

Everyday nationalism online
A case study of the Facebook discussion about the status of Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

This Research is inspired by the recent debate surrounding the Taiwanese K-pop star Chou Tzuyu who apologised to the mainland Chinese audiences for her wave of the national flag of Taiwan in a Korean variety show. The various discussion about Chou and the Taiwan issue after Chou's apology on Facebook provide valuable researching material of studying the everyday nationalism of mainland Chinese/Taiwanese. To understand how mainland Chinese/Taiwanese refer to nationalism in their everyday discussion on Facebook, the comments of the two news articles about Chou and Taiwan's status posted by BBC News on Facebook was analysed, and the research question is phrased as: how is nationalism challenged/reproduced in people's discussion about Taiwan's status on Facebook? To answer this question, a qualitative discourse analysis was conducted. The analysis categorised the comments into four different groups according to their main arguments as well as the association/variation, the characterisation of the agency, and the emphasis/exclusion made by the users. By interpreting the comments with the help of the Micheal Skey's (2011) five dimensions of national discourse as well as the nationalism theories of the modernists, primordialists, and ethnosymbolists, it is found that nationalism is both challenged and reproduced in those comments. It is challenged through some mainland Chinese users' reluctance to be generalised as Chinese and it is reproduced through people's different reference towards territory, history, culture, politics, and self/other distinction. Besides, it is discovered that different groups of people use the approach of modernism, of primordialism, and of ethnosymbolism respectively in their reproduction of nationalism. It is concluded that the spatial, temporal, cultural, political as well as the self/other national discourses are the major discourses people refer to in their daily reproduction of nationalism. And people may be unconsciously influenced by the existing nationalism ideologies proposed by certain political groups in their reproduction of different versions of nationalism.

KEYWORDS: *Nationalism, Taiwan, China, Modernism, Primordialism, Ethnosymbolism.*

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Research Topic

Chou Tzuyu, a member of the multi-national K-pop girl group Twice, triggered a dispute concerning the relationship between China mainland and Taiwan on Internet in January, 2016.

In November 2015, Tzuyu introduced herself from Taiwan and held the flag of the Republic of China (the official name of Taiwan) alongside that of South Korea on the Korean variety show *My Little Television*. A pro-China mainland Taiwanese celebrity Huang An then accused her as someone who strongly supports Taiwan's independence from China through his Weibo account (a social networking site like Twitter that based in mainland China). Mainland Chinese netizens were angry towards Tzuyu as she earns money from mainland Chinese audience while holding a pro-independence stance (Jackson, 2016). Later, Twice was barred from some Chinese television and Tzuyu's activities in mainland China was suspended.

On January 15, 2016, the day before the Taiwanese general election, the president of JYP Entertainment (the talent agency and music production company Tzuyu has signed with), Park Jin Young apologised to the Chinese media through his Weibo account. Meanwhile, JYP also released a video showing Tzuyu reading an apology that says:

"There's only one China. The two sides of the Taiwan Strait are one. I will always consider myself as a Chinese person and feel proud of this [...] As a Chinese person, I feel very very sorry and guilty that my inappropriate words and actions while abroad harmed my company and the feelings of netizens on both sides of the Taiwan Strait [...] I've decided to terminate all my activities in China (mainland China) and seriously reflect on this. Once again I apologise to everyone. I'm sorry" (BBC, 2016 b).

Many Taiwanese people watched the video and felt it was humiliating and a sign of Taiwan's predicament that Chou had to apologise for waving her nation's flag. This idea was emphasised by Tsai Ing-wen, who is the chairwoman of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taiwan which has a claim for Taiwan's independence and is recognised by the Beijing government as the national separatists (Lin, 2016). Tsai finally beat her opponent - Eric Chu from the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) that favours the unification of China mainland and Taiwan - and won the presidential election on January 16, 2016 (BBC, 2016 a). Some people believed that Tsai won her final votes because of Chou's event since this issue stimulates Taiwanese people's need for their distinct national identity (BBC, 2016 b). And because of Chou's wave of flag, the Taiwanese netizens had debate with the mainland Chinese netizens concerning the status of Taiwan as an independent country or not on Internet, especially on Facebook.

My research focuses on Chou's event and pays attention to the issue of nationalism in people's everyday life. According to scholars, nationalism began in the 19th century when the

dynastic states of the Western empires started constructing their own nation-state. The governors used the discourse of nationalism to apply the idea of nation to the whole country. The emphasis on nation, a concept which includes everyone in the nation-state, helped to converge different political groups together, and thus contributed to preserving the power of the state (Anderson, 2006). As a self-claimed nation that not being recognised by many other countries in the world as independent and sovereign, Taiwan has struggled with the issue of nationalism for a long time. After the 1949 China Civil War, China mainland and Taiwan was ruled by two different political systems separately as the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC). Since the democratic reform happened in Taiwan in 1980s, more and more Taiwanese people argued for their distinct Taiwanese identity rather than a Chinese identity (Ke, 2014). In recent years, the debate between the Chinese nationalists and Taiwanese nationalists on the status of Taiwan is becoming more and more fierce, and Chou's issue is a good example of the conflict between the claim for a Chinese identity and the claim for a Taiwanese identity.

The recent debate happened online surrounding Chou attracted my attention. Even though the Taiwan Issue has caused many debates between Chinese nationalists and Taiwanese nationalists, but it was the first time that so many mainlanders and people in Taiwan participated in the discussion publicly. Previously, because of the political restriction and technological limit, for example the control of the state and the lack of communication platforms, the discussions about Taiwan's status mostly happened within the group of people who have the same opinion. Even if there was a mutual debate, the scale of it remained small. But in recent years, the development of Internet and social media allow more communications between different groups. Especially in mainland China, even though the Beijing government still regulates the Internet for its political concerns (e.g. block selected websites that may harm the government), the mainlanders can always find their ways to get access to information (e.g. set up VPN to connect to the blocked sites). Anyway, the wide use of social media give the public, not only the scholars and the activists, but also the ordinary people the opportunity to express their ideas and points of view, and thus contributes to the online open discussions about the Taiwan Issue.

It is then of my interest to analyse those online discussions since they offer a good opportunity to study the viewpoints of the general public in regards to the status of Taiwan. Formerly, the national statements about Taiwan were mostly made by the states and activists. But seldom the voice of the ordinary people were heard. It is widely known by people that the government of mainland China and Taiwan have different claims on the status of Taiwan, but it remains unnoticed how the ordinary citizens in mainland China, Taiwan as well as other countries think about the Taiwan Issue and what are their arguments. It is the task of this research - by using the online discussions about Chou's issue

as the researching material - to study the ordinary people's thoughts on Taiwan and how they may challenge/reproduce nationalism in their discussions.

1.2. Research question

This research focuses on the online discussion happened on Facebook where the debate between the mainland Chinese and Taiwanese were most fierce. Even though Facebook is blocked in China, many mainland netizens used VPN to bypass the government's firewall and registered on Facebook to argue with the "Taiwanese independents" (Zheng, 2016). Especially, this research concentrates on the discussion that happened in the comment area under the two news articles about Chou Tzuyu posted by BBC News on Facebook. Facebook was the platform that mainland Chinese people chose to use in order to discuss with the Taiwanese about Chou's issue (Zheng, 2016). And the BBC news articles generated more systematic discussions comparing to the scattered posts or comments of the individuals. Also, comparing to the other news agencies' articles about Chou's issue posted on Facebook, the articles posted by BBC News attracted more comments. Based on these two reasons, the comments of two news articles about Chou and Taiwan posted by BBC News on Facebook was chosen as the researching object. To understand how those comments may express ordinary people's challenge towards/reproduction of nationalism, the general research question is phrased as:

How is nationalism challenged/reproduced in people's discussion about Taiwan's status on Facebook?

And to answer this question, three sub-questions have to be answered.

Sub RQ 1: What are the major statements about Chou Tzuyu and Taiwan?

What are the main ideas that people have on Chou's issue? What are their views on Chou's behaviour and apology? How do they identify themselves in regards to their nation and national identity? Those are the questions that need to be answered firstly.

Sub RQ 2: Is nationalism challenged/reproduced?

Are people's statements congruent with the main idea of nationalism or not? Are they challenging the nationalism ideology or reproducing it? These are the questions that need to be figured out in the second step.

Sub RQ 3: In what way do people challenge/reproduce nationalism?

If people's claim do not corresponds with the main ideas of nationalism, how do they challenge it? And if the comments are in accordance with the main arguments of nationalism, in what kind of ways do people refer to nationalism and what kind of nationalist approaches do they use?

Nationalism, in this research, is treated as an ideology developed by social groups to legitimise their status (Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 2008). It is (re)produced by people in their everyday activities and thus become naturalised in people's life. It is possible that people may refer to certain nationalism ideology without noticing that they are doing so (Billig, 1995). In this thesis, a discrepancy between people's idea of the nation and the notion of nation proposed by nationalism theories is considered as a challenge towards nationalism. And if people's idea of the nation corresponds with the nationalism theories' arguments on nation, then it could be said that nationalism is reproduced.

Studying how nationalism is challenged/reproduced in people's daily life help us reflect on our own sense of national identity. And to do this research, a qualitative discourse analysis which help people understand social reality through analysing texts will be used. Since this research analyses the textual comments of the users and nationalism as an ideology is constituted by national discourses, a qualitative discourse analysis is the appropriate choice. Especially, the analysis will be informed by Tonkiss's four pointers of doing discourse analysis: the key themes, the association/variation, the characterisation of agents, and the emphasis/exclusion.

1.3. Scientific and social relevance of the research

Although nationalism studies began in the 18th century, it is only until the end of the last century that scholars like Billig started recognising the importance to study nationalism in routine. Nationalism is an attractive theory for people who struggle to create a new state and it is often associated with people who are regarded as extremists (Billig, 1995). This is why even at present, most studies about nationalism are still connected with the state and activists, but not so much about ordinary people. For example, in the current world in which the world order is seemingly settled, we are still witnessing some nationalist movements such as the seeking of independence of Scotland, of Catalan region, and of Quebec area. But most researches of those movements are about how the state and activists each make use of nationalism as an ideology to justify their position while less attention is paid to the how the local people think about their nation and national identities.

Some scholars have made efforts to analyse how people make sense of their national identities in their routine activities like watching football games, shopping, and driving (Wodak et al., 1999; Cordor, 2000; Edensor, 2004; Skey, 2011). But seldom attention is paid to the daily activities of

social networking online. And this research, as it takes look at the daily discussion online, will add knowledge to how people unconsciously address nationalism in their everyday communication online. The possible similarities or differences of (re)producing nationalism online and offline could be discerned, and it could evaluate the applicability of the theories of banal nationalism to online media studies. Especially, this research centers on the ordinary people's use of nationalism on Taiwan Issue. Comparing to previous studies on Chinese/Taiwanese nationalism studies that only address the state and activists, this research could fill the research gap by offering understandings of how ordinary citizens make sense of their Chinese/Taiwanese identities in terms of nationalism. Besides, as mentioned, the recent debate surrounding Chou Tzuyu was the first time the Taiwanese people and mainland Chinese discuss their opinions on the status of Taiwan so openly and publicly, it will certainly contribute to everyday nationalism studies in general and Chinese/Taiwanese nationalism in particular.

What is more, this research focuses on the Facebook discussions. It could add knowledge to media studies as it could figure out how citizens make sense of their national identities and express their feeling of national belonging on social media. In particular, previous researches about mainland China in the field of media always put a lot of emphasis on the state and especially the internet censorship imposed by the PRC government (Tsui, 2003; Mackinnon, 2008; Zhao, 2009; Liang & Lu, 2010; Xu, Mao, & Halderman, 2011). Not many of them looked at the online behaviour of the normal citizens. And among the media researches about mainland China or Taiwan, very small number of them connect nationalism with media studies to analyse nationalism online. Therefore, this research could also help the readers have a better understanding of the online nationalism in Taiwan and mainland China.

In addition, this research could offer the readers a general view of how ordinary people think about the Taiwan Issue. Although the findings could not influence the decisions of the government, they could serve as the basis for the general public, social organisations and political institutions to understand the opinions of the netizens. Besides, as the research will present the opinions of different groups of people, it could also help the mainland Chinese, the Taiwanese, as well as the people from places outside Taiwan and mainland China understand each others' similarities and differences. Each group may have its distinct argument, but to understand other people's view is also important for the future relationship between Taiwan and mainland China. And this research could provide source for people to know about each others' opinions and to reflect on them. What is more, people could be aware of the fact that they may unconsciously refer to nationalism even if they feel that they are not and be more critical towards the issues like the one surrounding Chou in the future.

1.4. Outline

In the following pages, the guiding theory of this research will be introduced in the next chapter. Since this research focuses on nationalism in everyday life, the theory of banal nationalism will be used. But before introducing banal nationalism, a general explanation of nationalism will be offered and the three approaches of studying nationalism will be explained. Next, the thought of Michael Billig (1995) and Michael Skey (2011) on banal nationalism will be examined. And in the later section, both nationalism in mainland China and nationalism in Taiwan will be explained to offer the readers some background information. The explanation will be divided into three parts. First of all, the nationalism in China before the 1949 China Civil War will be described to help the readers get a general idea of how nationalism in China developed. Then, the nationalism in mainland China and the nationalism in Taiwan will be depicted separately as the 1949 Civil War left Taiwan and mainland China to two different political system and governments.

The Research design will be explained in Chapter 3. This research uses a qualitative discourse analysis (CDA) as the research method. It extracts the national discourses from the discussions of the Facebook users and comparing it with the nationalism theories to see if the nationalism ideology are being reproduced or challenged in people's daily interactions, how do people reproduce or challenge it, and what kind of approach of do people use if it is reproduced. The actual research is informed by Tonkiss's (2012) four pointers of doing discourse analysis. The key themes and arguments of the Facebook users' comments will be identified firstly. Then, the association and variance people made in their comments are investigated. Next, people's characterisation of the central agents involved in Taiwan Issue is researched. And finally, attention is paid to the different facts that people chose to emphasise and neglect.

In Chapter 4, the analysis and discussions will be presented. Firstly, the two news articles posted by BBC News will be analysed to see their main points. Next, the comments of the two articles will be categorised into four kinds of interpretation and each will be explained according to their major claims, the association and variation they made, their characterisation of the agents involved in Chou's Issue as well as the Taiwan Issue, and their emphasis and exclusion. In the discussion, it will be argued that nationalism is both challenged and reproduced in people's discussion about Taiwan's status on Facebook. It is challenged through some mainland Chinese users' reluctance to be generalised as Chinese and it is reproduced through people's different reference towards territory, history, culture, politics, and self/other distinction. Also, people develops different approaches of reproducing nationalism (the modernists approach, primordialists approach, and the ethnosymbolists approach).

In the final conclusion, the sub-conclusions of each chapter will be given. And following that, a reflection on the implications of the finds will be provided. Also, the contribution and shortcomings of this research will be addressed together with the possibility of future studies.

In this thesis, since both People's Republic of China (the official name of PRC) and Republic of China (the official name of ROC) have "China" in their names and many people use "China" quite ambiguously in their comments (e.g. mainland Chinese users use "China" to include Taiwan while "China" is used by others only as People's Republic of China). To avoid misunderstanding, this paper does not use "China" to refer only to PRC. Instead, it uses "mainland China" and "Taiwan" to distinguish the two places. And "foreign" are used to describe the country and people outside Taiwan and mainland China.

Chapter 2. Theory

In this chapter, different theories of nationalism will be introduced together with the explanation of the Chinese/Taiwanese nationalism that is popular in mainland China/Taiwan. Firstly, nationalism will be explained through introducing the three approaches of studying nationalism. Then, the banal nationalism that focuses on the everyday (re)production of nationalism will be brought out. Finally, the historical background of Chinese/Taiwanese nationalism will be explained.

2.1. Nationalism as an ideology

Nationalism as a concept was firstly used in the late 18th century and its definition varies between different scholars (Smith, 2004). According to Smith (ibid.), although it is hard to give nationalism a definition that could satisfy the various scholars, there are mainly five ways of using nationalism. It is argued that nationalism is usually used as a “process of the formation of nations”, a “national sentiment” of “belonging to a nation”, a “symbolic language” of “meanings attached to the nation”, a “movement with political goals for the attainment or maintenance of the status of a nation”, and an “ideology” of the “nation” to seek its own “autonomy, unity, and identity” (p. 1132). In other academic works, nationalism is said to be used to portray two phenomenon. Firstly, it is about “the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their identity as members of that nation”. And secondly, it is about “the actions that the members of a nation take in seeking to achieve (or sustain) some form of political sovereignty” (Nenad, Winter 2014). In either way of describing the use of nationalism, nationalism is connected with the nation and entails an explanation of the establishment and the maintenance of the nation.

Ernest Gellner (2008), one of the classical scholars who are specialised in nationalism, points out that nationalism is a theory that justifies the legitimacy of the ruling party. It emerged as a result of the shift from the agricultural society to the industrial one since industrialisation needed a theory that could group people together to use the power of the public to create the modern world. Therefore, nationalism is also a result of modernisation. Nationalism, according to Gellner, is the invention of European elites. It promotes the formation of a common community in which people share a common culture, history, language, religion and territory. At the beginning of modern times, intellectual elites who adopted a nationalist ideology came to rule the state. They advocated for a shared centralised educational system, a cultural homogenization, an exclusive bureaucratic authority, a common language and a common national identity. Their version of nationalism provided people a sense of belonging by imagining a common community in which small local communities could be grouped together. The convergence of those small local groups was the consequence of the replacement of local low culture (the folk culture spontaneously emerged among small local communities in

agricultural society) with a kind of high culture (the public, literate and sophisticated culture that formulated and taught by educational institutions in modern society) that invented by the nation-state to justify the existence of the nation. Similarly, Benedict Anderson (2006) also regards nationalism as a theory, or to say, an ideology that emerged with the 18th century's political developments initiated by the elites. When people started to make division of labour, and when printing enabled people to communicate and identify themselves through languages, the idea of nationalism emerged as people needed nationalism to justify their behaviour and identity. For Anderson, nationalism as an ideology could initiate the patriotism among people to establish and fight for their own nation.

Gellner (2008) and Anderson (2006) give a good explanation of how nationalism emerged as an ideology for the dominating social groups to legitimise their power and behaviour in a given society. However, they put too much attention to the role of the state in their writings and neglect the fact that nationalism could also be the ideology of the communities that do not have their own nation-state. Besides, they explain nationalism as a top-down ideology that is imposed from the ruling elites to the ordinary people, but say less about how the ordinary people understand and reproduce nationalism ideology in their daily life. What is more, they regard nationalism as a product of modernisation, and are criticised by scholars like Smith (2009) as they ignore the fact that many modern nations were established on the basis of the pre-existing cultural and social ties. In the current word, with the process of globalisation, some scholars argue for the unstable national identity, the end of the nation and the trans-nationalism (Bhabha, 1990; Appadurai, 1996), Gellner and Anderson's definition of the nation and nationalism is facing challenges. But anyway, their view that regards nationalism as an ideology is helpful in understanding how different parties are making attempt to create and entrench their own version of nationalism to gain and maintain their social power. Following their idea, nationalism is regarded as an ideology for the different social groups in mainland China and Taiwan to obtain and maintain their social status in this thesis. And this ideology, as it is usually used to explain nation, offers the ordinary citizens in both mainland China and Taiwan an interpretation of the emergence and development of the nation. The ultimate goal of this thesis, is to find out how the ordinary people challenge/reproduce the nationalism ideology through talking about nation in their daily communication.

As mentioned, nationalism as an ideology offers explanation of how the nation is formed. Based on the different interpretations, different types of nationalism like the ethnic and civic nationalism could be distinguished. While ethnic nationalism defines a nation based on language, religion, culture as well as other ethnic features, the civic nationalism defines a nation based on social ties and political activities of the members in a community (Kellas, 1991; Smith 1994; Conner, 1994; Brubaker, 1999). In this thesis, the different forms of nationalism is not the focus, instead, the

researcher chose to look at the different approaches of studying nationalism. Although there are overlaps between the main ideas of the different forms of nationalism and the different approaches of studying nationalism, the different approaches is more suitable for analysing the comments made by people since the ordinary people do not reproduce certain form of nationalism consciously, but they reproduce nationalism unconsciously by developing different approaches of talking about the nation.

Since the emergence of modern nationalism in the 18th century, various approaches of studying nationalism in the academic world have been developed, each offers their own notion of the formation of nation. Normally, three perspectives can be distinguished: the modernist approach, the primordialist approach, and the ethnosymbolist approach. The modernist approach regards nation as an imagined community rather than a natural entity. Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson are the ones who proposed this kind view. They take nationalism as a modern phenomenon and nation as a modern product that emerged with the French Revolution and industrialisation. The primordialist approach, on the contrary, understands nation as a natural product of history and nationality as a natural part of human beings. Scholars like Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz are the representatives of this approach. They think that nation originates from people's natural kinship with others who are born to be in their group. The final approach, the ethnosymbolist approach is represented by Anthony D. Smith. This approach is generally regarded as a compromise between the first two approaches. It admits that the notion of nation emerged in modern times and at the same time argues that nations have an ethnic origin. In this context, ethnicity is used to distinguish one nation from another (Ozkirimli, 2010).

2.1.1. Modernism

The representatives of the modernist approach are Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson. In Gellner's opinion (2008), the nation is a community constituted by people who recognise themselves and the other people in that community as members. Members feel that they share a kind of fellowship and culture. They join their fellows politically and define their own territory on which they protect and apply their culture. In other words, nation combines will and culture with political units like state. It means that people are politically united with other people who are willing to share a common culture imposed by elites. And the political organisation - the state - that people formed, expand their territory to the marginal places where people have the same culture. Similarly, Benedict Anderson (2006) also gives a definition of nation. According to him, the nation is an imagined community. It does not exist itself, but rather a social construction that is imagined by people who feel that they have equal status and share a comradeship. What Anderson (2006) and Gellner (2008) have in common is that they all think nation was created by people who need an idea that could define

people's community when they started to adopt nationalism as a way of thinking their identity. In other words, nation is constructed by people who perceive themselves as part of their community. To conclude, it could be argued that nation are constituted through three important elements: the state, the high culture, and the will of the people.

For the modernists, both nation and nationalism emerged as a result of modernisation, which means that they only exist in the modern times. What is more, nation emerged as a product of nationalism. For example, Gellner (2008) says that nationalism produces the nation. This is because nationalism uses and modifies the multicultural dimension that people inherited throughout history and invents a new culture which could be shared by different small communities. And by forming a sharing high culture, the basis of a nation is constructed. Anderson (2006) as well, points out that nation emerged as a product of the people who adopted the idea of nationalism to include their fellows who thought that they share the same culture.

Another important argument of the modernists is that the nation and the state should be seen as a combination. The two cannot live individually without the other one and the rulers in a state take nationalism as a political guideline to keep their authority. According to Gellner (2008), a state emerged prior than nationalism, it was the elites in the state who proposed the nationalism ideology in the 18th century and used it to form the nation that under the control of their state. However, Gellner's view in regards to the relationship between the state and nation is somewhat self-contradictory. On the one hand, he says that "some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state" (p. 6). On the other hand, he argues that nationalism only appear when there is a state. Considering his notion on the emergence of the nation which claims that the nation emerged as a product of the nationalism ideology, it seems ambiguous for him to say that a nation could emerge "without the blessings" of its state. Even though Gellner does not make it clear what he means with the word "blessings", the close tie between the state and nation is obvious in his writings. In my opinion, although Gellner says that a nation could emerge "without the blessings" of the state, he still think that the state is needed after the formation of the nation as he insists that the state maintains the order of the nation.

The modernists' way of explaining nation shows that in their point of view, nationalism is a political ideology. There are three reasons for this claim. First of all, the modernists argue that people are politically united in a nation. Secondly, it is the elites in the state - the political institution - that organise people in a nation through the imposition of a shared high culture. Thirdly, nation is produced by nationalism ideology that created by political elites with political purpose (to legitimise their rule). The modernists' view of nationalism as a political ideology corresponds with the notion of

civic nationalism that defines the nation according to the “social ties and culture rather than by common descent” (Kellas, 1991, p. 66). Similarly, both of them regard the nation as constituted by the politically united people who believe they share the same high culture that is socially educated (not limited to blood ties).

2.1.2. Primordialism

Contrary to the modernism, the Primordialism defines nation as a natural being instead of a modern product. Conner (1994), a primordialist, indicates that nation is “a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related” (p. 21). That is to say, nation is formed on the basis of the ancestral tie between people. This kind of ancestral tie, is defined by Gusfield (1996) as the “primordial attachment” of the people (p. 53). And the primordial attachment, is assumed by people to be “given” to themselves as they were “born into a particular religious community, speaking of particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices” (Geertz, 1963, p. 106). The congruity of “blood, speech, custom, and so on” (ibid.) naturally bounds people together and they are the “preferred bases” (ibid.) of the political units that autonomously constructed.

According to Ozkirimli (2010), there are four versions of primordialism: the “nationalist”, the “sociobiological”, the “culturalist” and the “perennialist”. For the nationalist, nationality is an “inherent attribute” of human beings. The value of being a human can only be realised through being a member of a national community, and the national identity is the primary form of belonging of a man. The sociobiological approach, represented by Van den Berghe, insists that group membership is determined by blood ties, and the kinship between group members is the foundation of nationalism. This kinship, can be recognised both through the physical “morphological phenotypes” and culture. But the cultural criteria (e.g. language and costume) is more convincible (ibid.). The third approach, the culturalist, is represented by Shils and Geertz. Geertz, as mentioned, gives definition to the primordial attachment. And Edward Shils (1957) claims that modern society is constituted through “personal attachment, moral obligations in concrete contexts, professional and creative pride, individual ambition, primordial affinities and a civil sense which is low in many, high in some, and moderate in most persons” (p.131). Their general view is that people make sense of their group membership through perceiving their primordial attachment. And on the basis of this perception, people form other “ideas, values, customs or ideologies” that further constitute a society (Ozkirimli, 2010). The last approach, the perennialist, believes that nation emerged together with history. Put it in a different way, nation is “immemorial”. Particular nations may emerged and disappeared, but nation as a form of “human association” is always there throughout history. Adrian Hastings, the representative of the perennialist, thinks that modern nations emerged on the basis of ethnicities,

which according to him is “a group of people with a shared cultural identity and spoken language” (p. 58). Although not every ethnicity turns into a nation, a nation is essentially based up on ethnicities (ibid). To conclude, the primordialists argue that the nation is natural and immemorial, it is naturally formed according to the cultural kinship (language, religion, etc) between people and people define their membership in a nation according to their shared culture as well as blood ties.

The primordialists’ ways of talking nation shows that nationalism is a natural way of thinking. Instead of saying that nationalism is a political ideology, the primordialists would claim that nationalism is a cultural ideology embedded in people’s mind naturally that they used to identify themselves according to their natural cultural ties (such as language and religion) with others. This kind of view is in accordance with the notion of ethnic nationalism which “extol native history and a more circumscribed ethnic culture” (Smith, 1994, p. 188). Both of them emphasise the important of ethnicity in defining one’s nation and show an exclusiveness of the others that are not “native” (ibid.).

2.1.3. Ethnosymbolism

The theory of ethnosymbolism emerged as a criticism towards modernism. In reaction to modernists’ claim that nationalism brought nation into being, the representative of this approach -Anthony D. Smith - argues that this is just “part of the story” (Smith, 2009, p. 44). He claims that even though nationalism as a theory only emerged in the 18th century and brought about the establishment of many modern nations. But many nations, especially many of the East European and Asian nations like Poland, Hungary, Sri Lanka, Burma and Vietnam, were constructed on the basis of pre-existing ethnicities. In those nations, the “symbols, memories, traditions and myths” (ibid.) of the dominant ethnies offer those nations the “public cultures”, “symbolic codes and repertoires”, as well as “many of their laws and customs”. Even those nations that seem to be established by some nationalists according to their nationalism ideology, their construction are founded on some “pre-existing cultural and political ties” (ibid.), which according to Smith is the “myths, memories, values, traditions and symbols” shared by certain group of people (Conversi, 2006, p.21).

Smith defines ethnies as “a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, common elements of culture and a measure of solidarity” (Smith, 2005, p. 99), it existed before the modern society and serves as the basis of a nation. Nation, in his early words, is “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members” (Smith, 1991, p. 14). Although later Smith changed its definition into “a named community possessing a historic territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and common laws and customs” (Smith, 2002, p. 15), the central claim over a nation is still clear. First of all, a

nation should have a territory. Secondly, the people within should share common myths and historic memories. And thirdly, the people within the same nation have the same public culture and legal, political, economic system.

It is important to remember that the “authority” plays an important role in linking people together with the shared myths, historic memories as well as the public culture and legal, political, economic system. Smith argues that those shared symbols and culture do not have to be real, they could be selected, modified and even created by the authority - some intellectuals, priests, and political leaders - in order to construct their pure national communities (Smith, 2005). Considering that, nationalism in the view of the ethnosymbolists is a cultural ideology that is based on the cultural similarities such as the shared historical memories and traditions, but could also be modified by politically the authorities into a political ideology that suits their political goal.

The three approaches of studying nationalism have different interpretations concerning the ways nations are formed and the ways people acknowledging their national identities. But one thing is shared by all the three approaches, that is, no matter the nation is naturally formed, politically formed, or culturally formed, the people in the same nation all share the same national identity and people acknowledge their shared national identity with others within the same nation. This common recognition of the three approaches will be used in this research to justify whether nationalism is challenged or not. The comments that agree with this recognition will be considered as a reproduction of nationalism. And the other comments that show the reluctance of the authors to admit this point will be regarded as a challenge towards nationalism. Besides, it is also expected in this research that the Facebook users show different views concerning what constitutes a nation and how they feel about their national identities. Therefore, in the interpretation of the comments, these three approaches will be used to categorise people’s ideas about the nation to better understand the kind of approaches people develop in talking nation, and thus to address the question of how people reproduce nationalism differently through making diverse claims about the nation in more detail.

However, the above mentioned theories of nationalism focus on the question of how the nation is formed, but do not offer enough explanations of how people make sense of their national identities in their everyday life within that nation. Anyway, individuals are the actual constituents of the nation. And considering that the aim of this research is to understand how people challenge/reproduce nationalism in their everyday talk about the nation, Michael Billig (1995) and Michael Skey’s (2011) theory of nationalism in everyday life will be consulted to understand how people reproduce nationalism in routine activities.

2.2 Nationalism in everyday life

While the classical studies of nationalism concentrates on the “extreme” expression of nationalism such as the nationalists movement, some scholars like Michael Billig (1995) claims that nationalism should be studied on a day-to-day basis. According to Billig, in established nations, nationalism as an ideology to start a new state is usually located on the periphery. He notices that usually, nationalism is either connected with national independence or linked to extremists. He states that nationalism does not only have impact in established nations in special circumstances such as the facing of threat from foreign powers, rather, nationalism is embedded in people’s daily life, which according to Billig is banal nationalism.

Billig (ibid.) introduces the word banal nationalism to describe the ideology that allows the national identity in established nations of the West to be reproduced in daily life. By using banal nationalism, Billig reminds people that they keep reproducing their national identity through daily mundane activities such as singing national song as well as hanging national flag in schools and public buildings. Those activities are so normal that people almost forget that they are signs of reminding their national identity. However, precisely because of the those activities, people keep being reminded that they are part of their country and they share the same national identity with the other citizens in this country. For example, when someone sees the waving flags hanging on the roof of a public building, he or she is unconsciously reminded that he or she belongs to this country. This is different from seeing the flag waving of a soldier in a war through which people’s emotion are stimulated and consciously reminded of their nationhood. In other words, banal nationalism refers to the reproduction of national identity in daily life while people may not have noticed. Its emphasis is that nationalism in established nations is embedded in people’s routine and attention should be paid to people’s daily reproduction of their national identity, or to say, nationhood. In our daily life when somebody refers to a nation, he or she always come up with a range of symbolic features in his or her mind that identify that particular nation. For instance, when someone mentions Britain, he or she might come up with words like weather and football to make sense of the nation. This is what Billig calls the “routine rhetorical business” (p.107). The nation has to be “unimaginatively imagined and the assumptions of nationhood accepted, for the routine phrase to do its routine rhetorical business. Through this routine business, the nation continues to be made habitual, to be inhabited” (ibid.)

Billig’s idea that people keep reproducing their view of their nation and their national identities provides the basis for analysing the comments of the Facebook users as we could assume that people may also unconsciously address nationalism in the discussions on Facebook. However, Billig's work is much more about theory but lacks of explanation of how exactly people reproduce the nationalism ideologies in their routine practices. Michael Skey (2011), another scholar who pays attention to nationalism in everyday life, analysed how people develop a national discourse through

their daily social practices in detail by doing interviews with the ordinary British people. He explicitly points out that it is through people's every day practice with, and recognition of the symbols of national terms such as road signs and maps, nationality and national identity make sense to people. Similar to Gellner and Anderson, Skey understands nation not as an entity, but an outcome of social discourses that (re)produce nation as it is. For Skey, discourse is "a particular way of talking about ... understanding [and acting in] the world that becomes stabilised through key institutional structures during certain historical periods" (p. 11). And people develop national discourses that (re)produce a nation to make the nation meaningful in relation to themselves, or to say, to "us". The various national discourses that people keep (re)producing in their daily activities can be categorised into five dimensions of national discourse: the spatial, temporal, cultural, political, and self/other defined by Ozkirimli (2005). And Skey (2011) uses the concept "sedimentation" to describe the process through which particular discourses become established. It is by sedimentation that some social discourses about the nation that (re)produced by people became natural towards the public. However, even if some national discourses become naturalised, they may still face the challenge and dispute from other groups. The dominant group have to make effort (mostly by making use of communication technologies) to make sure their national discourses are the ones that seem natural to people. This is what Skey calls "desedimentation". Skey notices the crucial role of institutions in establishing national discourses. He notes that the state plays an important role in constructing and maintaining fundamental systems such as military, welfare, and education that constitute the basic "nation". But it is the choices, the routine practices of the individuals and their interaction with each other determinate the activities of the institutions. After all, it is people who work in those institutions, and it is through people's everyday communication, the national discourses become further sedimented. Through (de)sedimentation, the naturalised social discourses about the nation gradually turns into a nationalism ideology that people keep addressing in their daily activities.

According to Skey (*ibid.*), the first spatial dimension refers to the territory of a nation. Territory, as a material space, provides people an objective boundary to distinguish themselves from "others". This is also the most common discourse that people come up with when talk about a nation. The second dimension - the temporal - is about the construction of history and daily rituals. As Skey mentioned, people perceive their shared identity both through the history of the past and the rituals of the present. And the idea of the nation becomes more concrete through connecting the past and the present. For instance, when interviewed with English football fans, Skey found out that many people talked about heavy drinking in England by referring it back to Roman times when English people already had a habit of getting drunk. By linking the current with the past, those fans were actually making sense of England and the people there in regards to the habit of drinking. The third cultural

dimension involves the “symbolic systems that are used to define and justify ... social norms and values [and]... create ‘maps’ for social actors” (ibid, p. 11). While different groups may have different systems, there is always a dominant system in a nation that guide people’s activities. Through shared cultural practices - namely the dominant system, people feel the connection with others and thus form their perception of a nation. Skey points out that while a national culture could be taken as self-evident by some people, there could still be ongoing struggles to (re)produce and define that culture. For example, the word British or English may be used unproblematically, but people still struggle to define what means to be British or English. The fourth dimension focuses on the function of political institutions in legitimising national discourse. Skey explains that the different political actors and groups struggle to produce their own version of national discourse. These different versions of national discourses, usually accompanied with armed forces, education, media and so on, contribute to people’s cognition of their national identity.

The final dimension - self/other contains two aspects. The first refers to the role of people and their “characteristics, emotions, habits and values” (ibid., p. 12) in creating particular national discourse. The second aspect points to the relation between particular nation and the foreign fellows. Like Billig, Skey shows interest in “us” versus “them”. It is discovered that people tend to use deictic language like we, this country, their nation to stand for all the people who they believe share the same national identity rather than just the speakers. By using “we”, people position themselves as the one who are able to speak on behalf of the nation. And the other people who have the same opinion as those people do recognise their rights to represent the group. When people locate themselves as part of the in-group, they distinguish themselves from the others. Skey found that it is usually through the challenge from the others, “our” national belonging become salient and evident. It is through this distinction of self and other, people validate their national identity. And what is more, they develop a sense of agency and place. Also, Skey argues that individuals recognise their identity not only through their own perception, but also through others’ judgment and (re)action. Those whose status is recognised by others without question are more likely to have a stable identity and could also make judgment on other people’s identity. Also, Skey claims that people tend to be more eager to their national identity when they feel more threatened and less secure. For example, the white English people often re-define the boundaries between them and the immigrants when they feel that the opportunity to get a job is threatened by immigrants.

These five dimensions of national discourse are constituents of the nationalism ideologies. People may refer to one or more of these discourses in their daily (re)production of nationalism. Following Billig’s idea, it is assumed in this research that the ordinary Facebook users also make reference towards the spatial, temporal, cultural, political, and self/other discourses in their

reproduction of nationalism on Facebook. The task of this research, is then to find out how the Facebook users make different references towards territory, history, culture, politics and the distinction between self and other in their talks about the nation. These five dimensions of national discourse will be used to interpret the comments of the Facebook users to see what kinds of discourses are proposed by the users and which discourses are the emphasis of different users respectively, they will serve as the basis of categorising the different approaches used by users in reproducing nationalism as the different focus on culture, politics, or history can be easily discerned.

2.3. Nationalism in China before the separation of mainland China and Taiwan in 1949

Nationalism in China emerged in the 19th century at the end of Qing dynasty when China was forced to accept the modern nation-state system. Before that period, since China was ruled by different ethnic groups and the boundary of its territory kept changing, there was no real notion of “Chinese”. As the Han ethnic group was the dominant ethnic group in China and they ruled the Chinese land for the most in history, some foreigners referred to Chinese simply as Han people. Since 1840s, with the Opium War, the elites felt it was important to create a notion of community that includes all the people living on the Qing territory, which includes the current territory of People’s Republic of China (PRC), Mongolia, Taiwan, and some parts that now belongs to Russia, so they started to announce the notion of Chinese by claiming that “foreigners wantonly, even consciously, used opium to victimise the Chinese people” to establish a collective identity to prevent themselves from foreign countries’ colonisation and exploitation (Zhao, 2004, p. 17).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Qing Government imported the concept of nationality from Western countries as Qing government started to reform by launching Westernization Movement (Also called Self-Strengthening Movement) (ibid.). The documents released by the government referred Chinese to people who: 1. Born in China; 2. Born of a father who is Chinese; 3. Born after the death of his or her father who was Chinese before he died; 4. has a Chinese mother and his or her father does not have nationality or his nationality is unknown (Liao, 2012). This definition of Chinese shows a primordialist view that focuses on the blood tie between people. Any outsider that does not have a blood kinship with the other Chinese should not be considered as “Chinese”. Actually, this kind of primordialist approach of defining people’s national identity is still prevalent in mainland China nowadays, which will be explained in later section.

After 1911 Republican Revolution, the Republic of China (ROC) was established by the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang/KMT) and the official definition of "Chinese" was expanded to include non-Han (Han Chinese is the largest ethnic group in mainland China. Its culture also dominates the Chinese culture) ethnic groups as part of a comprehensive Chinese nation

(Zhonghua Minzu) in order to boost the unification of 56 different ethnic groups in China (Zhao, 2004). Those ethnic minorities, they live in different parts of China and have their distinct culture. But they also communicate and interact with other ethnic groups throughout history. And they were then officially grouped together as Zhonghua Minzu. The official claim during this time was that although the different ethnic groups have their distinct language and culture, they all lived on the territory of the ROC and were under the rule of the ROC government. Zhonghua Minzu as a total should cooperated to defend the country from the intrusion of the foreigners (Wang, 2014). The founder of ROC, Sun Tat-sen and its successors, realised the importance to build a coherent Chinese nation to organise the country. And this notion of Chinese and Chinese nation was the important concept that guided the Chinese people in the fight against their enemies during the Second World War (Hughes, 1997). The ROC government's version of Chinese shows a modernist's view, that a sharing ethnicity or culture is not important for defining one's nation. If people live on the territory of a nation and are organised by the same state, they should be considered as sharing the same national identity.

Nevertheless, since the end of the Second World War, the definition of "Chinese" faces challenges as the territory of "China" had changed. Especially in Taiwan, many people refuse to be called as Chinese and started to assert their own Taiwanese identity. At the end of the Civil War in 1949, while the Republic of China (ROC) moved its government to Taiwan, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established on China mainland. And the two "China" bring questions to people's national identity and their feeling of national belonging. These challenges will be talked in detail in the following section.

2.4. Nationalism in mainland China since 1949

In mainland China, the Communist Party initially opposed to nationalism since this ideology is contrary to socialism's notion of universal fellowship among workers. However, since 1949 when the Communist Party took over the country, the PRC government started seeing nationalism as a mean to resist foreign powers. Especially during the Korean War, the PRC government tried to set up a nationalist sentiment to defend itself from the power of the United States. It began to promote nationalism to arouse people's attention to the integrity of the territory of their country. This promotion is also the political agenda of the Chinese Communist Party who wants to make use of nationalism to justify its governance and to fight against the foreign powers (Zhao, 2004).

At the end of the 20th century, with the changes happened in Europe, the PRC government again made use of nationalism to portray itself as a protector of China's national interest so that the ruling of the communist party could be justified. In the 21st century, nationalism is still promoted by

the PRC government. For example, the state promotes the anti-Japanese nationalism when there is political conflict between PRC and Japan. Also, the state now connects nationalism with the Communist Party, any activity that is anti-communist party is regarded as anti-Chinese (ibid.).

In regards to the issue of Taiwan, the PRC government insists its principle that there is only one China and the PRC only develops official diplomatic relationship with those countries who admit this principle (Kan, 2011). The PRC state claims that Taiwan is part of China since ancient times and the Taiwan authority should make effort to cooperate with the PRC state to make “China” united in peaceful ways (Hughes, 1997). In 1980s, Deng Xiaoping, the most powerful leader in PRC at that time, proposed the “One country, two systems” to realise the unification of China mainland, Macao, Hongkong, and Taiwan. That is to say, within a period of time, Macao, Hongkong, and Taiwan could remain their capitalist system while China mainland is still running in a socialist way if the unification is realised (Chiou, 1986). And in 1992, a so-called “1992 consensus” was reached by China and Taiwan through some non-governmental activists and organisations. Both PRC and ROC government agreed with the notion of “one China” and “reunification” in the consensus in their later statements, but they left the definition of “China” open as there is no explicit mentioning of whether People’s Republic of China (PRC) or the Republic of China (ROC) should be the legal name of “China”. Actually, both PRC and ROC (still dominated by KMT at that time) regard itself as the official representative of “China”, but they prefer to use the word “China” in a vague way so there would be no large conflict between the two sides of Taiwan Strait. (Ching, 2001).

In response to Chen Shui-bian’s (the president of ROC from May, 20, 2000 to May 20, 2008 who belonged to the opposite party of KMT - the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)) independence policies, PRC government issued the Anti-succession Law in 2005 to counter the Taiwan Independence Movement. Again, mainland China emphasised its principle of “one China” and reasserted the status of Taiwan as part of China (Seelos, 2010). Since Ma Ying-jeou’s (the president of ROC from May, 20, 2008 to May, 20, 2016) rule of Taiwan, PRC has made effort with Ma’s government to recover the relationship between mainland China and Taiwan. In 2010, the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement was signed. Even though a lot of progress have been made on the economic side, less have been done on the political side. Both Beijing and Taipei avoid the politically sensitive issue since the definition of “China” is still respectively explained in different ways. Both sides of the Taiwan strait prefer to keep Taiwan’s status quo to avoid possible war and make mutual economic progress. But according to the official statement of PRC government, Taiwan is a province of “China” that is currently ruled by other political parties (Bush, 2011).

The PRC government made its claim over the status of Taiwan. If we apply the five dimensions of national discourse stated by Skey, it could be concluded as follows. First of all, Taiwan is part of “China” (although the definition of China is quite vague, no mentioning of whether it is PRC or ROC). Secondly, Taiwan belongs to China throughout history. It is the Chinese who exploited and developed Taiwan. Thirdly, Taiwan shares the same Chinese culture and language as mainlanders do. Fourthly, the mainland government agrees to retain the capitalists system of Taiwan if mainland and Taiwan unites. And finally, a Taiwanese is also Chinese. (Cao, 2016). What is more, if we compare the major claims of the modernists, primordialists, and the ethnosymbolists with the Chinese nationalism in mainland China, we could discern that this kind Chinese nationalism is actually a primordialist nationalism as it focuses on the pre-existing ties between Taiwan and mainland China.

2.5. Nationalism in Taiwan since 1949

Before going into detail the nationalism in Taiwan, a brief explanation of Taiwan’s history is needed. About 9000 years ago, Taiwan was geographically departed from the mainland China and became an island. And about 8000 years ago, some Austronesian people who has close ties with other Austronesian groups like Philippines, Malaysian, Indonesian, Oceanian landed on the island. These people, whose descendant are considered as the Taiwanese aborigines (Yuanzhumin) nowadays, lived their life there since then (Bird, Hope & Taylor, 2004). In the early 17th century, mainland Chinese officially started their settlement in Taiwan and was soon expanded to the most dominant group in Taiwan (Shepherd, 1993). From 1624 to 1662 when mainland China was having a war that transformed the Ming Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, Taiwan was under the control of the Dutch East India Company. During this period, the Spanish also occupied the northern part of Taiwan in about 1626, but were forced to leave because of their failure in the battle with the Dutch forces. In 1662, Taiwan was again controlled by mainland China in 1662 as the Ming Loyalist Zheng Cheng Gong and his army conquered the Dutch forces. In the early times when the Qing Dynasty took over the Chinese mainland, Zheng established his own government in Taiwan. However, Zheng’s government went crushed in 1683 when the Qing army landed on Taiwan. Since then, Taiwan was controlled by the government in mainland China until the 19th century when Qing Dynasty started to decline. The trade in Taiwan was mainly controlled by Britain and France as China was defeated during the Opium War. Later in 1874, Japan invaded Taiwan, but the Qing government paid a large amount of silver to let Japan leave. Also, the French tried to invade Taiwan in 1884 but ended up in failure. In 1887, Taiwan’s status as a prefecture was elevated to a province by the Qing government. In 1895, after Qing was defeated again by Japan in the first Sino-Japanese War, Japan occupied Taiwan until the end of the Second World War in 1945 (Wang, 2006).

In 1943 the Cairo Declaration, the United States, China (ROC) and the United Kingdom issued a statement that expressed their purpose to let Japan return the stolen territory “such as Manchuria, Formos (an old name of Taiwan), and the Pescadores” to China (Charney & Prescott, 2000, p. 457). Later in 1945 the Potsdam Proclamation, this statement was iterated and Taiwan was officially returned to the control of China after Japan declared defeat. However, the unification of Taiwan and China mainland did not last for a long time. The Civil War in China departed them again. In 1949, the government of the Republic of China (ROC) that controlled by the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang/KMT) fled to Taiwan after its failure in the Civil War (Copper, 2015). While the Communist Party of China established its own government in China mainland and developed its own currency system, educational system, and so on, Taiwan continues to be ruled by the ROC government. Since then, Taiwan and China mainland are ruled by two different governments.

Until 1971, the ROC was internationally recognised as the only China. But in 1971, because of the changing political situation in East Asia, the PRC won its seat in the United Nations and replaced the ROC as a permanent member of the Security Council. The withdraw of ROC in the United Nations caused its predicament in the international community, the majority of the states began to recognise PRC as the only representative of China. The official name of the Republic of China is taken as the “Chinese Taipei” among the international communities (Hughes, 1997). And in 1979, the super power - the United States - started its official diplomatic relationship with the PRC and the US-Taiwan relationship went non-diplomatic (Kan, 2011). However, the United States did not make it explicitly which “China” has the sovereign right over Taiwan, it only “acknowledges the one China position of both sides of the Taiwan Strait” (ibid. p. 1).

In the 1980s, Taiwan started its political reform. In 1986, the opposition party of KMT - the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) established. Although been suppressed by KMT in the early days of its establishment, DPP is now one of the two major parties in Taiwan, along with its opponent KMT. Contrary to KMT who sticks to its Chinese nationalist principal that Taiwan is part of China and it would seek to unite the whole country, DPP is in favour of the independence of Taiwan (Chou & Nathan, 1987). In 1988, the first president that elected directly by the residents in Taiwan - Lee Teng-hui took charge in the ROC government. Lee was originally born in Taiwan and was the leader of KMT at that time. He is considered as the founder of democracy in Taiwan as he contributed a lot to the democratic political reform in Taiwan (Corcuff, 2002). Even though he did not explicitly use the word “Taiwanese nationalism”, but as the leader of the Taiwanese KMT (different from the traditional KMT members who are mostly mainlanders), Lee shared DPP’s goal to transform Taiwan into a “new, sovereign, native-dominated democratic state (ibid., p. 204). In 1991, Lees’ government made a revision to the constitution of ROC, and in the revision, the ROC government stopped its

claim of the sovereignty over mainland China, and documented that the ROC territory contains the island of Taiwan and its small neighbouring islands Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu. The PRC government was admitted by the revised constitution of ROC as the legal ruler of the mainland China. And in 1999, in an interview with the reporter from *the Voice of Germany*, Lee explicitly pointed out that Taiwan “has ceased to be part of China” and China are “two equal political entities within the one-China framework (ibid., p. 177). However, the PRC government still regard Taiwan as part of China and take Taiwan as a special province that governed by another government. No official document explicitly admit that ROC government is the legal rule of the Taiwan island as well as the islands of Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu (ibid.)

In 2000, the first non-KMT president, also the first DPP president - Chen Shui-bian was elected. Chen appealed to a Taiwanese nationalism that could lead to the independence of Taiwan. In 2006, Chen expressed his hope that Taiwan could join the United Nations with the name of Taiwan (Rubinstein, 2015). However, in 2008, KMT came into power again. The new president Ma Ying-jeou was more deliberate on the issue of Taiwan. On the one hand, he sought to cooperate with mainland on economy. On the other side, he tried to maintain the status that lasted for years, which is “no independence, no unification, and no use of force” (Bush, 2011, p. 276). In January 2016, Tsai Ing-wen, the DPP based politician was elected as the new president. Her election brings more uncertainty to the relationship between China mainland and Taiwan as she wants Taiwan to be independent from China (BBC, 2016 a).

Before 1990s, the Taiwan government described Taiwan as the ethnically Han and nationally Chinese (Brown, 2004). But since Lee Teng-hui’s rule of Taiwan, people in Taiwan have increasingly claimed their Taiwanese identity as a mixture of “Han culture and ancestry, Aborigine culture and ancestry, and Japanese culture (but not ancestry)” (p. 2). They argue that they have their own political system and government. And they have their distinct Taiwanese identity (ibid.). According to the research of the Election Study Centre of the Taiwan National Chengchi (literally means politics in Chinese) University, since 1990s, with Lee Teng-hui’s “Taiwanese Localization” policy, the number of residents in Taiwan who regard themselves as Taiwanese rather than Chinese went increased. In 2000, the number of people who only regard themselves as Chinese kept declined while the number of people who regard themselves only as Taiwanese or both as Taiwanese and Chinese did not change a lot. However, in 2008, more and more citizens in Taiwan only regarded themselves as Taiwanese instead of Chinese or both. And until December, 2012, people who regarded themselves as Taiwanese reached a historic high - 54.3%. More and more Taiwanese people are seeking for their distinct Taiwanese identity rather than a Chinese identity (Ke, 2014). It could be seen that in Taiwan, although there are still a large amount of people who regard themselves as

Chinese. But more and more people started to discard their Chinese identity and insist on the Taiwanese one.

It seems that Taiwan should be considered as an independent nation-state if we apply the modernists explanation of the emergence of the nation. Taiwan has its own independent state, the people in Taiwan share the same “high culture” (currency, education, health system, etc) and they are willing to be connected together as Taiwanese. All the three important elements for the establishment of a nation are satisfied. Actually, this is also what the Taiwanese nationalism argues, that Taiwan should be independent because it has its sovereign state and Taiwanese people have their distinct currency, education system, etc (ibid.). Therefore, we could also categorised Taiwanese nationalism that seek for the independence of Taiwan as a modernist nationalism. It is then the task of this research to find out how the ordinary Taiwanese people think of their national identity and what are their views concerning the status of Taiwan as a nation or not.

In this Chapter, the concept of nationalism is explained with the introduction of the different nationalism theories. Michael Skey’s (2011) discussion of the five national discourse and the three different approaches of studying nationalism will be used to explain how Facebook users reproduce/challenge nationalism in their Facebook discussions. Besides, the historical background of the emergence of Chinese/Taiwanese nationalism is introduced to help the readers understand the claims of the Facebook users in their comments. However, due to the fact that banal nationalism in China/Taiwan was under-researched, this chapter does not provide more literature that address the everyday nationalism in China/Taiwan. Anyway, the three theories of nationalism and Skey’s theory of banal nationalism will be used in depth to analyse the banal nationalism in China/Taiwan. Here in this thesis, nationalism is defined as an ideology for social groups to grasp/maintain their power. And in the next chapter, how nationalism is going to be studied will be offered.

Chapter 3. Research Design

In this chapter, the research design is presented. First of all, the research object and the researching approach of discourse analysis will be explained and justified. Then, the central concepts of discourse analysis will be examined and the principles of doing discourse analysis offered by the informing author will be provided. Finally, how the actual analysis is conducted will be explained and the discussion of the aptness of the analysis will be added.

3.1 Research object and justification for discourse analysis

This research project offers an analysis of how nationalism is used on Facebook discussions concerning Chou's issue. To do the research, the comments of two BBC News about Chou's event on Facebook were selected as the researching material. First of all, it was the Facebook, rather than other social media like Twitter that was selected because Facebook was the social networking platform on which many mainland Chinese people discussed with the Taiwanese about Chou's issue. Many mainland Chinese netizens organised themselves through some mainland online communities like "Li Yi Ba" and flooded to Facebook to make comments towards Tsai and Chou (Zheng, 2016). Secondly, it was the BBC News that was chosen because its articles about Chou received more comments comparing to the other news agencies' articles about Chou's issue posted on Facebook, which means that the discussion could be more diverse. BBC News published five articles that mentioned Chou's event on its official website from 16 to 26, January, 2016. And two of them were posted on BBC's Facebook page. These two articles, published on January 18 and 19, 2016 when the debate between Taiwanese and Chinese netizens was underway, received lots of attention, gathered 839 and 949 comments each until April 1st, 2016. The other famous news agencies like the Washington Post and the New York Times also published articles that refer to Chou on Facebook, while the Washington Post published two articles that mentioned Chou's issue and received 79 and 189 comments respectively until April 1st of 2016, the New York Times published one article and only received 264 comments. None of them could be compared with the BBC News articles considering the discussion they generated.

As a worldwide famous news agency, BBC has many followers on Facebook. And the two articles posed by BBC on Facebook - a social networking platform on which people could express their ideas and communicate with others - attracted ordinary Facebook users to share their opinions and discuss with each other by making comments. It is worthy to take a look at the comments of these two articles on Facebook to see how netizens debated on the relationship between China and Taiwan, what were their arguments and how they expressed their points of view as there were many discussions happened in the comment area of the two articles on Facebook. And comparing to its

official website, BBC News on Facebook attracted more users to comment since it was easier and more convenient for people to do so on Facebook. Comparing to the two news articles posted on Facebook, the other three articles barely initiated people's discussion. Also, following Billig's thoughts, it is through making comments, that is to say, the daily communication of the Facebook users, that people show their ideas over the Chinese/Taiwanese nation. Therefore, my choice was to take a look at the comments of the two articles about Chou posted by BBC News on Facebook to analyse how nationalism may be embedded in people's online discussions.

To analyse the comments, a qualitative discourse analysis is needed. Discourse analysis, as a common method applied in different researching fields, is noteworthy hard to define. As Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) point out, discourse analysis is "not just one approach, but a series interdisciplinary approaches that be used to explore many different social domains in many different types studies" (p. 1). The way of how to do a discourse analysis remains unclear as different filed has its own approach. But many scholars agreed that discourse analysis deals with the study of language that focuses on the interpretation of texts (McCarthy, 1991; Schiffin, Tanner & Hamilton, 2001; Wetherell, Talor & Yates, 2001; Tonkiss, 2012). As Tonkiss (2012) indicates, although there are different approaches towards discourse analysis, a common understanding among those approaches is that language is the object of analysis. However, the language in this sense is not only the carrier of information, but also the reflection of social meaning, social identity, and social facts. Like what Munir and Phillips (2005) states, discourse analysis explores how social reality is constructed through analysing texts, which are carriers of discourses. And likewise, Taylor (2013) also connects discourse analysis with social meaning and social reality by pointing out that the purpose of discourse analysis is to find out how meanings and ideas are established, used, reproduced, and challenged through the study of language material. Although this research does not take a look at how social reality or ideas are constructed, it concentrates on how those established ideas - the ideology of nationalism - are reproduced/challenged through analysing the texts, namely the comments of the two BBC news articles made by people on Facebook. Therefore, this research has the same purpose and same research object as that of discourse analysis, and discourse analysis should be the appropriate method for this research. Also, discourse analysis helps people understand "what people are doing with their language in a given situation" (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1376). As this research aims to understand what people are doing with their comments in reaction to Chou's issue, that is to say, how do people talk about the nation through their comments, a discourse analysis approach is suitable for this research.

What is more, the study of nationalism could be effectively approached through the "discourse theory", namely "the rhetorical analysis of texts" (Sutherland, 2005, p. 185). According to

Sutherland (ibid.), nationalism is an ideology proposed by the “parties, movements and states” (p. 186) to “legitimate and consolidate their bids for power” (p. 194). The more “entrenched” the ideology is, the more stable and powerful status they will have. It corresponds with the discourse theory proposed by scholars like Foucault which argue that discourse is about the power relationship and different groups struggle to assert their own discourse over others to maintain their power (ibid.). Similarly, the “parties, movements, and states” also struggle to assert and entrench their own version of nationalist ideology to maintain their legitimated status. Hence, nationalism should also be understood as a discourse and it could be usefully studied by doing a discourse analysis. Following Sutherland’s thought, this research also applies discourse analysis to study how nationalism could be challenged/reproduced in people’s online discussions.

3.2 Methodology

Discourse, the very important term in discourse analysis, also does not have a clear definition in the academic world. Here, the distinction between “discourse” (with a small ‘d’) and “Discourse” (with a capital ‘D’) made by Gee (1990; 1996; 1999) could be applied to explain the two common definitions of discourse. The “discourse” with a small “d” is the “language-in-use” (Gee, 1999, p. 7), it is about “any stretch of language (spoken, written, signed) which ‘hangs together’ to make sense to some community of people who use that language” (Gee, 1990. p. 103). And the “Discourse” with a capital “D” is the “socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and artifacts, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’” (Gee, 1996, p. 131). To put it in another way, the “discourse” is the texts that we write and use, and the “Discourse” is the “form of life” (Gee, 1999, p.7), or to say, the social meaning and social realities that expressed through the use of “discourse” for people to identify themselves.

In media and cultural studies, it is common for researchers to connect “discourse” and “Discourse”. For example, Hall defines discourse as “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about - i.e. a way of representing - a particular kind of knowledge about a topic” (Tonkiss, 2012, p. 406). Other scholars like Lister (2009) describes discourse as systems of language that constitute certain social behaviours. It could be argued that discourse analysis usually tries to figure out the social meaning and social realities through the study of texts (Tonkiss, 2012). In those definitions, the “discourse” is linked with the “Discourse” as “Discourse” is studied by analysing “discourse”. In this research, the “Discourses” that constitute people’s sense of nation and national identity will be extracted from the “discourses” - the comments users made to the two news articles

posted by BBC News on Facebook - and be compared with the “Discourses” of nationalism. But the word discourse will only be used to refer to the “Discourse” in this research to avoid confusion.

Power, is another important concept in addition to discourse in discourse analysis. In a given society, different social groups or institutions produce different discourses. The dominance may be empowered by the discourses it generates and controls the other social groups through the reproduction of its own discourses, but could also lose its power because of the challenging discourses of other power groups (Van Dijk, 1993). In a word, the power relationship could always be in change because of the reproduction and challenge of certain discourses. In this research, the Facebook users posted different comments to challenge/reproduce the nationalism discourses. They stand for the different social groups in the society. Each tries to entrench their own version of national discourse so as to legitimise and stabilise their power, status, as well as influence in the society. For example, there could be a group of people who support the independence of Taiwan reproducing the Taiwanese national discourses through their comments to gain more understanding and supports and thus make their group stronger. Hence, this research could also analyse the struggle between different social groups, that is to say, how they challenge/reproduce nationalism respectively to justify and enhance their own social status.

Although it is widely agreed that discourse analysis is about discourse and power relationship, as mentioned, the actual way of doing it varies. Here is this research, the analysis follows the instruction of Tonkiss (2012) who offers four pointers of discourse analysis which are quite useful. According to Tonkiss, after defining the research question, the data of analysis should be selected based on its relevance towards the research question. The abundance of media texts requires the researcher to be aware of the rationale of choosing certain kinds of data and make the choice according to the perceived analysability. Also, the researcher should be clear of the strategies of how to collect the data (e.g. what is the time period? how to preserve the data? etc). After the selection, the data should be sorted, coded, and analysed. There are four pointers which could be useful in this step. Firstly, the key themes and arguments should be identified. Secondly, the association and variation in the texts should be discovered. Thirdly, the central characters and agency in those texts should be examined. And finally, attention should be paid to the emphasis and silences.

First of all, the key themes and argument could be easily figured out by finding the “repetition or emphasis of keywords” (ibid, p. 413). The researcher should ask him/herself what kind of ideas the texts expresses, what kind of argument are used to support those ideas, and what are the differences between different ideas and arguments. Next, the association and variation could be discovered through finding answers towards the question concerning what associations/variation are

established between “different actors, groups or problem” (ibid.) For example, in the study of immigration, immigrants may be depicted as others with negative words and the political left may be portrayed as “allies” of the immigrants. This kind of association with other actors/groups and the exclusion of certain actors/groups are the points the researcher should be aware of. Then, the characterisation and agency could be examined by finding out the central feature of the agents that being talked in the texts, the reason why the author characterises the agents like that and the image as well as the behaviour of the agents mentioned in the texts. In charactering the agents, the agents could be personalised or depersonalised. For example, a refugee may be referred to with his/her name or simply as Syrian. And while explaining the characterisation of agents, the author may present the reason by situating him/herself as sympathetic/subjective or impersonal/objective. Also, in depicting the agents’ image and behaviour, the author may use different description to portray the agents and their behaviour. The personalisation/depersonalisation of agents, the position of the authors, and the description used by the authors should all be taken into consideration. At last, the emphasis and silences could be noticed by paying attention to the “frequency or consistency with which various terms, metaphors or associations are used” (p. 416) and the possible “alternative accounts” that do not appear in the texts (p. 417).

As a qualitative approach, discourse analysis prompts the researcher to chooses certain aspects of the research object and analyses those aspects in-depth, which means that not every discussion on Facebook, and not every comment of the two articles posted by BBC news on Facebook will be looked upon. It could be criticised that the findings are not representative enough. But since BBC News is an influential news agency and its two articles attracted more comments comparing to other news articles, and about 600 comments in total will be analysed in detail, the result could definitely share some opinions concerning how nationalism may be challenged/reproduced to the readers. Another problem of discourse analysis is that it always involves the researcher’s personal opinion and interpretation, which may influences the accuracy of the findings. But how the analysis is done and how the interpretation of the findings will be guided by the nationalism theory of scholars will be explained in detail in the next section, the transparency of the analysis could be guaranteed and the research result concluded from discourse analysis could be regarded as credible.

3.3. Method

Discourse is made up of texts, the texts could be anything including “written texts, spoken words, pictures, videos, or any other interpretable artifact” (Munir & Phillips, 2005, p. 1667). To analysis how nationalism is challenged/reproduced in people’s discussion about Taiwan’s status on Facebook,

the comments of the two news articles posted by BBC were selected as the researching texts. During the research, the steps and four pointers of discourse analysis proposed by Tonkiss (2012) was adopted. First of all, the comments of the two news articles of BBC News posted on Facebook were selected. The first article “Taiwan election: How a penitent pop star may have helped Tsai win” gathered 839 comments in total until April, 2016. And the second news article “S Korea website 'hacked' over Chou Tzuyu Taiwan flag row” had 949 comments. As said, not all the comments could be analysed one by one, so the research took a look at the top 15 comments of each news article as well as their responses in the comment area (selected by the system of Facebook as the most relevant). The comments that had more than 30 responses, only the first 30 responses were analysed. In total, 298 commentary replies of the first article and 319 of the second articles were selected. The 617 comments of the Facebook users were the final researching material. As mentioned by Herring (2008), the content of website keeps changing because they can always be updated, which means that the researching subjects on the Internet should be documented in detail. Therefore, to avoid the inconvenience of research due to possible update or changes of the webpages, screenshot was taken in April 2016 to preserve the articles and comments. And for the convenience of analysis, all the comments analysed were printed as hardcopy.

	Article 1	Article 2	
comment 1	30 responses	30 responses	
comment 2	30 responses	30 responses	
comment 2	30 responses	21 responses	
comment 4	22 responses	30 responses	
comment 5	30 responses	14 responses	
comment 6	20 responses	16 responses	
comment 7	30 responses	8 responses	
comment 8	13 responses	30 responses	
comment 9	30 responses	15 responses	
comment 10	7 responses	5 responses	
comment 11	14 responses	30 responses	
comment 12	2 responses	15 responses	
comment 13	3 responses	2 responses	
comment 14	9 responses	30 responses	
comment 15	13 responses	28 responses	

	Article 1	Article 2	
Total: 15 comments	Total: 283 responses	Total: 304 responses	Total: 617 commentary replies

Firstly, the two articles posted by BBC on Facebook were analysed to provide a general idea of how BBC described Chou’s event and how it portrayed China and Taiwan. Since people made comments and had their discussion in reaction to these two articles, the analysis of the two articles served as the starting point to analyse the comments made by people. Then, the comments of those two articles were analysed in detail. All the comments were numbered to facilitate the analysis, and to code the comments, the four pointers proposed by Tonkiss (2012) were used.

First of all, the general ideas/claims about Chou’s event and Taiwan’s status were extracted from those comments. How do people react to these news articles? What kind of statements do they have concerning Taiwan’s status as a country or province? How do they feel about their national identities? These were the questions that the researcher tried to answer with every comment. The answers were recorded as notes according to the keywords that each comment used, and after this, the statements of the comments were grouped into different categories according to their main claims. Secondly, the association and variation that established between different groups of people were looked upon. The questions were asked: How do those users associate themselves with their fellows who share the same idea? How do they distinguish themselves with their opponents? And how do people make reference to other similar issues (Like the independent movement in Scotland and the governance of Hong Kong and Macau by the PRC) ? In addition to finding answers to these questions and took notes, the adjectives and metaphors used in the comments to associate/distinguish themselves with/from other mainland Chinese or Taiwanese were highlighted in the hardcopy of the comments, and different colours were used to distinguish the negative adjectives with the positive ones. Thirdly, attention was paid to the characterisation of the central agents involved in the Taiwan issue. For example the mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, the Chinese Communist party (CPC), the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as well as other foreign powers who tried to define the status of Taiwan. Different from the second step during which the adjectives and metaphors were focused, at this stage, how the agents were personalised or depersonalised were analysed. For instance, when replying someone’s comment, a person may consider his/her reply as a response to all the Taiwanese/mainland Chinese people instead of to that single user. This kind of generalisation of the people were all underlined. Besides, how the users

positioned themselves in the comments were also analysed. The researcher judged the users' position as sympathetic or impersonal according to the association/variations found earlier, and the categorisation of sympathetic/impersonal were recorded next to the each comment. What is more, the verbs and noun used to describe the behaviour of the central agents were also highlighted with different colours according to their negativity/positivity on the printed hardcopy of the comments. Finally, what was emphasised and what was excluded in people's argument were examined by looking for the information that each group emphasised and neglected. This was done by comparing the claims of different groups of users founded in the first step. What are the things that they keep stressing? And what kind of fact they choose to avoid? For instance some people who argue for the independence of Taiwan may avoid the nonrecognition of Taiwan as a country by many other countries while their opponent may emphasise this fact. These different emphasis and exclusion were recorded as notes. After analysing the four pointers, the notes were organised to facilitate the interpretation. Firstly, the grouped claims of the comments were numbered and were put into a table in the row. Then, the central claims, the association/variation, the characterisation and agency, and the emphasis and silences were put into a table in the column. And next, the information founded were put into the table. When referring to some words or sentences of the comments, the number of the comments were also given to remind the researcher when making direct quote in the thesis.

To interpret the findings, first of all, whether nationalism is challenged or reproduced is judged according to the criteria explained in the last chapter. The statement of each numbered groups were compared with the main ideology of nationalism to see if those statement show a view of nationalism. If so, then that group was categorised as reproducing the nationalism discourse. If not, then it was regarded as the challenging group. Next, Michael Skey's (2011) theory of the five dimensions of national discourse were used to further interpret those groups of statements that were considered as a reproduction of nationalism. The information in the table were organised again on another paper according to Skey's categorisation of the spatial, temporal, cultural, political, and self/other. The statement and argument of the comments were organised into these five categories. In this way, what kind of references people make when talk about the nation could be clearer. In the next step, the theory of the primordialists, the modernists, and the ethnosymbolists were used to examine the kind of approaches the ordinary users adopted in their reproduction of nationalism. Similarly, the information in the table was reorganised in another paper according to their correspondence with the main claims of the primordialists, the modernists, and the ethnosymbolists. The groups of comments that were categorised as reproducing nationalism were also categorised as reproducing the primordialism, modernism, and ethnosymbolism. This kind of categorisation could help the readers

understand the kind of view different users have towards the nation and add further knowledge towards the different claims over nationalism that people express in their daily communication.

Although the data were selected in a way to make the researching material as relevant as possible. There are still some limitations. The top comments were selected by Facebook itself according to their relevance, but it is not entirely sure how the system work. Some comments only generated two or three responses but were still considered by Facebook as the most relevant. Also, the comments analysed were posted when Chou's issue were still in hot debate, many comments are quite radical and may not represent the "daily" communication of people since their were triggered by special event. But all in all, different top comments as well as their responses were analysed to make sure more diverse information could be obtained, the data collection could be considered as valuable. As for the data analysis, it is hard to group all the information into several categories since some of them may agree with each other in some aspects but disagree in other perspectives. Besides, as a mainland Chinese, the researcher may have biased interpretation. But since the interpretation are guided by theory instead of the researcher's personal opinion, the results could be regarded as convincible. In addition, the researcher avoided the "non-analysis" proposed by Antaki et al (2003). The analysis did not only summarise the content of the comments, it did not take any side of the discussions, it did not over-quoted or use one single quote. Instead, the researcher not only summarised the content of the comments, but also made categorisation and interpreted them with the help of theories. Besides, the researcher avoided making judgement over the accuracy of the statement and made appropriate quotes in this thesis as could be seen in the next chapter. Considering all the effort the researcher made to enhance the credibility of the results, the analysis could be regarded as reliable.

In this chapter, the methodology of discourses analysis and the method of how the discourse analysis was done was explained. The analysis was done through five steps. Firstly, the main statements were categorised into groups through the use of keywords. Then, the association and variation were found through paying attention to the different adjectives and metaphors used in the comments. Thirdly, the characterisation of the central agents was examined through finding out the personalisation/depersonalisation of the agents, the position of the users (as sympathetic or impersonal), and the noun and verbs used to describe the behaviours of the agents involved. Next, the emphasis and exclusion were scrutinised. Following that, different theories about nationalism were used to interpret the findings in the earlier four steps. While discourse analysis may be criticised as a methodology that may generate biased and non-representative results, it is still a valuable methodology for this research since it could real how people talk about nation in their daily life through the interpretation of the researcher.

Chapter 4. Analysis and discussion

4.1. The analysis of the two news articles.

Before analysing the comments of the two news articles, the two articles themselves will be portrayed first. The first article - Taiwan election: How a penitent pop star may have helped Tsai win - focuses on how Chou's issue helped Tsai-Ing-wen win the general election. It says that Tsai claimed that Chou's incident is a reminder of the importance of the strength of Taiwan as an independent nation. She promised to make it one of her most important responsibilities as the next president of the Republic of China (BBC, 2016 b).

The article firstly describes how Chou Tzuyu waved the flag of Taiwan along with the flag of South Korea on a Korean variety show and how she subsequently apologized. Chou is described as an innocent girl who did not have any political intention when she waved the flag of Taiwan. Then, the article describes the reaction to Chou's wave of flag of both sides (China and Taiwan). The television station in mainland China canceled the performance of Chou's band and many Taiwanese who watched Chou's apologising video felt "it was humiliating" as they could not express their Taiwanese identity publicly (ibid.).

The article suggests that the issue helped Tsai-Ing-wen win the presidential election even though she was going to win without the help of this issue. As mentioned in the article, "Ms Tsai would have won even if the video hadn't been posted, but some scholars believe the incident may have contributed another one or two percentage points" (BBC, 2016 b). Tsai Spoke publicly on Chou's issue to express her opinion concerning Taiwan's independence. As the leader of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) which has traditionally favoured independence for Taiwan, Tsai insisted that Taiwan should fight for its independent identity and its relationship with China should be determined by Taiwanese people. Other Taiwanese celebrities who also faced with the problem of China/Taiwan relationship was mentioned at last.

Even though both the People's Republic of China (based in China mainland) and the Republic of China (Based in Taiwan) have "China" in their names, follows an international convention, this article uses "China" only in relation to the People's Republic of China, and "Taiwanese" in relation to people from Taiwan. When describing Chou's flag waving, the articles says "she innocently showed the flag of the Republic of China - Taiwan's official name...". It highlights the idea that Chou did not do it with intention and explains that Taiwan has its own official name. But this articles uses quotation marks when saying national flag of Taiwan. For instance, it says "[...]they felt it was humiliating and a sign of Taiwan's predicament that Chou had to apologise for expressing her Taiwanese identity and for showing her "nation's" flag" (ibid), it seems that whether Taiwan could be considered as a "nation" is still debatable.

The article explains that Beijing “considers” Taiwan its province despite the two sides being ruled separately since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949. The use of “consider” seemingly suggests that it is Beijing’s own wishful thinking that no one else agreed with. And as this article mainly consults the reports of BBC’s reporter Cindy Sui in Taipei, it offers more information about what the Taiwanese people react to Chou’s issue but says less about mainland people’s reaction. It writes that Taiwan is not recognised as a country officially by the United Nations as well as many other international organizations, which is the biggest predicament for Taiwanese people. Besides, it says that Taiwanese celebrities have long been suffered from the pressure of China (mainland). Taiwanese people do not want to be called Chinese. Based on the information provided by this news articles, it seems that BBC News supports the Taiwan side more as it mentions more about the Taiwanese people’s anger and weakness (no being able to claim their national identity) and shows an suspicious altitude towards the claim of the PRC government.

The central claim of the second article - S Korea website 'hacked' over Chou Tzuyu Taiwan flag row - is that JYP Entertainment said that its website was attacked though it is still unknown where those attackers coming from. Again, it describes what happened on Chou and her apology under the subtitle “Humiliating for Taiwan”. It also refers to Cindy Sui’s reports in Taipei that Taiwanese people think Chou’s apology is a humiliation for her and Taiwan (BBC, 2016 c).

In this article, China is used only when referring to China mainland again. And it is also explained that Taiwan has been ruled separately since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949, but it is seen by China, as a “breakaway province” which it has threatened to take back by force if necessary. The article emphasises Taiwanese people’s anger towards this issue and their predicament about their Taiwanese identity, but Chinese people’s reaction are not mentioned. Only one sentence “Chou was widely criticised and the band had an New Year's Eve appearance on Chinese TV canceled”, but it is unclear who criticised her. What is worth mentioning is that it says that the other countries’ reaction are depicted. A South Korean multicultural organization which has special concern for the human rights of foreigners in South Korea has said “it is lodging a formal complaint with the national rights (without quotation marks) watchdog about Chou's treatment” (ibid.). And the Center for Multicultural Korea (CMCK) said it would ask the commission to "investigate whether the apology was forced or not” (ibid.).

Again, although this article does not mention explicitly who criticises Chou and who hacked JYP’s website, by addressing the anger of the Taiwanese people, it gives the audience a feeling that it was the mainland Chinese who did those things. Especially, by saying that a human rights organisation is going to investigate whether Chou was forced to make apology, it gives the readers an impression that Chou did so because of JYP’s received pressure from the China mainland

considering PRC's bad fame on human rights. And without using quotation marks when referring to "national right". BBC seems to admit that Taiwan could be considered as a nation.

4.2. The analysis of the comments

The authors of the comments could be categorised into four groups according to their main statement. The first group of people argue that Taiwan is an independent country and the connection between mainland China and Taiwan is limited, which consists about 50% of the comments analysed. The second group of people are those who claim that Taiwan belongs to China. Even though they seem to realise that Taiwan has its distinct state, they still think Taiwan is a special province of China that is currently ruled in another system by another government, which consists about 44% of the comments analysed. The third one are those people who state that the Taiwan issue is complicated. It is admitted that Taiwan has its distinct state, parliament, army, culture, and so on, but there is still a historical and cultural connection that cannot be neglected exists between Taiwan and mainland China. They think that the final status of Taiwan will be hard to define because different political powers will make different claims for their diverse political purpose, and about 5% of the comments share this view. Only about 1% of the comments are posted by the fourth group of users who do not give any idea about Chou or Taiwan, but simply show a reluctance to be categorised according to their national identity. Although the comments are extracted from the comments area of two different news articles. The content of the comments does not vary much. The majority of them are radical and the comments of both articles are more likely to be plain statements about the status of Taiwan rather than responses towards the BBC news articles. In the following pages, the argument of each groups will be explained in detail by discussing the essence of the arguments as well as the association/variation, the agency, and the emphasis/exclusion that found through the analysis.

4.2.1. Group 1: Taiwan is an independent country

1. The key arguments:

According to the first group of users, it is totally unnecessary for Chou to make an apology. They think that there is nothing wrong with Chou to hold and wave her national flag and saying that she is Taiwanese. They think that Chou was "born" in Taiwan, "raised" in Taiwan, so it is totally right for her to hold the flag of the "nation" where she was born. They blame mainland Chinese government and the angry mainland netizens for giving pressure to the JYP Company so that Chou had to apologise to win the audience. It is argued that the mainland state media like *the People Daily* wrote articles that trigger the anger of the mainland netizens in regards to Chou's wave of flag and thus pushed JYP to make Chou apologise. Although not everyone in this group think that Chou helped Tsai win the election and the opinion concerning whether Chou influence the election varies, they

agreed that Chou triggers the national pride of Taiwanese people. They argue that Taiwanese people have long been disappointed with KMT's policies towards mainland China. It is the PRC government who exerts pressure to JYP company and the television stations in mainland China should be blamed.

As mentioned, many comments do not say anything about Chou, but only focus on the status of Taiwan. Their main argument is that Taiwan is now a distinct country, not part of China. And Taiwanese people should have and be able to claim their distinct Taiwanese identity. Although Taiwan's status is not admitted by foreign countries, Taiwan has its distinct government, its own political system, its own currency as well as its own army, and Taiwanese people have their own passport issued by ROC and they vote for their own president. Taiwan is certainly a distinct country. The view of this group is similar to the Taiwanese nationalism that is now popular in Taiwan as both of them argue for the independency of Taiwan and the distinct Taiwanese identity of the Taiwanese people. There is one comment says like this:

“It doesn't belong to China at all. Can you fly to Taiwan without a passport or visa? Does Taiwan use the RMB? Will you ever find a picture of Mao above every government building in Taiwan? Can you vote like they can in Taiwan? Can you easily log into Facebook like they can in Taiwan? Do you understand this?”.

First of all, there is a clear claim that says Taiwan does not belong to China. Then, the author lists the differences between Taiwan and mainland China to show that these two places are two different countries. Here, the passport, the currency, and the democracy that the Taiwanese people own are the proof that Taiwan is not ruled by the government of the mainland China and they could be considered as the criteria for people to judge the existence of a nation.

Besides, It is argued that Taiwan has the freedom to seek its distinct identity and to choose whether to be independent or not. Although Taiwan may be ruled by the mainland government before, it could claim its independency now:

“I realise mainland Chinese tend to immediately grasp for the historical reasoning, but there are limits to that. When the reality on the ground is so vastly different from what you are saying, how can you continue on the same course of denial? History only goes so far, the present matters as well”.

This comment criticises the comments of many mainland Chinese that they focus too much on the history. However, The current situation is different from previous times and whether Taiwan should be considered as a country depends on its current status. It reflects the idea that the pre-existing tie between people should not be considered as the only proof of their national identity, which is similar to the notion of the modernists.

Also, words like “should”, “must”, and “totally not”, capital letters, and exclamation marks are used to highlight Taiwan's status as a country. And some of the users in this group claim that they

are “proud of” being Taiwanese and they should have the “passion” to “protect” their “lovely land”. There is one person who says that she is “glad” that she is not Chinese. And another rather radical comment says that Taiwanese should “get rid of ROC” to find its distinct Taiwanese identity. In addition, it is claimed by this group of users that mainland China gives pressure to the international community so that Taiwan is in a political predicament in the international world. They think that the PRC government threatens other countries not to recognise Taiwan as a country. If any country supports Taiwan, it will lose the market of China mainland. Therefore, for economic reasons, Taiwan is isolated by many other countries.

2. The association/variation

Many Taiwanese users in this group explicitly claim their Taiwanese identity in their comments. When insisting their Taiwanese identity, they tried to distinct themselves from the mainland Chinese. In their comments, it is common to see words like “those Chinese”, “you Chinese” and “you mainland guys”. They compare themselves with the mainland Chinese to show that they are different from the mainland Chinese so they do not belong to the same “China”. For example, many of them indicate that they have the right to vote, freedom of speech and democracy, but “those Chinese” do not have.

When referring to Chinese (namely the mainland people), negative descriptions are used by this group of users. For instance, Chinese are described as “greedy”, “brainwashed”, “poor” and “notorious”. Also, the users in this group associate Chinese with the communist. For example, words like “red China” are used, and in some comments, Chinese are referred as “coward communists” and “stupid communists”. There is one user who even uses the word “mainland patsies” that irritated many users who claimed to be mainlanders. These descriptions, further distinguish Taiwanese from the mainland Chinese as Taiwanese belong to a capitalist system. What is worthy of mentioning is that some self-claimed Taiwanese users intentionally type the phonetic symbols of Mandarin to distinguish themselves from the mainland Chinese (In mainland China, people use simplified Chinese and they seldom know how to read the phonetic symbols of the traditional Chinese character). It is argued that even though both Taiwanese and mainlanders speak Mandarin, they have a different version of Mandarin so that they are different from each other.

Despite of distinguishing themselves from the mainland Chinese, the Taiwanese users also connect themselves with the other residents in Taiwan. One of the evidence is that most of the Taiwanese users tend to use the word “we” when they make a statement. Instead of using “I”, the use of “we” suggests that those Taiwanese are not only speaking for themselves, but are representatives of the whole Taiwan. It is a way for those users to establish a kinship with all the other Taiwanese. Besides, “Taiwan” also appears as the agent of speaking. Argument like “Taiwan does not want to be

back to China” again indicates that some users position themselves as the representative of Taiwan. It is not some people in Taiwan who want to be independent, but Taiwan as whole refuses to unite with mainland China.

Comparing to the negative description of mainland China and the mainland Chinese, the words used to depict Taiwan is more positive. For instance, there are some comments that depict Taiwan as Taiwanese people’s “motherland” and claim that their “motherland” can only be Taiwan instead of China. Another comment makes a metaphor and states that some mainlanders’ claim make him feel that “some stranger keep saying that he is my father”. And in response, a self-claimed mainland user says that the claim of the Taiwanese actually shows that “the son takes his father as a stranger”.

Actually, users in this group also try to establish a kinship between Taiwan and other places that they think are in similar situation as Taiwan does. For instance, there are comments refer to Hongkong and Macau, the previous colony of Britain and Portugal since the Qing dynasty and is now returned to PRC. It is said that the PRC is limiting the liberty and democracy in Hong Kong and Macao, and Taiwan does not want to be the “second Hong Kong”. In this way, Taiwanese users confirm the liberty and democracy that they now own as the feature of Taiwan and differentiate Taiwan from mainland China in which people have little liberty and democracy. Moreover, some comments also label Taiwan as a member of the “weaker neighbours” of PRC, connecting it with Vietnam, Philippines and some other countries that “bullied” by PRC. This kind of connection actually equals the status of Taiwan and other countries, and inexplicably shows Taiwan’s status as an independent country. Furthermore, Some Taiwanese users make comparison between the Taiwan-mainland China relationship and the United States-the United Kingdom relationship. It is claimed that if Taiwan is not a country but a province of China, then the United States should also not be considered as a country but a part of the United Kingdom.

3. The agency

When mentioning mainland China, many negative adjectives are used by this group of users. For example, mainland China is said to be “terrible” and “bloody”, an “aggressor” who always “bully”, “boycott” its “weaker neighbours”. According to these users, Taiwan is always “suppressed” and “threatened” by PRC, and Taiwanese people are living in the “fear of China (PRC)”. Some users refer to the facts that Taiwanese people cannot sing the national anthem and use their national flag in international games like the Olympics to prove that they are “suppressed” by PRC. And they have to be called as “Chinese Taipei” instead of “the Republic of China”. Some of them also quote other news articles made by foreigners to prove that even foreigners think that they are “bullied” by the

mainland China. And in some other comments, PRC is said to be “a Nazi country” and one user even depicts PRC as the “Chinese version of ISIS”.

When stating that the mainland state gives a lot of pressure to the international community so that the status of Taiwan as a country could not be admitted, it seems that some users regard the action of the Beijing government as the action of the mainland Chinese, “you Chinese” is used to refer to the agent who did all those “evil” things. There are about ten Taiwanese users who depict their unpleasant communication with some mainlanders and conclude that “you Chinese” acted in such a way that make people disappointed. These ways of depersonalisation actually bound the state and nation, and link every mainland Chinese together. In other words, one’s state basically defines one’s national identity and one’s identity can also be defined by their fellows in the same nation.

This group of users show a great sympathy towards the plight of Taiwan and the Taiwanese people. As mentioned, many Taiwanese users explicitly claimed their Taiwanese identities and regarded themselves as the representative of the whole population of Taiwanese. Even those users who claimed that they are foreigners also engaged themselves in the discussion as someone who could feel the embarrassment of Taiwanese in the international communities and show clear inclination to the notion that Taiwan is an independent country.

4. The emphasis/exclusion

The statements of this group of people emphasise on two points. Firstly, Chou Tzuyu does not need to apologise. And secondly, Taiwan does not belong to China. In their argument supporting their claim, their different political system is the emphasis. It is stressed that they have their own government, army, parliament, and they vote for their own president. Different from most mainland Chinese, history, culture, and other countries’ recognition is not the focus, and they argue against those users who put an emphasis on history and culture as stated in the second section of this chapter. For these Taiwanese, the present, the existence of an independent state, and the will of the Taiwanese people are their emphasis. For instance, many of them stress that Taiwan and mainland China are ruled by different political systems since the 1949 Civil War, even though Taiwan was ruled by government in mainland China in the ancient times, “now” Taiwan is independent from the control of the Beijing government so it should be independent. Besides, Taiwanese people are the residents of the Taiwan island, they have the right to decide whether to be independent or not.

The excluded point of this group is culture and history. Although Taiwanese people share many culture with the mainland Chinese people, they did not mention the cultural similarities that much. Instead, they focuses more on the different political systems of Taiwan. Also, in reaction to the argument of the second group of users which claim that Taiwan has been ruled by China since history, this group of users argue that the history that the mainland people known are manipulated by the

mainland government. What is more, the mainlanders only focus on the history that Taiwan has been ruled by Chinese. But in fact, Taiwan was also ruled by the Netherlands and Japan for a period of time. If they want to refer to history, then Taiwanese could also be Dutch or Japanese in addition to Chinese. Also, it is claimed by some self claimed Taiwanese users that PRC always says that Taiwan is ruled by China since ancient times. But the ancient China also ruled Korea, Vietnam and many other parts of Asia as well. Why should PRC stick to Taiwan as part of China but do not argue with Korea and Vietnam about their status as countries? Besides, there are some interesting comments saying that if history decides everything, then everyone is African. There is one comment which explicitly criticise the Chinese nationalism in mainland China. It points out the “sickness part of Chinese nationalism education”. It says that mainland China focuses too much on “history” and “bloodline”, which according to the user is “old school nationalism”. Another comment says that where and what Taiwanese are originated from is not the key issue now, “the more important things are the self-recognizance of being a Taiwanese”.

4.2.2. Group 2: Taiwan belongs to China

1. The key arguments

Among the users who make the second kind of comments, only three of them criticise Chou for her wave of the ROC's flag, except for those users that do not refer to Chou at all, the rest of them state that they do not need the apology of Chou. According to them, it is totally okay for Chou to wave her flag and state that she is Taiwanese rather than Chinese. They just don't want Chou to make money from the Chinese audience while claiming that she is Taiwanese, which from their view is a disrespect to mainland China. Also, they criticise the DPP and *the Apple Daily* in Taiwan, claiming that it is the DPP and some media in Taiwan who wrote reports that take mainland as the guilty party who attacks a sixteen years' old girl that make the mainland netizens so angry. In this sense, they agree with the first group of people who say that Chou should not be blamed as Chou is just a poor girl who seems to be the tool of some political groups to win the presidential election. It is said in one comment:

“First of all, nobody in mainland China required her to apologise. She might be forced by her company. Why she did that? For money! The reason why we don't want to watch her show in China is never about waving flag. “Waving flag” is the claim from your media, the Apple daily”.

In addition to criticising the Taiwanese media, three users in this group explicitly criticised BBC for not reporting the news from the standpoint of justice. They claim that BBC have “double standards”. That is to say, BBC would not say Scotland is a country but it would describe Taiwan as if

it is. One of them criticises BBC as it uses the word “breakaway province” to describe Taiwan. It is argued that Taiwan is not a breakaway province, but “always been” a province of China.

For the users in this group, Taiwan is not a country, it is part of China (although they do not make it clear it is PRC or ROC). For them, Taiwan is a province of China although it is currently ruled by a distinct political system. When referring to Taiwan as one province of China, words like “renegade” are used. About ten comments claim that Taiwan belongs to China “forever” (or Taiwan “always” belong to China). Not only in history, but also at present and in the future.

There are three major arguments is used by this group of people to back up their statements. Firstly, Taiwan has been ruled by China throughout history. Secondly, Taiwan is not recognised by international powers like the United Nations and many other countries. Thirdly, Taiwanese people share a lot of culture with the mainland Chinese, like the Chinese New year and the Chinese language. For instance, there is one comment that says:

“[...]Taiwan has always been a province of China. Taiwanese are Chinese people, we share the same culture, same ancestors, same history, same country [...] then you explain to me what is Taiwan now? A country? Serious? A country only recognised by itself? A country cannot even defend itself from the U.S. intruders? Ah, got it, according to your passport, you are from the Republic of China, not China, one more word after all. The Taiwan local government can’t just claim to establish a country because they want to”.

Here, contrary to the first group, the user think that the passport should not be considered as a sign of the independency of a nation. Rather, a nation cannot exist if it is not recognised by other countries. Besides, national identity depends on the culture, ancestor and history that is promoted by the primordialism. This kind of view is in accordance with the Chinese nationalism ideology that is prevalent in mainland China as both of them emphasise the pre-existing ties between mainland Chinese and Taiwanese.

2. The association/variation

Like the Taiwanese users in the first group, the mainland Chinese in this group also make explicit claim of their identity as mainland Chinese. Similarly, they use words like “we”, “our”, “you”, and “your” in their comments to distinguish themselves from the Taiwanese and speak for the whole mainland population. For example, some comments point out “we” don’t need Chou’s apology and “you” should learn more about history before deciding Taiwan’s status. In this way of using “we” and “you”, the Taiwanese users in the first group and mainland users in this group unconsciously stress their mainland Chinese/Taiwanese identity. It is through the use of “we” and “you” that they all agreed they belong to the same “Taiwanese” group or “mainland Chinese” group and different from each other.

However, those mainland Chinese users in this group do not want a big distinction between Taiwanese and mainland Chinese. They actually make attempts to relate themselves with Taiwanese people. As already been mentioned. Mainland users refer to history and culture to specify that Taiwan and China has historical and cultural link with each other. Apart from this, mainland Chinese and Taiwanese are also described as “brothers” who belong to the same “mother China”. Also, it is emphasised that most Taiwanese and mainlanders belong to the same Han ethnic groups, so they have blood association in some sense.

Also, the mainland users in this group differentiate themselves with the communist. They refuse to be tagged as the “communist” and explain that not every Chinese is the same as the description of some Taiwanese users. Also, they argue that they are Chinese but they do not belong to the Communist Party, they know that the PRC state does not do well sometimes but they still love China and hope it could be better. These kind of claims show that in the mind of those mainlanders, the state and nation are not the same, being in country that ruled by the communist party does not mean he or she is a communist, and one’s love for their nation does not equal the support for the state.

3. The agency

As noticed, the self-claimed mainland users in this group make use of “we” to speak for the whole population of the mainland Chinese. This is what Tonkiss called the depersonalisation, that they do not make argument in their own names, but speak in a way as if they are the representative of a larger group. In this way of positioning themselves as the speaker of the whole mainland China, the mainlanders in this group involved themselves in the issue of Taiwan. Besides, they argue that Taiwan Issue should be tackled by the mainland people and the Taiwanese people together. Again, they regard themselves as the people who are able to give judgement over the status of Taiwan. In reaction to of some self-claimed foreigners’ support for Taiwan, the self-claimed mainlanders in this group criticising those foreigners as outsiders who know nothing about China. It is said that those foreigners should not make any judgment over Taiwan issue because it is an “inner” issue that can only be settled by the mainland Chinese and Taiwanese. Certainly, this view is opposed by foreigners who think they have the right of speech. As one foreigner who has a Taiwanese wife and lives Taiwan says, “residence is enough to allow an opinion”. And the “democratic freedom” allows him to “criticise without fear of being arrested and having to issue a public apology on national television”. In an ironic way, this comment criticises the mainland China as undemocratic. In response, some mainlanders claim that his criticism only shows that he does not know PRC pretty well as if he only knows the country from media and his wife.

In fact, although the self-claimed mainlanders in this the group are willing to be depersonalised so as to be connected with their fellow mainlanders, they personalised themselves in their comments to avoid being linked with the communists. They argue that they speak for themselves instead of for the communists. One comment even describes “communist” as the “obstacle” that prevent Taiwan from being united with China. And it says that Taiwan is “an extension of Greater China” and it was part of China in history and in the future. Taiwan should be united with the mainland so that they could spread democracy in China and help mainlanders “get rid of the Communist rule”.

As said before, the central agent PRC is described by the first group of users as the one who “bullies” Taiwan. However, in the mind of the users in this group, the PRC is “misunderstood” by others. It tries to cooperate with the Taipei government to solve the Taiwan Issue peacefully and it helps Taiwan make its economic progress by signing some trade agreements with Taiwan. And in reaction to the first group’s argument that the Mainland government and the mainland media should be blamed for Chou’s issue, people in this group state that Chou’s issue was manipulated by the DPP for its election and some media that support the independence of Taiwan. It is argued that the DPP posted news articles saying that the mainland Chinese are abusing Chou Tzuyu for her wave of ROC’s flag. But in fact, not many people know about Chou’s behaviour before the Taiwanese became angry with the mainlanders because of their media’s report. For the people in this group, it is the strategy of Tsai Ing-wen and the DPP party to portray Chou as a girl who is bullied by the mainlanders so as to win the vote of those Taiwanese who are angry and thus to ruin the relationship between mainland China and Taiwan. In their view, the involvement of the DPP, the media that support the independence of Taiwan are the ones who should be blamed in Chou’s issue. The PRC government did not take special action to suppress Chou, which means that those television who banned Chou made their decisions themselves.

4. The emphasis/exclusion

The argument of the users in this group emphasise on three points. First of all, they keep saying that mainland China did not force Chou Tzuyu to apologise. Secondly, it is emphasised that the whole issue surrounding Chou was manipulated by DPP and some Taiwanese media that want the independence of Taiwan. Thirdly, the most frequent emphasis is that Taiwan belongs to China. And in their argument, as has been indicated, three aspects are emphasised: the history, the culture, and the altitude of the foreign powers. Especially, those comments focus on the period of history in which Taiwan was ruled by the ancient Chinese dynasties and the same tradition as well as custom that shared by Taiwanese and mainland Chinese. In fact, Taiwan was also ruled by other foreign powers for time, and Taiwanese also have their distinct culture like the aborigine culture in addition to the

Han Chinese one. But those facts are neglected in the comments and only the similarities are emphasised. Besides, the culture is emphasised a lot, but about 90% of the comments that refer to culture do not make it clear what kind of culture is shared by the mainlanders and the Taiwanese. Also, the non-recognition of Taiwan as an independent country by other foreign countries is one of the major argument used by this group of users to claim Taiwan's status. Especially, the attitude of the United Nations towards Taiwan is mentioned many times. Although it seems that they should be happy with the foreign countries' attitude towards Taiwan, some of the users in this group still take the United States as well as many other Western powers as the "evil" powers that hamper the process of the mainland-Taiwan unification. They think the Western countries, especially the United States are willing to see the Taiwan-Mainland status quo so that their power in East Asia would not be threatened. However, although the mainland users claim that Taiwan issue is an "inner" problem and should only be tackled by mainland China and Taiwan together, they do not say anything about Taiwanese unwillingness to be united the mainland China, but just insist that Taiwan belongs to China.

4.2.3. Group 3: Taiwan Issue is complicated

Since the comments of both the third group and fourth group are limited, the main argument, the association/variation, the agency, and the emphasis/exclusion will be discussed together. The users in the third group are much more modest than the first and second group of users. They think that Taiwan issue is hard to define because of the complicated political relationship behind and they admit that Taiwan has its distinct state, parliament, army, culture, and so on. But they also think that Taiwanese share many culture with the Mainland Chinese. In some comments, some Taiwanese and mainland Chinese share their love for the same Taiwanese/mainland Chinese TV dramas and express that it should not be denied that that Taiwanese and mainland Chinese have so much in common concerning their culture, not only the traditional one, but also the popular one as well. There is one comments says:

"I really feel that the culture of both sides [of Taiwan strait] have many in common, I also have a lot of friendly mainland friends. We (Taiwanese and mainland Chinese) should communicate more like this, it is better than media. The whole thing could not be defined by our quarrel here, the governments, the US always have to do something".

And in reaction to the above comments, a user posted like this:

"I agree, people could have different personalities, but it's not okay to speak so rudely. We [mainland Chinese] don't know quite well about Taiwan as well, but we [mainland Chinese and Taiwanese] do share many culture. The government will do their things,

hopefully we could witness the day when everybody is satisfied with the outcome. We need to communicate more”.

In these two comments, it is argued that the Taiwan Issue cannot be easily solved. People in Taiwan and in mainland China should not deny their cultural ties although there are difference between them, and they should communicate more to have better understanding of each other instead of talking rudely with each other. Here in this group, the word “we” is used to associate the mainland Chinese and the Taiwanese. It is argued that there is a clear cultural tie between them and it should not be neglected. Although there may be variance between them, there are also association. Comparing to the first two groups who tend to make comments on behalf of the Taiwanese or mainland Chinese, this group of people make comments only as a way to express their own idea. As could be seen from the above examples, they use “I” instead of “we” as the agent of speaking. Also, unlike the first two groups who involve themselves in the Taiwan Issue, the users in this group are more objective as they claim that they could not define the whole issue and more parties will be involved. The emphasis of this group of users is not about the association or variance between the Taiwanese and mainland Chinese, but they focus on the peaceful communication between the two sides and argue that the Taiwan Issue could not be easily solved.

4.2.4. Group 4: Refuse to be generalised

Different from the self-claimed Taiwanese users who are happy to be grouped as “Taiwanese”, some mainland Chinese users refuse to be generalised as the “Chinese” that some Taiwanese users described. What is interesting is that only the mainlanders are unhappy to be generalised. This is probably due to the fact that many negative description are used to portray mainland China and mainland Chinese. These unhappy mainland users distinguish themselves from other “Chinese” and indicate that some offensive comments are made out of personal sentiment of some mainland users. They think they should not be represented by other mainland Chinese, nor could they represent the others. For instance, they criticise some other users’ use of “all Chinese” and “you Chinese”:

“I am not brainwashed by the government. I am not representing the Chinese people. I only state my personal view. You should be careful saying “all Chinese” cuz I don’t say the same things as they do”.

In another comment, it says:

“Serious? all Chinese? How can you know that ‘all Chinese’ are bullying her? Right, some people may be angry with her. But I didn’t do anything! I don’t even know her not to mention bullying her. What they do does not mean I think or do in the same way!”.

Those mainland users in this group distinguish themselves with the other mainland Chinese. As could be discerned from the examples, words like “they” and “I” are used to distance themselves

from other mainland Chinese and personalise themselves. Like the users in the third group, the mainlander users in this group also speak for themselves instead of for a larger group. They situate themselves in an objective position and emphasise that one's national identity should not only be defined by their fellows' action or behaviour in the same nation. In other words, a person may not share the same national identity as his or her fellows in the same nation.

4.3. Discussion

In this section, firstly, the question concerning whether nationalism is challenged or reproduced will be answered. Then, how it is challenged or reproduced will be explained. To analyse how the nationalism ideology is being reproduced, the five dimensions of national discourse of Michael Skey (2011) will be applied. Later, the different kinds of approach of viewing nationalism expressed in people's reproduction of the nationalism will be examined.

4.3.1. The national discourses used in the discussions

From the above analysis, we can conclude that nationalism as an ideology is both challenged and reproduced. First of all, nationalism is challenged through some mainland Chinese users' reluctance to be tagged as "Chinese". According to the nationalism ideology, no matter from the view of the primordialist, the modernist or the ethnosymbolist, people always share the same national identity with other people within the same nation and they acknowledge this shared identity. However, the mainland users in the fourth group refused to be generalised as Chinese and they do not acknowledge the shared identity between them and their fellows in mainland China as they emphasise on the personal differences between Chinese. They think that they, as well as other mainland Chinese just share their personal idea in the comments area. They cannot present the other "Chinese", neither could the other "Chinese" view be considered as theirs. And they have nothing to do with the other Chinese people's behaviour.

But it is apparent that only a small number of people make challenges towards the nationalism ideology, all the three other groups of users show an unconscious reproduction of the nationalism in their comments. The reason for the researcher to believe so is that all the five dimensions of national discourse categorised by Skey (2011) can be extracted from their comments.

Firstly, even though the users in these three groups make different claims over the boundaries of China, they all make reference to territory in their comments. While the first group of users think that Taiwan is a distinct territory, the second group considers the Taiwan island as part of China. Secondly, the temporal discourse can be traced frequently in the discussions. But while the second group of users focus on the ancient history, the old time, the first group of users concentrate on the contemporary history, the present. And the moderate third group regards history as a proof of the tie

between Taiwanese people and mainland Chinese without emphasising its role in defining the status of Taiwan. For instance, the second group makes claim over the ancient history of the dynasties in China and concentrate on the period of Ming and Qing during which Taiwan is ruled by the government in mainland China. And in reaction to the this kind of “disrespect” of history, the first group refers to the history when Taiwan is not under the control of the mainland government (e.g. the period during which Taiwan is occupied by the Netherlands and the more recent time during which Taiwan is under the control of Japan). Especially, unlike the second group of people who prefer to connect the past with the present as Skey (2011) noticed in his research, that many people unconsciously reproduce nationalism through making connection of the history and the present, the first group focuses on the “present” and claim that history is history, but “now”, Taiwan does not belong to “China” any more.

Thirdly, the cultural discourse is also addressed by the Facebook users. For example, the third group of people recognised that Taiwanese and mainland Chinese use the same language and they have the same rituals (e.g. the celebration of some festivals). And the first group, they keep emphasising the cultural similarities to stress that Taiwan belongs to China. And in response to their argument, the first group claims that Taiwanese also have their own Taiwanese aborigine culture and their language also have difference (e.g. reminding the mainland Chinese that they are different by using the phonetic symbols of Mandarin). As noticed in the last section, the first group of users emphasise on the difference of the culture between mainland China and Taiwan while the second group focuses on the similarities of their culture. And for the second group of users, using Chinese (Mandarin) and having the same Han Chinese traditions are self-evident “national culture” that proves Taiwan is part of China, but for the first group of people, especially for those self-claimed Taiwanese in that group, they are still struggle to define their national culture - whether it should be a Han Chinese culture or a local aborigine culture, or a combination of the two? And because of this struggle, they choose to exclude the cultural similarities when defining the status of Taiwan. It corresponds with Skey’s (2011) argument that while a dominant culture could be self-evident for some people, some others are struggling to make sense of that culture.

The fourth kind of national discourse - the political discourse - is another important discourse that appear a lot in people’s discussion. First of all, the comments refer a lot to the PRC government, the Communist Party, the KMT as well as the DPP. Although these comments do not explicitly explain the national discourse of these political groups. They are aware of the role of these parties’ involvement in producing their own national discourse. For instance, the third group of people argue that the fortune of Taiwan will be defined by the changing power relationship between those parties. And the first group, describes mainland Chinese as “brainwashed”, which is an evidence of the users’ recognition of the fact that the PRC government produces its own version of national discourse and

the mainlanders adopt its discourse through education. And in the claim of the second group, Taiwanese people are fooled by the DPP party and some media that categorised by them as “Taiwan independents”, which means that DPP party also creates its own version of national discourse to “misguide” the Taiwanese people for its own political purpose.

The last national discourse - the self/other discourse is most obvious in people’s use of words like “we”, ‘us’, “you”, and “your”. As showed before, both the first and second group like using “we” to set an association with other Mainland Chinese or Taiwanese in their group, and the third group also uses “we” to connect mainland Chinese and Taiwanese. Besides, the first and second group use “you” to refer to the people who they think are in the opposite group. As Skey (2011) has noticed, the use of “we” actually shows that people locate themselves within the group and position themselves as the representative of that group. Similarly, the Taiwanese/mainland Chinese users also regard themselves as the representative of Taiwan/PRC through using words like “we Taiwanese” and “we Chinese”.

In addition to the use of words like “we” and “you”, the self/other discourse can also be found in people’s association and variation with other foreign countries and foreign people. For example, by taking Taiwan and other countries like Vietnam and Philippines as the “weaker neighbours” of mainland China who are always “bullied” by mainland China, the first group of users actually distinct Taiwan from mainland China as it is only a neighbouring country of PRC instead of a part of China, and they recognise the distinct Taiwanese national identity of the people in Taiwan through mainland China’s “bullying” action. And they quote the writings of some foreigners who think Taiwan is “suppressed” by mainland China and share the link to show that the “bullying” is a fact verified by foreigners. Similarly, the second group also refers to the foreign countries, but their reference are aimed to identify the status of Taiwan as part of China according to other countries un-recognition of Taiwan. As Skey (2011) points out, people’s national identity can also be identified through others’ judgment and (re)action. Here, the second group use the other countries’s judgment to identify the status of Taiwan while the first group recognise Taiwanese people’s national identity through China’s “bullying” action towards Taiwan and Taiwanese people as well as foreigners judgment over their suffering.

Besides, as mentioned many times, the first group focuses on the differences between the mainland Chinese and Taiwanese while the second group emphasise on the similarities. For the first group of users, Taiwanese have different state, different culture and different social-political system, but for the second group, Taiwanese have the same language, same culture, and same history as the mainland Chinese do. This kind of different emphasis actually indicate that while the second group trying to create a bigger “self” and include the Taiwanese in the “self” group of Chinese, the first group are labeling the Taiwanese as the “other” by specifying the differences.

The above analysis explains how the Facebook users who posted comments under the news articles of BBC News unconsciously reproduce the nationalism ideology through making different reference towards space, history, culture, politics, and the distinction between self and other. But as noticed in previous section, there is also one comment that explicitly address the nationalism discourse. This comment criticises the nationalism ideology in mainland China and argue that it focuses too much on the “history” and “blood tie”, which according to the user does not correspond with the current trend in nationalism study. For this user, “the present” and “the state” is the defining element for people to talk about nationalism.

4.3.2. The kind of nationalism ideology reproduced in the discussions

As explained in Chapter 2, there are three major approaches of nationalism. The primordialist approach, the modernist approach, and the ethnosymbolist approach. Here in this section, the view of the first three different groups of people will be analysed by comparing their opinions with the central argument of the modernists, the primordialists, and the ethnosymbolists to figure out the kind of nationalism approach they use in reproducing nationalism. And according to the comments being analysed, the first group take the modernists view while the second group take the primordialist approach. And the third group who take the Taiwan Issue as a complicated problem that hard to be solved are more likely to be considered as ethnosymbolists.

1. The modernist view of most Taiwanese and foreigners.

There are three major emphasis of the modernists on nation. First of all, the modernists’ view highlights the central role of the state in a nation. State is said to be the indivisible constitution of the nation. It is the state who organises the nation and keep its form through political, cultural and social activities that guided by the state. Secondly, the modernists regard the “high culture” as one fundamental element that constitute a nation. The high culture, which covers many aspects of social practices, includes the political system of a nation, the government, the education system, the army, the national festivals and so on. It is through the shared high culture that people find their affiliation with other people and make sense of their shared national identity. Thirdly, the will of the people is another important element for the establishment of a nation. Only through people’s recognition of their fellowship with others and their will to be grouped together that a nation could be constructed.

Similarly, the comments of the first group also stress these three points. Firstly, it is emphasised a lot by the first group of users Taiwanese have their distinct state/government, and they vote for their own president. For them, if Taiwan has its distinct state and government that handle the political, cultural and social activities of the residents in Taiwan without the involvement of other foreign power, it should be considered as a nation. It is claimed that mainland China has its PRC

government, and Taiwan has its ROC government. The PRC government never ruled Taiwan and the ROC government has now lost its control over mainland China, so there should be two distinct nations in mainland China and Taiwan. Secondly, the first group argues that Taiwan has its own political system, its own army and its own parliament so they should be considered as an independent country. It is clear that they address the “high culture” that is only shared by the Taiwanese people to show that Taiwan is a distinct nation. And finally, the comments of the self-claimed Taiwanese in the first group also highlight the intention of those Taiwanese to have their own Taiwanese identity rather than a Chinese one. They passionately hope that Taiwan could bravely claim its independence from “China”. Their expressed willingness to have Taiwan claimed independent and their perception of the attachment with other Taiwanese actually show that they “imagine” Taiwan as a nation according to their shared fellowship and independent state. Considering all the three pointers made by most Taiwanese and foreigners, it is argued here that they show a modernist view of nationalism. Also, considering that nationalism in Taiwan now takes the form of independence, it could be argued here that the opinions of the first group of people show an inclination towards the current popular version of Taiwanese nationalism that claim to have an independent Taiwan and distinct Taiwanese identity.

2. The primordialist view of most mainland Chinese.

Three major claims of the primordialists are used to evaluate the kind of the nationalist view of most mainland Chinese: the claim over blood tie, the claim over kinship, and the claim of nation as an immemorial being that exists since the recorded history. The blood tie is about the genetic connection between people. Although there are billions of Han Chinese living in the world and a number of them are not the residents of PRC, the second group still uses the belonging to the same ethnic group as one of the evidences of the Taiwanese people’s similarity with mainland Chinese. And this kind of fact is used as if all the people within the same ethnic group should be in the same nation. Apart from the blood tie, the kinship between people is also stressed as if people who share the same language, the same festivals, the same rituals etc should be considered as belonging to the same nation. It is argued by the users in the second group that both Taiwanese and Chinese use the same language - Chinese (Mandarin), celebrate the same traditional festivals, and their ancestors had been ruled by ancient Chinese dynasties in history. They think these kinds of facts prove that Taiwanese and mainland Chinese are the “same”, so Taiwanese is also Chinese.

From here we could notice the big distinction between the first group and second group. Actually, it is also one of the most conspicuous differences between the modernist view and the primordialist view, that while the first group (the modernists) emphasises on the current political institution (the state) and regards history and culture as the “low culture” that need to be replaced with the “high culture”, the second group (the primordialists) holds the point of view that one’s national

identity should not be defined only according to their state. The state and nation are not the same and one's love for their nation does not equal the support for the state. Instead, they take history and culture as the defining element of people's nationality because they are undetachable being that people born with. And in some comments made by this group of people, it is argued that Taiwan is "always" part of China, it belongs to China in history, at present, and even in the future. Although they do not give further argument to explain why they think so. Their plain argument without further explanation shows exactly that they regard the nation as a being that is immemorial since China is described by them as if it is there since history instead of constituted by certain group of people or political organisations.

This primordialist view of the second group corresponds with the Chinese nationalism that is popular in mainland China to some extent as both of them argue for the unification of "China" and claim that Taiwan is an indivisible part of "China". At the same time, it could also be considered as a challenge to the nationalism that is popular in China which regards the pro-communist as the pro-Chinese. On the contrary, the self-claimed mainland Chinese in this group refuse to be categorised as "communist" and show that it is not okay to connect all Chinese with communists.

3. The ethnosymbolist view of few prudent mainland Chinese and Taiwanese.

As a compromise of the other two approaches, the ethnosymbolist view holds the idea that people within the same nation share the same public culture and legal, political, economic system, which is similar to modernist' view of "high culture". Besides, it also recognises the importance of the shared pre-existing cultural and historical symbols between people. The few prudent third groups of people, namely those who think Taiwan issue is a complicated question to be solved, seem to agree with the ethnosymbolist. First of all, this group of people think it is a fact that Taiwan has its distinct government that is out of the control of Beijing. And they admit that Taiwan is now in different political system with mainland China and it also have its own aborigine culture. But they also think Taiwan and mainland China have a lot in common concerning its people, its tradition, its culture, etc. This group of people are not that radical as the other two groups. Their view is also a compromise of their fellows' idea. On the one hand, they recognise and admit Taiwanese people share its distinct "high culture", namely their own state, own political and legal system, own army, own Taiwanese tradition and culture and so on. On the other hand, they also think there is a pre-existing connection between Taiwan and mainland China, Taiwanese people and mainland Chinese people in regards to both traditional culture and popular culture.

Although the three groups of people are each categorised as modernists, primordialists, and ethnosymbolist, there is one idea mentioned by the ethnosymbolist Smith that shared by all the groups, that people could create or modify fact to sustain their national discourse. This is exactly what

the three groups of people do. It could be noticed from the comments that the words “China” and “Chinese” are used in an ambiguous way by all the three groups of people. Sometimes, “China” and “Chinese” are used only to refer to mainland China and mainland Chinese. And sometimes they are used to refer to mainland China and Taiwan as a whole. Besides, some arguments made by people to support their argument may not correspond with the fact at all. But they are all used in a way to make their statement more convincing. Again, these phenomenon confirm that nationalism is reproduced by people in their comments.

Chapter 5. Conclusion and discussion

5.1. Conclusion

This research is about the topic of nationalism and pays attention to the nationalism in people's everyday life. And as a research in media studies, it focuses on the everyday nationalism online. Especially, this research concentrates on the Facebook discussion about the Taiwan Issue that triggered by the national flag event surrounding a Taiwanese pop star named Chou Tzuyu who works in South Korea. To do the research, the comments of two news articles about Chou and Taiwan posted by BBC News on Facebook was chosen as the researching object. And the research questions is framed as: how is nationalism challenged/reproduced in people's discussion about Taiwan's status on Facebook? There are three sub-questions: what are the major statements about Chou and Taiwan? (SQ 1) Is nationalism challenged/reproduced? (SQ 2) In what way do people challenge/reproduce nationalism? (SQ 3).

Following Gellner (2008) and Anderson's (2006) thought, nationalism is defined as an ideology for social groups to grasp/maintain their power. Although Gellner and Anderson's notion of nationalism is challenged by other scholars, their explanation of nationalism is valuable in this research as the nationalism the Facebook users challenge/reproduce in their Facebook discussion reflect the ideologies proposed by different social groups in Taiwan/mainland China for certain political/social purpose. In addition, Michael Skey's (2011) discussion of the five dimensions of national discourses and the different versions of nationalism of the modernists, the primordialists, and the ethnosymbolism are also consulted. They are used to interpret the comments of the Facebook users.

To analyse the comments, a qualitative discourse analysis was used. The research was informed by the four pointers that Tonkiss (2012) points out and the analysis was done through examining the central argument of each comment as well as the association/variation, the characterisation of the agents, and the emphasis/exclusion that expressed. Categorising the various comments was not an easy task, but with help of Tonkiss's four pointers, the process went fluently. It is found out that there are four groups of people who posted comments under the BBC news articles on Facebook. The main argument of the first group of people who think Taiwan is an independent country is that Taiwan has its distinct state, government, political system, army, Taiwanese culture, etc. And Taiwanese people vote for their own president. These features explain Taiwan's independency as a country and people in Taiwan have the right to claim that they are Taiwanese rather than Chinese. It is claimed by this group that Taiwan is not admitted as an independent country by other foreign countries because mainland China bullies Taiwan by giving pressure to the international communities. However, this kind of arguments are challenged by the second group of people and they put their emphasis on the period of history during which Taiwan was ruled by

mainland government as well as on the culture that shared by mainland Chinese and Taiwanese. It is claimed by the second group that Taiwan “has been” ruled by “China” since history and Taiwanese people share the same Chinese culture with the mainland Chinese. The history and culture should define Taiwan’s status as part of China instead of an independent country. Being milder and more prudent than their fellow Taiwanese and mainland Chinese, the third group of people argue that Taiwan has its distinct political, social, cultural system, but Taiwan also has a lot in common with mainland China in regards to its social activities and culture. And Taiwan issue is a historical problem that left since the 1949 Civil War, different political powers struggle to win their benefit and left Taiwan in such a special occasion that different people show different opinions over its status. Finally, the last group are those who refuse to be categorised according to their national identity, constituted only by the self-claimed mainland Chinese.

Through the interpretation of the comments with the help of the above mentioned theories, it is found that in people’s Facebook discussion, nationalism is both being challenged and reproduced. First of all, it is challenged by the forth group through their refuse to be categorised as “Chinese”. People in the forth group argue that not every Chinese is the same, and people make comments out of their own mind rather than their national identity. This kind of argument is considered as a challenge to nationalism because it departs people and their nation and thus rejects the basic notion of nationalism, that people feel and acknowledge that they share the same national identity with others within the same nation.

The rest three groups unconsciously reproduced nationalism through making comments as they show an acknowledgment of their national identity. By applying Micheal Skey’s five dimensions of national discourse, it is discovered that people unconsciously reproduce nationalism through making different reference over territory, history, culture, politics, and difference between self and other in their comments. Firstly, while the first group regards Taiwan island as a distinct territory, the second group refers to Taiwan as part of the “China” territory. Secondly, while the first group focuses on the contemporary history of Taiwan, the second group concentrates on the ancient history in which Taiwan was ruled by the government of mainland China. Thirdly, the first group refer to the distinct Taiwanese aborigine culture and tradition while the second group making reference to the Chinese culture that shared by Taiwanese people. Fourthly, the first group blames the PRC government for bullying Taiwan and Taiwanese people while the second group focuses on how DPP has fooled the Taiwanese people to hate mainland China. Finally, the first group refer more to the differences between mainland Chinese and Taiwanese while the first group refer more to the similarities. Comparing to the first and second group, the third group is more moderate as they admit all the different notion of the first and second group in regard to territory, history, culture, politics, and self/other distinction in mainland China and Taiwan.

Also, it is discovered that in their reproduction of nationalism, people show their distinct approach of talking about nationalism. The first group of people talk about nationalism with a modernist approach. This is seen through their emphasis on Taiwan's distinct state, Taiwanese people's distinct "high culture" and their will to be independent. And the second group is considered as using the primordialist approach since they put an emphasis on the pre-existing ancient history and cultural similarities shared by both Taiwanese and mainland Chinese. Thirdly, the final group use an ethnosymbolist approach as they not only admit the state, the "high culture", and the will of the Taiwanese people, but are also aware that Taiwan and China have many similarities and pre-existing connection that are hard to deny or cut off.

5.2. Implications

Skey's (2011) theory of national discourse could be confirmed here that even though most people do not explicitly claim that they share the same view with the nationalists, they keep making reference to spatial, temporal, cultural, and political facts about their country and making connection or distinction with other people in their daily communication about their country. The additional finding of this research is that people make different claims over these five subjects and thus show the reproduction of different nationalism ideologies (the modernism, primordialism, and the ethnosymbolism). Actually, as discussed in chapter 2, the Chinese nationalism that is popular in mainland China could be considered as the primordialist nationalism, and the Taiwanese nationalism in Taiwan could be regarded as the modernist nationalism. Considering that many users in the first group claim that they are Taiwanese and many users in the second group claim that they are mainland Chinese, it could be presumed here that those Taiwanese users and mainland Chinese users are influenced by the nationalism ideology that is popular (proposed by the powerful political parties) in the place where they live. And they keep reproducing those popular ideologies in their daily communication without noticing that they are been influenced. Therefore, it could be argued here that people (re)produce nationalism in their daily life based on the nationalism ideologies they are familiar with.

The findings of this research thus inform us that people are constantly influenced by the popular nationalism ideology in their place and they are constantly reproducing that ideology in their daily practices. It could serve as a reminder for the readers that their view about their nation may be incomplete and thus be more careful when making statement about their nation. Also, the findings suggest the researchers to be more critical with the banal nationalism that (re)produced by ordinary people as its ultimate generator may be the political parties instead of the ordinary people.

Based on the analysis of the comments, it seems that the majority of the public reproduce the nationalism ideology rather than challenge it in their routine communication. What is more, it is

witnessed here in this research that Taiwanese people and mainland Chinese are passionate with the Taiwanese nationalism and Chinese nationalism respectively. However, according to other researches, there are also people in Taiwan who are in favour with the Chinese nationalism and others who do not have preference over mainland China or Taiwan but hope to remain the status quo (Ke, 2014). But those kind of views are hard to find in this research. This may be due to the fact that not all the comments are being analysed. Apart from this, most comments appear on Facebook are made by people who are eager to argue for their nation. Especially in this research, no Taiwanese people are found to challenge the nationalism ideology. This is partly because that Taiwanese were at that time (during the period in which the articles were published) passionate about their national identity since Chou Tzuyu's issue triggered their national sentiment. And also, most people appear frequently on Facebook are from the younger generation. Comparing to the older people who still feel many connection with the mainland China and who are more moderate towards the Taiwan issue, the young Taiwanese people are more radical and enthusiastic about their Taiwanese identity. Besides, the results may not be representative enough since most of the mainland users who posted comments on Facebook are those young people who have the ability to use VPN to connect to the blocked sites in China and they are also radical to talk in a nationalist view since they are irritated by some blames towards their "bully" of others. It is a limitation of this research that Facebook comments analysed only represent the opinions of a small number of people (especially the young people).

Nevertheless, this research still contribute to both the nationalism study and the media study. First of all, this research fills the researching gap of nationalism in current PRC and Taiwan by addressing the expressed nationalism in people's daily communication. Many scholars have explained nationalism in Taiwan and mainland China and examined how the state and dominating political parties involved in the development of nationalism, but there is no mentioning of how the ordinary people may challenge or reproduce nationalism in their daily life. This research, offers answers concerning how mainland Chinese and Taiwanese public make sense of nationalism and national identity themselves, and thus add knowledge to the understanding of the banal nationalism in mainland China and Taiwan. Actually, After the few weeks' debate, the issue was put in a thawing as the state media of PRC - the China Daily, and the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council of PRC announced that Chou Tzuyu is just a "innocent" girl that was utilised by "some political powers". And the state television broadcaster of PRC - the China Central Television (CCTV) rebroadcasted the songs of Twice (Shi Hua, 2016; Xiao, 2016). The pro-mainland Taiwanese Huang An who accused Chou Tzuyu as the "Taiwan independent" also cleared all his Weibo posts since July, 2015 (Lu, 2016). The netizens in both Taiwan and mainland stopped their open discussions and this research thus became important for the readers to know about the everyday nationalism in the communication between Taiwanese people and mainland Chinese. Besides, this study took a look at the expressed

nationalism in Facebook discussions, it could serve as a pre-analysis of how social networking sites like Facebook are used by people to express their national sentiment and how do people unconsciously challenge or reproduce nationalism online.

But as mentioned, this research only analyses the discussion of a small group of people who mostly have radical points of view. Further research could be done to include different age groups and people who have more diverse ideas. And new studies could focus on other cases such as the nationalist movement in Scotland, Quebec and Catalan. What is more, this research only analyses the comments made by people, considering that comments are often made in response to other statement, the result could be biased as people tend to use radical words and sentence to emphasise their statement. Therefore, more researches could be done through interviews to get more detailed answers as people could directly express their view rather than be pushed or triggered to make some claims. In addition, researches could be done on the different ways people express the nationalism ideology online and in their face-to-face discussions.

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