakers can wield the country through agenda-setting and framing.

Some researchers give a further illustration of the country's attraction. Many agree with Nye's opinion that the attraction of a country comes from culture, political and social values, and foreign policies (Cho & Jeong, 2008; Ding & Saunders, 2006; Gill & Huang, 2006; Heng, 2010). However, a country's cultural attraction should be connected with the content. For example, Islamic countries may repel Christian culture (Blanchard & Lu, 2012). Mattern (2005) points out that persuasion and threats may influence attraction via third parties. Blanchard and Lu (2012) also support Mattern's opinion for considering the allure of third parties and their values and mention that attraction may be affected by the availability of alternatives. Besides the

favorable attraction, Callahan (2015) proposes an idea of negative soft power to describe China's soft power strategies. He argues that soft power is a complex concept that should be considered as a social construction rather than an entity or a variable, and it can reflect the national identity and security dynamics.

For measurement of the efficacy of soft power, Zhang (2012) measures the efficacy of soft power from strategic and tactical levels and finds that deploying soft power from the strategic level is more effective. Moreover, Blanchard and Lu (2012) summarize that to measure the efficacy of Chinese soft power, researchers need to identify the target audience and messages of the soft power programs, evaluate Chinese soft power mechanisms, and measure the intensity of views about Chinese attractiveness. They also point out that the domestic audience is a missing point in the study of Chinese soft power. Manzenreiter (2010) echoes Blanchard and Fu's opinion. He argues that the 2008 Olympic game is an excellent channel to educate Chinese citizens and promote national unity rather than reaching foreign audiences. In Blanchard and Fu's review, they conclude techniques for measuring the attraction of a country which include: 1) investigating key audiences' statements from the public and private channels, 2) reviewing related government documents, 3) conducting the in-depth interview to target audiences, 4) measuring the number of foreign individuals who study mandarin or travel to China, the popularity of Chinese traditional medicine and Chinese festival, and the box-office share of Chinese movie.

Besides, researchers of Chinese soft power study also summarize the shortcomings of present research:

- 1) Rare attention has been put on why and how China's soft power works or not. (Lee, 2018)
- 2) Most extant studies neglect the domestic influence of China's soft power (Blanchard & Lu, 2012).

Moreover, having a better understanding of soft power can partly reveal the role of power in modern society and help students of soft power to develop a further

understanding of national attitudes, images, and identities as well as the influence of information technologies (Blanchard & Lu, 2012).

In summary, soft power in this study refers to the ability of a country to attract others' attention and generate others' preferences. In other words, soft power aims to elicit audiences' attraction and identification via a non-coercive method. Compared to the sources of hard power, which are war, weapons, coercive diplomacy, etc., the sources of soft power are often considered culture, political and social values, and foreign policies. Furthermore, it can be used in international circumstances and in the domestic environment to help a government improve its legitimacy and national cohesion. A country can wield its soft power via the methods of agenda-setting and framing.

Furthermore, based on the previous review, it is rational to connect soft power with national identity and patriotism. From previous studies, patriotism refers to a positive and supportive attitude toward the country, including its culture, history, territory, political ideologies, etc. In contrast, national identity refers to a sense of belonging, identification, and agreement toward a country and its culture, political systems, and values and can also be considered a source of soft power. Since patriotism and national identity both involve a sense of support or agreement toward a country's culture, political and social values, it is reasonable to postulate patriotism and national identity can also be a source of soft power for China. According to Edney's (2015) idea, China's soft power may potentially maintain the legitimacy of the government and enhance national cohesion. As we discussed before, the essence of patriotism and national identity is to build a sense of affection and belonging for people toward their country. In other words, it can help the government to reach the goals of maintaining legitimacy and enhancing national cohesion. Thus, this study intends to use soft power as the cut-in point to analyze national identity and patriotism.

2.4.1 Agenda setting as a tool of soft power

Maxwell and McCombs initially introduced agenda-setting theory in 1972, which elaborates on the relationships between the emphasis that mass media places on the

issues and the importance that audiences put on those issues. McCombs and Shaw (1972) study provides empirical evidence that news media's concentration has become the concentration of the public, revealing the role of agenda-setting in gaining audiences' attention. After the proposal of the agenda-setting theory, many researchers in the communication field have dedicated themselves to exploring this theory furtherly. Moreover, many researchers agree that the public agenda influences the media agenda.

Moreover, Nye's opinion on soft power also confirms the role of agenda setting and framing in building soft power. He suggests that agenda-setting is a tool for a country to wield its soft power, and Rothman (2011) supports his opinion. Furthermore, in the political communication field, Chan (2007) conducted a study on China's media policy which discovered that the Chinese government has already noticed the importance of agenda-setting in guiding public opinion since Mao's age, and it has become a vital topic after the Tian'anmen demonstration in 1989. Furthermore, Leibrandt-Loxton (2022) research on the soft power of South Africa also reveals positive implications of agenda-setting as a tool to employ soft power.

2.4.2 framing as a tool of soft power

As Nye (2021) and Rothman (2011) suggest, framing is also a tool that a country's soft power can employ. Framing refers to the process by which people conceptualize an issue from a particular aspect or adjust their thoughts toward an issue, and the 'frame in thought' influences people's opinions (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Furthermore, in daily communication, via providing interpretation and definition to an issue or event (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), the framing phenomenon is widely found and 'organizes daily reality' Tuchman (1978), especially in the political area (Shah, Watts, Domke, & Fan, 2002).

Moreover, the effect of framing on the audience's attitude and behavior has been investigated by many researchers from the field of political science and communication and found that politicians, social activists, and citizens adopt frames in their communication often ((Druckman, 2004; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Entman, 2004). Besides, in the soft power studies, Molho (2015) points out that framing

benefits Turkey's soft power to gain attraction from the international stage via constructing Istanbul as a regional art center. Furthermore, El Damanhoury and Garud-Paktar (2021) also deploy a comparative analysis of visual framing in China and U.S. soft power journalism, which commits to framing as a tool in a country's soft power.

2.5 Film and the New Mainstream Film in China

The film has become a necessity for people's daily entertainment. It can be accessed from the theatre, the internet, or TV. In Merriam-Weber Dictionary, it is defined as the motion picture, a motion picture theatre, movies, especially the film industry, and the art or technique of making motion pictures. According to the purpose of this study, this paper will consider cinema as a movie or a film. From the sources of soft power, it can be easily proved that the power of culture, political and social values and foreign policies depend on dissemination, in other words, communication. Culture, values, or policies will not attract one if one has not accessed them. As researchers discussed, the root of soft power is communication, and soft power can be enhanced by using media (H. Li, 2018; Shambaugh, 2015). As a cultural product, cinema is a powerful agent to shape nationality through storytelling and displaying pictures of the nation due to the communication function of cinema Berezhnaya and Schmitt (2013). Based on previous studies, Thus, this study adopts cinema as a channel to reveal Chinese patriotism and national identity to analyze China's soft power.

In addition, it is essential to have basic knowledge of mass media and mass communication, for cinema is a sort of mass media that can be used to conduct mass communication. Mass media refers to a type of media that has been deployed to a large number of audiences (masses). It includes various types of media, such as newspapers, television, radio, print media, and films. Mass communication refers to a process of exchanging information with a large scale of audiences via mass media. In other words, cinema is a proper channel to communicate with the public. Researchers also summarize two functions of cinema discovery and communication (Mercer, 1953). With its discovery function, cinema is widely used in law, sports, and biological science. For communication function, cinema is utilized as an educational

channel to communicate skills, information, attitudes and incentives, and appreciation. Meanwhile, as one of the essential parts of media culture, cinema plays a role in offering materials to shape audiences' values, behaviors, identities, and even ideologies. McKernan (2002) also illustrated that cinema as an official propaganda tool had started since the first world war and was mainly used toward home and neutral audiences.

As an essential expression of media culture, the film is responsible for providing materials for shaping people's identities, values, and behaviors (Kellner, 2003). Reconstruction is a vital method for the film to connect with the real world, for it helps audiences form opinions toward a specific object, including social groups, institutions, social practices, and other elements in the films (Hou., 2009). For example, the American *Black Hawk Down*, which background is an American military operation, evolved into a rescue operation that happened in Somalia. Moreover, the image it reconstructs is not only American soldiers (social groups), the military, and the government (social institutions) but also the image of military operation and rescue operations (social practices). Such images and narratives can facilitate target audiences to form their identity related to group identity, historical identity, cultural identity, etc. (Berton, 2017). Therefore, according to this foundation, it is rational to postulate that Chinese war films have the same effect as American war films. Through the narratives and pictures of the film, the relationship between the Chinese army and Chinese citizens, the image of the political institution such as the government, and the social practices such as rescue operations can be reappeared to help audiences to build up their national identity, cultural identity, political identity, etc.

2.5.1 Identity Issues in Films

Based on Lacan's mirror stage, Baudry and Williams (1974) analogize the scene of watching films in the theatre with Lacan's mirror stage. They argue that people can not only identify with the actors or actresses but also identify with the camera, for they represent the admiration of humans toward orders, institutions, and the untied. Their research shifts Lacan's research from psychoanalysis to ideology analysis. Moreover, Metz (1975) agrees with Baudry and Williams's idea and

supplements the analysis of audiences. He proposes that the identification with the camera is the primary identity, and the identification with the actors or actresses in the film is the secondary identity. Kellner (2003) points out that Mass media, as a product of modernization, is a tool to carry out a country's national identity.

Meanwhile, in *the power of identity*, Castells (2011) asserts that mass media plays an essential role in the formation of an individual's identity via collective memory. Thus, explaining the national identity and patriotism via film is rational and pragmatic. However, rare researchers shed light on this field(Hou., 2009; X. Wang., 2016).

2.5.2 History of Chinese Patriotic Film: from the Main Theme Film to the New Mainstream Film in China

As a cultural product, the film also plays a unique role in Chinese society. Many Chinese researchers in the field of film study point out that Chinese film is an important vehicle to carry out the concept of China's Dream and the main ideologies and values of Chinese society (Chen & Liu, 2021). Generally, Chinese films can be separated into three categories: main theme films, commercial films, and art-house films (Yin & Liang, 2018). At the very beginning, these three types of films have strict distinctions. Except for these three types of Chinese films, there is another type of film that is rising up in China: the new mainstream film. Chinese film researchers generally agreed that the new mainstream film is born from the main theme film. Ge (2016) proposes that the new mainstream film involves the main theme film in general. However, in narrow, the new mainstream film is different from the main theme film, for the features of commercial films and art-house films have been merged into the characteristics of the mainstream film.

Besides, Chinese film researchers have divided the development period of Chinese films since 1949(Chen & Liu, 2021; Ge, 2016; Yan, 2018):

- 1) The first period is from 1949 to 1987, defined as the pre-era of the main theme films. During this period, the People's Republic of China was set up, and the party and state apparatus had great power over film production.

Thus, the films focused on disseminating the ideologies of collectivism, heroism, socialism, and patriotism and acting as a carrier of political education, especially from 1949 to 1966, which was the 17-year period. The main themes in this period were praising workers, peasants, and soldiers and singing for the new era of China, such as *the people by the Huai river* (*Huai Shang Ren Jia*, 1954), *Spring in all world* (*Chun Man Ren Jian*, 1958). From 1966 to 1976, China stepped into a period of a 10-year cultural revolution. The main themes of films in this period mainly shed light on the great revolution in Chinese history and real life, which were led by political intention and emphasized class struggle and the leading role of Chairman Mao Zedong. Later, from 1977 to 1987, along with the end of the Cultural Revolution, China moved into another new era. During these ten years, the focal point of Chinese films was paying tribute to the life of normal people in the new era to emphasize the main core of the era in such a period, which was reforming (Yan, 2018). Hence, in summary, Chinese films during the first period worked as the conveyer of state ideologies with a great political element.

2) The second period is from 1987 to 2000. The main theme or mainstream film concept was proposed during this period officially. In 1987, the director-general of the film department of the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television, Teng Jinguang, firstly proposed the slogan of *Highlighting the main themes and insisting on diversity* (Chen & Liu, 2021). Moreover, Chairman Deng Xiaoping pointed out that the thing that can spread the value of truthfulness, kindness, and virtue can be considered the mainstream. Later in 1994, Chairman Jiang Zeming defined mainstream film as films that conveyed values of patriotism, collectivism, and socialism and could benefit the construction of modernity and the reform of China and could facilitate to encourage people to work hard, be innovative, and be proactive. He also encouraged highlighting the main themes and advocating diversity (Ge, 2016). Therefore, with encouragement from the government, a series of films were produced to disseminate values of patriotism, collectivism, and

socialism. The main themes of films in this period were telling stories of important and famous events or figures in Chinese history, for example, *The birth of new China (Kai Guo Da Dian, 1989)*, *Zhou Enlai (1992)*. In summary, in this period, the main theme of films still had a strong sense of political ideologies and lacked commercial and art-house characteristics.

3) The third period is from 2000 to nowadays. With the import of foreign movies, especially commercial movies from Hollywood during the mid-1990s to the early stage of the 21st century, the market capitalization of Chinese films experienced a rapid descending to an amount of less than a billion Chinese yuan, and more than half is from imported films (Yin & Liang, 2018). The proliferation of American films was challenging the market share of the main theme film. Moreover, the concept of the new mainstream film was born at this moment in 1999. Ma. (2000) explained that the new mainstream film was originally proposed by several new-generation directors in China that aimed to set up a new genre of Chinese films to defend against the intrusion of Hollywood films. According to Ma's definition, the new mainstream film referred to films that emphasized imagination, and the production cost was controlled at 1.5 million to 2 million yuan. However, the cost of the new mainstream film nowadays is not limited to the previous range. The new mainstream film is defined as the films with a mixed feature of the main theme film, commercial film, and art-house film, especially the commercial feature. Audiences' tastes and preferences have been considered during the production of the new mainstream film.

2.5.3 The New Mainstream Film as a Carrier of China's Soft Power

As a cultural product, the film also plays a special role in Chinese society. Many Chinese researchers in the field of film study point out that Chinese film is an important vehicle to carry out the concept of China's Dream and the main ideologies and values of Chinese society (Chen & Liu, 2021) and plays an important role in Chinese patriotic education. As Kracauer (1997) proposed, "the films of a nation reflect its mentality in a more direct way than any other artistic media." Thus, as the

main carrier of core ideologies and values in Chinese society, it also can work as a carrier or media to wield Chinese soft power.

Meanwhile, with the proliferation of American films at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, the share of Chinese films was challenged, especially by the Hollywood commercial films, which took up more than half shares of the Chinese film market at that time (Yin & Liang, 2018). Moreover, at this moment, the concept of the new mainstream film was proposed by several new-generation directors in China that aimed to set up a new genre of Chinese films to defend against the intrusion of Hollywood films (Ma., 2000). According to Ma's definition, the new mainstream film referred to films that emphasized imagination, and the production cost was controlled at 1.5 million to 2 million yuan. However, the cost of the new mainstream film nowadays is not limited to the previous range. Hence the new mainstream film is defined as the films with a mixed feature of the main theme film, commercial film, and art-house film, especially the commercial feature. Audiences' tastes and preferences have been considered during the production of the new mainstream film. Besides, as a carrier of main social ideologies, Chinese patriotism is a hot topic for new mainstream films (Y. Li, 2021). Thus, the new mainstream film has become the vital film genre to carry out the patriotic education campaign in China.

Furthermore, *Outlines on implementing the patriotic education campaign in the new era* proposed to enhance the education of patriotism, collectivism, and socialism and lead the people to build correct values on history, nation, and culture. That reflects the demands of the party to build a solid Chinese national identity and promote patriotism in Chinese society, and soft power is a useful way, and a new mainstream film is an effective tool.

2.5.4 Wolf Warrior 2, Operation Red Sea and the Battle at Lake Changjin

With the rise of the status and influence of China in the world, films like *Wolf Warrior 2*, *Operation Red Sea*, and *The Battle at Lake of Changjin* acquired great success and are considered the flags of the new mainstream film by film study researchers in China (Chen, 2017, Chen & Zhang, 2021, Ma, 2019, Zhang & Fan,

2021, Sun, 2017, Yin & Liang, 2018) for the patriotic ideology core they carried in the films.

Wolf Warrior 2 is a film produced particularly for the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Army of the People's Republic of China and officially released on 27th July 2017, four days before Army Day. Moreover, it became the film that reached 1 billion yuan the fastest. Thus, the success of Wolf Warrior 2 is also recognized as a milestone for new mainstream films by some researchers (Yu, 2020). Wolf Warrior 2 tells a story of rescuing Chinese nationals from other countries.

Operation Red Sea is a new mainstream film that ranks 8th in Chinese ticket-sale history, and its story is made up of the real evacuation event in 2015 in Yemen. It tells the story of the Chinese Navy rescuing Chinese nationals from foreign countries and fighting with terrorists to defend peace.

The Battle at Lake Changjin is the hottest-grossing new mainstream film that ranks the first position in Chinese ticket-sale history with ticket sales of 5.77 billion Yuan IMDb (2022) and is released on 30th September 2021 as a film to celebrate the establishment of the 100th anniversary of the People's Republic of China. It is considered a good example of the new mainstream film, for it tells the story of how the Chinese People's Volunteer Army defeated the U.S. Army in the Korea war under the circumstances of lacking supplies and advanced weapons. Its story has a strong sentiment of patriotism and an intense sense of identification with Chinese identification.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this study are to find out what are the concepts of national identity and patriotism depicted by the *Wolf Warrior 2*, *Operation Red Sea*, and the *Battle at Lake Changjin* and to find out the audiences' reception of the concepts of national identity and patriotism from these three films. Thus, qualitative methods of narrative analysis and conventional content analysis will be deployed to analyze the films and audiences' reviews of Douban Movie, respectively.

3.1 Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis refers to a series of procedures that researchers adopt to understand and interpret texts or visual messages in the form of stories (Figgou & Pavlopoulos, 2015). Researchers often use a qualitative research method of narrative analysis to understand the stories, such as Propp's study on Russian stories or the cognitive message to understand a specific phenomenon (Allen, 2017). The film is also a story that consists of many narratives, and many researchers have deployed narrative analysis to understand the film (Heck, 2020; Parsa, 2004; X. Wang., 2016). Thus, this research adopts narrative analysis to analyze the national identity and patriotism portrayed in the specific films.

3.1.1 Research Samples and Sampling Methods

A purposive sampling method has been deployed in this research to study the national identity and patriotism expressed in the films. This study has searched for the top 10 ticket-sales movies in Chinese film history and found that the *Battle at Lake Changjin* (2021), *Wolf Warrior II* (2017), and *Operation Red Sea* (2018) are patriotic war films, which rank 1st, 2nd, and 8th on the list (IMDb, 2022). Thus, this study will use these three films as research objects to deploy a qualitative method of narrative analysis to analyze these three films to explain the national identity and patriotism portrayed by the films. Moreover, The narratives are picked out purposively according to the operational definition of national identity and patriotism.

3.1.2 Research Instrument

As for the communication study, the narrative perspective was introduced by Walter R. Fisher in 1987. Fisher constructed his narrative paradigm from the form of 'storytelling' and believes that the tactics of 'storytelling' are deployed in all successful communication. In Fisher's (1988) narrative paradigm, he emphasizes two principles while analyzing the narrative: coherence and fidelity. For coherence, it refers to the story's structure, logic, and resemblance. For fidelity, it refers to the degree of the story's authenticity and the values the story delivers that the audiences accept. Since the film is a narration, narrative analysis is widely used in film studies to investigate the narrative structure or specific topic of films (Heck, 2020; Parsa, 2004; X. Wang., 2016). Based on Fisher's narrative paradigm, Sellnow (2017) introduces a practical instruction that recommends analyzing the narration from 8 aspects:

- 1) Setting: the place or the location where the action takes place.
- 2) Characters: characters in the story
- 3) Narrator: the elements that can communicate with audiences directly or the elements that can interpret events and characters to the audiences, and it might be in the form of oral or visual.
- 4) Events: active events and stative events. Moreover, the events of a story can be separated into major and minor events. The major event is the event that cannot be ignored. Otherwise, the coherence of the story will be destroyed. Moreover, the minor event is the event that is not crucial to the story.
- 5) Causal relations: the cause-effect relations among events.
- 6) Temporal relations: syntagmatic relations among events in which flashback and flash forward are used.
- 7) Intended audience: target audiences of the story and the attitude and values that audiences might perceive from the story should be considered.

- 8) Moral conveyed: the ethics and morals conveyed by the story.

Vladimir Propp is another authoritative scholar in narrative analysis. He develops folk tales' morphology by analyzing hundreds of Russian folk tales. In his narrative theory, he separates characters in the tales into seven different categories and identifies 31 functions of tales that are well acknowledged and adopted by researchers in narrative analysis. Parsa (2004) deploys Propp's narrative structure to analyze the film 'Titanic.' X. Wang. (2016) uses narrative analysis to study the narrative structure of South Korean war films on state identification. Furthermore, Heck (2020) conducts a narrative analysis of the film 'A War' to explore the narrative of peace in the film.

Meanwhile, despite the syntagmatic narrative analysis proposed by Propp, researchers also consider Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist theory vital to the development of narrative analysis (Parsa, 2004). Strauss's paradigmatic approach to narrative analysis emphasizes the importance of opposition in the narrative.

This study adopts Fisher's narrative paradigm to analyze the narratives in the films, especially the setting, characters, and events, so as to extract the concepts of national identity and patriotism from the films. Moreover, Propp's seven categories of characters have been deployed in the period of analyzing the characters.

Table 3.1 Categories of characters in the story (Parsa, 2004; Propp, 1985)

Role of character	Sphere of action
Villain	Villainy, have conflict or fight with the hero
Donor (Provider)	Giving magical agent or help to the hero
Helper	Moves the hero, makes good a lack, rescues from pursuit, solves complex tasks, and transforms the hero
The princess & her father	A sought-after person: assigns complex tasks, brands, exposes, recognizes, punishes
The dispatcher	Sends hero on quest/mission

Role of character	Sphere of action
The hero	Departs on search, reacts to the donor, and attempts complex tasks, marriage
The false hero	Unfounded claims to the hero's sphere of action

3.1.3 Validity and Reliability

As a qualitative method, subjectivity and lack of observational data are the shortcomings of narrative analysis. In order to decrease such biases, researchers are deployed to ensure the quality of narrative analysis: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Shenton, 2004).

Credibility is related to internal validity, which refers to the congruency of the researcher's analysis with reality. It requires the researchers to present an accurate picture of the phenomenon.

Transferability relates to the external validity or generalizability of the study, which is concerned with the applicability of research findings in other situations. It is generally required in quantitative research. However, in qualitative research, transferability requires researchers to provide sufficient details of the research context to help readers decide whether the study findings apply in other situations.

Dependability relates to the reliability of the research, which refers to the repeatability of the research. It requires researchers to strive to provide a way for future researchers to repeat the research.

Confirmability relates to the objectivity of the research, which refers to the origin from which the research findings are generated. It requires researchers to generate findings from the object data rather than predispositions.

3.1.4 Data Collection and Data Analysis

Tencent video is a legal video platform in China with many copyrights of Chinese movies and is held by Tencent Company. All these three films are available

on Tencent video. Thus, the researcher watches the video on Tencent video on May 10th, 15th, and 20th, 2022. The analysis process is conducted immediately after watching the films.

The analysis of the film has been deployed from May 21st to May 30th, 2022. While analyzing the films, there is no direct connection that can be found between the casual relations, temporal relations, intended audience, and the concepts of national identity and patriotism. Meanwhile, for the part about morals conveyed, the research aims to explore the concepts of national identity and patriotism, which are morals already. Thus, the narrative analysis part of this research focuses on analyzing the elements of the film's setting, characters, narrators, and events.

3.2 Conventional Content Analysis

Berelson (1952) defined content analysis as an *'a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of the communication.'* Rosengren (1981) further illustrates content analysis as a method to conduct impressionistic, intuitive, and interpretive analyses of texts or content with systematic characteristics. Moreover, some researchers think content analysis is a flexible research method for conducting text or content analysis (Cavanagh, 1997). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) propose that qualitative content analysis is a research method that interprets texts or contents subjectively by systematically coding texts or content and identifying themes or patterns. In order to dig up the latent implication of the audiences' reviews, qualitative content analysis has been deployed in this research.

3.2.1 Research Samples and Sampling Method

Douban Movie is China's largest online movie community, with 200 million registered users and 400 million monthly active users until 2019 (Douban, 2020). Meanwhile, more than 60% of users are female, and 50% live in first-class or new first-class cities. Furthermore, the percentage of users under 24 years old is 33.28%. Users whose ages are 24 to 30 years old and 30 to 35 years old take up 23.41% and 23.88%, respectively (Sohu, 2021). Compared with different Movie Rating platform

as Maoyan Movie, Weibo, and Douban Movie, Douban movie has a larger user group and is perceived as a professional film critics platform. Many people think Douban Movie is the most authoritative and convincing platform for movie ratings (Chen., 2018). Some media practitioners even consider Douban Movie as China's IMBD (Shen., 2020).

The researcher adopts python to gather long reviews of Wolf Warrior 2, Operation Red Sea, and the Battle at Lake Changjin from the website address:

- 1) <https://movie.douban.com/subject/26363254/reviews>,
- 2) <https://movie.douban.com/subject/26861685/reviews>, and
- 3) <https://movie.douban.com/subject/25845392/reviews>

There are 9533 long reviews of Wolf Warrior 2, 6063 long reviews of Operation Red Sea, and 682 reviews of the Battle at Lake Changjin on Douban Movie that have been extracted from the website initially.

Then, the process of data selection can be divided into 2 phases. The researcher conducts the first-phase selection of the data in order to get reviews that are more representative and make the analysis of the reviews more pragmatic. The researcher adopts the criteria of 'useful,' 'useless,' and 'reply' on Douban Movie to select the reviews. The reviews which do not get feedback on 'useful,' 'useless' or do not get a reply have been deleted.

After the first selection phase, 4817 long reviews of Wolf Warrior, 2238 reviews of Operation Red Sea, and 602 reviews of the Battle at Lake of Changjin have been left. However, some reduplicate reviews or reviews are not related to national identity and patriotism concepts. Hence, a manual selection has been deployed to delete the reduplicate and irrelevant reviews on July 20th to 27th, 2022. Eventually, 1680 long reviews of Wolf Warrior 2, 844 reviews of Operation Red Sea, and 447 reviews of the Battle at Lake Changjin were left to do content analysis.

3.2.2 Research Instrument

The research instrument followed the genre of summative content analysis as proposed by Hsieh and Shannon (2005). It begins by identifying and quantifying specific words or contents in sample texts to understand the uses of words or contents, and the quantitative process here is used to explore the uses only rather than inferring meaning (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Furthermore, aside from counting the uses of certain words or contents, summative content analysis digs further into the words or contents to find out the underlying implications of words or contents to present fundamental insights into the texts or contents.

According to the study by Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999), three types of content are manifest content, latent pattern content, and projective content. Furthermore, they also introduce three types of roles of the theory in the content analysis: the role of no theory, inductive role, and deductive role, respectively. Since the variables of national identity and patriotism do not have a strict definition, thus, this research has thoroughly reviewed the definitions and theories of national identity and patriotism, especially in the context of China, and generated operational definitions of national identity and patriotism to be used as an unidentifiable theory to develop the audiences' reception of national identity and patriotism. Moreover, the third objective of this research is to study the audiences' reception of the concepts of national identity and patriotism, which requires the researcher to identify the patterns of the content. Thus, the audiences' reviews are recognized as latent pattern content. Based on Potters and Levine-Donnerstein's opinions, the inductive use of theory is beneficial in finding out the answer of 'what is audiences' reception of national identity and patriotism from the film?'

3.2.3 Validity and Reliability

To evaluate the trustworthiness of qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed a modal to evaluate it. The modal consists of four aspects: credibility, applicability, consistency, and neutrality.

Credibility refers to the researchers' confidence in the findings and data studied. Moreover, Sandelowski (2000) thinks that the credibility of qualitative research relates to the accuracy of the description and interpretation of data.

Applicability refers to the fittingness or transferability of the finding. It relates to the possibility that readers transfer the research results to other similar situations.

Consistency refers to the repeatability of the findings. It requires the results of a qualitative study should be able to be replicated with the same subjects or in similar situations.

Neutrality refers to the level of bias of the study. It requires the research to be conducted objectively, and findings are only practical uses of data with no other motivations.

3.2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process in the content analysis part is deployed from June 18th to June 19th, 2022. The data analysis process partly overlaps with the second-phase data selection from July 28th to August 5th. The researchers read the reviews one by one to rank, analyze and categorize the data based on the definition of these two concepts generated from the literature review and conduct content analysis on all reviews. The representative reviews have been written down, translated into English, and taken as examples in this research.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter will present the concept of national identity and patriotism portrayed in the patriotic war film and show the audiences' reception of national identity and patriotism via the films.

This chapter will be separated into three main parts. This first part is the narrative analysis which elaborates on what national identity and patriotism portrayed in the films are. The second part is the content analysis part which explains what national identity and patriotism audiences receive from the films. The third part compares the differences between the film portrayal and audiences' reception of national identity and patriotism.

4.1 Narrative Analysis

A qualitative method of narrative analysis has been deployed to analyze *Wolf Warrior 2*, *Operation Red Sea 2*, and *the Battle at Lake Changjin*. Moreover, Fisher's narrative paradigm and Propp's seven categories of characters have been employed to analyze the films' setting, characters, and events to find the concepts of national identity and patriotism expressed in these films.

4.1.1 National identity

According to existing studies, national identity generally refers to a sense of belonging, identification, and agreement with a nation-state's ethnic, cultural, and political characteristics, including a sense of belonging and identification with the ethnic groups, historical land, culture, values, customs, history, and political institutions. As for the new mainstream film channel for the patriotic education campaign, the core of disseminating the party's political ideologies is apparently. Hence, after analyzing three films, five types of national identity can be identified in the films.

4.1.1.1 A sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state

In all three films, a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state is expressed by the character of heroes in the films. All heroic characters in the films are Chinese, and they have a strong sense of belonging and identification with their nation-state, China. They actively expressed their Chinese identity in the films.

In *Wolf Warrior 2*, In the story, the heroic character— Leng Feng is designed as a hero who has a Chinese identity. Furthermore, in the event when Leng Feng is facing danger, the first decision he makes is to seek help from the Chinese embassy. When Leng Feng is in an unfair trade with a Chinese businessman in an African country, he tries to use his Chinese identity to persuade the Chinese businessman to give an acceptable price. Such belonging and identification show the hero's sense of belonging and identification toward his ethnicity, which is the Chinese ethnic group. Thus, the hero utilizes his Chinese identity to persuade compatriots and seeks help from the representative department of his nation-state in the foreign country.

In *Operation Red Sea*, when the heroic character—the Jiao Long Unit - is on the mission, they always show their identity as the Chinese navy. Their identification with the Chinese navy reflects a sense of identification with China.

Moreover, in the *Lake of Changjin*, the heroic characters are also a group of heroes-- the People's Volunteer Army and the leaders of the communist party. they are the founders of the People's republic of China, and their belonging and identification with China can be found in the events of military mobilization and the party meeting before the launch of the war. These two events represent that the reason for launching the war with the U.S. is to protect the motherland of all Chinese. For example, When the commander is making a mobilization speech, he asks the soldiers, *"We just triumphed over the entire nation-state. Before we even had time to rest, imperialist America started a war with Korea at our Northern border; they intended to spread the heat of war to our newly established China; what should we do?"* the soldiers responded, *"Fight! Resist the U.S. aggression and aid Korea! Defend our*

country!” Furthermore, in the party meeting, when Mao Zedong hears the U.S. Army intends to cross the 38th Parallel, the dialogues between Mao Zedong and reporters:

Mao Zedong: Did you all hear that ? If they cross the 38th parallel, will they cross the Yalu River too?

Reporter: In fact, by being stationed in Taiwan, the U.S. army has already invaded our territory. They are now assembling forces on the Korean Peninsula and threatening our nation-state security. (00:16:56)

Such dialogues reflect that the belonging and identification of heroes in the film are not only triggered by the Chinese ethnic group but also by the belonging and identification with the territory that belongs to their ethnicity.

4.1.1.2 A sense of differentiation from other countries

As Cooley’s(1998) theory of the looking-glass self, one’s identity is built during interaction with society. Jenkins (2014) also illustrates that one’s identification with a specific group reflects one’s differentiation from other groups. Thus, a sense of differentiation from other countries is also a Chinese national identity. In three films, such differentiation is mainly triggered by the character of the villain in the film. From the interaction between the hero and the villain and the comparison between China and other countries in the films, the differences between the hero and the villain can be found. The three films depict the stories of Chinese heroes protecting their compatriots or the country. Thus, the villains in the films generally refer to other countries. For example, the main villain in the Wolf Warrior 2 is a western character, Big Daddy; in Operation Red Sea, the pirates in Aden Gulf and terrorists in Yewaire, and the villain in the Battle at Lake Changjin is the U.S. Army. Moreover, in Wolf Warrior 2 and the Battle at Lake Changjin, comparing China and other countries is beneficial to construct a sense of differentiation.

In Wolf Warrior 2, the sense of differentiation from others is built from the different characteristics of the hero and the villain. In the film, Leng Feng is a Chinese hero who is brave, benevolent, and willing to sacrifice to save others. On the contrary, Big Daddy is depicted as a character who is a vicious, cruel, and bloodthirsty

westerner; for example, in the films, Leng Feng is always saving people while Big Daddy is killing innocent all the time. From the differences between the hero and villain, a sense of differentiation between China and the other countries is built. Besides, a sense of differentiation is triggered by the interaction between the hero—Leng Feng, and the helper—Rachel, for example:

Rachel: You are going to the Chinese factory? We should go to American Consulate. The U.S. Marines are stationed there. That is our safest bet.

Leng Feng: You think the U.S. Marines are the best in the world? That may be true. But where are they now?

Rachel: I have informed the consulate of the situation.

Leng Feng: Where are they? Tell me exactly how you informed them.

Rachel: I tweeted at them on Twitter.

Then, Rachel called the consulate and got an automatic reply 'welcome to the American Consulate. Unfortunately, we are closed.

Rachel: Fuck!

Leng Feng: All foreign navy ships had left when I arrived. As I watched them sail away from the port. Among the countless departing masts, I saw one with stars and stripes. (00:49:41)

Via the dialogues between Leng Feng and Rachel, the differences between China and the U.S. have been built, portraying China's government as a responsible and positive image. In contrast, the U.S is depicted as the opposite image of irresponsible for their nationals.

In Operation Red Sea, the sense of differentiation is also built from the different characteristics of the hero and the villain. The group of heroes—the Jiaolong Unit, is brave, benevolent, well-planned, and willing to save others. While the villains—pirates and terrorists, are cruel and willing to hurt others to pursue their interests. Moreover, the number of villains is times that of Jiaolong Unit members, which also triggers a sense of differentiation. Moreover, in the event that Jiaolong Unit went to rescue hostages from the terrorists, Jiaolong Unit put Chinese hostage—Deng Mei prior to other foreign hostages for their task is to rescue Chinese nationals;

this event adopts the difference in priority to show a sense of differentiation between China and other countries.

In the *Battle at Lake Changjin*, the sense of differentiation is mainly built on the comparison between the People's Volunteer Army and the U.S. Army and the attitude of the U.S. generals and Chinese generals. In the films, the People's Volunteer Army lacks weapon supplies and food. At the same time, the U.S. Army is equipped with advanced weapons and abundant food supplies, especially in the event of Thanksgiving Day; Chinese soldiers have frozen potatoes while the U.S. soldiers have a Thanksgiving feast. Besides, the characteristics of leaders of two Army can trigger a sense of differentiation. The general of the U.S. Army—McArthur, is portrayed as an arrogant character who underestimates the rivals and is eager to show his might by invading other countries. In contrast, the leaders and generals of the Chinese army are depicted as modest characters who are dragged into the war by America and determined to protect the motherland.

4.1.1.3 A sense of belonging and identification with the political institution

As Jiang. (1998) states, national identity also includes identifying and agreeing with its political institutions. In China, the political institutions involve the communist party, the people's liberation army, the state council, the national people's congress, and the Chinese people's political consultative conference, and the communist party dominates the absolute leading position due to its Leninist roots (Lawrence & Martin, 2013)

From the films, only two types of political institutions can be identified in the three films which are the Chinese military which refers to the Chinese Navy, the Chinese Wolf Warrior squadron of the Chinese army, and the People's Volunteer Army, which is the precursor of the People's Liberation Army and the communist party.

In *Wolf Warrior 2*, the Hero Leng Feng used to be a member of the Wolf Warrior squadron of the Chinese army. Even though he is expelled from the military, he still remembers his identity as a Wolf Warrior. In the event that he fights with the

enemy, the enemy sneers at him for expelling him from the army. He responds, ‘*Once a wolf warrior, always a wolf warrior.*’ to express his belonging and identification with the political institution.

In Operation Red Sea, all heroic characters are members of the Jiaolong Unit under the Chinese Navy’s control. In the films, all members are obedient to the order of the commander in the Chinese Navy and fulfill their responsibilities as Chinese navies to protect Chinese nationals in the foreign country. Thus, a natural sense of belonging and identification with the Chinese Navy can be found.

The Battle at Lake Changjin tells the story of how the People’s Volunteer Army won the Korean War under the leadership of the Communist Party. A normative Chinese political structure is found that the party leads the military in the film. Moreover, this film’s heroes are members of the communist party or the People’s Volunteer Army. Thus, a natural sense of belonging and identification with the political institution can be found in all heroic characters. Moreover, In the event of military mobilization, a new soldier is asked why to join the army, and he responds, ‘*The Communist Party and Chairman Mao allotted land to our family. But now someone is here to take land from us; we cannot let it happen.*’. Such a response also reflects a sense of identification of characters with the political institution.

4.1.1.4 A sense of identification with a shared history

In the definition of national identity, the identification with the shared history is one of the types of national identity. Among the three films, the sense of identification with a shared history can be identified in Wolf Warrior 2 and the Battle at Lake Changjin

In Wolf Warrior 2, the sense of identification with a shared history of century humiliation is carried out by the character of the hero. During the interaction between Big Daddy and Leng Feng when they fight, for example:

Table 4.1 Analysis of dialogues between Big Daddy and Leng Feng

Dialogues	Analysis
<i>Big daddy: I guess the Chinese military is not as lame as I thought.</i>	Since China has endured humiliation from westerners and Japanese for a
<i>Leng Feng: Cut the cray. (01:39:34)</i>	century, the words ‘lame’ and ‘inferior’
<i>Big Daddy: People like you will always be inferior to people like me. Get used to it. Get fucking used to it.</i>	will easily recall Chinese people’s memory of humiliation history and the title of ‘Asian sick man’ that is used to
<i>Leng Feng: That is fucking history. (01:50:29)</i>	label Chinese in the old society. Moreover, the words ‘Get used to it’
	strengthen the feeling of humiliation. However, Leng Feng’s responses of
	‘ <i>That’s fucking history</i> ’ reflect that China has changed, and so do the
	Chinese people, particularly the word ‘history’ that emphasizes the shared
	memory of that history in Chinese people’s minds.

In the Battle at Lake Changjin, many verbal narrators are deployed to illustrate the history of the Korean War to the audience. Such as, at the end of the film, “Over 197,000 heroic Chinese people sacrificed their lives during the war, more than 300,000 heroes including Yang Gensi, Huang Jiguang, Qiu Shaoyun, etc. “ as nearly 6,000 meritorious units emerged. The great spirit from the war remains timeless. The mighty martyrs of the PVA will never be forgotten.” Such narrators confirm that the story portrayed in the film is composed of actual history: the Resist the U.S. and the aid Korea. Such confirmation is also a sense of identification with the shared account.

4.1.1.5 A sense of identification with collectivism

In research from (Insights., 2017), Chinese society is highly collectivistic, implying that the in-group relationships are before the out-group relationships. Thus, collectivism is one of the types of Chinese culture. Furthermore, the sense of

identification with collectivism can be identified in Operation Red Sea and the Battle at Lake Changjin.

As for Operation Red Sea, in the event that one of the team members of the Jiaolong Unit is injured and cannot go back to the team, captain Yang Rui chooses to tell a white lie to comfort other team members' feelings and carries the wound by himself that reflects that Yang Rui puts the feelings of others ahead of his feelings, example as follows:

Captain of Lin Yi Warship: Have you told them?

Yang Rui: Yes, except it pierced his spinal nerve; I didn't tell them.

Captain of Lin Yi Warship: Have you heard this? "A soldier should know about sacrifice and that he may never return. They should understand the soldier's duty. You can tell them the truth. You're the captain, not their parent.

Don't take all this personally, or the stress will kill you.

Yang Rui: I can't help it. It's my responsibility. (00:12:46)

Besides, all the members of the team care about each other. During the events of rescuing hostages from pirates and terrorists, they will not abandon companions; they will use their lives to protect their companions; for example, before Zhuang Yu dead, he uses his last strength to fix the satellite connection between the team and the navy ship, and when the team members are in danger, Zhang Tiande sacrificed himself to save other companions. All these events reflect a sense of collectivism in Chinese culture.

In the Battle at Lake Changjin, a sentiment of collectivism can be easily found in the Chinese characters in the films, for example, when Wu Wanli disregarded his brother's order and returned to the battlefield to find his brother. After the war, his brother taught him, '*In the army, you must abide by orders. Your comrades-in-arms might die for your mistake if you act alone.*' Furthermore, when Wu Wanli praised Tan Ziwei as an unbeatable hero, Tan Ziwei reminded him that the comrades-in-arms who died in enemies' bombs, who were frozen to death when they marched for six days without sleep and sleep and who ran 10 meters in front of the enemy to toss their hand grenades were heroes, for there were not heroes would never be killed. Their

responses emphasized the collectivistic concept of the Chinese, which is a traditional value that is well accepted by all Chinese and reflects the strong cultural identity of the Chinese.

4.1.1.6 Summary

Through analyzing *Wolf Warrior 2*, *Operation Red Sea*, and *the Battle at Lake Changjin*, it can be found that Chinese national identity in the films consists of 5 components which are:

- 1) A sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state refers to Chinese ethnicity and territory.
- 2) A sense of differentiation from other countries.
- 3) A sense of belonging and identification with the political institutions refers to the Chinese military, including the *Wolf Warrior* squadron, the Chinese navy, the People's Volunteer Army, and the Communist Party.
- 4) A sense of identification with the shared history refers to the history of a century of humiliation and the history of resisting the U.S. and aiding Korea.
- 5) A sense of identification with collectivism.

4.1.2 Patriotism

According to previous studies, patriotism, an emotional or attitudinal concept, generally refers to love and loyalty to the nation-state and its culture, which includes the particular concern for the development of the nation-state, the willingness to attach to the nation-state actively, willingness to identify with the nation-state's culture actively and even the willingness of sacrifice for the nation-state. In other words, patriotism can be considered as a sense of devotion of an individual toward a specific nation-state and supportive behaviors toward specific nation-state decisions. Moreover, the *outlines of implementing the patriotic education campaign for a new era* also requires that Chinese patriotism is the united love of the country, the party, the country, and socialism. Besides, Canovan (1996) and Van Hooft (2009) also

propose a concept of political patriotism, which refers to the loyalty of citizens toward their shared polity. Thus, adopting the definition of patriotism into narrative analysis, Chinese patriotism expressed in the films can be summarized as follows:

4.1.2.1 The love of the nation-state and compatriots

Among the three films, the love of the nation-state and compatriots is widely identified in the character of the hero and related events.

In *Wolf Warrior 2*, the love of the nation-state and compatriots can be found in many events, such as when Ambassador Fan found people to save Dr. Chen and the Chinese workers, Leng Feng volunteers. Leng Feng does not step back or run away when facing several enemies. When Big Daddy said to Leng Feng, *'You are gonna die for these people.'* Leng Feng responded, *'I was born for them.'* Furthermore, when Captain Zhang Zhiyong ordered to fire the enemies with tears. All these events and responses show the love of Ambassador Fan, Leng Feng, and Captain Zhang toward their compatriots.

Furthermore, the hero's attitude toward the Chinese flag reflects a deep love toward the nation-state. When the hero returned the Flag to the Chinese Ambassador, he folded the flag carefully and used two hands to hand in the banner. Since the flag is also a symbol of the nation-state, this action illustrates a sense of deep love of the hero toward the nation-state.

In *Operation Red Sea*, the love of compatriots can be easily found. The whole story of the film is telling how Jiaolong Unit rescues the Chinese from villains, which reflects the core of the film is to portray a love of compatriots, for example, when there is a pirate escape from the cargo ship:

Soldier A: Captain, the hostage-taker, is escaping on a boat.

Luo Xing: Captain, I'll chase him.

Yang Rui: No, Luo Xing, too many of them are too dangerous.

Luo Xing: We can't let him go; they kill people.

Yang Rui hesitated a while and responded: All right! Permission granted, but be careful. Don't cross into territorial waters.

Luo Xing: I promise I'll get him before we cross into territorial waters.

(00:08:00)

Moreover, when Jiao Long Unit was sent to rescue Deng Mei, the Captain of the Linyi warship said, “*Our mission this time is to give a message to all terrorists that you can never harm a Chinese citizen.*” All the above are reflections of love toward the compatriots.

In terms of the Battle at Lake Changjin, this film's love of the nation-state refers not only to the motherland but also to an ethnic community of compatriots. In the films, China's purpose in joining the Korean war is to protect the main motherland from invaders. Furthermore, in some specific events, for example, when the U.S. Army bombed the railways, and people around did not have enough time to run, soldiers carried the people on their backs and ran away together. Such a scene infers the love of heroes in this film toward compatriots. Furthermore, in the event of mobilization, when all the soldiers heard that the U.S. planned to threaten the country's security, they responded with their willingness to protect the motherland. Moreover, in the films, in the event that the Chinese army was lack of supplies and food, even though the soldiers could not have enough food, they still would keep food for the injuries, which reflects the love of compatriots as well, which is a component of the concept of the nation-state.

4.1.2.2 The willingness to sacrifice for the well-being of the nation-state and compatriots

All heroes in these three films express the willingness to sacrifice for their nation-state and compatriots. For example:

In *Wolf Warrior*, this type of patriotism is not only carried out by the character as the hero but also carried out by the character as helpers, Zhuo Yifan and He Jianguo. In the events when they confronted the enemies, they faced times the number of enemies, did not step back, fought with enemies bravely, and almost died if they did not get support from the Chinese navy. Especially in the event that the Lamanla virus infected the hero, some Chinese workers urged him to leave even though he had

just saved their lives, and to keep the rest safe; he chose to leave alone. However, when he recovered from the fatal disease, he decided to return to save others instead of going them in danger. Moreover, from events between Big Daddy and Leng Feng, Big Daddy threatened Leng Feng, ‘you are gonna die for these people, and Leng Feng replied, ‘I was born for them.’ This scene reveals that the hero is ready to save compatriots anytime.

In Operation Red Sea, there are some events in which some heroes, such as Zhang Tiande and Zhuang Yu, die in the mission, and Luo Xing is heavily injured to protect the companions and complete the task. Moreover, the compatriot is also a component of the concept of the nation-state. Therefore, all these actions and characters reflect a sense of willingness to sacrifice for the nation-state.

In the Battle at Lake Changjin, this type of patriotism is mainly conveyed by ordinary soldiers in specific events. In the film, all the soldiers fight with the villain without regard for their lives. For example, when the U.S. army dropped the FX bomb to locate the location of the Chinese Army to launch a bombs attack, a Chinese soldier carried the FX bomb in his car to attract the bombs of the U.S. Army, and he used his death to save lives of other comrades. The third company fought with the U.S. army until the last soldier, the last one who carried an explosive packing, ran into the crowd of the U.S. Army to conduct a suicide attack to stop the advancement of the U.S. army. When the U.S. army is bombing the base of a Chinese general, Mao Anying, the son of Mao Zedong, runs into the base to save the vital battle maps on the ground and dies in the bombing. Moreover, when a group of the Chinese army was frozen to death on the battlefield. All of these scenes and plots reflect the willingness of heroes to sacrifice for the nation-state.

4.1.2.3 A sense of pride in the nation-state

Pride is also considered a positive attitude that people hold; a sense of pride in the nation-state that there is no doubt can be recognized as a type of patriotism. After analyzing the films, the sense of pride in the nation-state can only to identified in Wolf Warrior 2.

The event of rescuing the princess triggers a sentiment of pride toward the nation-state. In *Wolf Warrior 2*, there are two types of princesses, the first type is the foreign princess, Tundu's mom and Dr. Chen's daughter—Parsha, and the second type is the Chinese worker, who can be considered the national princess. Via the action of rescuing the foreign and national princesses in a foreign country, it reveals that China has grown up and become a strong country capable of protecting its citizens outside its territory and helping other countries.

Moreover, the praise from a foreigner also can bring out national pride. For example, when Tundu's mom was calling his son:

Tundu: Mom, mom I am ok, I am ok.

Tundu's Mom: Oh, thank god!

Tundu: Mom, I am ok.

Tundu's Mom: Because you're on a Chinese warship.(00:54:00)

In this scene, the praise and acknowledgment from Tundu's mom, an African woman, catalyzes the sentiment of Chinese national pride.

Besides, the film's last scene is considered by Director Wu Jing as the most successful scene. He illustrates that this scene is an expression of his feelings and values and expresses his pride in the growth of China. Even though there is no such sentence on the actual Chinese passport, Wu Jing hopes to use this passport which is a verbal narrator, to tell the audience that China is not as lame as before; China has become more robust and can protect its citizens.

'Citizens of the People's Republic of China:

When you encounter danger overseas, do not give up!

Please remember, a strong motherland always backs you up!'

4.1.2.4 A sense of loyalty toward the political institution

According to the definition of patriotism and the requirements of the patriotic education campaign, a positive and supportive attitude toward the political institution can also be recognized as Chinese patriotism. Thus, a sense of loyalty toward the

political institution can be counted as one of the types of Chinese patriotism. After analyzing the three films, such dedication only can be found in *Wolf Warrior 2*.

In *Wolf Warrior 2*, the character Leng Feng is designed to reflect the Chinese army; he has a permanent loyalty to the country. Moreover, in 1989, Deng Xiaoping emphasized that the Chinese military should be loyal to the party, the people, the country, and socialism. The identification of Leng Feng shown in this film is the best reflection of Deng Xiaoping's requirement for the Chinese Army. Moreover, when Leng Feng was sent to jail, his leader told him, *'The reason a soldier is respected is not because of the uniform he wears but because of the duty he carries. With or without the uniform, his duty remains. And he continues to be respected.'*

Furthermore, when the enemies asked Leng Feng, *'We know you are not a soldier anymore, what the fuck are you fucking for?'* Though Leng Feng was not a Chinese soldier anymore, he responded, *'Once a wolf warrior, always a wolf warrior.'* The active self-identification of Leng Feng and former Chinese soldier He Jianguo toward the Chinese army also reflects a sense of loyalty toward the political institution.

4.1.2.5 The special concerns toward the future of the nation-state

According to the previous study, Primoratz (2020) has included special concern in the range of love. Thus, based on his definition, patriotism refers to the love of one's country, identification with it, and special concern for its well-being and that of compatriots (Primoratz, 2020). Through the three films, such special concern toward the nation-state only can be identified in the *Battle at Lake Changjin*.

In the *Battle at Lake Changjin*, from the decision-makers to the soldiers of China, they both show up the determination-state to fight against the aggressors and hope the next generation of China will not experience the war anymore; for example, Mei Sheng, the commissar of the seventh company emphasized twice that "I hope our next generation no longer has to live through war." "If we do not fight this war, our next generation will have to fight it. We are risking our lives to win them a peaceful life." Furthermore, Mao Zedong, in the film, also explained that "But if it is for the

future, and the peaceful development of our country over a few decades or a century, we must fight this war.” Such scenes show the special concerns toward the country’s future from the common soldier’s and the country leader’s perspectives. From the perspective of ordinary people, the special circumstances in this film refer to the care for the next generation. Moreover, for the country’s leaders, special concerns refer to the nation-state's more extended development and peace.

4.1.2.6 Summary

All in all, the Chinese patriotism expressed in *Wolf Warrior 2*, *Operation Red Sea*, and the *Battle at Lake Changjin* can be summarized into five types as follow:

- 1) The love of the nation-state and compatriots refers to China and Chinese nationals, respectively.
- 2) The willingness to sacrifice for the well-being of the nation-state and compatriots.
- 3) A sense of pride in the nation-state, refers to China.
- 4) A sense of loyalty toward the political institution, which refers to the Chinese military.
- 5) The special concerns toward the future of the nation-state.

4.2 Content Analysis

The researcher deploys a quantitative content analysis method on the reviews of *Wolf Warrior 2*, *Operation Red Sea*, and the *Battle at Lake Changjin*. As for the long reviews on Douban Movie, each film's total number of long reviews is 9533, 6061, and 682, respectively. Since the Douban Movie has the interaction function of reviews, the author has selected the reviews which get feedback as ‘useful’ and ‘useless’ and get replies as the criteria. After selection, 4761, 2243, and 602 reviews have left for *Wolf Warrior 2*, *Operation Red Sea*, and the *Battle at the Lake Changjin*, respectively. Moreover, this paper aims to study audiences’ reception of the concepts of national identity and patriotism from 3 films. A manual selection has been

deployed to select the reviews which are related to these concepts. Eventually, 1680, 884, and 447 reviews have been left which are related to these two concepts. Moreover, the analysis of the reviews is conducted on the foundation of the second round selection.

4.2.1 Wolf Warrior 2

4.2.1.1. Audience Reception of National Identity from Operational Red Sea

1) A sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state

A sense of identification with the nation-state can be sensed from all 1680 reviews that have been selected. Moreover, a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state is mainly expressed in 2 ways by audiences:

a. A sense of belonging and identification embeds in audiences' minds naturally

Among the reviews, some audiences express their identification with the nation-state directly, such as 728 out of 1680 reviews using the words 'Motherland (祖国)' to describe China and the word 'Chinese' to demonstrate and explain their national identity. Especially the word 'motherland' reflects that audiences treat the nation-state as a part of their family. Besides, some audiences also compare the film with Hollywood films and state that they are touched by the Chinese film easier, which also reveals an identification with the nation-state. Besides, the flag is also a symbol of the nation-state; the appearance of the flag element in the film also lets the audiences echo their national identity. Examples are exhibited as follows:

Table 4.2 Audiences' reception of a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state (a) (Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
55	<i>It's so good to live in China; it's so good to be Chinese; my motherland is so good! No adjective can express my pride.</i>
775	<i>Wolf Warrior 2 shows a thought of anti-war. Compared with Hollywood films like special forces and the Avengers, after watching wolf warrior 2, I feel touched because I am Chinese, and this film tells a story about Chinese people. This feeling cannot acquire from the Hollywood film.</i>
1256	<i>I have seen the flags in the film several times, and only in such situations could we know the importance of having a strong country for every Chinese person.</i>

- b. A sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state is triggered by a sense of safety provided by the country.

Among the reviews, 463 reviews state that China provides a sense of safety for its nationals, and they appreciate the country's effort to build safe living conditions for citizens. Such gratitude reveals that a sense of identification with the national state will be triggered by a sense of safety provided by the country. The audience feels safe because they are Chinese, and the country will protect its nationals. Moreover, when the Chinese are in danger, the country will always be the backup force for the Chinese people. From the audiences' reviews, it can be found that a sense of safety provided by the nation-state has a maximum effect on the identification with the nation-state. For example:

Table 4.3 Audiences' reception of a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state(b) (Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
375	<p><i>The most impressive scene in the film is the scene passport at the end of the film; it shows 'Citizens of the People's Republic of China: When you encounter danger overseas, do not give up! Please remember, a strong motherland always backs you up!' When I see this paragraph, I was so proud that I am Chinese. And though the country is imperfect, it will always be my solid backup force when I need it.</i></p>
335	<p><i>In the film, Leng Feng provides a sense of safety for others and China provides a sense of safety for Chinese people. This is why China is strong and why we are away from the war and can have a happy life. This is because we are Chinese.</i></p>
339	<p><i>In the film, the African rebels hold the fires and let them go because they are Chinese. Because they are Chinese, the nation-state will send a warship to receive them, and because they are Chinese, they will definitely be protected. Such a sense of safety makes me feel good.</i></p>

2) A sense of identification with the political institution.

Since the hero—Leng Feng, has the identity of a former Chinese soldier. Thus a sense of identification with the political institution can be found in the reviews. 790 audiences mention the word 'soldiers' in their reviews. Moreover, the audience's reception of the sense of identification with the political institution is mainly built on the spirits and devotion of soldiers.

- a. A sense of identification with the spirits of loyalty and sense of mission of Chinese soldiers recall the sense of identification with the political institution

74 audiences mention the phrase '*once wolf warrior, always wolf warrior*' in their reviews. Moreover, the phrase reveals a sense of loyalty and identification of the

hero with the political institution. Via the hero's identification with the army, the audiences also sense such identification with the army. Besides, some reviews also mention that whether in the army or not, the sense of mission of the soldiers will never disappear. Such identification with the soldier's spirit of loyalty and sense of mission reveals a sense of identification with the political institution. Because the soldier is the representative of a political institution. The identification with PLA soldiers is a type of identification with the political institution. For example:

Table 4.4 Audiences' reception of a sense of identification with the political institution (a) (Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
755	<i>It's so great. This is the best movie this year. The core of Wolf Warrior one is 'Anyone who dares to offend China will be eventually punished, no matter how far they are.' And the core of Wolf Warrior 2 is 'Once Wolf Warrior, always Wolf Warrior.' Wolf Warrior shows the mighty of the country and the fighting capability of the People's Liberation Army.</i>
1257	<i>True soldiers, whether in the army or military ranks, will never forget the highest spirit in their minds. Such spirits, justice, love, and responsibilities will still be recalled when in a dangerous situation, whether he is still in the army or has military medals.</i>
755	<i>Every Chinese soldier is a hero in our mind. Though they do not have any superpower, they still protect the country.</i>

b. A sense of safety provided by the soldiers enhance the sense of identification with the political institution

201 reviews mention the sacrifice and devotion of the soldiers, such as No. 613, No.824, and No.413. They all praise the sacrifice and devotion of the Chinese soldiers. The reviews reflect the audiences' appreciation of the efforts built on the blood of Chinese soldiers. Such appreciation reveals the identification of audiences with the soldiers and the Chinese army, especially No.413. The spirits of the sacrifice of Leng Feng push forward audiences identification with the nation-state and the army

to a high level, and the wish of the audience to be Chinese in the afterlife demonstrates that the concept of the political institution has combined with the nation-state and his identification with the political institution has lifted to the level of the nation-state. Besides, No.441 also reflects a real situation in China: the army and the party are a continuum in the Chinese concept. Thus, when Chinese people talk about the soldier and the army, it also can be referred to as the communist party for its leadership over the army.

Table 4.5 Audiences' reception of a sense of identification with the political institution (b) (Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
612	<i>I am a strange person. When Leng Feng uses his arm to raise the flag, it gets my blood going. But the scenes make me want to cry. There are few soldiers whose age seems similar to mine, we are the same age, but they are fighting with blood to protect us from war at a place where we cannot discover. There is somebody to shoulder the burden for you.</i>
440	<i>I think this film elicits my patriotic feeling. Though I cannot make an effort as great as soldiers for the country, I am still proud to be a member of the communist party.</i>
412	<i>I am impressed with the dialogue when Leng Feng fights with Big Daddy. Big Daddy asks Leng Feng to look at the people in the warehouse and say, 'you will die for them.' Leng Feng looks at the warehouse's scared faces and responds, 'I am born for them. I appreciate the devotion and sacrifice of the people born for us. They fight for our peace and happiness. I will not regret being Chinese and shall be Chinese again in the afterlife.'</i>

3) A sense of differentiation from other countries

A sense of differentiation from other countries in the Wolf Warrior 2 can mainly be divided into two categories:

- a. The war, turmoil, and lacking food in the African country and peaceful and happy life in China, and a strong motherland

454 reviews have recognized the difference between China in real life and the African country depicted in the film. In the film, the African country is depicted as a country stuck in turmoil and suffering from an internal war. The African people are killed in the war and lack food. Meanwhile, the audiences who watch the film in China live in a peaceful and safe country and have enough food and family. In the film's image of the African country, the Chinese audiences identify a sense of differentiation from other countries. Since the Chinese audience lives in a safe and strong country, their identification with the nation-state has been enhanced via watching the film and expressing that they are lucky to live in a safe country. For example:

Table 4.6 Audiences' reception of a sense of differentiation from other countries (a) (Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
430	<i>We hide in our country. We might never have the opportunity to experience the tough life in Africa, which lacks food and clothes and will be killed by a minor illness. The starvation, diseases, and war are twisted with the lives of African people. We live in a prosperous, strong country, and we should be proud. Though China is not perfect, it is continually progressing and working for a better future for Chinese nationals.</i>
454	<i>Blood and the lives of numerous people exchange for the life we have now. We do not have any excuse to waste it. Compared with the people in Africa and the Middle East, we are happy, because we do not suffer the war or bombs and do not need to worry about missing the sunrise the next day.</i>
1259	<i>This is my first time feeling the cruelty of the war. I cry that the Red Scarf Rebellion kills Africans. This is not a matter of skin color and</i>

Number of reviews	Content
	<i>nationality. I feel the cruelty of the war, and I appreciate the peace and strength of my motherland.</i>

- b. The leaving warship of the other country and the coming China warship

359 reviews mention a scene in the film in which all the warships of other countries are leaving, and the Chinese warship is heading to the port. Furthermore, this different behavior builds a sense of differentiation between China and the other country for Chinese audiences, and the Chinese people's national identity is enhanced by evacuation action launched by the Chinese government. For example:

Table 4.7 Audiences' reception of a sense of differentiation from other countries (b) (Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
3	<p><i>The Yemen evacuation, Libya evacuation, and the earthquake in Nepal and New Zealand, no matter the natural or humanistic disasters, our country always arranges evacuation for nationals as soon as possible. However, the country, which has the most advanced marines force in the world, is just like the scene in the film. It cannot evacuate its nationals, close the embassy, and leave its nationals behind. When the catastrophe comes, the fleet of other countries is leaving, and the Chinese fleet is deploying the magnificent retrograde rotation in the world several times.</i></p>
797	<p><i>The coolest retrograde rotation is the most beautiful view in the world. When the war is coming, other countries are leaving. The Union Jack flag is leaving. However, the five stars flag is always there.</i></p>

4) A sense of identification with the shared history

a). a sense of identification with the evacuation in 2015

Since the media promote that this film is adjusted from the real event of the Yemen evacuation in 2015, thus, 104 reviews mention this event, and when the audiences watch the film, they recall it naturally. Such recalling reflects that the audience has combined the film with the evacuation mission deployed in Yemen in 2015. For example:

Table 4.8 Audiences' reception of a sense of identification with the shared history (a) (Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
3	<p><i>The Yemen evacuation, Libya evacuation, and the earthquake in Nepal and New Zealand, no matter the natural or humanistic disasters, our country always arranges evacuation for nationals as soon as possible. However, the country, which has the most advanced marines force in the world, is just like the scene in the film. It cannot evacuate its nationals and close the embassy, leaving its nationals behind. When the catastrophe comes, the fleet of other countries is leaving, and the Chinese fleet is deploying the magnificent retrograde rotation in the world several times.</i></p>
412	<p><i>In the evacuation at the film's beginning, all countries are leaving the battlefield, and only a Chinese warship is heading to the port because there are Chinese nationals on the battlefield waiting to go home. The director refers to the Yemen evacuation in the production of the film. At that time, Yemen also had a rebellion, and once the Chinese navy in Somalia received the task, they went to the Arden port of Yemen immediately and helped Chinese nationals to evacuate from Yemen. From it, I see a strong China which will never abandon its nationals</i></p>

- b. a sense of identification with the history of a century of humiliation

Besides, eight reviews echo the dialogue between Leng Feng and Big Daddy, when Big Daddy sneers Chinese as a weak nation and the people like Chinese are inferior to the people like him, and Leng Feng says that is fucking history in response. This scene recalls the memory of Chinese century humiliation history since the 19th century, and Chinese people used to be called ‘Sick men of Asia’ by western invaders. Thus, such dialogue in the film also triggers Chinese people’s identification with this history. Though China has a history of humiliation, the audiences will not deny it, and the progress that China has achieved nowadays also promotes Chinese national identity.

Table 4.9 Audiences’ reception of a sense of identification with the shared history (b) (Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
582	<p><i>Facing the insult from the enemy, ‘People like you will always be inferior to people like me. Get used to it. Get fucking used to it.’. Leng Feng responds, ‘that’s fucking history.’ Moreover, punches him till he dies. This is super cool. There is no explanation to express the feeling of touching and national pride. Exactly, we used to be the ‘sick man of Asia’, we used to be exploited by others, but that is past time. We will kill you if you dare to exploit us again right now.</i></p>
845	<p><i>After working hard for years, Chinese people eventually got rid of the title ‘sick man of Asia’ and ‘inferior nation’, which are discriminated labels given to Chinese people by other countries. In the future, we will not discriminate against others who are weak than us. We should treat all countries, all nations equally, like a real and confident great power stands in the world.</i></p>

4.2.1.2 Audience Reception of Patriotism from Wolf Warrior 2

1) A sense of pride in the nation-state

A sense of pride toward the nation-state can be identified in 1335 reviews. Furthermore, the sense of pride toward the nation-state of the audiences is mainly elicited via the depiction of a strong country in the film. The mighty of China and the Chinese navy provide the audiences with a sense of safety and pride toward the nation-state. The audiences directly use the words ‘pride’ to describe such feelings in their reviews to express their sense of pride. Besides, the audiences also echo the scene where the two fighting parties cease the fire when they see the Chinese flag on Leng Feng’s arm. The reaction also makes audiences proud because it shows the high position of China in the African country. Examples are as follows:

Table 4.10 Audience reception of a sense of pride toward the nation-state(Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
353	<p><i>In the film, the rebellion repeatedly emphasizes that it can not kill the Chinese. Furthermore, at the end, when Wu Jing uses his arm as a flag stand and raises Chinese flags across the battlefield. The battle tentatively ceased. Now, I am so proud of the mighty of my country. And lastly, Wu Jing brings Chinese nationals to report with the Captain, and the sense of pride in my heart increases to an indescribable high level. There have been several evacuations in China’s history, and the action of China makes Chinese people proud and triggers a sense of jealousy of other countries’ citizens. All in all, the film can elicit national pride easily.</i></p>
377	<p><i>In African or Mid-east countries, they truly do not kill Chinese people because Chinese people do not intervene in their home affairs but help them cure the ill and construct roads. Do not think that scene in the film is fake. That is respect exchanged by Chinese sincerity.</i></p>

2) The love of the nation-state and compatriots

a. The love of the nation-state and compatriots is enhanced by the sense of safety provided by the country

730 out of 1680 reviews use the words ‘patriotism’, ‘patriotic feeling’, and ‘I love China’ to directly express their love toward the nation-state and compatriots. Many of them mention that the core of the film is a mainstream film that talks about patriotism and the love of the country and the party. Thus, a strong sense of patriotism can be found in the film that will elicit the love of the nation-state of audiences. Besides, the devotion and sacrifice of the soldiers will also elicit the love of compatriots, for soldiers are also compatriots of the Chinese people. Especially, 198 reviews use the phrase ‘Anyone who dares to offend China will be eventually punished, no matter how far they are.’ to show their determination to protect the motherland.

Table 4.11 Audience reception of the love of the nation-state and compatriots (a)
(Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
659	<p><i>The third highlight of the film is love of the nation-state. Every Chinese has a warm heart, which might be hidden or buried when life does not go well, but from a broad perspective, the country's growing strength will benefit all nationals worldwide.</i></p>
760	<p><i>Then, it is the expression of the mainstream concept (Do not ask me what the mainstream is; if you do not know, you can treat it as the love of the country, the party, and the people). Wolf Warrior 2 does a great job of eliciting the Chinese people's national pride by depicting a story of evacuating Chinese nationals. ‘Anyone who dares to offend China will be eventually punished, no matter how far they are.’ Especially when the captain of the warship orders to fire, this scene pushes the love of the nation-state and compatriots to the peak. Anyway, these are personal opinions. The patriotic sentiment depends</i></p>

Number of reviews	Content
	<i>on personal feelings. I love my country. Thus, I am touched by the two series of Wolf Warrior and almost cry in some vital scenes.</i>

b. The love of the nation-state expressed via defending the film

Among all 4761 long reviews after the first-round selection, 3771 reviews rank Wolf Warriors average or above average. However, 990 reviews give negative feedback to the film. They blame that the film is full of individual American heroism and the portrayal of the hero—Leng Feng, is out of reality, and the film uses patriotism to kidnap the audiences to consume it. In terms of such negative feedback, 62 audiences argue with such negative feedback and describe the audiences who give negative feedback as the people who kneel for foreigners to express their dissatisfaction and demonstrate their resonance with the patriotism of the film to defend the film, the film industry even the love of nation-state. Especially No.545, though the audience recognizes the feature of individual heroism of Leng Feng, he still thinks that the strength of Leng Feng comes from a strong motherland that works as his backup force. Such reviews reflect that although the film has a strong sense of individualism since the hero has a Chinese national identity, the audience will attribute his success to the nation-state's success. And the love of the hero will transit to the love of the nation-state

Table 4.12 Audience reception of the love of the nation-state and compatriots (b)
(Wolf Warrior 2)

Number of reviews	Content
545	<p><i>I just signed up for the account two minutes ago, only to comment on this film. Why do I do this? Because I find that someone ranks 1 star on this film, criticizes individual heroism, and labels Wu Jing as little pinky. How could you criticize patriotism in such ways? Why do you suck up, Captain America? Is its plot better than Wolf Warrior 2? Or is it just because of your slavish worship? Your knees are still soft because your calcium tablets have been wasted?... Just like the film depiction, the foundation of the heroism of Leng Feng is a strong motherland, and the film has been emphasized several times. He has not been killed because the rebellion is afraid of China. I tell you, you have not been born at a peaceful age but because you are born in a peaceful country.</i></p>
752	<p><i>Firstly, I think this film is worth 8 to 8.5 marks, which is 10. I give 5 stars to this film because I find many biased reviews. They criticize the film without any convincing reasons. So I give 5stars to average the scores. Nowadays, too many people have kneeled for a long time, so they cannot stand up anymore. This is my first time writing reviews just for writing a review. Maybe it is because I am affected by the film, or I just want to argue with those who give negative reviews without convincing reasons. Although this film is a mainstream film, for the Chinese who have kneeled for a long time, the authentic depiction of evacuation, the relationship between China and Africa, and the exhibition of Chinese soldiers and mighty of the army can make you change from kneeling the whole body to kneeling the half of your body. Do not be so tired. You say this film is consuming patriotism, but can you merge the above elements and present them to the public? This is already great work.</i></p>

Number of reviews	Content
736	<i>Some people watch the film and comment on this film as the imagination of the director. I can hardly control myself to reply to your reviews. But I give up. If this touching film cannot satisfy your patriotic feeling, the comment that Big Daddy used to despise the Chinese are suitable to describe you.</i>

4.2.1.3 Summary

From the previous analysis, there are four types of national identity reception that can be identified from reviews which are 1) a sense of identification with the nation-state which embed naturally in the Chinese mind and which is triggered by a sense of safety provided by the country; 2) a sense of identification with the political institutions which refer to the communist party and the army. The spirits of sacrifice trigger such identification and sense of mission of the Chinese soldiers and a sense of safety provides by the political institution as well. 3) a sense of differentiation from other countries, which refers to the difference in internal circumstances between China and Africa and the difference in behaviors while in danger between China and other countries, especially America. 4) A sense of identification with the history of evacuation events in 2015 and a century of humiliation history.

As for patriotism, audiences receive it as 1) a sense of pride toward the country, which triggers by the mighty of the army and the nation-state. 2) the love of the nation-state and compatriots is enhanced by a sense of safety provided by the nation-state and army and expressed by the defending reaction against the negative comments.

4.2.2 Operation Red Sea

4.2.2.1 Audience Reception of National Identity from Operation Red Sea

1) A sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state

- a. A sense of belonging and identification embeds in audiences' minds naturally

A sense of identification with the nation-state can be identified from all the selected reviews of Operation Red Sea. Furthermore, among 844 reviews, 225 reviews use the word 'motherland' (祖国) to describe the nation-state that reflects their senses of belonging and identification with the country. Many audiences also use the word 'Chinese' to demonstrate their identity, which reveals they confirm their identity as a citizen of China. For example, No. 760, 'As a person who has lived abroad for many years, this film improves my trust and expectation of my motherland.'

- b. A sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state is triggered by a sense of safety provided by the nation-state.

Moreover, the identification with the nation-state is triggered by a sense of safety provided by the nation-state. 42 reviews describe that they feel lucky to live in a safe country. While comparing life in other countries that are stuck in turmoil and war and the lives of audiences in their real life in China, the sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state will become more solid. For example:

Table 4.13 Audience reception of a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state (b) (Operation Red Sea)

Number of reviews	Content
28	<i>It was almost I am when I walked out of the cinema; few people are walking on the street. A sense of happiness zoomed in my heart when I looked at my father. I always feel lucky that I am Chinese, live in a peaceful country, and have my dreams and family whenever I see a picture of wars or the parade for the 90th anniversary of the triumph of the anti-Japanese war.</i>
33	<i>After watching the film, I talked with my younger sister and brother. They say it is lucky to be born in China and live in current China</i>
761	<i>I appreciate that my country provides me with enough safety to live a happy life. I feel lucky to be Chinese.</i>

2) A sense of differentiation from other countries

Since the film depicts a story that happens outside China, thus, a sense of differentiation from other countries are mentioned by 86 audiences. Furthermore, such feeling is mainly triggered by the war scenes in the film. Audiences compared their lives with those who lived in the countries that suffered wars. The film's audiences accepted the message that some other countries are stuck in the war and not as safe as their country. They live in a safe country while others suffer, where comparing living conditions raises a sense of differentiation from other countries. For example:

Table 4.14 Audience reception of a sense of differentiation from other countries
(Operation Red Sea)

Number of reviews	Content
24	<i>After watching the film and walking out of the cinema, it feels like I have come into another world. Though the day is rainy and cold, I feel happy because I have family, work, a child, and without war.</i>
65	<i>PS: It is better to choose a safe country when I am going to travel abroad in the future.</i>
308	<i>When I watched the film, I received a message from my husband, who was in Africa. He said the capital of Burkina Faso underwent a terrorist attack. Thus, when I watch the film, I feel like everyone who suffers in a rain of bullets is related to my life. My husband is a construction contractor who spends almost all his time in Africa, so as his wife, his safety abroad is the most important thing. Hope for a peaceful world and hope my country will become stronger and stronger so that the people like us who live in it will feel safe.</i>
554	<i>It is good that we can live in a peaceful circumstance, although there is haze. Compared with the children who are threatened by guns and the people who suffer from guns, we are happier.</i>

3) A sense of identification with a shared history

The evacuation of Chinese nationals from Yemen was a real event in 2015, and this film is adapted from this event. Among 844 reviews, 124 audiences have recalled this memory and related it to the film, reflecting a sense of identification with a shared history in their minds. Furthermore, this film is about a real event in Chinese history. Recalling such history is beneficial for audiences to identify themselves with the nation-state. For example, No.9, *'The first interesting point in this film is that the story is composed of the evacuation and because I have paid attention to the evacuation in Libya in 2011 and evacuation in Yemen 2015, so this film is interesting to me.'* By identifying with the shared historical events in Chinese history, the Chinese national identity of audiences has been built.

4) A sense of identification with collectivism

A sense of identification with collectivism has been found in 49 reviews among 844 reviews. Since the hero's character in the film is a group of heroes, their interaction and cooperation via teamwork exhibit a sentiment of collectivism, and their care toward each other improve such collective sentiment to a deeper level. Besides, some audiences compare Operation Red Sea with Wolf Warrior 2 and show their preference for collectivism, which also reflects that in Chinese people's minds, collectivism is prior to individualism, like No.4. 'Country first, then home'.

Table 4.15 Audience reception of a sense of identification with collectivism (Operation Red Sea)

Number of reviews	Content
1	<i>In Operation Red Sea, Jiaolong Unit perfectly expressed the core of a team and explained the importance of a united spirit in building a strong team.</i>
4	<i>Country first, then home.</i>
7	<i>Some people will compare Operation Red Sea with the Wolf Warrior series. Though they are talking about a story of the evacuation of Chinese nationals, the former focuses on group cooperation, and the latter emphasizes individual work. As for me, I am attracted by group cooperation. Actually, I still believe a good team can conquer all obstacles in real life.</i>
58	<i>The story is similar to Wolf Warrior 2, but Operation Red Sea chooses collectivism over individualism. In Wolf Warrior 2, it is easy to accept the concept that everyone is the hero.</i>
555	<i>All people are members of a collectivity. No individual heroism. No matter male or female, they are all warriors.</i>
737	<i>Compared with individual heroism, I prefer collectivism</i>

5) A sense of identification with the political institution is triggered by the dedication of the Chinese Navy

578 reviews mention ‘soldiers’ in their reviews. The audiences have recognized the devotion of the soldiers to protect them from the wars and defend the peace. Moreover, they acknowledge the efforts that the navy soldiers make for the Chinese nationals and nation-state, such as No.56. Since the Chinese navy is one of the representatives of the political institution, thus, it is reasonable to state that the acknowledgment of the soldiers and their efforts reveals the identification with the political institutions.

Table 4.16 Audience reception of a sense of identification with the political institution (Operation Red Sea)

Number of reviews	Content
56	<p><i>Besides, Operation Red Sea reveals the significance of the Chinese blue water navy toward the outgoing diplomatic policy of China in the new era. The film shows the mighty of China and the Chinese navy and the factual background of the Yemen evacuation in 2015. This will enhance the resonance of the Chinese. ‘There is no such thing as a peaceful world. We feel like so because someone takes on the burdens.’. The saying describes the Chinese soldiers in the peaceful age.</i></p>
781	<p><i>Operation Red Sea reveals the heroism of Chinese soldiers and the spirit of rejuvenation of China.</i></p>
806	<p><i>This review does not include the plots of the film. I just want to recommend you to watch the great Chinese navy and the great Jiaolong Unit.</i></p>

4.2.2.2 Audience Reception of Patriotism from the Operation Red Sea

1) The love of the nation-state and compatriots

In the film, the love of the nation-state and compatriots is triggered by the war in other countries, and the rescue action taken by the Jiaolong unit reveals that the nation-state will never leave its nationals in danger. Such protection behavior led by the nation-state and implemented by the Chinese soldiers elicits the love of audiences of the nation-state because all audiences in the cinema are also Chinese nationals. Moreover, 92 audiences express their gratitude for the countries for providing safe living circumstances and show their care toward the injured soldiers in the reviews, for they seem to feel the same hurt as the soldiers in the film, revealing a love of compatriots expressed by the audiences, for example:

Table 4.17 Audience reception of the love of the nation-state and compatriots (Operation Red Sea)

Number of reviews	Content
13	<i>When I watch the film, I feel hurt. The effort of the Chinese navy moves me. After watching it, I feel lucky to live in a peaceful age. Our strong country needs their protection, and their blood colors our flag, but how much blood is required from them? I really do not expect</i>
64	<i>their blood to be exchanged for the strength of our country, I do not hope our warriors die on the cruel battlefield, and I hope the war will never occur again.</i>
71	<i>I always say the love of the country is a single-way love. In actuality, the people I love are not people who are hypocritical and exploit common people. I love the people who sacrifice for China and those who work hard in their position.</i>
77	<i>If you live in a safe world, someone must carry the burden for you. If I am lucky to have the next life, I still want to be Chinese, Love my motherland and compatriots.</i>

Number of reviews	Content
88	<i>I feel hurt when I see the navy soldier bleeding a lot, and I feel upset that the whole team is willing to die to save one person.</i>

2) A sentiment of pride toward the nation-state

A sense of pride toward the nation-state can be found directly in 406 reviews out of 884 reviews. Moreover, such sentiment is triggered by the protection provided by the country and the mighty advancement of the country. The success of the mission implemented by the Jiaolong unit and the advanced weapons they use in the film reveals the great development of the nation-state, which triggers a sense of pride in audiences toward the nation-state, for example:

Table 4.18 Audience reception of a sentiment of pride toward the nation-state s (Operation Red Sea)

Number of reviews	Content
2	<i>Operation Red Sea is not a triumph for the individual but group cooperation. It shows the mighty of China. Watch the film repeatedly. The strength of my motherland moves me. I am proud to be Chinese.</i>
4	<i>Being born in a strong country like China is a very happy thing, but many compatriots' blood is exchanged for this happiness. Country first, their home, it is great that our country is strong.</i>
11	<i>We can live happily and safely not because we live in a peaceful age but because we live in a strong and peaceful country.</i>
46	<i>The advanced weapons shown in the film prove the strength of our country. I am proud of our army and navy.</i>
74	<i>As a Chinese, I am proud that our motherland is getting stronger! I am proud to be Chinese.</i>
83	<i>The evacuation of Chinese nationals is the event that can tie Chinese nationals together. The people who are making a living abroad will</i>

Number of reviews	Content
	<i>feel that we have not been abandoned. As a Chinese national, I feel proud and elated.</i>

3) A sense of gratitude toward the political institution

197 audiences expressed their gratitude to the Chinese navy, which represents the Chinese political institution. Due to the spirits of sacrifice and devotion of the Jiaolong Unit in the film, audiences express gratitude to navy soldiers appreciating their sacrifice and their efforts in protecting the people and country from dangers, and the injured and death of members in the film furtherly recall the devotion and sacrifice behavior of other representatives of the political institution like fireman which furtherly enhance the sense of gratitude toward the political institution which refers to Chinese navy and governmental department. For example:

Table 4.19 Audience reception of a sense of gratitude toward the political institution (Operation Red Sea)

Number of reviews	Content
79	<i>From the Xinhai Revolution, generations of soldiers devoted their lives and blood to fighting for peace and safety for successors. And nowadays, the common soldiers still keep protecting the safety and peace of the motherland and every Chinese national.</i>
81	<i>After watching this film, I have considered what the task of a soldier is. They undertake a lot of danger and pressure. Further, I recall the firefighters who sacrificed and even died to protect the safety of the country and people. Salute to them!</i>
551	<i>This exhibits China's defense capability and encourages the sentiment of national pride in common people's hearts. The Chinese army is the best! I am proud to be Chinese! Salute to all soldiers who protect our country.</i>

4) The willingness to devote and sacrifice for the nation-state and compatriots

Since the heroic characters in the movie have characteristics of willingness to sacrifice for the country, and some of them, like Zhang Tiande and Zhuang Yu, die to protect comrades, the audiences also receive the messages of willingness to devote and sacrifice for the country and compatriots. Thus, some reviews praise the spirits of the sacrifice of the soldiers, and some are inspired by such spirits and demonstrate their willingness to devote themselves to the well-being of the nation, for example: Table 4.20 Audience reception of the willingness to devote and sacrifice for the nation-state and compatriots (Operation Red Sea)

Number of reviews	Content
23	<p><i>As a post-90s, I cannot calm down after watching the film, we grow up in a peaceful age, and there is always a saying that the post-90s generation is the flower in the greenhouse. But in film, I find some post-90s actors. I recognize that our post-90s can undertake our responsibilities. I have some classmates who joined the army. We are not the flower in the greenhouse. If our country needs us, we will be summoned without hesitation.</i></p>
53	<p><i>Soldiers devote their strength and implement their duties to fulfill the rejuvenation task of our nation, we cannot go to the battlefield, but we can devote ourselves to the rejuvenation of our nation in our daily life.</i></p>
80	<p><i>To die for our country, in pride, do we care whether our remains will be brought back wrapped in horsehide?</i></p>

5) A sense of special concern toward the well-being of the cultural product of the nation-state

Besides the love and praise, few reviews reflect a special concern of the audiences toward the nation-state. Due to more than half reviews of this film being positive feedback, other reviewers attack some negative feedback. Thus, 7 extends their concern on formalism and the future development of Chinese mainstream film. For example, No.749:

‘The water army (水军, it refers to a group of paid ghostwriters on the Internet who are hired to post comments with specific content) makes me angry this time for two reasons: 1. Insulting audiences and leading public opinion with a malicious intention. 2. Only praise but ignore the problems of this film. The patriotic film will be stuck in formalism if there is always a compliment. When I was young, I watched the film Zhang Side, which told a good story but lacked tense settings and touching points. Later, I watched Independence Days and Battleship. I was very jealous that we could not have this kind of patriotic main theme film. Moreover, when Wolf Warrior and Reborn came out, I felt that our main theme culture had some good works. However, in the reviews and ranks of Operation Red Sea, I feel the clouds of formalism come back again, making me very anxious.’

These reviews show a special concern for Chinese cultural products, and the love of the nation-state and its cultural product can be sensed. Because of the love, the audience hopes the Chinese film can develop in a benign circumstance rather than in a framed environment with praise only.

4.2.2.3 Summary

In terms of audiences’ reception of the national identity, it refers to 1) a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state, which is naturally embedded in Chinese people’s minds and will be triggered by the sense of safety provided by the nation-state. 2) a sense of differentiation from other countries is triggered by the comparison of the depiction of the life of other countries, suffering in the war, and the audience’s peaceful life in the real world in China. 3) A sense of identification with the shared history of Yemen evacuation in 2015. 4) A sense of identification with collectivism is built from the team cooperation of the Jiaolong Unit in the film. 5). A sense of identification with the political institution is built from the devotion of the Chinese navy.

In terms of patriotism, there are five types of patriotism that receive by the audience which are 1) The love of the nation-state and compatriots. 2) a sense of pride

toward the nation-state and 3) a sense of gratitude toward the political institution. 4) the willingness to sacrifice and devote to the country and compatriots. And 5) the special concerns toward the film industry and nation-state.

4.2.3 The Battle at Lake Changjin

4.2.3.1 Audience Reception of National Identity from the Battle at Lake Changjin

1) A sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state

All reviewers have a sense of identification with the nation-state, for they are written from the perspective of Chinese people, and while reading the reviews, some use the word ‘Chinese’ to describe their identification, such as No.152, No.230. Furthermore, some echo the spirits and characteristics that exhibit in the film and identify those are spirits and characteristics of Chinese people. Via identification with the spirits and characteristics of the Chinese people, the audience’s identification with the nation-state is built, such as No.236, No.339, No.363, No.375, and No.387. Moreover, some audiences think this is the film that all Chinese should watch. They show their identification with the nation-state via watching the film and recommending others to watch it, such as no. 230, No.328, No.387.

Table 4.21 Audiences’ reception of a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state (the Battle at Lake Changjin)

Number of reviews	Content
152	<i>We will never withdraw because we are Chinese. Where we stand is the land of China.</i>
236	<i>This film shows the special spirit of all Chinese</i>
236	<i>This film shows the special spirit of all Chinese.</i>
339	<i>Only the Chinese will echo with the film and cry for it.</i>
363	<i>I feel the heart and spirit of the Chinese from the film.</i>
375	<i>Maybe only the Chinese would know the spirit of the film, for it is a film that depicts the war from the perspective of the Chinese. It is a pity that it cannot be promoted in the world.</i>

Number	Content
of reviews	
387	<i>Chinese film should have Chinese characteristics and should put Chinese audiences in priority.</i>
230	<i>If you have time, watch the Battle at Lake Changjin, not for the special effect, not for the actors or actresses, but because you are Chinese.</i>
328	<i>A good film deserves all Chinese to watch</i>

2) A sense of identification with the political institution

Besides the identification of the nation-state, some reviews can also indicate a sense of identification with the political institution. It can be found three reviews reveal a sense of identification with the army of China, the date of August first each year is the anniversary date of the establishment of the People's Liberation Army, and the logo of the red star with the character AUGUST FIRST is the logo the of AUGUST FIRST FILM STUDIO which is owned by the army. Therefore, the sense of identification with this logo, military medal, and the spirits of the army is also related to the identification with the army.

Figure 4.1 The logo of August First Film Studio



Source: https://www.sohu.com/a/494485242_395847

Moreover, the phrases ‘our party’ and ‘under the leadership of the party and a member of the communist party in 5 reviews illustrate the identification of reviewers toward the party. Particularly, review no. 444, it shows that the identification of the reviewer toward the party is enhanced after watching the film since he thinks the film helps him understand the values and pursuits of the party's leaders and communism. Due to the party and the army being all the political institutions in China, thus, the identification with the party and the army can be summarized as the identification with the political institution, which is a dimension of national identity.

Table 4.22 Audiences’ reception of a sense of identification with the political institution (the Battle at Lake Changjin)

Number of reviews	Content
340	<i>The red star is shining in the opening sequence of AUGUST FIRST FILM STUDIO, which is like watching the sun rising from the east and feeling warm.</i>
356	<i>The clothes cover the blood and the scars of bullet wood, but the military metal is shining as usual.</i>
122/287/377	<i>Our communist party</i>
385	<i>The victory is gained under the leadership of the party</i>
437	<i>Although the story of the Lake of Changjin ended, the spirits of our Army are descending.</i>
444	<i>As a member of the Chinese Communist Party, I have to admit that my communist faith had shaken. When I listened to the song ‘we are successors of the communist’, I felt naïve. I have not considered this as the expectation of our ancestors. I have once pursued ego, democracy and freedom and treated egoism as my bible, I have forgotten the essence of my nation and questioned Chairman Mao's policies in his elder age, but I do not that his eventual idealism. In the end, I hope all of us can stay true to our original aspirations and found missions of our nation.</i>

3) A sense of identification with the collectivism

Among 447 reviews of the Battle at Lake Changjin, 21 reflect a sense of identification with collectivism, a shared value in Chinese culture. Though the film only uses the seventh company as one of the main heroic groups to tell the story, audiences also recognize the people outside the seventh company, and they treat all the soldiers who join the war as heroes, whether they have names or are mentioned in the films or not. Such thoughts reflect that though there are outstanding figures in the war, the triumph belongs to the whole team reflects the concept of collectivism of Chinese, such as No.3. And some directly demonstrate that they are moved by collective heroism rather than individual heroism, which can be found in the American film, such as No.209, No.257 No.294, No.316, No363, and No.431. Moreover, especially No. 149, it blames the disobedient behavior of Wu Wanli as selfish, even though in the film he contributed to the battlefield when he left the team, but the audience still thinks his behavior is shameful. Moreover, in No.121, the audience praises a soldier's decision to die with his team. From such blame and praise, the preference of the Chinese toward collectivism can be identified easily, and such identification with collectivism can also be found in No.19. And some audience directly expresses that a concept of the country should be prior to an individual home, which reflects that Chinese people put the collective group into a higher position than their home, such as No.2, and No.433.

Table 4.23 Audiences' reception of a sense of identification with the collectivism (the Battle at Lake Changjin)

Number of reviews	Content
3/141/147/309/328/441	<i>The heroes are the people who join the war</i>
2	<i>I am moved by the spirit of sacrificing individual interests for the public good</i>
19	<i>The frozen soldiers are like sculptures that reveal a genuine spirit of selflessness.</i>
35	<i>When our country is being invaded, the destiny of all Chinese people is tied</i>

Number of reviews	Content
121	<i>Even though only one soldier is left, he will still decide to die with his comrades firmly.</i>
149	<i>I am shocked and angry with Wu Wanli's desertion on the battlefield. As a new bee in the army, his behavior is wilful, uppity, hotheaded, and selfish. He should be ashamed of his disobedience.</i>
209	<i>Our war is not the war of individual heroism but the great success of a collective group.</i>
257	<i>Our collective heroism moves me. Unlike individual American heroism, one person can save the world. In recent years, egoism has gradually swept Chinese society, and when I watched the film, I felt that our collective heroism is magnificent.</i>
294	<i>The film depicts a group of heroes. Who is the hero? Tan Ziwei told Wu Wanli that the heroes were those who went to the battlefield. No matter who died in the gunshots, they are all heroes, died frozen or still alive.</i>
296	<i>People from different places in China fight for the new China, for China's future, and a common faith have the name 'the hero'.</i>
316	<i>No individualism, no heroism, all characters in the film represent brave and heroic soldiers of the People's Volunteer Army.</i>
363	<i>The film does not depict individualism. It shows us the braveness and fearlessness of the People's Volunteer Army.</i>
431	<i>The heroes on the battlefield are the cutest people in the world.</i>
433	<i>Have country, then home.</i>

4) A sense of identification with a shared history

Among 447 reviews, 237 mentioned that the film depicts a history in modern China, revealing that 53 percent of audiences identify with this history. Most audiences appeal to remember this period of history, and some mentioned that their grandfathers were soldiers in this war. They heard this history from their grandfathers, and the story depicted in the film is the same as the story they heard from their grandfathers. Some people mentioned they learned this story from the books, and the real situation is crueler than the scenes depicted in the films. All of these reviews reflect that the film recalls a shared history in audiences' memory, and more than half audiences identified with this history.

5) A sense of differentiation from the U.S.

a. Difference in materials

77 out of 447 reviews state a sense of differentiation between China and the U.S. Among 77 reviews, 34 reviews mention the event in which the Chinese army ate frozen potatoes while the U.S. army had turkeys on Thanksgiving Day, and some of the reviews have mentioned the difference between the weapons of the Chinese army and the American army, which is lack of weapons and abundant with advanced weapons. All these differences reflect that audiences have received a sense of differentiation between China and the U.S. from a perspective of materials.

b. Difference in physical conditions

Despite the physical differentiation, some reviews also mention the mental differentiation between the Chinese army and the U.S. army, as well as compare the intentions of the U.S. and China in launching the Korean war, and it believes that wild ambitions and desires drive the U.S. to plunder land and wealth, but the faith of protecting the country drives China. Furthermore, some reviews use negative words to describe the U.S. army, such as 'arrogant', 'conceit', 'greedy' and 'evil', while using positive words 'firm', 'earthy', 'friendly' and 'warm blood' to describe Chinese army, for example:

Table 4.24 Audiences' reception of a sense of differentiation from the U.S.(b) (the Battle at Lake Changjin)

Number of reviews	Content
42	<i>In the film, the U.S soldiers seem arrogant and conceited, but the Chinese soldiers are earthy, friendly, and warm blood.</i>
76	<i>The American army has won several triumphs before this war; they have a sense of arrogance, but the Chinese army is fighting for its dignity and people's hope.</i>
77	<i>The war launched by the U.S was driven by wild ambition. They do not have faith and only rely on advanced weapons, whereas the Chinese army strongly believes in perseverance and iron-mindedness.</i>
100	<i>Our nation fights for survival. We are tenacious and brave. The U.S fights against plundering our land and wealth. They are greedy and evil.</i>
203	<i>The feeling of the U.S soldier is 'I am here for work,' and the feeling of the Chinese soldier is 'I am here for country and people.'</i>
290	<i>The U.S is arrogant and underestimates the enemy. The Chinese army is firm and brave.</i>

4.2.3.2 Audience reception of Patriotism in the Battle at Lake Changjin

1) Love of nation-state and compatriots

The love of nation-state and compatriots is a well-acknowledged sentiment in this film, 279 reviews illustrate the love of nation and compatriots, and the expression of love of nation-state and compatriots can be separated into three types:

a. Expressing the love of the nation-state and compatriots in a direct way

91 of the reviews use direct phrases like *'I love you, China, 'I love compatriots', 'the spirit of caring about home and country (家国情怀), 'Resist the*

U.S, Aid Korea, protect our homes and defend our country and the words ‘*patriotism*’ and ‘*patriotic feeling*’ to express their love of the country directly.

- b. The beautiful landscape triggers the love of the nation-state

Besides, six reviews also mention that the love of country will trigger by the beautiful landscape of the motherland, for example, no.360 ‘I like the scene when the soldiers see the view of the Great Wall, such a beautiful place is the motherland they are willing to sacrifice for.’ which also reveal the love of motherland via the appreciation of beautiful landscape.

Figure 4.2 the picture of the great wall in the Battle at Lake Changjin



Source: https://www.sohu.com/a/494485242_395847

- c. Expressing the love of nation-state and compatriots via showing respect to ancestors and cherishing the efforts of ancestors

240 audiences have expressed their appreciation toward ancestors in their reviews, and most of the audiences expressed their appreciation and respect to ancestors for providing the next generation a peaceful and prosperous life and mentioned a script in the film ‘*If we do not fight this war, our next generation will have to fight it.*’. Moreover, many reviews also state that ‘*cherish the peaceful life and good living conditions because it is the life that the ancestors use their blood and flesh to win for next generation.*’ This appreciation and cherishing of ancestors’ efforts are also a type of love of compatriots. It is the love that descendants extend to

their ancestors via remembering and cherishing their effort; no matter the descendants or ancestors, they are all compatriots but live in different times. For example:

Table 4.25 Audiences' reception of the Love of nation-state and compatriots (c) (the Battle at Lake Changjin)

Number of reviews	Content
82	<i>This film does not have after credit scene, but when I come out of the cinema, I see the crowded people and vehicles on the road and the peaceful life we have. I recognize this is the real after-credit scene of this film.</i>
83	<i>Deeply thank you, ancestors, for fighting for us to provide a peaceful life.</i>
91	<i>'We fight all the war that has to fight. Our descendants do not need to fight anymore. The payment of peaceful life and good living conditions is the blood and flesh of our ancestors. They are all great. If we do not fight this war, our next generation will have to fight it.</i>
92	<i>Meisheng talked about this when he saw his daughter's picture. Ancestors use their blood to exchange our present peaceful life. Respect heroes, cherish the present, and live a good life. Try your best to contribute to this great era.</i>
93	<i>This film let me feel the toughness and sacrifice of our ancestors and the toughness of peace. I hope we all can cherish the life we have today and devote our lives to building our country.</i>
94	<i>The present prosperity of the country is built on the blood and flesh of our ancestors. The reason why we do not have to fight is that our ancestors have already fought all wars.</i>
95	<i>If our ancestors did not fight for us, we could not have peaceful life nowadays.</i>
97	<i>We have not born in a peaceful era. We are just born in a peaceful country, thanks to our ancestors' devotion and thanks to a strong</i>

Number of reviews	Content
188	<p><i>country. Without them, we cannot enjoy our normal life in the peaceful sunshine.</i></p> <p><i>Our ancestors fight a different future for us. What should our generation do? I think it is doing our jobs well and working hard to defend each land and dignity that they use their blood and flesh to fight for us. We have to strengthen ourselves.</i></p>
189	<p><i>All we can do right now is cherish our good life. Love our country, remember the sacrificed ancestors, and let this story descend to future generations. On the way home, I tell my son there is no excuse for him if you do not study hard. Please grow up and be a useful person for our country.</i></p>

2) The willingness to sacrifice for the well-being nation-state

Among reviews, there are 50 reviews that mention that the film's heroes are willing to sacrifice themselves for the country's well-being. Some reviews mentioned that there is no undefeatable hero, they will be afraid when they face death, but their senses of responsibility and love toward the motherland and compatriots encourage them to face death calmly. Such reviews reflect the audiences' acknowledgment of the willingness to sacrifice. The following are examples:

Table 4.26 Audiences' reception of the willingness to sacrifice for the nation-state (c) (the Battle at Lake Changjin)

Number of reviews	Content
2	<p><i>The urn of elder brother Baili is on the hand, metaphorizing that peace comes from sacrifice.</i></p>
12	<p><i>The huge gap between the weapons of China and the U.S army reveals the spirit of willingness to sacrifice furtherly.</i></p>

Number of reviews	Content
31	<i>True heroes are the people who devote their lives to fend for common compatriots with no regard for individual life and who are willing to use their blood to promote national rejuvenation.</i>
35	<i>Chinese people have their self-esteem and shame. We do not want to be the enslaved person who lost our motherland. When we see our compatriots suffering in the invasion of enemies, the only redemption for us is fighting. Hope and a bright future only can be gained from fighting. Thus, the soldiers throw away their fear and sacrifice for the land and compatriots. This is their devotion. This is their honor.</i>
48	<i>They love the country, compatriots, and the soldier's glory; in one wave after another, they stand on their posts. There are no undefeatable heroes, and there is the sacrifice of Chinese soldiers.</i>
78	<i>The film shows a national spirit of fearless of enemies, perseverance, and fearless of death.</i>
95	<i>They use their lives, blood, and flesh to exchange for our peaceful life today.</i>
143	<i>I am confused when I see the frozen soldiers keeping their fight posture until they die; aren't they afraid of the cold? Of course, they are afraid. Aren't they afraid of death? Of course, they are afraid. But why do they do this? Because I am an honorable soldier of the People Volunteer Army. Snow! I will never yield to you, even if I am frozen to die, I will stand on my post proudly," and this is the answer to why they keep their posture when they die.</i>
150	<i>Anonymous PVA soldier is willing to sacrifice to save injured people and protect comrades from bullets. They never think about the question of whether it is it worth or not.</i>
406	<i>I do not want to face the cruel war and sacrifice. I hope for a peaceful world. But when my country needs me, I will be recruited voluntarily without hesitation. I love you, China!</i>

Number of reviews	Content
414	<p><i>You know the greatness of martyrs, but you do not know why they are great. We are successors, so we know the prosperity and independence of the motherland. But martyrs do not know and traitors either; a-hundred-year history, three generations of Chinese suffered in a broken motherland. When they sacrificed, they would not know whether the motherland would triumph or not in the end. They would not know where the country would head to. But they died with enemies without hesitation, froze to death.</i></p>

3) A sentiment of pride and gratitude toward the nation-state and political institution

Among reviews, 82 audiences demonstrate a sense of pride toward the nation-state and political institute. Some reviews express such feelings directly, and many say they are proud to be Chinese. They are lucky to be born in China, which reveals a sentiment of pride toward the nation-state, and some express that they are proud of the Soldiers of the People Volunteer Army, like ‘Long live the great People Volunteer Army’, ‘The martyrs of the People Volunteer Army are immortal’ and praise the mighty of the army to express the pride and gratitude to the political institution.

Moreover, some reviews also express their gratitude and pride to the nation and political institution by praising life nowadays like using the phrases ‘*This present flourishing age is as you wish*’ and the other examples as follow:

Table 4.27 Audiences' reception of a sentiment of pride and gratitude toward the nation-state and political institution (the Battle at Lake Changjin)

Number of reviews	Content
75	<p><i>Luckily, we can live in China and be born in this peaceful and wonderful age. I hope there is no war in the world anymore. I always feel lucky that I can live in a peaceful country. I do not use the words 'peaceful age' because the world is not at peace now. There are still guns firing in the place that we can not see. After</i></p>
92	<p><i>watching the film, I feel that there is no pity in being born in China (生而无悔入华夏). Chinese people are eager for peace, but we are not afraid of war. If invaders offend us, no matter how far they are, we will let them pay their debt.</i></p>
129	<p><i>This film is talking about the story of the rise of a great nation. From our ancestors, I find the spirits of our nation's tenacity,</i></p>
230	<p><i>inclusive, self-strengthening, and confidence spread in our society for 5000 years.</i></p>
254	<p><i>Resist the U.S. and Aid Korea is a story about how new China won the strong country in a weaker condition. It enhances the confidence and pride of the Chinese</i></p>
258	<p><i>Today is National Day and is also the date of the 72nd anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Via recalling this history, I am further moved by my motherland's strength. I sincerely wish for long-lived prosperity in my country.</i></p>

Besides, some reviewers also compared the current situation of China and the U.S, where pride toward the nation can also be found, for example, no.218 *'No matter the past, the present, and the future, in the battle between China and the U.S., the U.S. will never defeat China because our people are not afraid of sacrifice, we have the great steel wall that is made of blood and flesh.'* And no.413 *'The battle between China and the U.S. today is just like the confrontation in the battle at Lake Changjin. China has the spirit of brave, confidence, and fearlessness. Even though we are not as*

strong as the U.S in hardware, we are not afraid. We can defeat the U.S. in a weak condition once. We can defeat strong America again with the encouragement of the Battle at Lake Changjin.’. From their words, pride toward the nation can be identified as well, for they have strong confidence in the nation.

4.2.3.3 Summary

In terms of the national identity received by audiences, it refers to 1) a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state. 2) a sense of identification with the political institution. 3) a sense of identification with collectivism. 4.) a sense of identification with a shared history and 5) a sense of differentiation from a foreign country which is the U.S, from the perspective of material and mental.

In terms of patriotism, audiences received it as 1) the love of the nation-state and compatriots that is naturally triggered by the Chinese identity, started by the affection for the beautiful landscape and expressed by respecting and cherishing the efforts and dedication of ancestors. 2) the willingness to sacrifice for the well-being of the nation-state, and 3) a sentiment of pride and gratitude toward the nation-state and political institution.

4.2.4 Summary

After investigating the audience’s reception of the national identity and patriotism, as for the national identity, it can be concluded that the audience’s reception of nation identity consists of:

- 1) A sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state, which refers to Chinese ethnicity
- 2) A sense of identification with the political institution refers to the Chinese military and the communist party.
- 3) A sense of identification with a shared history refers to the history of Yemen evacuation in 2015, a century of humiliation, and the history of resisting the U.S. and aiding Korea.

- 4) A sense of identification with collectivism.
- 5) A sense of differentiation from other countries.

In terms of patriotism, audiences receive it as:

- 1) The love of the nation-state and compatriots.
- 2) The willingness to devote and sacrifice for the well-being of the nation-state
- 3) The special concern is toward the well-being of the future of Chinese movies.
- 4) A sense of pride in the nation-state.
- 5) A sense of gratitude toward the political institution.



CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the summary of the findings in Chapter 4 and discusses findings and research questions. Firstly, the summary of the findings will be presented, followed by the discussion on the film as a soft power to promote Chinese national identity and patriotism and its relativity with the patriotic education campaign.

5.1 Summary

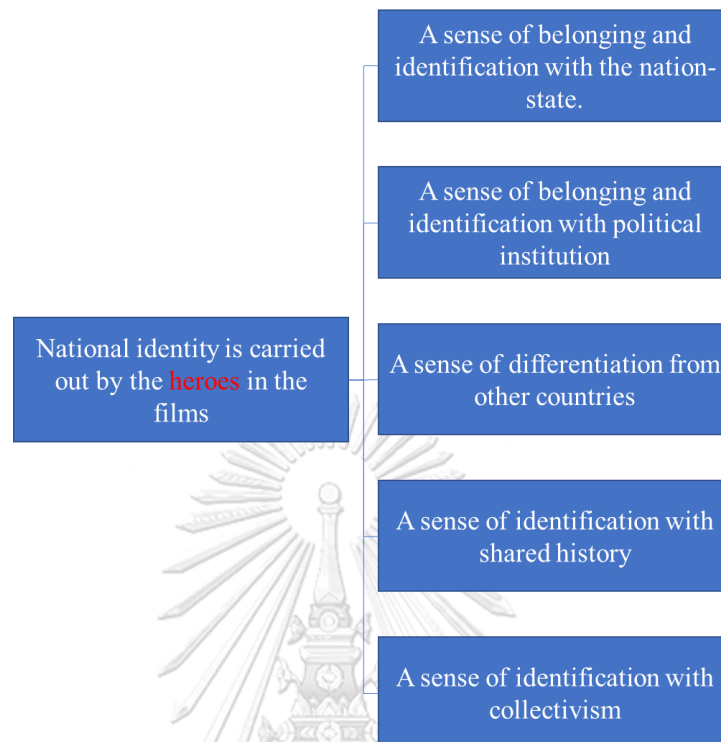
This chapter aims to answer the research questions of this research, which are what the national identity and patriotism expressed in the films and the audience's reception of the concept of national identity and patriotism from the films. Firstly, the summary of the findings will be presented to answer the questions, followed by the discussion on the film as a soft power to promote Chinese national identity and patriotism and its relativity with the patriotic education campaign.

5.1.1 National identity and patriotism expressed by the films

1) National identity

As for the Chinese national identity expressed in the three films generally can be summarized as 1) a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state. 2) a sense of belonging and identification with the political institution. 3) a sense of identification with collectivism. 4) a sense of identification with shared memory, and 5) a sense of differentiation from other countries.

Figure 5.1 National identity expressed in the films



Chapter 4 shows that the new mainstream films mainly use the hero's character to build a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state and political institution. The hero in these three films has a common point: they were soldiers of the Chinese army, such as the special forces, the Chinese navy, or the People's Volunteer Army. Meanwhile, they have a strong sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state and political institution, for example, the hero in *Wolf Warrior 2* always shows his identity as Chinese in the film. Though he is no longer a soldier in the special forces, he memorizes his responsibilities as a soldier of special forces all the time. The saying 'once wolf warrior, always wolf warrior' reflects his identification with the political institution.

A sense of identification with collectivism is also carried by the behavior and values of the hero. For example, in *Operation Red Sea*, the members of the Jiaolong Unit care about each other. The last behavior Zhuang Yu does before he dies is to recover the communication for the team with the warship.

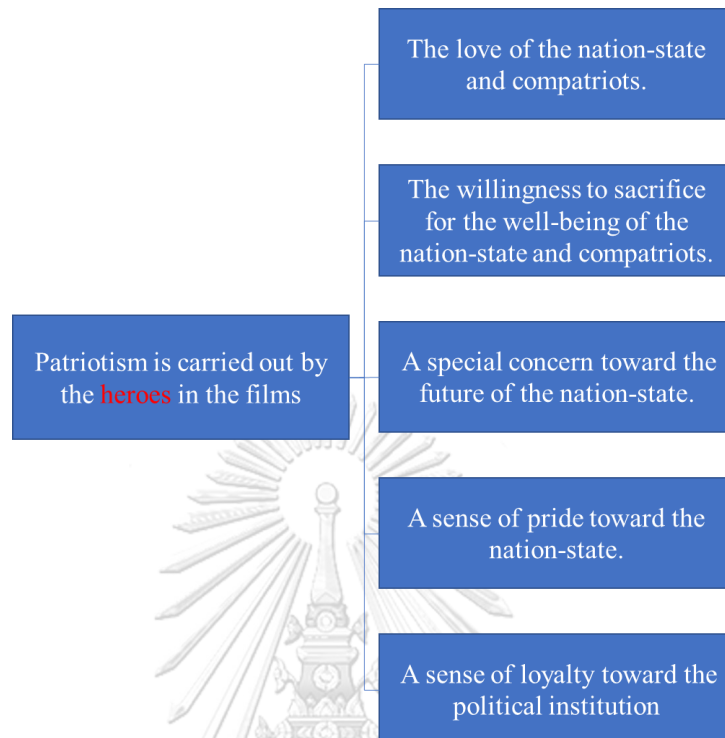
In terms of a sense of identification with a shared history, it is expressed by narrators in the film and the behavior of the hero, such as, in *Wolf Warrior 2*, Leng Feng's identification with the history of a century of humiliation and in the *Battle at Lake Changjin*, the narrators at the end, narrates the history of Resist the U.S and Aid Korea.

For a sense of differentiation from other countries, it mainly compared the character of the hero and the villain from physical and mental perspectives. For example, the *Battle at Lake Changjin* depicts the U.S army as arrogant and underestimating the enemy and depicts the Chinese army as persevering and brave, which reveals the differentiation from other countries from a mental perspective. And the scene of the Thanksgiving Day feast of the U.S. and the frozen potatoes of the Chinese army reflects such differentiation from the physical perspective.

2) Patriotism

The concept of Patriotism expressed in the films can mainly be summarized as 1) the love of the nation-state and compatriots. 2) the willingness to sacrifice for the well-being of the nation-state and compatriots. 3) a special concern toward the future of the nation-state. 4) a sense of loyalty toward the political institution, and 5) a sense of pride toward the nation-state.

Figure 5.2 Patriotism expressed in the films



As for the love of the nation-state and compatriots, it is carried out by the character of the hero in 3 films. All hero fights to protect their compatriots and the country from the villain, i.e., the People Volunteer Army fights with the U.S. army, to resist the invasion of the U.S. army and protect the safety of the nation-state and compatriots.

As for the willingness to sacrifice for the well-being of the nation-state and compatriots, it is also carried out by the hero. In the film's depiction, all heroes are willing to sacrifice for the nation-state and compatriots, i.e., in *Wolf Warrior 2*, Big Daddy tells Leng Feng that he will die for those Chinese workers and Leng Feng responds that he is born for them.

For a special concern toward the future of the nation-state, it is identified in the Battle at Lake Changjin from the motivation of the hero to fight the war. For example, Mei Sheng says in the film that the reason he fights the war is to protect the next generation from the war, and Mao Zedong demonstrates that this war aims to fight a bright future for China.

A sense of loyalty toward the political institution and a sense of pride in the nation-state is mainly identified in *Wolf Warrior 2* and is carried out by the hero Leng Feng and the event of an evacuation. For example, the saying ‘once wolf warrior, always wolf warrior’ reflects the hero's loyalty toward the political institution, which refers to the special forces army. And the pride in the nation-state is triggered by the event depicting the Chinese warship heading to the port to evacuate Chinese nationals while other countries are leaving.

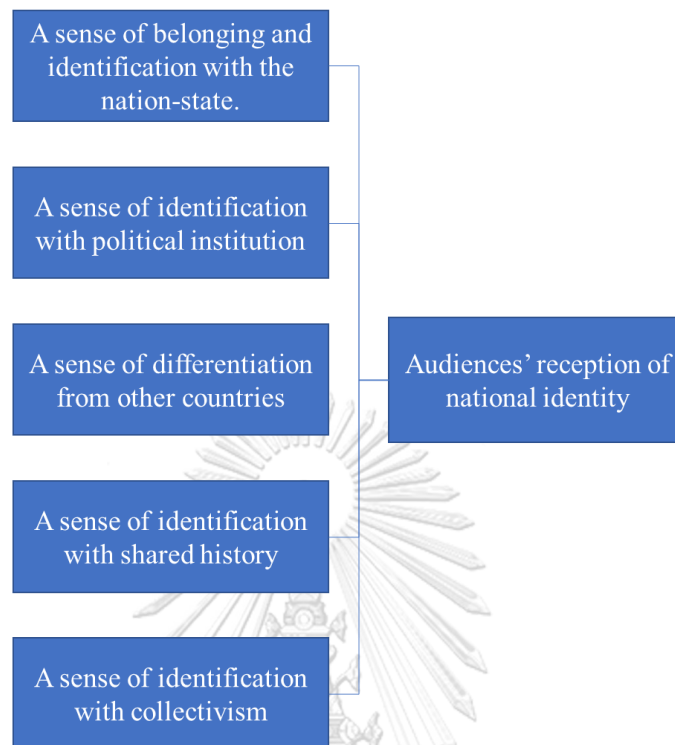
5.1.2 Audiences’ reception of national identity and patriotism

This paper deploys a qualitative content analysis on audiences’ reviews of the Douban Movie, which is the most authoritative film review online platform in China, and via analyzing the audience’s reviews, the reception of national identity and patriotism can be summarized as follow:

1) National identity

For audiences’ reception of the national identity from the films, it can be summarized as 1) a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state. 2) a sense of identification with the political institution. 3) a sense of differentiation from other countries. 4) a sense of identification with a shared history. 5) a sense of identification with collectivism

Figure 5.3 Audiences' reception of national identity



As for a sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state, since the audiences are all Chinese, most of the audience has a natural sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state. And these three films narrate stories of how the country protects Chinese nationals from wars. The sense of safety provided by the nation-state might enhance belonging and identification.

As for a sense of identification with the political institution, since the hero in the films has a common identity as a member of the Chinese army, no matter the special forces, the Chinese navy, or the PVA, the identity of the hero triggers such identification for audiences.

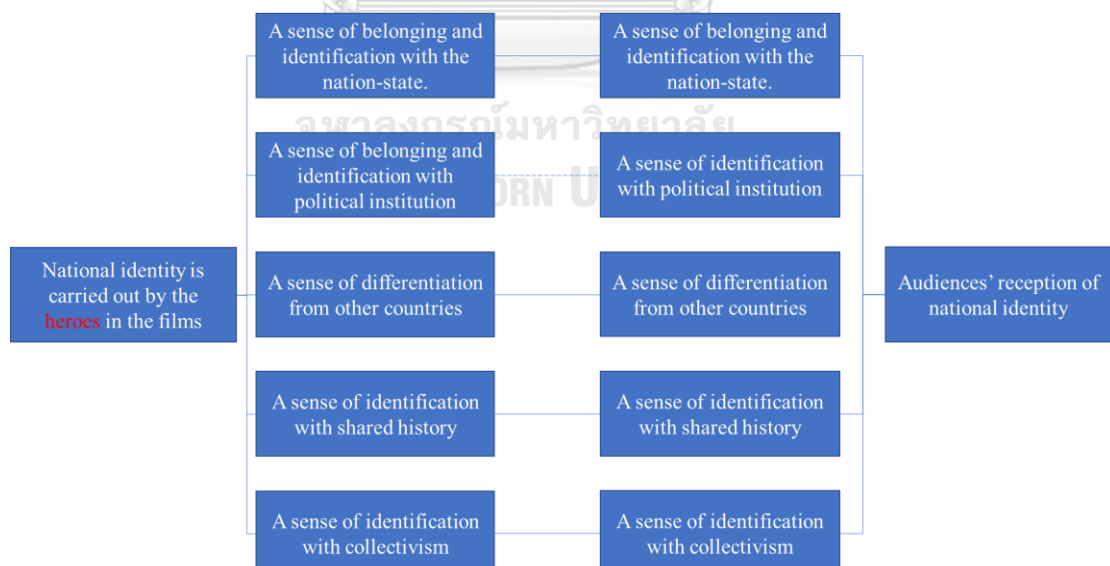
A sense of differentiation from other countries is triggered by comparing the real life of the audiences in China and the film depiction of life in other countries. Besides, comparing the hero and the villain also contributes to building a sense of differentiation from other countries for audiences.

As for a sense of identification with a shared history, since the story of the film has obvious directions toward the specific historical events in Chinese history, such as the Yemen evacuation in 2015 and the history Resist the U.S and Aid Korea. And the audiences have basic information on such events in their memory, especially grandparents of such audiences are the participants of such event, thus, a sense of identification with a shared history triggered by audiences' memory.

As for a sense of identification with collectivism, the Battle at Lake Changjin and Operation Red Sea narrate stories of a group of heroes. From the interaction and team cooperation of heroes, audiences identify a sense of collectivism from the films.

While comparing the film portrayal and the audiences' reception, it can be found that the messages of national identity have been well accepted by audiences which reveals the films have successfully planted the national identity into audiences' minds. However, a sense of belonging toward the political institution is hardly found in the reviews.

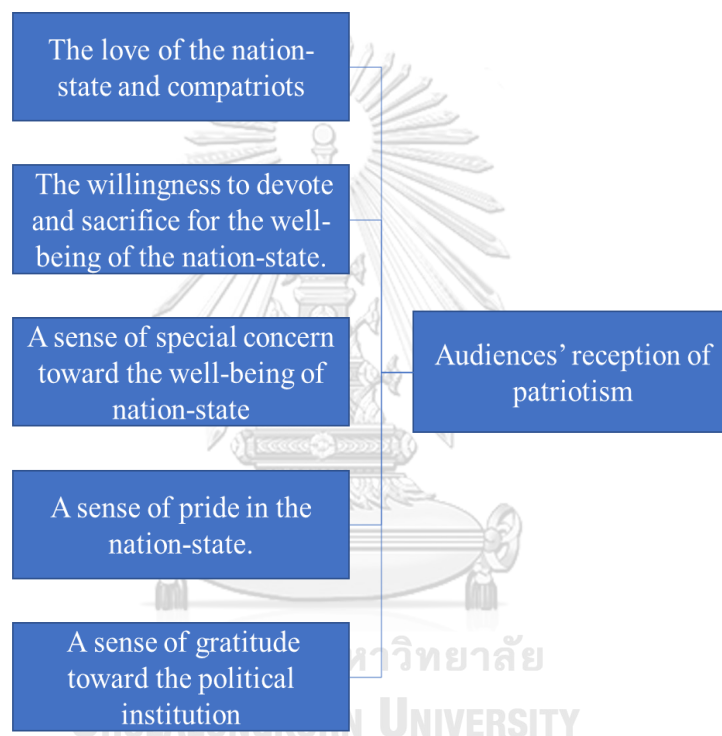
Figure 5.4 Comparison of national identity expressed in the film and received by audiences



2) Patriotism

For audiences' reception of the patriotism from the films, it can be summarized as 1) a sense of pride in the nation-state. 2) the love of the nation-state and compatriots. 3) a sense of gratitude toward the political institution, 4) a sense of special concern toward the nation-state 5) the willingness to devote and sacrifice for the well-being of the nation-state.

Figure 5.5 Audiences' reception of patriotism



As for a sense of pride in the nation-state, *Wolf Warrior 2* and *Operation Red Sea* tell stories of rescuing Chinese nationals from abroad, and *the Battle at Lake Changjin* depicts a story of that Chinese army defeating the mighty U.S. army in bad condition. Thus, the sense of pride in the nation-state is built from the mighty of the nation-state and audiences also compare the current life with the life of ancestors in the past, the development and growth also elicit a sense pride of audiences toward the nation-state.

The love of the nation-state and compatriots is triggered by the sense of safety provided by the nation-state and the sacrifice and dedication of the hero. Furthermore,

the negative reviews also play a role in triggering the love of the nation-state. Some audiences express their love of the nation-state by debating the negative review of Douban Movie.

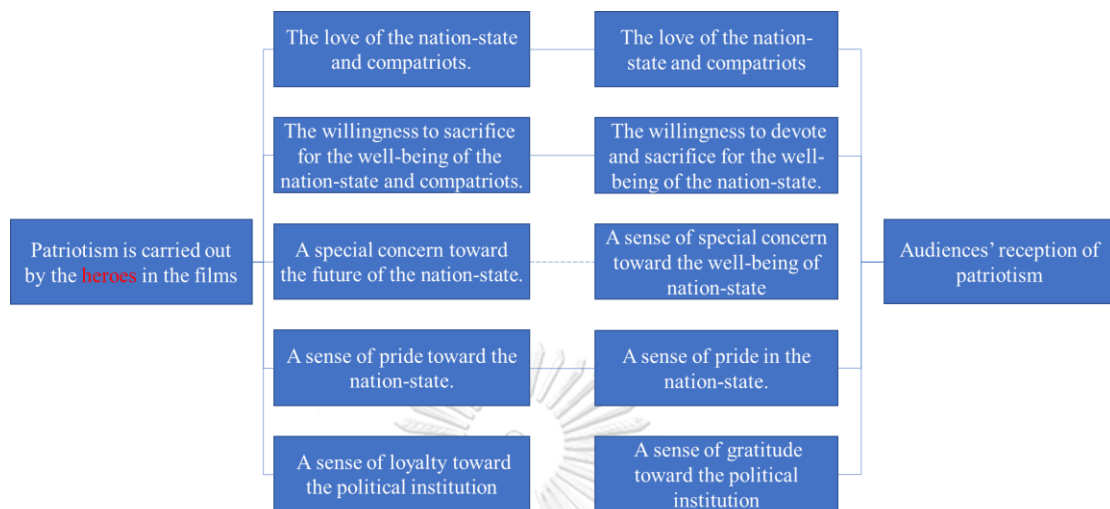
As for a sense of gratitude toward the political institution, all heroes of the three films have a common identity of soldiers, which is a member of the Chinese army. And in China, the army is the representative of the political institution. Thus, the sacrifice of the hero triggered audiences' gratitude to the political institution.

As for a sense of special concerns toward the nation-state, it is also a type of patriotism triggered by reviews on the platform in Operation Red Sea, and some audiences show their concerns on a large number of positive reviews on the film, which might reveal a trend of formalism in Chinese society.

As for the willingness to sacrifice for the well-being of the nation-state, audiences mainly sense it from the sacrifice of the hero in the film, for the audiences echo with the spirits of dedication and sacrifice for the nation-state.

While comparing the film portrayal and audiences' reception of the concept of patriotism, it can be found that the audiences have acquired most types of patriotism. However, loyalty toward the political institution can hardly be found in audiences' reviews, revealing a weak point that needs to be strengthened. As for the special concern toward the nation-state, the content of concern is different from the film, which is the special concern directly toward the bright future of the nation-state, while the audiences' concern is the worry of formalism. Although the content of concern differs, they all represent a concern for the well-being of the nation-state. Moreover, the audience's reaction toward the negative and positive reveals that the review part on the social media platform is also the battlefield of disseminating the ideologies.

Figure 5.6 Comparison of patriotism expressed in the film and received by the audiences



5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 The content of Chinese national identity

The concept of national identity expressed by the film and received by the audiences is almost equivalent and is resonant with the three dimensions of national identity proposed by Jiang. (1998). 1) Ethnic dimension: The sense of belonging and identification with the nation-state is the Chinese national identity from the ethnic dimension, which refers to the identity derived from blood relationships or a subjective sense of sameness of an individual toward a Chinese ethnicity. Meanwhile, the sameness of an individual toward a specific ethnicity also reveals a sense of differentiation toward other ethnicities, which echoes Jenkins (2014) argument of two levels of identification which are identity and differentia, a sense of differentiation of Chinese audiences toward other countries reflects the consistencies of Chinese people's identification with China. Therefore, a sense of differentiation is also an identity in the ethnicity dimension. 2) Cultural dimension: the sense of identification with the collectivism and shared the country is the Chinese national identity from the cultural dimension, which refers to the belonging triggered by shared collective memories, values, customs, and historical traditions, which are values of collectivism and the shared history of Yemen evacuation in 2015, history of a century of humiliation and the history of Resist the U.S. and Aid Korea. 3) Political dimension:

the sense of identification with the political institution is the Chinese national identity from the institutional dimension, which refers to political identity that derives from the agreement of an individual toward specific political institutions, which are the communist party and the army. Thus, the national identity expressed in the film and received by the audience can also be classified as 1) an ethnic identity of the ethnic group of China whereas a differentia from other ethnicities. 2) a cultural identity of the common value of collectivism and the cultural identity of shared history and memories in Chinese people's minds. 3) an institutional identity of identification with the party and the Chinese army.

From reviewing the dimensions and levels of national identity, it can be found that the Chinese national identity is similar to the concept of national identity that is well accepted by academia. However, compared with the findings of Huntington and Dunn (2004) on the American national identity, which is that the ethnic identity is melting, the cultural identity is obscuring, and the political identity is enhancing, the situation of national identity in Chinese society is different. From the findings of this study, the ethnic, cultural, and political identity of Chinese in society all influence Chinese people. It might be because the ethnic-cultural-political community formed by the system of enfeoffment and loyalty in feudalistic China (J. Xu., 2015) still influences present Chinese society. In Chinese people's minds, the political community is still linked with the ethnic and cultural community. Thus, the identification with the political institution can remain since the ethnic and cultural identity remains.

However, from the reviews from the audience, the political identity is relatively weak than the other two identities, for periodic reviews show a sense of belonging toward the political institution, which might be due to the negative influence of globalization on ideologies which refers to the harm on legitimacy and agreement on the political system, social orders and main ideologies (Han, 2012). With the end of the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s and the implementation of Reform and Open up policies, the ideologies from the western world had spread over China, and students received new thoughts from outside China. The beliefs crisis had occurred in China refers to faith in socialism (xinxin weiji), a crisis of belief in

Marxism (xinyang weiji), and a crisis of trust in the party (xinren weiji) (Gregory P Fairbrother, 2003) and led to the Tian'an Men demonstration in 1989 (Zhao, 1998) which can be considered as the examples of the influence of foreign ideologies on Chinese society. And later, in 1994, the patriotic education campaign was carried out officially to enhance the political education of the young Chinese. In 2001, China formally joined the WTO and opened up further, and the communication and exchanges between China and international society became frequent. An increasing number of foreign cultural products rushed into the Chinese market, and the Chinese people embraced the world further. Thus, the negative influence of globalization should be considered for the weak appearance of political identity. Moreover, through the three films, the political institution mainly refers to the Chinese army, the direct image of the communist party only appears in the Battle at Lake Changjin, and the identity of soldiers is strongly signified by occupation. Therefore, this might be why the belonging toward political institutions is weak.

In conclusion, the findings on the national identity of Chinese people are consistent with the classification of national identity that is well accepted worldwide. However, the condition of national identity in Chinese society is different from other countries, such as the U.S. Meanwhile, the findings of this study partly support that the effective factors of Chinese national identity are cultural identity and political identity. Besides, this study also suggests that when talking about national identity, ethnic identity also should be considered, for it can be found in Chinese films and audiences reviews

5.2.2 The concept of patriotism in Chinese people's mind

The concept of patriotism is partly in resonance with the definition proposed by Stephen Nathanson (1993), which refers to special affections for own country, which is the love of the nation-state and compatriots and a sense of pride in the nation-state in this study, special concerns of the well-being of own country and the willingness to sacrifice for the well-being of own country which can be found in the findings of this study as well.

The definition of patriotism proposed by Nathanson reflects the western definition of patriotism agreed by western scholars. They exclude the special affection for its current government or political institutions in the element of patriotism (Costa, 2020). However, the findings of this study reflect that Chinese people have special gratitude toward their political institution, which in the study refers to the party and the army, which resonates with the guiding thoughts of the patriotic education campaign. The patriotic education campaign requires that Chinese patriotism be the love continuum of the love of party, the nation-state, and socialism. Since 1994, the patriotic education campaign has been launched in China for nearly 30 years, and the influence of the patriotic education campaign on the attitude of audiences cannot be ignored.

Moreover, according to Fan's (2007) study of junior high school students' gratitude, almost all students acknowledge the necessity of gratitude, 100% agree with the gratitude toward the country and nature, and 95% agree with the gratitude toward society. Since the concept of country is a continuum of ethnic, cultural, and political communities, the affection and gratitude toward the soldiers will also be transferred to the nation-state and society.

Besides, such affective sentiment echoes the definition of political patriotism proposed by Van Hooft (2009), and Canovan (1996) thought that patriotism should refer to citizens' political loyalty to their shared polity. Therefore, the effective sentiment for the political institution should also be considered when talking about Chinese patriotism.

In conclusion, the patriotism of the Chinese people does not only refer to the love and pride in the nation-state, the special concerns toward the nation-state, and the willingness to sacrifice for the well-being of the nation-state. It also refers to the special affection toward the political institution, which differs from the definition of some western scholars. Thus, when talking about patriotism in the context of China, the role of the political institution should not be ignored.

5.2.3 The success of Mainstream Film as a Channel of the Patriotic Education Campaign

According to the *Outlines on implementing the patriotic education campaign in the new era*, the film is a tool to carry out the Patriotic Education Campaign, and the patriotic education function has been noticed by some Chinese researchers. From the comparison of the films and audiences' reviews of the concept of national identity and patriotism, it can be found that audiences have well accepted the ideologies expressed by the film. Moreover, in the reviews of the films, there are 158 reviews for *Wolf Warrior 2*, 39 reviews for *Operation Red Sea*, and 40 reviews for the *Battle at Lake Changjin* have mentioned that they think the film has the function of patriotic education. Some reviews also mentioned that the school and company organize them or provide the tickets to them to go to watch these movies. And based on the news on the Internet, it can be found that many universities and official departments have organized their staff to watch the films (DayDayNews, 2022).

Moreover, as *the outlines* mentions, the patriotic education campaign aims to educate Chinese people about China's Dream, the history of the party and the nation, Chinese traditional culture, and the importance of national security and defense. Via analyzing the films, it can be found that they will disseminate the information of identification with the shared history of a century of humiliation, resisting the U.S., and aiding Korea in *Wolf Warrior 2* and the *Battle at Lake Changjin*. In the *Battle at Lake Changjin* and *Operation Red Sea*, the films carry out the traditional Chinese value of collectivism. Furthermore, the *Battle at Lake Changjin* was released in 2021, during which the relationship between the U.S. and China was deteriorating, and since the segregation between China and the U.S had broken up in the 1970s, the films talked about the Korean War vanished (Park, 2021). Re-release film related to the Korean war, like the *Battle at Lake Changjin*, has their consideration in the political aspect. It not only plays a role in carrying out the party's political ideologies but also strengthens the importance of national security and defense for Chinese nationals in a special moment that fulfills its function of patriotic education. Besides, all three films depict the triumph and the might of Chinese heroes that imply the eagerness to fulfill China's Dream of the nation's great rejuvenation. China's Dream is the concept firstly

proposed by Chairman Xi Jinping in 2012 (Chai & Chai, 2013) which reflects the political aspiration of the Chinese Communist Party to bring China back into a period of great prosperity. Thus, the triumph of Chinese heroes in the films, especially by portraying completing the mission in foreign countries and defeating the U.S., which is the most powerful country in the world, exhibits the fulfillment of China's Dream to some extent to the audiences and that also triggers national pride of Chinese. And the political identity of the heroes in the films triggers the identification and positive attitude of audiences toward the Chinese political institution as well, which is beneficial for wielding Chinese soft power in maintaining the legitimacy of the party.

In conclusion, with the entertainment and education function, the new mainstream film has become an important tool that cannot be ignored when discussing the Chinese patriotic education campaign. Moreover, the Chinese patriotic education campaign is a power that cannot be ignored while constructing Chinese soft power.

5.2.4 The success of the Mainstream Film as Soft Power in Promoting National Identity and Patriotism

- 1) The role of the mainstream film as soft power in promoting national identity and patriotism in domestic China

As a cultural product, the film combines art, history, and technology, reaching its communication goal via telling stories. The definition of soft power refers to the ability to affect others and elicit positive attraction via co-optive methods such as culture, foreign policies, and political and social values to reach the preferred outcomes (Nye, 2021) The new mainstream film is a suitable carrier of China's soft power. And From the scores of *Wolf Warrior 2* (7.1), *Operation Red Sea* (8.2), and the *Battle at Lake Changjin* (7.4) on the Douban Movie, it is reasonable to state that the relatively high scores of these three movies have partly proved that China's soft power performance well in domestic China. Furthermore, by analyzing the review of audiences of the first round of three films, for *Wolf Warrior 2*, 3771 out of 4761 reviews rank a score that is higher than average. For *Operation Red Sea*, 1967 out of 2243 reviews give positive feedback, and for the *Battle at Lake Changjin*, 586 out of

602 reviews report good for it. Such feedback indicates the preference of the Chinese audiences and the effectiveness of China's soft power in domestic spheres.

2) The role of the mainstream film as soft power in the international sphere

Some researchers have researched the comparison of media coverage of *Wolf Warrior 2* by comparing appraisal resources in *China Daily* and *BBC*, and they found that the appreciation resources are more frequently shown on *China Daily*, and affect and judgment resources in *BBC* are used more frequently than *China Daily* (Wang & Ruan, 2019). Such findings are similar to *Operation Red Sea* and the *Battle at Lake Changjin*. Appreciation is the most frequent resource that can be found in Chinese media coverage. In contrast, the negative comment on these three films can be easily found on *Rotten Potatoes*, such as the foreign media considering the *Battle at Lake Changjin* is a propaganda film carried out by the Chinese government (Hoad, 2021; KERR, 2021; McCarthy, 2021). It depicts a jingoish image of the U.S. army (Hay, 2022; Hoad, 2021; Tsai, 2021) to narrate that China is good and the U.S. is bad (KERR, 2021). Such conflicts in the media coverage in foreign countries and domestic China reveals a dilemma of China's soft power on the international stage.

3) The role of the mainstream film in reflecting the changing trend of China's soft power

Besides, via counting the negative feedback in the reviews of the three films, *Wolf Warrior 2* gets 990 negative feedback which is 20.79% of the total in the first-round selection, and *Operation Red Sea* gets 235 which is 10.4% of the total reviews of first-round selection and the *Battle at Lake Changjin* gets 16 negative feedback out of 602 reviews which are 3% of the first-round selection reviews. Combining the research finding of the Edelman Trust Barometer in 2018, 2019, and 2022 which show the general trust of the population toward the government in the years 2017, 2018, and 2021, the release year of the three films, respectively, some trails of the declining of negative feedback year on year can be inferred. In the trust report for 2018, 2019, and 2021, the general population's trust experiences a rise in these three years from 84 to 86, then 91 (Edelman Trust barometer, 2018, 2019, 2022). By

comparing the changing trend of the number of negative feedbacks on the films and the general trust of the Chinese population, a negative trend can be found, the negative feedback is declining and the trust of Chinese people toward the government is inclining which reflects that China's soft power is enhancing in domestic circumstance and the new mainstream film can be considered as a reflection for such transformation.

Furthermore, by comparing the media coverage and audiences' reviews, it can be found that there are some negative still can be found on social media platform like Douban Movie but cannot be found in official media coverage in China. Considering the requirement proposed by Chairman Xi Jinping in 2016, which requires the state-owned media should be loyal to the party (Guangcha.cn, 2016) and the latest prohibition on private capital participation in media (Hu & Liu, 2021) in China, which reveals a stricter restraint on media control in China. Though the regulations seem to set requirements on state-owned media, the private-owned media are under a tighter supervision as well. Since 2017, the online news platform like Toutiao and ifeng were under stricter supervision (BBC, 2017), and several online social media platforms were received a notification to rectify, such as Weibo and Zhihu (Applenews,2021), especially, Douban, it received 22 notifications for rectification with an accumulated fine of 10 million Yuan within the year of 2021 (Sohu, 2021). Therefore, combining the situation of media restraint and the declining trend of negative feedback and formalism mentioned in No.749, it is possible to postulate that the sharply declining of negative feedback on the *Battle at Lake Changjin* might be affected by the increasingly strict supervision of media to some extent.

In conclusion, by analyzing the reviews and media coverage of the mainstream films in the domestic sphere, a good performance can be found that echoes the study of Blanchard and Lu (2012), who did research on the Olympic Games 2008 and found that China's soft power has a better performance in the domestic sphere. However, while viewing the media coverage in foreign countries, the negative reviews of the mainstream film are more than the positive ones, which reflects a dilemma for China's soft power in the international sphere. And the success of China's soft power in the domestic sphere also points out that domestic political supervision and support

from the government should be taken into consideration, and it also echoes the opinion of Edney (2015) on the influence of domestic politics on China's soft power.

5.2.5 Framing and Agenda Setting in the Films

According to researchers' studies, framing and agenda-setting are tools for a country to implement its soft power and have been adopted by some countries like Turkey, China, and America to deploy their soft power with positive feedback. Thus, the strategies of framing and agenda-setting adopted by the films cannot be ignored as well.

Wolf Warrior 2 and Operation Red Sea tell the story of China, and the story's setting is in Africa, which is not the target market of the films. Thus, the films have not been released in Africa. However, the story of the Battle at Lake Changjin happened among three parties: China, the U.S., and Korea. The film only tells the story from China's perspective and Korean characters disappear in the film. Thus, some film commentators from South Korea criticize that the Battle at Lake Changjin's portrayal of the war seems like it is the war that only happened between China and America and ignored the position of Korea in this war. And in the history of South Korea, this war is depicted as an invasion launched by the North Korean and Chinese (Ryall, 2021). Thus, the effect of framing can be identified in this film.

Since Wolf Warrior 2 and the Battle at Lake Changjin are films produced to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Liberation Army and the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party, respectively, the release dates of these two films have been deliberately selected which are 27th July 2017 that is four days before the Army Day and 30th September 2021 that is one day before the National Day of China. Moreover, since the segregation between China and the U.S had been broken up in the 1970s, the films that talked about the Korean War vanished (Park, 2021). Thus, the re-talking of this war has its political intention inside, just as the Xinhuanews (2021) comments that this movie will inject energy into the Chinese film industry under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic and the spirits of the Chinese soldiers in the film will trigger

patriotism among audiences (Chinanews, 2021). The agenda-setting strategy can be easily detected from the selection of the release date of these films.

In conclusion, implementing China's soft power also adopts the strategies of framing and agenda-setting, which echoes Rothman (2011) study.

5.2.6 China's social media control cultivates an advantageous domestic circumstance for China's soft power

Compared with other countries, China has a relatively restrictive media environment in the world, and it has become more restrictive gradually. Qin, Strömberg, and Wu (2017) do research on the posts on Sina Weibo from 2009 to 2013. They find that the Chinese government provides a freer environment for people to express their opinions on social media platforms, for some sensitive materials such as official corruption and protest can still be found on Sina Weibo. However, they also find that a more restrictive control on social media has been implemented since 2012, which caused a fall in the number of posts by approximately 30% on Sina Weibo from 2012 to 2013, and they posit that the flow has changed to another freer platform—WeChat which faces less control than Sina Weibo (Qin et al., 2017). Moreover, Reporters Without Bound—a France-based watchdog group, ranks the Chinese press freedom index at 175 out of 180 (Bound, 2022), which implies that China's media are experiencing one of the most restrictive censorship in the world. In 2016, Chairman Xi Jinping proposed the principle that the media should be under surveillance of the party. The media should reflect the party's ideologies and the people's voices (Zheng, 2017). In 2021, the National Development and Reform Commission of China released a Market Access Negative List (2021 version) to seek public opinions, which regulates that private capital cannot invest in journalism (Hu & Liu, 2021). And in 2022, the Cyberspace Administration of China plans to deploy surveillance on every single comment on social media to "*safeguard national security and public interests, and protect the legitimate rights and interests of citizens,*" and the public feedback on this regulation will be gathered until July 1st, 2022 (Yip, 2022).

The more restrictive the surveillance is, the more powerful the control of the government toward social media is. Researchers and foreign media practitioners have already noticed the power of the Chinese government over social media ((Xu & Albert, 2017). The restrictive censorship on social media, news and other Internet platforms will locate the watchdog department of the government in a powerful position to disseminate the information according to their needs, which will cultivate the soil for China's domestic soft power to grow stronger. The polarized media coverage in China and foreign media and the decrease in the negative audiences' reviews of the three films can partly explain these reasons. And it can be predicted that the more restrictive control on social media will make China's soft power more powerful and benefit the internal propaganda.

5.3 Practical Implications

This research provides insights into the concepts of Chinese national identity and patriotism, from which various practical implications can be found.

Firstly, this research takes the new mainstream film as a cut-in point to study China's soft power that supplements research on the influence of China's soft power in domestic circumstances, which is rarely studied by academia. Secondly, as Kracauer (1997) said, "*the films of a nation reflect its mentality in a more direct way than any other artistic media.*" via analyzing the films and the audience's reception of the films, this research provides a way to know Chinese audiences' opinions and values clearly which offers readers an opportunity to know China society furtherly and up to date. Thirdly, from the findings of this research, the role of film as a soft power has been revealed, as well as the influence of soft power in domestic circumstances. Therefore, this research provides a practical tool for Chinese media practitioners in government to consider while doing a campaign to improve national cohesion. And based on the findings of this study, the insights into Chinese audiences' social preferences have revealed that collectivism is still the main ideology in Chinese society which should be highlighted by researchers and media practitioners in future studies and campaigns to trigger the resonance from Chinese. Eventually, the

lack of belonging toward the political institution in the findings should be aware by the relative authorities as well, for the weakening point of China's soft power.

All in all, this research provides a useful understanding of Chinese audiences and soft power as well as the Chinese patriotic education campaign to help readers understand China further and deeply. The findings of this research can be adopted in political communication and by business media practitioners to target Chinese customers and develop communication strategies.

5.4 Limitation and direction for future study

Though this research has covered the sender and receiver parts of communication mode, it still has some limitations. This research only analyzes the reviews from Douban Movie, which cannot cover all Chinese audiences of all ages, for there are other media platforms that also have a large number of Chinese users, like Weibo, and the users of Douban Movie are relatively young. Thus, the research only partly represents the thoughts of Chinese audiences. Secondly, all data in content analysis is analyzed by one researcher. Therefore, some subjective biases might exist. Finally, the three films selected in this research all talk about the stories of soldiers, which are only one type in the new mainstream film. Though these films are the top three in Chinese film history, they only provide analysis of a specific type.

To further expand this research, more social media platforms can be considered to gather feedback from audiences, and more themes of mainstream films can be taken into consideration while analyzing, such as the story of common heroes in daily life. Moreover, from the audiences' reviews, the water army's influence has been mentioned, which is an important force that can influence public opinion on the internet recently (Jiaze. Xu., 2021). Thus, for future study, the water army as soft power is also a good direction to study China's soft power. Furthermore, from the three films and audiences' reception, the hero's character's significance has also been revealed. Thus, the national hero's role in a country's soft power is also worth considering for future studies.

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