

The PRC's Official Discourse on Mongolia since 1990

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own work and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

The issue of interactions between the Han Chinese and Mongolian minority national in the PRC has been drawing serious attention of western scholars in recent years. The focal point of this thesis, however, is the textual representation of what used to be called 'Outer Mongolia' and its people, in Chinese authoritative writings since the beginning of the 1990s, a period marked by the onset of a new era in the history of Mongolia and Sino-Mongolian relations.

This thesis assesses the current, arguably competing or complementing, discourses on Mongolia embedded in officially approved and published texts meant for a general, Chinese-speaking readership. It analyses the evolution of these discourses over the last decade and highlights the discrepancies between the authoritative discourses on Mongolia of the party and government publications.

The objective of the study is to try to understand the meaning of such changes and discrepancies within the discursive formation regarding Mongolia, and to do so from the perspective of the developments found in the more dominant, all-embracing discourse on Chinese/Zhonghua nation that have gained strength in the PRC throughout the 1990s. The thesis argues that Zhonghua discourse has lost its hegemonic position in formulating the official line on how Mongolia should be represented, interpreted, and acted upon.

A wide range of official publications including Chinese government statements, publications of various Party organs, articles from mass-circulation periodicals, academic writings and reference literature, personal accounts, and fiction are drawn upon to illustrate the argument. This thesis uses discourse analysis as an analytical framework complemented by detailed case studies of particular representational practices and linguistic devices employed by the producers of Chinese texts to construct Mongolia's 'true' identity through their writings. In order to avoid a purely structural analysis of the texts, they have been read against the socio-political context of China-Mongolia interactions since 1990, including Mongolian perspectives on the most controversial topics addressed by the Chinese authors, for example, the issues of Mongolia's independence.

Content

Acknowledgements.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Content.....	4
Abbreviations Used in the Text.....	7
Note on the Text.....	8
CHAPTER ONE Introduction.....	9
1.1 Mongolia in Chinese Official Publications.....	9
1.2 Textual Representations and Construction of Mongolia's Identity.....	10
1.3 China-Mongolia Interactions in Western Academic Writings.....	19
1.4 Methodological Issues and Thesis Structure.....	23
CHAPTER TWO Theoretical Framework: Studying Chinese Discourse on Mongolia.....	30
2.1 Representations and Construction of Identity of the Other.....	30
2.2 Power, Knowledge, and Discourse.....	33
2.3 Textual Analysis.....	39
2.4 Data.....	43
2.4.1 Choice of texts.....	45
2.4.2 Genre and Intertextuality.....	47
2.4.3 Institutional framework.....	57
CHAPTER THREE Discursive Formation: Ideologies, Narratives, Institutions, and the Context.....	68
3.1 Ideologies and their Narratives on Mongolia.....	68
3.1.1 The Nation-building Project and its Language.....	69
3.1.2 'Revolutionary' view on Mongolia.....	81
3.1.3 Alternative voice.....	82
3.2 Power Distribution.....	84
3.2.1 Political Elite.....	85
3.2.2 The CCP.....	86
3.2.3 Government.....	87
3.2.4 The Central Military Commission and People's Liberation Army.....	89
3.2.5 Local authorities and influential business groups.....	90

3.2.6 Foreign Policy making.....	91
3.3 The Context for the Study	93
3.3.1 Mongolia in the 1990s-2000s.....	93
3.4 Conclusion.....	99
CHAPTER FOUR Historical Identity of Mongolia	101
4.1 Historical Identity of Mongolia as a Political Issue.....	101
4.2 Contextualisation of the Construction of Identity.....	105
4.3 Evolution of the Political Texts on History.....	107
4.3.1 ‘Triple Emphasis’ (Key Text 1)	108
4.3.2 Filling up the ‘Gaps’ (Key Text 2).....	122
4.3.3 From Nationalism to Patriotism and the Return of the Party (Key Text 3).	132
4.3.4 ‘Clash Of Representations’ (Key Texts 4, 5, 6).....	135
4.4 Mongolia Profiles as the Guideline.....	141
4.5 ‘Balancing’ Between Different Readerships	145
4.6 Locating the discourse(s).....	148
4.7 Conclusion	150
CHAPTER FIVE Cultural Identity of Mongolia	152
5.1 Mongolian Culture and Society in Official Publications since 1990.....	153
5.2 Mongolian Ethnicity and Customs (Key Text 1).....	154
5.2.1 Vanished Ethnicity	155
5.2.2 Mongolian Folkways	163
5.3 Population, Religion and Nationhood (Key Text 2)	169
5.3.1 Population Updated	169
5.3.2 The Flag and Emblem: the Nationhood Nodal Point	171
5.4 Holidays and celebrations.....	173
5.4.1 Mongolian Culture and People According to MFA	174
5.4.2 Mongolian National Holidays and Ceremonies	175
5.5 Discursive Shift from ‘State’ to ‘Modernity’ (Key Texts 5 and 6).....	181
5.5.1 Visual Representations of Mongolia	181
5.6 Hybridity revisited (Key Text 7).....	184
5.7 The Questions of Mongolian Modernity and Cultural Integrity.....	186
5.7.1 New Strategies of Representing Mongolia	189
5.7.2 The Myths	193
5.8 Mongols vs. Mongols: the Strategy of Grouping.....	199

5.9 Conclusion	205
CHAPTER SIX Mongolian Politics and Economy	209
6.1 Socialist Mongolia on the path to reform	209
6.2 Discovering a ‘new’ name and natural resources (Key Texts 1 and 2).....	216
6.2.1 Re-naming the country	216
6.2.2 The land of ‘timeless’ economy and natural resources	218
6.3 Sanitised Politics and Foreign (aid) relations (Key Text 3)	220
6.3.1 Political system of Mongolia	221
6.3.2 Foreign relations.....	223
6.4 Professionalism and Political correctness (Key Text 4).....	228
6.4.1 General political situation.....	229
6.4.2 The Economy	233
6.5 Dominant discourse after the MFA Profile (Key Texts 5 and 6).....	234
6.6 MFA text as <i>the</i> official profile (Key Text 7).....	237
6.7 Conclusion	238
CONCLUSION	242
BIBLIOGRAPHY	252

Abbreviations Used in the Text

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DA	Discourse Analysis
GMD	Guomindang (KMT)
IM	Inner Mongolia
IMAR	Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region
IR	International Relations
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOC	Ministry of Commerce
MOE	Ministry of Education
MPR	Mongolian People's Republic
MPRP	Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party
OM	Outer Mongolia
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMRB	<i>Renmin Ribao</i>

Note on the Text

In this text I have used the standard Pinyin system, as set out in the 'Basic Rules for Hanyu Pinyin Orthography' issued by the Commission for Pinyin Orthography, State Language Commission PRC in 1988. Due to the primary source material being in Mandarin Chinese, proper names are either the Chinese names, or pinyin versions of transliterations from foreign languages into Chinese. Where possible I have indicated the original version of the names in brackets. The only exception is Chinggis Khaan which is a transliteration from Mongolian. All the quotations from Chinese are my own translations. In some places the Chinese characters follow the English translation in order to give to readers all the nuances of meaning of the word or sentence. Chinese concepts/terms central to the thesis are given in Pinyin (Zhonghua, minzu, etc.) with a brief explanation.

The bulk of the online materials for the thesis were collected by September 2004. During the revision process it was discovered that many of the websites mentioned in the thesis have either changed their address or ceased to exist all together. However, all the texts to which this thesis makes reference or cites were printed out with the exact date when they were accessed.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Mongolia in Chinese Official Publications

Until recently, anyone reading about Mongolia in Chinese would, sooner or later, have come across the statement that ‘historically Mongolia was a part of China.’ Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, this was the case for all types of media, including political documents, academic writings, fictional accounts and teaching materials.

However, much to the surprise of those familiar with the history of the ‘Mongolian question’¹ (Menggu wenti) in China, the last few years have seen this phrase virtually disappear from Chinese authoritative writings, particularly the texts that comprise the most ‘closed’ discourse in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) at present – the political one. For example, although the country briefs on Mongolia produced after 2000 by the *Renmin Ribao* and Xinhua News Agency still strongly allude to the idea of the country’s ‘illegitimate’ and ‘unjust’ partition from China at the beginning of the twentieth century, they no longer employed this particular expression.

Despite the recent relative liberalisation of the media in the PRC, the official discourse on Mongolia still remains strictly controlled. Even the most preliminary analysis of the texts under consideration in this thesis shows the high degree of control over topics relating to Mongolia² with the recurrent use or suppression of certain words and expressions. Thus, any change in the language employed in this official discourse has special significance.

The situation appears even more paradoxical if one takes into account that such a shift in representing Mongolia is at odds with the much more powerful master discourse on

¹ The term ‘Mongolian question’ (Menggu wenti) refers in the Chinese sources to the legitimacy of Mongolia’s partition from China in 1911, which is still much debated in the PRC. The term also refers more generally to the concept of Mongolia as a ‘historical part of China.’ These issues will be expanded on later in this chapter and in the discussion of the historical background of this study in Chapter 3.

² For example, certain topics regarding the independence movement in Mongolia in the 1910s-1920s are still taboo in PRC texts.

the Chinese/Zhonghua nation, which has traditionally dominated all Mongolia-related statements. Here, the Mongols have been considered a 'natural component' (along with the other 54 minority nationalities) of the 'endogenously evolved' Chinese nation (Zhonghua minzu). The territory of contemporary Mongolia has similarly been habitually considered a part of the traditional 'Chinese world' (Zhonghua dadi). This in turn leads one to ask what these new tendencies in the official PRC discourse(s) of Mongolia mean, what sort of identity they seek to construct in the case of Mongolia, and for what purpose.

In order to answer these questions, this thesis will consider the political discourse of Mongolia in the PRC since 1990 as a means of understanding how the official identity(s) of Mongolia have been constructed through textual representations. In order to do this, it will focus on a selection of publications produced by the central Communist Party and government media. The purpose of these texts is to convey to the readers the 'official line' of the PRC political elite on the contemporary 'Mongolian policy'. A wide range of the background publications is also drawn upon to illustrate the argument of this paper. Certain academic writings on Mongolia will also be examined in order to demonstrate how (or whether) they have been appropriated by the political discourse to reinforce the message(s) of the political elites.

Based on the assumption that the discourse stems from policies that have certain political and/or ideological goals, this thesis will address the following questions: What is the official PRC discourse on Mongolia? What are the messages in this discourse? What are the possible objectives of this discourse? In other words, the thesis a) establishes the factors, domestic and international, that shape and/or influence this discourse on Mongolia, b) assesses what, according to the official PRC discourse, 'true' Mongolia 'is' and how it should be interpreted and, most importantly, c) identifies subtle shifts in the discourse formation with the appearance of the alternative voices as reflected in the evolution of the discourse since 1990.

1.2 Textual Representations and Construction of Mongolia's Identity

It is proposed in this thesis that these textual representations of Mongolia should be seen and approached as an act of stating the 'facts' about Mongolia in order to construct its

identity and hence to establish its status in relation to the Chinese/Zhonghua nation and Chinese state. The terms ‘Chinese’ and ‘China’ in this thesis represent the political entity called the PRC, which has only existed since 1949. The concept of Zhonghua refers to the idea of a more mythical ‘Chinese state’ to which the Republican, and then PRC governments aspired. This concept (which includes the sub-concepts of Zhonghua minzu – the Chinese nation, Zhonghua wenhua – the Chinese culture, and Zhonghua dadi – the Chinese world) remains an absolute authority in representing ‘domestic Mongolia’ (the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, IMAR, and the Mongolian minzu). My own survey of the official materials published prior to 1990 (analysis of which was not included in the thesis) showed that until recently, this concept has been equally dominant in the overwhelming majority of the official PRC writings/statements regarding the independent Mongolia.

However, this thesis argues that Zhonghua rhetoric is gradually losing its dominant influence on the PRC official discourse of Mongolia because of new realities (or, to use the post-modern term, new ‘practices’ - i.e. new socio-political developments - which together with language constitute discourse) which no longer ‘fit’ with the orthodox Zhonghua discursive formation. This in turn challenges the existing discursive order, thereby causing what has been termed ‘dislocation of the discourse’ (Laclau 1990: 39-59). Such a dislocation can be seen in the emergence of a plurality of discourses, or in other words contending views, on Mongolia from many different sources; for example, different government structures, academic institutions and so on. Even a preliminary examination of the official publications on Mongolia shows certain discrepancies within the political discourse that exist on different levels: ideological, regional, and professional.

It will be further suggested in this thesis that these new realities challenge the limits placed upon the ‘readings of Mongolia’ by the orthodox Zhonghua discourse. The first of these new developments is the existence of new elements within the PRC political elite. That is, a new generation of politicians and officials, ‘professionilised pragmatic,’³ often educated abroad, that has contesting ideas of the PRC’s interests and priorities in domestic and foreign policies in general and in regards to Mongolia in particular.

³ The term will be explained later in this Chapter.

The second new development is the integration of Mongolia as a member of the international community since gaining its independence from China almost a century ago, which effectively means that Mongolia's sovereignty can be considered a *fait accompli*. Unlike Inner Mongolia, Mongolia has an almost mono-ethnic all-Mongolian population for whom the question of their country's independence from China is just one of many past events in Mongolia's already long history, thus rendering Zhonghua rhetoric something of an anachronism. Mongolia's self-identification as an independent, sovereign state and equal partner (especially vis-à-vis Russia and China) in international relations has particularly intensified within Mongolia since 1990, when the country embarked on a series of major economic and political reforms aimed at creating a market economy, a democratic society, and closer links with Western democracies.

These developments required PRC political leaders and government officials to adopt a more realistic and pragmatic approach to bilateral relations with Mongolia, because of the promise of economic benefits and regional stability. This is especially the case in the light of a new domestic policy that prioritised the economic development of the provinces, mainly the plan initiated by the central authorities in the beginning of the 2000s to promote the development of the northern and north-western regions of the PRC, including the IMAR. This policy has seen the rapid growth of economic relations between the IMAR and Mongolia, contributing significantly to the development of the Inner Mongolia. Moreover, the implementation of the policy required a rhetoric that would support the policies on a local level. This in turn entailed the production of a peripheral discourse on Mongolia.

The third new development is related to the requirements of the PRC's foreign policy and, more generally, a greater engagement with the world at large. In light of this new engagement, the PRC's political elite has, to a certain degree, renounced the idea of 'putting China's interests first' over its international commitments, at least temporarily, deciding instead to play by international rules in accordance with their new concern with the PRC's image in the world arena. This is also true in the case of Mongolia. However, these new perspectives on Mongolia, promoted via party and government media and publications, are not always in accordance with the popular views on Wai Menggu (Outer Mongolia), this name which, in fact, is still the most common term used

by the Chinese people.⁴ Indeed, the official discourse now has to be in accordance with the elites' goals (which often differ), the requirements of international politics as well as ordinary people's aspirations regarding Mongolia; to balance between these three objectives is not an easy task, especially in case of Mongolia.

However, it should also be noted that although there are some signs of discrepancies within the political discourse, as well as some very carefully articulated 'alternative views' offered by the academic and peripheral discourses, the grip of the Zhonghua discourse is still strong. Interestingly, the majority of semi-official and unofficial websites on Mongolia, such as big internet portals or web pages of tourist agencies,⁵ simply copy texts from the *Renmin Ribao* (*RMRB*) and Xinhua rather than using 'alternative voices' from academic or popular nationalist sources.⁶ Needless to say, for the majority of the official media, such as *Guangming Ribao* or *Beijing Qingnian Bao*, the prime source of 'knowledge' on Mongolia is the *RMRB* and Xinhua, although, unlike *RMRB* and Xinhua, they do generally offer a much wider degree of interpretation.

A possible explanation for the powerful position of Zhonghua rhetoric is that the discourse on independent Mongolia is still rather strongly addressed to the Mongolian minzu of China. Effectively, the government is using this discourse on Mongolia to send a message to Inner Mongolia. In other words, if the PRC 'lets go' of the 'Mongolian question', and if Mongolia's independence is no longer going to be a 'humiliating memory of historical injustice,' then this would give the Mongols in IMAR a good reason to ask the logical question 'why not us too?' On the other hand, if the PRC persists with claims on Mongolia as a 'lost territory' of the 'historical Chinese world', then it could not only harm Sino-Mongolian relations but also add to the PRC's negative image within the international community. The parallels between the Mongolian and Taiwan questions often made in many official and non-official publications should also be noted, since this reflects the preoccupation of the PRC's

⁴ More will be said on the significance of Mongolia's 'name' in Chapters 4 and 6.

⁵ Although unofficial sources have not been selected for this study, they are used as examples or as 'background texts' throughout this thesis.

⁶ Chapter 2's section on primary sources used for this thesis will discuss this issue in more detail.

officialdom with the possible negative effects that full recognition of Mongolian nationhood may have on China-Taiwan relations.⁷

The subject of the official discourse on Mongolia in the PRC has received little attention from Western academics. Yet Mongolia, and its relations with the PRC, is an important and rather unique area of study. On the one hand, Mongolia is an independent state whose relations with China can be analysed in the same way as any other country's, that is, within the framework of the study of the PRC's foreign policy and International Relations (IR) theory. This approach is adopted by scholars in the field of Mongolian studies, who focus on China-Mongolia relations almost exclusively in terms of diplomacy, trade and economy, military cooperation and so on.⁸ These scholars tend to analyse PRC policy vis-à-vis Mongolia as concrete political actions taken by the PRC government while the *whole* spectrum of political processes *inside* China is often not taken into account. PRC policy on Mongolia, including discourse as its vital part, is often seen by these scholars as highly homogenous, ultra-nationalistic and irredentist. This means that explanations of the two countries' political behaviours are often found in some 'historical' factors, such as China's 'territorial ambitions', 'mutual mistrust' and 'deep cultural antipathy' between the two peoples.

On the other hand, within the field of Chinese Studies there is a great number of studies which focus on representations of the Mongolian national minority in Chinese official discourse and the construction of its identity in the authoritative Chinese media. However, independent Mongolia rarely and only fragmentally appears as an issue of examination within this scholarly framework being, therefore, somewhat marginalised by Western sinology. This thesis does not follow such a reductionist approach (when Inner Mongolia and the PRC Mongolian minority stand for *all* Mongolia and *all* the Mongols). Rather, the thesis argues that the Zhonghua concept is as much about independent Mongolia as it is about the IMAR. In other words, the concept of the Chinese nation sees the Mongols (Menggu minzu) as an integral part of its 'thousands of years-long' historic development. Because Chinese historiography traces the

⁷ Thus, the President of Taiwan's National Security Council publicly claimed in 2003 that Taiwan saw Mongolia's foreign policy in the Asian region, implying perhaps the relations with the PRC as well, as a model for its own (Campi 2005).

⁸ See for instance Ginsburgh (1999), Jagchid (1991), to some extent Rossabi (2002) and Sanders (1997).

Mongolian minzu back to a point in history that long precedes the political division between Inner Mongolia and Outer Mongolia, one is bound to conclude that the ethnic entity of Mongolian minzu is supposed to somehow include the Mongols of independent Mongolia. Indeed, it is this perception that supports the idea of Mongolia as a historical part of China.⁹ Thus, there is an obvious need for those who produce the PRC discourse on the Chinese nation to somehow overcome the ‘difficult case’ of independent Mongolia. The question of how this is done, and what it means, has not been addressed before, even though it is significant in many respects.

The subject of Mongolia appears to be on the boundary between Chinese foreign and domestic politics. This means that the official discourse on Mongolia is trapped between two competing discourses: the powerful all-encompassing discourse of the Zhonghua and the supposedly competing discourse on the PRC foreign policy in general and its policy towards Mongolia in particular. The solution which this thesis offers is to avoid dividing the study of the PRC and Mongolia’s relationship between these different schools of study (Chinese or Mongolian Studies, IR theory or ‘domestic orientalism,’ etc.), and instead to synthesise the multiple approaches into one inter-disciplinary framework.

It should be stressed that this thesis is not a study of Sino-Mongolian relations *per se*; rather it is an analysis of the PRC *discourse* that stems from the Chinese officialdom’s approaches towards Mongolia and in this regards it can shed some light on the development and dynamics of the relations between the countries. The objective of this thesis therefore is to identify the subtle and incremental shifts in this policy through a close monitoring of the official rhetoric.

⁹ For instance, Sun Yixian (Sun 2001), a Chinese diplomat with many years experience of working in Mongolia, recalls in his memoirs how people reacted on his placement in the end of 1960s to Ulaanbaatar: ‘One cannot consider Outer Mongolia abroad. It is originally a Chinese region, so it should be more or less the same as Inner Mongolia.’ The author himself does not share this point of view but admits that that was (is?) the popular perception of the country in the eyes of many Chinese. Interestingly, Sneath when discussing the actual degree of the national independence of Mongolia (‘largely symbolic’, but ‘not entirely fictional,’ Sneath 2003:40), refers at one point to a later Russian joke that ‘a chicken is not really a bird, and Mongolia is not really abroad’. Mongolia seems to be a battlefield between its two dominating neighbours to consider it a piece of their ‘homeland.’

While taking into consideration main postulates and some of the methodological tools offered by other schools of thought, the main theoretical framework chosen for this thesis is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), since this enables us to gain a certain insight into different approaches to Mongolia that would otherwise be difficult to identify. For instance, methodological tools that IR offers for the study of foreign policy making (for example, interviews with the PRC policy-makers, scrutiny of materials of restricted circulation, etc) were considered unsuitable, or were merely inaccessible, in the case of China's policy on Mongolia. Discourse analysis on the other hand allows for gathering evidence which otherwise a PhD student would not be able to get access to. Discourse analysis also suits better the task of identifying Mongolian identities constructed in the official discourse as the texts reveal a great deal about how Mongolia should be interpreted. Moreover, since one of the main objectives of the thesis is to trace how the official discourse has *evolved* over time, that is, since 1990, focusing on the officially published texts in which the discourse is embedded makes this objective achievable.

It is also proposed in this thesis that the analysis of the PRC discourse on such a complex subject as Mongolia - a difficult aspect of Chinese nationhood - can contribute to a better understanding of the mechanics of the PRC nation building project.¹⁰ Thus, the thesis will also contribute to a body of study that has attracted a great deal of attention not only within the area of the Chinese studies, but also scholars of many other disciplines: that is the issue of the PRC's changing concept of its identity as a multiethnic state and its international role and image. This is especially the case in view of the recent emergence of multi-ethnic nations all around the world.

Finally, this thesis suggests that focusing on the PRC's official discourse on Mongolia offers a new perspective to the study of Sino-Mongolian relations which takes into consideration the emergence of competing discourses on Mongolia and indicate that PRC policy towards Mongolia is no longer a highly homogeneous entity with a single, nationalistic, agenda regarding Mongolia. Instead, through the analysis of the Chinese official discourse on Mongolia, the thesis seeks to provide a fuller picture of the different views hold by different groups within PRC policy makers who seem to pursur

¹⁰ This refers to the ideological project to build a multi-national Chinese nation, legitimise it through 'history' and position it in relation to other nations in terms of time and space.

different goals and agendas regarding Mongolian. Moreover, the thesis shows that the tendency is that the alternative discourses (which support alternative approaches) on Mongolia gradually came to co-exist with the dominant orthodox discourse on the Zhonghua nation.

The Chinese officialdom's approaches to Mongolia (and to the ways it should be officially represented) have been rather schematically divided throughout the thesis into two large camps: 'orthodox nationalists' and 'professionalised pragmatists'. However, it should be firmly stated that this does not imply that the former camp's approach is not 'pragmatic'. On the contrary, both camps' discourses on Mongolia can be characterised as highly situational and instrumental – teleological – as they are employed to serve China's national interests. The point where the two camps differ is in their understanding of a) what China's interests regarding Mongolia are, and b) what kind of official rhetoric on Mongolia would serve these interests best.

The thesis employs the expression 'orthodox nationalists' (hereafter nationalists) to refer to the stratum of the Chinese leaders who prioritise the objectives of the Zhonghua project: they see revival of the nation as revival of Zhonghua minzu, the re-unification of China as a re-unification of Zhonghua dadi. These concepts are very much rooted in the past, especially past humiliation as, for instance, 'the loss of Mongolia.' From this perspective, 'orthodox nationalist' discourse represents Mongolia as primarily an issue of the PRC's *domestic* policy and addresses the discourse mainly for the domestic audience.

This thesis argues that alternative discourse(s) on Mongolia have been emerging and finding their way into the central media like *RMRB*. The producers of these different approaches termed in this paper as 'professionalised pragmatics' (hereafter pragmatists) referring mainly to the policy makers attached to state institutions who appear to hold that it is in China's interests to position Mongolia as an issue of PRC's *foreign* relations and take into consideration international audience (including Mongolia) when formulating discourse on the country (more on this will be said in Alternative Voices section of Chapter 3).

A large number of primary sources in Chinese, Mongolian and Russian are drawn upon for this study (reviewed in detail in Chapter 2). As far as the Chinese sources are concerned, this thesis is based on empirical data derived from many sources. In terms of printed materials, these are newspapers, magazines, textbooks and references, literary fiction and travel accounts. Many examples supporting the thesis were obtained from the electronic media sources, for instance the official web sites of the party and government structures, semi-official news portals and forums, e-publications and forums representing the ultra nationalistic views of both Han/Chinese and the Mongols of the PRC, etc. Although the detailed analysis of writings conducted for this thesis is based only on a representative selection of the political texts, a wide range of publications that cut across the different discourses, genres and media have also contributed to serve a broader 'intertextual' background for the study.

All the empirical material was collected during the fieldwork in China and Mongolia. After several months of work in different libraries and bookstores a wide range of printed materials published since the end of the 1980s was acquired. Interviews with the officials, academics, and intellectuals, as well as information related to the topic of research gained from relevant TV and radio programmes, electronic resources, theatres and exhibitions and other forms of mass culture in China and Mongolia formed also a significant part of material gathering.

As far as the Mongolian sources are concerned, it is important point to note that the author is aware that a thesis focusing solely on the Chinese construct of Mongolia is open to criticism for ignoring the counter-discourse. Unfortunately, the scope of the study does not allow for a deeper examination of Mongolian self-representations or reactions on the Chinese rhetorics on Mongolia-related topics. Therefore, the bulk of the material gathered in Mongolia had to be left out of this study. The only exceptions were made for the Mongolian texts which have a correlating institutional status as the Chinese ones. They are only used in some cases where this is absolutely necessary to support a particular point. The Mongolian counter-discourse, however, appears to be a highly interesting issue for further study.

1.3 China-Mongolia Interactions in Western Academic Writings

Naturally, English-language publications on Mongolia and its relations with China have also played a significant role in the study presented in this thesis. However, the major problem with the application of European-based and North-American-based studies for this research is a striking lack of studies that focus on the current situation in this relationship. Virtually every author, who has written on Mongolia since 1990, has approached, in one way or another, the question of the country's relations with China in terms of the unquestionable significance of the relationship for both countries. Nonetheless, the analysis of the situation inside China as a significant factor shaping its relations with Mongolia is often overlooked or somewhat dogmatic.¹¹ Some authors, on the other hand, like Rossabi (2000) or Tumurchuluun (1999) examine the bilateral relationship in a more in-depth manner and produce a detailed account of the diplomatic events between the countries, a thorough analysis of economic and trade cooperation, as well as all other types of interactions between the countries.

Nevertheless, as a rule, these works offer little or no analysis of the discourse on Mongolia within the PRC or indeed the issue of the PRC politics vis-à-vis Mongolia. Neither do they examine the forces that form or influence the relationship between the two countries. Moreover, little attention is given to the question of the competing ideas among the PRC political elite regarding China's interests in the country or their competing understandings of its status and identity and the significance of these for the dynamics of Sino-Mongolian relations. As a result, the authors tend to see only the nationalistic components of the more complex PRC policy towards Mongolia and often follow Mongolian popular stereotypes about China. However, an interesting examination of 'Chinese Orientalism'¹² in Outer Mongolia in the 1920s is offered by Wurlig Borchigud (2002) and serves as a good historical background for the present study of the abovementioned issues.

¹¹ The diversity of the domestic situation in China is often reduced to the nationalistic agenda, strict central control over all China-Mongolia interactions when even the grassroots contacts between Mongolia and IMAR 'are closely monitored by Han Chinese officials' (Sanders 1997: 137).

¹² 'Chinese Orientalism' has become a rather established term in the Chinese Studies since there are many authors working on the topic of minority nationals in China and the PRC. Said's (1977) concept has been applied to numerous studies of this issue. See for example Chen (1995), Gladney (1998), and Shein (1997).

So far, there has been no place for Mongolia in the school of thought within Chinese Studies which concerns itself with the PRC's foreign relations and policies. While experiencing a boom, this branch of Chinese studies deals primarily with the PRC's relations with the US, Japan, the EU and other major players on the international arena. Usually Mongolia is mentioned merely as a 'satellite' in regards to the Sino-Soviet relation (Harding 1994) or, for instance, as a country whose relations with the PRC improved due to Beijing's new 'peace line' adopted in the middle of the 1980s (Hamrin 1994).

The situation is particularly striking when compared with the number of scholarly works dealing in more depth with the current situation in Inner Mongolia and contemporary PRC politics towards Mongolian nationalities of China. In recent years there has been a significant rise in the number of works that deal with issues relating to the cultural and representational politics of the PRC towards Mongols and, especially such important topics as the diversity of Mongolian identity(ies) in China – ethnical, cultural, and regional. The studies of such authors as Bulag (2002, 2004), Bilik (2003), Khan (1995, 1995a) and Khurelbaatar (1999) proved to be of particular interest for this thesis.

These works focus on such significant issues as the growth of nationalist sentiment among the Chinese Mongols, their self-identification, the role in this process of Chinggis Khan as a symbol of 'Mongolness' and in particular the question of the appropriation of this symbolic figure by the central PRC discourse on Menggu minzu and the Zhonghua nation (Khan,1995). With his examination of the representational politics of the PRC in relation to the Mongols, Khan (1995a) offers an interesting methodological approach that is partially adopted by this thesis and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

The works of Bulag (1998, 2002, 2002a, 2003) not only provide an abundant source of factual information on many aspects of Mongols' 'co-existence' with the Chinese state in both an historical and contemporary perspective, but also develop a solid analytical framework to study Mongol history and ethnicity. One of his works (2002) provides an insight on how the PRC 'manages' its Mongolian nationality in terms of the

'international dimension of the Mongols,' referring to both the Mongols of Mongolia and the Russian Federation. Although this thesis approaches the same topic from the opposite direction - how China 'manages' 'foreign' Mongols in terms of their 'domestic' dimension - Bulag's work serves as a very good source of information on the general principles of the 'mechanics' of Zhonghua.

By the same token, the works of authors concerned with issues of national minorities in the PRC (particularly Gladney (1994, 1997, 1998, 1998a) and Shein (1996, 1997)) have contributed a great deal to this thesis in terms of their lucid explanations of ethnicity and nationalism in contemporary China. These works also provided the initial impetus for this study, both in terms of the focus of the research and its methodological perspective. They approach the issue of national minorities in the PRC from the position of critical postcolonial studies, drawing on Said's concept of Orientalism, as well as other scholars from Subaltern Studies who focus on representations of the minority Other by the dominant Self (the latter will be discussed in more detail below). However, they did not provide the whole spectrum of methodological tools necessary to the analysis of the discursive representations and the analysis of discourse itself.

It would have been impossible to fulfil the tasks of this thesis without a preliminary study of the history and nature of nationalism in China. In recent years, a growing number of studies have focused on such issues as the past and present of Chinese nationalism, its relations with official ideology and the growing division between state nationalism and popular nationalism. The works of different scholars compiled in publications edited by Dittmer and Kim (1993), Unger (1996), Harrison (2001) have introduced the spectre of the different stages of the Chinese nation-building project and the construction of Zhonghua identity, as well as different methodological perspectives with which they can be approached. The work of Christiansen (2000) on authoritative representations of the nation and ethnicity in the last decade, and in particular the official language of the nationalist discourse in the PRC, has been especially useful. They provided both a helpful methodological perspective for the examination of the major issues of this thesis and suggested ideas for concrete research techniques, particularly on work with Chinese electronic resources.

This thesis draws on the literature concerning the current situation in Mongolia in terms of its political, economic, social and historical aspects for two main reasons. These are: a) in order to obtain an understanding of the broader background for the study (see Chapter 3), and b) to access a non-Chinese perspective on the PRC's official discourse where it relates to Mongolia. A general picture of the country, its past and present, is offered by numerous authors. Rupen (1997) and Sanders (2003) appear to provide the most in-depth overviews; Goldstein and Beall (1994), Rossaby (2000) and Sneath (2002, 2003) focus on the contemporary issues of the post-communist society in transition; and Ginsburgh (1999) examines issues relating to nationalism in Mongolia since its break with communism. There are also a number of books that deal with the country's transition to a market economy and its effect on society in general. For example Nixon et al (2000) contribute to the contextual framework for this study as well as providing a better understanding of the Mongolian/Western Mongolists' points of view on many subjects relating to contemporary Mongolia.

The whole spectrum of issues relating to the so-called 'Mongolian question' has always been among the most addressed by scholars of Mongolian history. Among the most recent publications in English¹³ which contributed most usefully to this thesis, I would single out the work of Lan (1999) on the Manchurian-period policy toward the Mongols, and Onon (1997) on the Mongolian independence movement, which, it is argued, is in fact the result of Manchurian-period policy. Atwood's article (1999) on how the Chinese recognition of Mongolian independence was achieved in the 1940s was also of interest. All of these sources not only provide a wealth of factual material on the chronology of events, but also provide interesting analyses of these events.

From this preliminary overview of the relevant literature one cannot help but notice how few indigenous voices are among those writing at present on Mongolia, or indeed how few are published in English. Although sometimes where there are works produced by indigenous writers, this is no guarantee of quality. For example, one of the latest works

¹³ There is also a large body of publications concerning this topic in Russian. However, although the numerous Russian materials on this topic were thoroughly examined, they were not included (with some exceptions) into the main body of this thesis. This was because although the works of the Russian authors were invaluable for reaching Mongolian/Chinese primary sources, since they often included a great number of archival documents, texts of the treaties and agreements; their theoretical analysis though was not always satisfactory.

by a Mongolian politician and writer, Baabar (1999), has been rightly criticised by Gaunt (2002) as producing a book which can hardly be considered scholarly. Moreover, the views expressed in this book on Mongolian history, especially recent Mongolian history, seem to be too opinionated and subjective as well as unrepresentative of Mongolian society or even a large part of it.

Another weakness of this literature is an imbalance between the attention paid to Inner Mongolia and Mongolia proper, which can be explained by the fact that many of the abovementioned authors are ethnic Mongols from China, often from Inner Mongolia. On the one hand it seems only too reasonable that as a topic of their research they choose the issues of their homeland. On the other hand, however, it is a manifestation of what can be called an 'Inner Mongolia-centrism'. One of the strongest postulates of the Chinese discourse on the history of the Mongols from the ancient past to the present day is the discursive representation of Inner Mongolia as the only and true successor of the historical 'Mongolian world'. Another of their postulates sees the Mongols of Inner Mongolia as the holders of 'real' Mongolness as opposed to the 'Russified' and 'Westernised.' Mongols from contemporary Mongolia. The works produced by the ethnic Mongolians scholars from China, even those who are based in the Western universities and research centres, often seem to reinforce such a message which originates from the core of the Zhonghua discourse.¹⁴

1.4 Methodological Issues and Thesis Structure

The present tendency in academic writings on Chinese discourse on minzu-related issues is to use mostly postmodern and post-colonial methodological perspectives based on the works of Foucault, Said, Spivak and other theorists who focus on the issues of identity and power, as well as the representation or the signification of these concepts. The thesis also adopts this analytical framework, in the form of CDA, for the study of

¹⁴ 'Russification' or 'Westernisation' is what the Mongols from Mongolia are often accused of by Mongols from IMAR. In this case such an accusation followed the official PRC discourse propagating the idea of the former not being 'true' Mongols due to the close alliance first with Russia and then with the Soviet Union. In my opinion, Inner Mongolians (including academics and intellectuals) not only eagerly embrace the idea, but often promote it through their works, thereby reinforcing the message of the official discourse. It goes not only to the Inner Mongolians living and working in the PRC (that would be understandable after all), but also to those of them who left the country and conducted their research and studies in Western universities.

the PRC discourse on independent Mongolia. Chapter 2 will show how these methodological approaches can be applied to the analysis of this discourse.

Although the works of the scholars who study the place of Mongolian minzu in the PRC nation-building project can add much to an understanding of the processes, they do not correlate directly with the objectives of this thesis. The difficulty of the above-mentioned authors writing on the appropriation of Mongolian (or any other) minzu by the nationalist discourse is that they approach this problem in terms of ‘domestic alter’ – ‘Han Self versus Minzu Other.’ In contrast, the aim of the thesis is to examine how the ‘foreign’ Mongols of independent Mongolia are being constructed vis-à-vis the PRC and the Chinese nation, which includes its ‘Mongolian component.’ Chapter 2 will suggest that Khan’s (1995a) concept of sub-subaltern appears to be a possible solution to the dilemma, since Mongolia can be seen as subaltern in regards to China and the Zhonghua nation, and as sub-subaltern in relation to the Mongolian national minority of the PRC.

The next task of this thesis is to examine how Mongolia is being represented by the official PRC discourse, what images these representations construct and what ideological and/or political work they do. Again, the works that deal with the minorities and their representations in the PRC pose some methodological questions. For example, the authors seem to adopt what can be called a ‘panoptic view’ in studying the minorities’ identity construction in Chinese society by including in their data the whole spectrum of representations of all types of media – from TV and Radio programmes to literary fiction, children’s picture books and private conversations. Adopting such an approach has two major problems. Firstly, it raises questions about which rigorous methodological techniques can be applied to study such heterogeneous material. Secondly, and most importantly, these works on the representations of minorities in the PRC often do not discriminate, between how Mongolia is *perceived* and how it is *represented*, between popular perceptions and stereotypes and the artificially constructed images offered by the authoritative discourse. This last point explains why, in the same empirical data pool, authorised teaching materials can be found together with references to such ‘sources’ as ‘one Han woman on the train to Hohhot told me....’

In contrast, this thesis draws exclusively on the officially authorised texts published by the party and the government in general whose aim is to convey the official line on how Mongolia *should be seen* according to the political elites' views and agendas rather than on what it *is* in the people's perceptions. Through analysis of such texts, this thesis seeks to access the political discourse on Mongolia, attempting to analyse its functioning, messages and goals.¹⁵

Chapter 2 will focus on the methodological perspectives and analytical framework for the examination of data adopted by this thesis. It will begin with an overview of the analytical approaches to the study of representations offered by scholars from post-colonial and Subaltern Studies.¹⁶ These authors see representations as ideologically-charged images, the tools of constructing identity of Other/Alter in order to influence its hierarchical status. The authors further argue that these images are social constructs, so that their analysis should not be confined only to the study of the ideological content of the texts, rather it should be *contextual*. The readers are asked to read themselves, their context, the text, the author, the author's sources, and the subject of study as a single field of historical analysis.

Discourse functions through the representations; the thesis therefore seeks to reach the discourse on Mongolia through analysis of textual representations. In a similar vein to postcolonial critique, the concepts of discourse developed by the works of such post-structuralist and post-Marxist authors as Foucault (1972, 1977, 1980), Bourdieu (1991), Laclau (1990), and Laclau and Mouffe (1985) advocate the 'historicity' of discourse. For them discourse is a language 'located' within an institutional and social framework and is closely related to power, in this case *power to represent*.

One possible technique used to analyse representations as tools of discourse can be found in the approach offered by Doty (1996), who draws on the works of Foucault,

¹⁵The period of study (1990 till present), the choice of texts and their nature are discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁶The Subaltern Studies project originally emerged as a result of dissatisfaction among scholars with the ways in which traditional historiography erased histories of subordinated groups in South Asian society. They use the Gramscian category of 'subaltern' which means that the subjects to be studied are understood by the researcher to be somewhat outside of traditional history. They also advocate the principle of 're-writing history from below'. Subaltern Studies has contributed to a larger postcolonial critique and today historians and scholars from a variety of disciplines regularly cite Subaltern Studies in their work.

Derrida, Laclau and Mouffe. She argues that identities are constructed through representational practices with power producing meanings and identities, as well as their interrelationships. Referring to Laclau and Mouffe's concept of *nodal points* that function to 'fix' discourse, she further argues that it is possible to locate representational practices in texts that work to establish these nodal points. She then offers a comprehensive system of such practices which has great relevance for the study of the PRC's authoritative writings on Mongolia developed in this thesis.

One of the most important issues to be examined in Chapter 2 is how to analyse a concrete empirical example of text in a concrete historical context. In other words, it is a question of the concrete techniques for language and text analysis. When examining discourse, the first technique which naturally springs to mind is the methodological approach offered by the school of 'discourse analysis.' However, discourse analysis appears to be a rather vague term that includes a very broad range of analytical frameworks, as indicated by many monographs introducing the method for the readers (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 1997, Howarth 2000, Wetherel 2001, Schifrin et al 2001).

As will become more apparent in Chapter 2, this thesis favours the authors working in the field of critical discourse analysis. One such author is Van Dijk (1998), whose approach to the topic is based on Foucault's idea of discourse that exists in a concrete historical context and social milieu. Generally, these authors offer techniques that see discourse as social action and focus on the promotion of political and social power through discourse. Discourse finds its expression in text (Kress 1990), and text, in turn, derives from the linguistic domain. Thus, critical discourse analysis shows how language figures in social process (Fairclough 2001). Indeed, Fairclough offers a well-developed scheme for the type of concrete textual analysis that is adopted by this thesis.

Chapter 2 will also discuss in more detail the empirical data, emphasising some of the issues that appear to be of particular importance in analysing discourse/texts. These are, what might be called a 'social' organisation of texts (such as text-producers, the institutional framework and the media), the targeted audience; the choice of texts is also to be examined as well as their genre (Mongolia country profile) and structure.

Discourse is socially rooted. In order to better understand, or even just understand, the meaning of the representations and the representational practices at work in the PRC's recent discourse on Mongolia, these representations have to be localised within the current socio-political context of the two countries, as well as the historical background of China-Mongolia interactions. Thus, Chapter 3 seeks to provide such a background against which the texts are to be analysed. It starts with a brief overview of the 'Mongolian question' and the connotations associated with it. This term is more than just a way of speech; the idea behind it is that Mongolia – a 'historical part of China' – was 'lost' while the country was in the chaos of the 1911 Xinhai Revolution.¹⁷ An analogy to the 'Taiwan Question' appears to a certain degree justified, since for some in the PRC, Mongolia, as well as Taiwan, is still closely linked to ideas around the 're-unification of Motherland' and 'the sensitive issue of territorial integrity' (Whiting 1994: 518).

In more general terms, *Menggu wenti* also refers to the whole range of 'injustices' and 'humiliations' experienced by China (from the Qing dynasty to the Chinese Republic and then the PRC) since the end of the 19th century which are derived from the interference of 'foreign forces' in China's 'domestic affairs.' Indeed, Mongolia's 'partition' from China is represented by Chinese official discourse exclusively as a result of Russia's intervention, supported by a handful of Mongolian nobles. This thesis will pay particular attention to the past and present usages of the expression in different contexts and media in the PRC.

It is absolutely vital for the study of discourse, text and language to locate the concrete historical and socio-political context in which it operates. Chapter 3 then gives an overview of the broader background of dominant discourses and their language, the ideologies and narratives that reinforce them. The chapter also address the 'factual' component of the background, such as the situation in Mongolia 1990 and the state of Sino-Mongolian relations. Attention will be drawn to such important and determinative current issues as the rise of nationalism in both countries, the liberalisation of the media and wider freedoms of expression, political changes and the intensified involvement of the two countries into both multi-lateral and bilateral international cooperation, etc. In

¹⁷The 1911 Revolution refers, in rather simplistic way, to the overthrow of the China's ruling Qing Dynasty and establishment of the Republic of China.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this thesis, the correlation between these processes and the evolution of the PRC discourse on Mongolia since 1990 will be demonstrated, highlighting in particular how this found its manifestation in the language of the discourse.

Another issue, highly significant not only for building the theoretical framework of the study but also for unfolding the argument, of the thesis, is the question 'Who produces the officially sanctioned knowledge on Mongolia.' According to CDA, text analysis should include an examination of the institutional origin of the texts, which can provide an insight into the degree of the text's illocutionary force. The issue is addressed in detail in the Power Distribution section of Chapter 3 which provides a brief overview of the PRC institutions within which official discourse(s) on Mongolia is/are produced.

The thesis holds that the political system of China in the end of 1990s-beginning of the 2000s was such that it allowed for a power balance among main political actors and the possibility of 'multiple winners' of the struggle between the different political actors (such as the CCP, the government, the PLA, the local authorities, influential business groups) for the authority to represent Mongolia according to their agendas. The thesis argues that analysis of the official discourse on Mongolia in the PRC will reveal the plurality of the views on Mongolia. It also hypothesise that those most pragmatic and professional of these views, which take into consideration all the complexity of the motives and goals of both domestic and foreign policies (for instant those embedded in the texts produced by experts of the MFA and the MOC), will receive at least the same degree of authority to represent Mongolia as the orthodox nationalist approaches to the country which prioritise the domestic objectives of Zhonghua project (expressed in the texts of *RMRB* and *Xinhua*).

The special significance of history and its interpretation in Chinese official campaigns and discourses on different social and political issues, particularly in regards to the debates on the Chinese nation, has been pointed out by many authors (for example, Unger (1993) and Duara (1995)). Chapter 4 will highlight some general tendencies in 'representing authoritatively' Mongolian history. For example, it will consider the almost absolute unanimity of all authors writing on the subject and the strong influence of the orthodox Chinese nationalistic rhetoric on it. This chapter will also examine how

language can be used to manipulate meaning through control over certain topics, words and expressions and the use of grammar and syntax.

Chapter 5 offers an analysis of how the cultural and ethnic identities of the Mongols from independent Mongolia have been constructed through the language of textual, and some non-textual, representations. It also looks at how different *political* identities for Mongols of Mongolia and the Mongols of the PRC are constructed through such representational practices as the creation of binary oppositions, 'strategic grouping', 'inclusion-exclusion', etc., and assesses the significance of these artificially produced cultural differences drawn between the Mongols on both sides of the border.

Chapter 6 examines how the official discourse deals with the political and economic changes in Mongolia since 1990 as well as changes in Mongolian foreign policy in general and Sino-Mongolian relations in particular. The focus is on the discrepancies that emerged within the discourse that can be seen as a result of a 'competition' in the PRC ideological and institutional 'market'; in other words, the way in which different institutional actors began to promote their different, if not competing, ideas and aims regarding the mode by Mongolia should be represented.

The concluding chapter will summarise the work undertaken for this thesis and propose some ideas for the future research. It will show that there have been highly significant shifts in the discursive formation seeking to represent Mongolia due to the 're-distribution of power' between the competing discourses that emerged in the 1990s in different party and government structures of the PRC that often pursue different agendas regarding Mongolia. Examination of these changes and tendencies provides a fuller picture of the official discourse as important part of the PRC Mongolian policy and important factor that shape Sino-Mongolian relations.

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Framework: Studying Chinese Discourse on Mongolia

This chapter offers an overview of the methodological frameworks that determined the approach to ‘reading’ the texts as well as the techniques used for their analysis. Since the main focus of this thesis is political representations of Mongolia and their role in PRC discourse on Mongolia, this chapter begins by characterising recent theoretical approaches of the concept of representation in different fields of the Social Sciences and how they relate to achieving the goals of the thesis.

2.1 Representations and Construction of Identity of the Other

Different schools of thought emphasise different meanings of the word ‘representation.’ The approach adopted in this thesis follows the understanding of the term provided in works of the scholars of critical (postcolonial) theory such as Said, Spivak, Shohat and Bhabha.

The semiotic meaning of the term representation is ‘something standing for something else.’ In his analysis of textual representations of the Orient, Edward Said emphasises the fact that representations can never be exactly realistic: ‘In any instance of... written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation’ (Said 1977: 21-22). In other words, representations create images. On a broader scale, representations also create identities by ‘stating facts’ about those they seek to portray. The question of representation therefore is closely related to the issue of ‘identity’. It is particularly true so far as representations of Other are concerned. One of the most popular psychological theories of social identity, developed by Tajfel (1978), states that one of the most important dimensions of identity is the co-existence of Self and Other components (that is, of ‘sameness’ and ‘alterity’).

The scholars of Subaltern Studies believe that such identities are socially constructed in everyday life and are shaped in complex contexts (Bhabha 1990). In relation to the Other (subaltern), these identities are shaped in a complex context of historical, symbolic, local and national space and of historical, real and virtual time. Within Subaltern Studies representations are considered to be ideologically constructed images, and, in a sense, ideological tools, that can serve to reinforce systems of inequality and subordination. For the scholars of this school the act of representing - of 'stating facts' - is an act taken in order to influence action or status of Other.

The analysis of representation therefore should include, first of all, the examination of the ideological content of the representation. Secondly, it has to be contextual and ask 'who represents whom', and who is the audience. There are many studies that analyse representations and identities of national minorities in the PRC. As noticed by many of those writing on the minzu topic from the point of view of the postcolonial critique, ethnic minority nationalities, including the Mongols, have provided possibilities for the majority Han Chinese to imagine their 'domestic Other' (Shein 1996, 1997). Thus they prove that

The objectified portrayal of minorities ... is essential to the construction of the Han Chinese majority, the very formulation of the Chinese 'nation' itself (Gladney 1994: 93).

Leibold (2001) furthers the argument by stating that construction of identity (ethnic identity first of all) in China is an intensely political process. It represents a complex and on-going dialogue between popular self-perception ('I am proud to be a Han'), the stigmatized designation of Other ('You are a filthy Mongol') and state definitions ('We are both Zhonghua minzu'). Thus, the 'them' minorities are also being represented to the public through the media and the education system as 'us' - 'brotherly nationalities' within the all-embracing official political projects of nation building (the concept of Zhonghua minzu), national revitalization (Minzu zhenxing) and national unity (Minzu tuanjie). As far as representations of the Mongols in the Chinese official writings on nationality are concerned, the prevailing tendency in portraying the Mongols is to depict their cultural alterity while emphasising their biological closeness (at least the sameness of origin) with Han Chinese (see for example Bai 1996, Zhou 1997).

An interesting methodological perspective for the analysis of representations in light of Subaltern Studies is offered by US-based scholar Almaz Khan (1995a). As mentioned above, there is a significant degree of diversity within a minzu in general (including the Han) and among the Mongols in particular (Leibold 2001). Thus, Khan in his analysis of the PRC's cultural and representational politics toward the Mongols draws on the works of Spivak (1988) for whom the subaltern are those with 'no voice', whose voice is not presented, and not recognised by the dominant discourse. However, notions of subaltern for her are not equal to that of Other. As she puts it, the subaltern is not 'just a classy word for oppressed, for Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie' (Spivak 1988: 309).

Khan furthers the concept of subaltern and argues that the Mongols in the PRC have a subaltern status vis-à-vis Han, as was pointed out by many scholars who focused on the issues of minority nationals in China. However, there is a distinct diversity of a hierarchical nature among the Mongols. For example, there is a sub-group within the Menggu zu, the Mongols involved in agriculture, who are subaltern because they are not 'traditional' pastoral Mongols. Thus, agricultural Mongols comprise the lowest strata of Chinese society and become its sub-subaltern. This thesis draws on such adaptations of the subaltern perspective. It explores the place of Mongolia in current discourses on Menggu and Zhonghua and argues that Mongolia is in a way a sub-subaltern in the official Chinese polemic on the majority of the Menggu-related issues, most importantly in Mongolian and Zhonghua history, ethno genesis, and cultural identity.¹⁸

The works of the authors from Subaltern Studies provided a valuable perspective on the understanding of the concept of representations, particularly in regards to their role in identity shaping and ideology transmission. However, although they all emphasise the dominant force of representations acting as an ideological means to reinforce systems of inequality and subordination, they were not sufficient for the concrete analysis of how representation actually works in particular texts. Thus, further methodological approaches were needed to study the ways textual representations were implicated in

¹⁸There have been academic and semi-academic (issued by an academic institution for the wider non-specialist audience) works published recently that can serve as good examples for this thesis. For instance, a three-volume work entitled *Menggu Tongshi* was published by Minzu Chubanshe in 2001.

power. Such approaches were found in works dealing with the subject of discourse and discourse analysis.

2.2 Power, Knowledge, and Discourse

Representation is a process of social construction of identities, and discourse figures in representations. It includes representations of how things are and have been, as well as imaginaries – representations of how things might, could or should be. A discursive approach to representation provides a ‘revolutionary means of understanding how ideas (statements) are elaborated in the context of ideology’ (Muecke 1982: 99).

Discourse, according to Foucault, is a historically specific system of representations that involves language, social practices and institutions (Foucault 1972: 49). It is a system of meaning which form the identities of subjects and objects. In other words, since ‘all social practices entail meaning, and meaning shapes and influences what we [people] do [conduct], all practices have a discursive aspect’ (Hall and Gieben 1992: 291). However, Foucault moves beyond the semiotics believing instead that human beings understand themselves and others and acquire knowledge through relations of power, not relations of meaning.

According to Foucault (1980), the relation between discourse/language and power is self-evident. In this thesis it means the methodological ability to identify the official PRC discourse and to see how it has been used for the promotion of (sometimes competing) ideas and interests regarding Mongolia. Power is understood as something that is never localised, it functions through net-like organisations. Foucault emphasises the connection between discourse (or, more correctly, discursive practices) and the wider context of non-discursive activities and institutions. For instance, in his later genealogical account of power (the complex of knowledge/power), discourse is related to such non-discursive practices as economic and political changes.

Power in discourse studies is understood not as a confrontation, but as negotiation between the parties in order to reach a consensus and thereby pursue their interests. Thus, Bourdieu (1991) introduced the concept of a ‘market’ of discourses within which

negotiation regarding the pursuit of different goals takes place. He also suggested that the key role in negotiations between the parties and the strategies of control they use belongs to language. Language, in turn, relies on institutions, social structures and processes. His concept of a 'market' of discourses (where a variety of different discourses 'compete' for their right to dominate) is also useful to understand the part language plays in operations of power. The thesis attempts to explore how in the texts issued by *Renmin Ribao*, Xinhua News Agency and governmental organisations, one form of language/rhetoric¹⁹ prevails over others and what the effect of this is.

In this thesis the language of the official PRC texts on Mongolia is seen as a crucial part of the negotiation of power and influence over how the country should be represented. Power, therefore, is seen as a balance between competing forces claiming authority or influence over the representation of Mongolia. This negotiation of power can manifest itself on different levels. Firstly, power is manifested on an international level, for example, between the Mongolian state and the PRC. Secondly, it is manifested on a regional level, between the state and its peripheral areas, such as the regions bordering Mongolia. On an institutional level, power is manifested between politicians, ganbu, academics, and businessmen who pursue quite different aims regarding Mongolia. Finally, on an ideological level, power is manifested between those with nationalist views on the country and those advocating a Marxist or a pragmatic approach.

For Laclau and Mouffe (1985) discourse is something that includes all practices and meanings and any given text is open to unlimited interpretations. In order to locate any given discourse they developed a concept of nodal points. These are the discursive points which partially fix the meaning and underpin the identity of a discourse by constructing a set of definite meanings, such as nation, party, and class. This thesis employs this methodological framework to establish such nodal points on a 'lower level', that is, in the PRC official discourse on Mongolia.

In terms of analysing how representations operate in actual textual examples this thesis also uses the concept of nodal points as adapted by Doty (1996) in her study of representational practices. Doty analyses North-South relations and argues that 'one of

¹⁹ Unless specified (or seen from the context) otherwise, by 'rhetoric' this thesis means the style, content, and structure of writing.

the most consequential elements present in all of the encounters between the North and the South has been the practice(s) of representation by the North of the South' (Doty 1996: 2). By representations she means the ways in which the South has been discursively represented by policy makers, scholars, journalists, and others, in the North.

Doty takes as a perspective Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) concept of nodal points – discursive points that for her not only 'fix meaning', but also 'establish positions that make predication possible' (Doty 1996: 10). She then argues that representational practices in texts work to establish these nodal points. Through looking at various texts on the 'third world' published in the West she singled out the following representational practices (Ibid: 10-12):

1. *Presupposition* is based on the capacity of discourse to naturalise identities. For example, to create 'background knowledge' that is taken to be a 'natural truth', simply 'how the things are'. It generates implicit theorisations on 'how the world works' and also an elaboration of the nature of its inhabitants. Presupposition manifests itself as statements of 'facts' (what something 'is') or works through a process of substitution when one constituent in a binary opposition substitutes (or gets identified with) its counterpart from another pair. For instance, the sedentary agriculture or nomadic husbandry and modern or backward oppositions can merge into new oppositions between the progressive agricultural Chinese and 'undeveloped' pastoral Mongols. Interestingly, the very genre of the texts selected for this study (the country profile) is quintessential background knowledge creation – a compendium of 'objective truths and facts' (and that is how they are meant to be perceived by the readers) about Mongolia.

2. *Classification* is a rhetorical strategy closely linked to naturalisation. It entails the construction of classificatory schemes, which often serve to naturalise people by placing them into the categories in which they 'naturally' belong. Thus, through the process of essentialisation of their character, people get positioned into various kinds of hierarchies. The classification usually works through establishing and propagating certain stereotypes. This serves as a basis for the hierarchies, and also creates 'a quick and easy image' of the objects of classification. Such images are often an essentialised generalisation which lack accuracy and specificity. The texts on Mongolia analysed in

this thesis show that the official discourse often employs the popular stereotypes and perceptions of Mongolia, particularly as far as cultural and ethnic identities of the Mongols are concerned. It also correlates with the abovementioned argument of the positioning Mongolia as sub-subaltern.

3. *Surveillance* ‘renders subjects knowable, visible objects of disciplinary power.’ It refers to procedures of observation and examination, which constitute an important element of disciplinary practices. These practices are important strategies by which people ‘come to be ‘known’, classified, and acted upon.’ Encounters with Alter are occasions for Self to collect ‘facts,’ ‘monitor situations and problems,’ and then legitimize policies deriving from these ‘facts’ and their interpretations. A large number of the Chinese academic writings that have been examined for this thesis (although they were not included in the key group of texts selected for a detailed analysis) can serve as good examples of how this representational practice functions in the official PRC discourse on Mongolia.

4. *Negation* is a process of constructing the Alter as a ‘blank space’ – historical, geographical, cultural, political and social spaces. These are spaces that are to be filled in by Self writing. It is the ‘denial of effective agency’ to the Alter by the Self through portraying the activities of the Self-Alter interrelations as ‘missions of deliverance and salvation,’ which fill blank spaces with civilization, modernization, progress and prosperity.

The examples in support of the existence of such representation practice in the data collected for this thesis are numerous. For instance Chapter 4 deals with the discursive representations of the Mongolian history in the official Chinese writings and attempts to demonstrate how, through some linguistic devices and choices, the Mongols are denied ‘a history of their own,’ or a status as active ‘creators’ of it. Examples to support this argument can be also found in the Chinese representations of the contemporary social life of Mongolia and the role of China in it that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

5. *Positioning* Alter vis-à-vis Self is another rhetorical strategy of discourse. Doty refers to the following strategies: opposition, identity, similarity, and complementarity. Examining the texts from the perspective of this representational

practice has proved to be extremely helpful to escape from the 'methodological deadlock' when ostensibly different (and even opposite) messages are found within a single text, which is often the case in writings about Mongolia. Its ambiguous status as neither 'in-group' nor 'out-group' often results in such situations. It is also helpful when the analysis is carried out not on the micro-level of a single text, but on the macro-level of the discourse. Often contemporary Mongolia is portrayed as totally 'detached' from the PRC as a sovereign political entity ('opposition'), which nevertheless has its 'historical roots' in China and 'ethnic roots' in the genesis of the *Zhonghua minzu* ('identity').

6. *Logic of difference* and *logic of equivalence* are, as Doty points out, the 'inclusive-exclusive' character of the discourse. The strong presence of this 'exclusion-inclusion' dynamic has also been emphasised by some authors studying official and popular discourses on the national minorities in the PRC (for instance Shein 1997). The logic of difference fixes the positions of Self and Alter as stable, positive differences (in appearance, custom/culture, dress, and language). Thus, the Mongol identity(ies) are presumed to be based upon 'foundational essences' and are constructed through the representations as being solely different from the Chinese one. These identities occupy specified places in a system of relations between China/PRC and Mongolia. The logic of equivalence, however, is simultaneously at work. It can manifest itself when both Self and Alter are positioned vis-à-vis a common Other. Thus, in discursive representations of the events that led to Outer Mongolia's independence, Mongolia and China as a whole are positioned vis-à-vis the Foreign Other, who, according to the official discourse, played a decisive role in the partition of Outer Mongolia from the 'Motherland.'

Doty also points out that those representational strategies are 'intensified in times of crisis, when naturalised identities and the existing order are at risk of being called into question' (Doty 1996: 12). This argument appears to be particularly relevant to this thesis, since the PRC is believed to be going through a stage when the question of its identity, as multiethnic state, is at the centre of heated debates inside the country, and where there is rising awareness among the national minorities of their self-identification. The issue of PRC identity and its status as an international player is also understood differently by different groups inside the PRC. As far as Mongolia is concerned, one of

the main arguments of the thesis is that its identity as a 'historical part of China', or at least the need to represent Mongolia as such in the official media, has been recently called into question by some among the political elite of the PRC and this finds its reflection in the official representations of the country that are at the centre of this study.

The concept of representational practices elaborated by Doty proved to be extremely useful in analysing not only why and how Mongolia's identity has been constructed through the representations, but also what practices make it possible. This methodological perspective highlights aspects of power in the process - how it produces meanings and 'constitutes particular modes of subjectivity and interpretive dispositions' (Doty 1999: 4).

However, while drawing heavily on the Doty's methodological framework, this thesis does not accept all that it postulates. Thus, being a scholar of critical theory, Doty emphasises two aspects relating to representational practices. Firstly, Doty sees identity construction as something that prompts actual actions – identities are something 'acted upon.' That is, the meanings that are produced and attached to subjects and objects give space for speculating on possibilities of particular actions. The issue of the correlation between official discursive representations of Mongolia and concrete political actions of the PRC leaders towards the country is a fascinating one. However, it appears to be out of the scope of this thesis and only occasionally drawn in as complementary examples.

Secondly, Doty believes that the analysis of representational practices not only demonstrates how power produces identities and meanings, but also how it affects interrelationships and prompts hypothetical actions. This, in turn, 'allows for predictions.' This thesis, although theoretically fully in agreement with this argument, takes a very careful approach to actual 'predicting.' Besides, it sees this study of representations as an aid to better understanding of current China-Mongolia interactions, rather as a means to foresee their possible future.

Without attempting to locate the future, this thesis focuses on the current and often rapidly changing processes taking place in the PRC, Mongolia and their interactions, as well as how they affect the discourse under consideration. The methodological approach for understanding this phenomenon was found in Laclau's (1990) concept of

'dislocations of discourse.' By this he means events that can no longer be symbolised by the 'traditional' discursive order, and thus function to disrupt that order. As a result of new realities and practices described in Chapter 1 (and revisited in the Chapter 3), the thesis holds that the PRC discourse on Mongolia is currently undergoing such a 'dislocatory experience.' However, according to Laclau disruption of discourse brings to life a counterpart - a 'myth' - that attempts to counterbalance such dislocations and reconstruct the order (examined in detail in Chapter 5). This practice can also be located through the examination of the official texts on the Mongolian question. This will be demonstrated in the following chapters of the thesis that deal with the concrete analysis of the data.

2.3 Textual Analysis

While all the abovementioned studies provide this thesis with a broad methodological perspective on the research issue – the functioning of the discourse through representations, – they do not provide a rigorous technique for analysis of concrete texts. Such analytical tools were found in the works of the authors who belong to the school of critical discourse analysis (CDA), such as Van Dijk, Kress and Fairclough.

CDA treats language as a type of social practice among many social practices used for representation and signification. The critical use of discourse analysis in applied linguistics is leading to the development of a different approach to understanding texts. As Gunter Kress points out, CDA has an 'overtly political agenda,' which 'serves to set CDA off...from other kinds of discourse analysis' and text linguistics, 'as well as pragmatics and sociolinguistics.' While most forms of discourse analysis 'aim to provide a better understanding of socio-cultural aspects of texts,' CDA 'aims to provide accounts of the production, internal structure, and overall organization of texts.' One crucial difference is that CDA 'aims to provide a critical dimension in its theoretical and descriptive accounts of texts' (Kress 1990: 84-99).

According to CDA, texts are produced by socially situated authors, and the meaning of a text comes through interaction between its producers and recipients. For example, there can be a relationship of solidarity if the text producers follow the popular

stereotypes, or one of disagreement if, for instance, texts are used to promote 'unpopular' ideas. The issues of authorship and the audience of the texts examined in this thesis are considered vital for this study and discussed in greater detail below.

The main characteristic of CDA approach to text analysis is its 'historicity.' Thus Van Dijk (1985, 1991) states that the focus on 'textual or conversational structures' derives its framework from the 'cognitive, social, historical, cultural, or political contexts.' His method is not only to examine the structures and meanings within the texts, but to go further in 'establishing relationships with the context.' Although CDA includes in its analysis all factors relating to context, particular emphasis tends to be placed on politics and ideology.

Although Foucault is often used for the study of the language/ideology complex, he was sceptical about ideology since, for him, there is no un-ideological, pre-existing truth. Rather, truth is always a product of discourse (Foucault 1980:118). However, in CDA, ideology, like language, has its role to play. Kress stresses that

Any linguistic form considered in isolation has no specifically determinate meaning as such, nor does it possess any ideological significance or function (Kress 1990: 90).

The speaker/writer expresses ideological content in texts and so does the linguistic form of the text. Following this argument when examining the texts, the particular attention in this thesis was drawn to the authors' choices of linguistic devices.

Another scholar of CDA School whose approach to text analysis has been extensively used in this study is Fairclough (1992, 1995, and 2001). For him any examination of discourse means first of all establishing the relationship of language to other elements of social processes that would eventually (ideally?) result in the 'production of knowledge which can lead to emancipatory change' (Fairclough 2001: 236). In his works Fairclough offers a rather detailed scheme to approach a text analysis that has been adopted in this study.

Firstly, Fairclough suggests that the focus of the analysis should be placed not on a conventional 'research question,' but on a social problem or practice. Thus, the original

focus of this thesis - Mongolia as an object of the PRC foreign policy, and all the actual actions and events of Sino-Mongolian relations in the 1990s to mid-2000s - was eventually shifted to the issue of Chinese representations of Mongolia and their dissemination through the government authorised media texts. Hence, one of the main tasks the thesis fulfils is to see how the different views and agendas of those with authority to speak officially on Mongolia are represented through the official discourse.

Secondly, in accordance with other scholars of CDA, Fairclough suggests identifying the object of research and the obstacles to the problem being tackled and tracing them 'from local level to global level.' This can be achieved by locating the language within the network of practices and establishing the relationship of semiosis (meaning production) to other elements within these practices. In other words, it is necessary to contextualise the discourse on different levels. This thesis draws particular attention to the issue of context as will be demonstrated below.

Fairclough suggests several approaches to the actual identification of discourse. For instance, it can be done through the structural analysis, the so-called order of discourse. By this he means the semiotic aspect of a broader social order – a particular social ordering of different ways of making meaning, a network of discourses where some of the discourses are dominant and mainstream, and others are 'alternative' and marginal. The aspect of dominance - and therefore power - is crucial in discourse ordering. Similar to Laclau and Mouffe, Fairclough believes the order of discourse to be an 'open' system since the dominance is something that is never fixed but always contested in a struggle for power (Fairclough 2001).

This approach will be employed throughout this thesis. The PRC political media which were the source of the texts selected for the analysis are an order of discourse within which there are different recurrent representations of Mongolia. These representations carry different weight: for instance in Mongolia-related discussions, texts from *Renmin Ribao* and *Xinhua* used to form the dominant all-powerful discourse. Since the end of the 1990s, the authority of these discourses started to be challenged by the relatively marginal discourse mostly produced by 'pragmatic professionals' from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Commerce (MOC). However, *Renmin Ribao* and *Xinhua* still remain the authority that sets the agenda for other press and they enjoy

much larger readership than other political media's publications. *Renmin Ribao* and Xinhua is often the site of consensus between the competing discourses. The result can be seen in the 'hybrid' text, the Mongolia country profiles issued in May 2002 by the MFA, where the topics are 'divided' between the two camps: everything related to politics, economic and society is written by Mongolia professionals from MFA, while the issues relating to Mongolian history - the 'sacred cow' of the adepts of the orthodox nationalistic perspective on Mongolia - are produced by the CCP's organ, *Renmin Ribao*.

Fairclough also believes that it is 'very important how the representations produced in particular media are taken up by other social practices' (Fairclough 2001: 238). Therefore, although it is not the main focus of the thesis, it also looks briefly at how (or indeed whether) the texts on Mongolia, issued by the party and government organisations, influence the ways Mongolia is represented in educational materials and curricula and what is the significance of this.

For further examination of texts Fairclough advocates interactional interdiscursive analysis. According to this analysis, the researcher has to see the texts in interactional terms. That is, the interaction between 'writing' and 'reading' of the text, the text producers, the targeted audience, and its responses. Such interaction can be analysed as a connection between the semiotic and the social. He advocates the idea that semiotic properties of the texts (particular words, grammar, syntax, and visual images) 'connect with what is going on socially' and vice-versa: 'what is going on socially is, in part, what is going on interdiscursively in the text' (Fairclough 2001: 240).

Interdiscursive analysis presupposes establishing which discourses are included in the text and how they are worked together. Thus, for Fairclough (he follows here the 'interglossia' concept of Bakhtin) all the texts are hybrids of different genres and discourses. The 'hybridity' of the texts 'depend on social and historical circumstances' (Fairclough 2001: 241). The example of new 'hybrid' texts on Mongolia mentioned in the previous paragraphs is directly relevant to this statement.

Finally, critical examination of discourse includes linguistic and semiotic analysis of the texts in order to see how language works on different levels. The analysis includes:

whole-text language organisation (narrative, structure of the text, etc.); clauses combination (clauses and sentences); clauses (grammar, semantic, usage of action verbs, voice, mood and modality); words (lexicon, semantic, metaphors, connotations, etc.). Fairclough himself is rather schematic on how to carry out a concrete linguistic and semiotic analysis of any given text. Therefore, for this particular task sources which would deal with semiotic methodology in more detail were required.

The starting point of such a search was the work of Culler (2001) which gave the most fundamental outline of semiotic and literary theory. For the concrete techniques of the linguistic examination of the texts this thesis used much more detailed study of semiotics produced by Chandler (2002) who provides a very comprehensive introduction to semiotics as a field of study and enough concrete information on its actual use in textual analysis.

Before this chapter proceeds to the overview of the primary sources used for this study, a few words should be said about the methodological approach to the non-textual images that also figure as a part of the data in Chapter 5. As mentioned before, the focus of the study is the textual representations of Mongolia. However, on several occasions the chosen texts contain a few non-textual representations of the country - photographs and maps - that appear to be of great importance in the interpretation of the messages promoted by the whole texts. All the instances of non-textual representations are also 'read' within the framework of CDA concept of semiosis – meaning-making through language, visual images or any other type of signification. To examine visual material, the thesis will follow all the abovementioned 'rules' of analysis that were applied to the written forms of representation.

2.4 Data

The term official discourse used throughout this study refers to 'political discourse'. And although the term appears rather universal - almost all the discourses may be considered political, and all analyses of discourse are potentially political (Chandler 2002); in this study it simply refers to the discourse embedded in the body of texts produced by political institutions, government, and political media. Thus, the thesis

attempts to reach political discourse on Mongolia through the texts issued by different government structures, for instance the MFA, or those published by the top CCP organs such as *Renmin Ribao*.

The term 'text' is used to define the type of writings selected for this study instead of 'article' or 'media writing' since apart from the publications from *Renmin Ribao* and Xinhua, the thesis uses publications issued by two governmental structures – the MFA and the MOC. All the key texts examined in this thesis exist in electronic form and were acquired from the official web pages of the *Renmin Ribao*, Xinhua News Agency and the ministries. Thus, the term 'text' here refers to a message recorded in writing that is physically independent of its sender or receiver, an ensemble of signs/words constructed (and interpreted) with reference to conventions to its genre (country profile) and medium (mass media controlled by the CCP and government structures).

The authorised texts examined in the thesis represent the 'official line,' the official and published point of view of the political establishment; in most of the cases formally supported by concrete political decisions and actions. These are the 'power' texts with the so-called illocutionary force. The saying of such texts is their enactment; for example, declaring a law passed (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 1997: 2). They do not so much represent Mongolia as it is, but they 'prescribe' how it should be dealt with ideologically, politically, and economically. In other words, unlike the discourses of a more interpretative nature (academic and popular), the political, 'closed' (Hodge and Kam 1998: 19) discourse deals not as much with Mongolia as it is (be it a result of a 'scientific' study or popular perception); rather, these texts deal with how the country should be seen in the current socio-political context. It appears to be the case, paraphrasing Doty's classification, that while the popular discourse on Mongolia can be considered as descriptive, while academic and semi-academic discourse can be considered normative, with elements of description, the political discourse is normative, descriptive, and, most importantly, 'prescriptive' (Doty 1996: 9).

2.4.1 Choice of texts

Language/discourse is the ‘blood’ of politics and all policies are articulated and legitimised through it. Moreover, political struggles (if such exist) are manifested in language/discourse through verbal and written representations. With this assumption in mind, this thesis approaches the official PRC discourse on Mongolia in order to try and see what the possible interests and goals of the country’s political elite regarding Mongolia are.

In terms of methodology, one of the first tasks of the thesis was to make a selection of media and texts. In light of what has been already set out, the thesis focused exclusively on authorised media that produces officially sanctioned discourse. It is a common notion at the moment (pointed out by some scholars of the Chinese studies and ‘China watchers’) that the PRC is currently witnessing an unprecedented diversity and, most importantly, relative liberalisation of its mass media. The media are becoming more autonomous and starting to report on many previously untouched political and social subjects. Any explicit challenge to the authority and legitimacy of the Party rule and leadership still remains an unwritten taboo.²⁰ However, even such national Chinese Communist Party papers as *Guangming Ribao* and *Jingji Ribao*, while still mostly featuring official statements, propaganda and policy viewpoints, are steadily gaining more autonomy from strict Party controls (CIA 1997).²¹

In this light, *Renmin Ribao* and Xinhua appeared to be the most ‘loyal’ mouthpieces of the Chinese leadership and sources of texts that would represent the most regulated and monitored, ‘closed’ discourse on Mongolia. Such texts would supposedly carry most weight in discussions where different points of views, different interests and policies clash or struggle for power over presentation.

²⁰ Some scholars examining the relation between language and politics in the PRC, consider taboo a form of ‘formalisation of language’ and as such a ‘part of politics’ (Schoenhals 1992: 1).

²¹ The report on Chinese media produced by the Centre for the Study of Intelligence of the CIA is cited on several occasions in this thesis. While the topic of changes in the media sphere in the PRC has been addressed in many works recently (for example Donald et al 2002, Zhao 1998, Lee 2000), this thesis refers to the CIA report since it offers information in a detailed but compact form. Although some of the statistics might be outdated by now, the tendencies outlined in the report are still relevant.

On the other hand, the powerful governmental organisations (such as the MFA and the MOC) were also chosen as a source for the selection of the key group of texts. In fact, the MOC and MFA were among the very few constituencies which issued Mongolia-related texts in the country profile genre. The publications from other governmental organisations (usually concerning specific topics) were used in this thesis only as a ‘supporting’ body of texts.

The second methodological issue concerned the selection of the ‘messages’. The original idea of the data-gathering for the thesis was to collect the texts of all formats (writings, interviews, and visual representations). However, during the fieldwork a few adjustments had to be made. Firstly, official, and often very, clichéd statements on Mongolia, such as proclamations of ‘eternal friendship between the Chinese and Mongolian peoples’, ‘growing cooperation between the two countries’, and so on, were drawn in solely as background, not core texts. Although such texts represent an important aspect of discourse (the formulaic and ritualistic mode of communication), they do not provide sufficient material for the study of the evolution of the PRC’s official discourse on Mongolia. Such statements are usually made on the occasion of the visits by high-ranking leaders and tend to be published by *Renmin Ribao* and *Xinhua*.

Secondly, the idea of collecting interviews was also rejected for several reasons. For instance, it did not prove possible to arrange interviews with the high-ranking members of the Chinese political elite. It is also true that the interviews as a data source proved to be too contextual where virtually everything was affecting the message content – the interview environment, the topic of the discussion and even the personal characteristics of the interviewer.²² Therefore, it was decided to focus only on written data published by the authorised central media texts of the same genre (country profile), that were premeditated, and had undergone careful internal discussion and editing by their producers.

Thirdly, the original intention of the thesis regarding the actual text examination was to perform a quantitative analysis. However, the key texts examined in this thesis (sixteen altogether) are in fact all the texts of this genre and media that have been published on

²² A Russian doing research for a British institution on a rather ‘sensitive’ subject appeared ‘doubly suspicious’ for some of the interviewees.

Mongolia since 1991. This number of texts presupposes to some degree the necessity of qualitative analysis which is believed in DA to be both inefficient and labour intensive (Taylor 2001: 24). However, the thesis argues that its selection of texts is representative since it was not done to cover all the writings on Mongolia in China, but only those that provide readers with general information on the country, represent central authority and the 'official line' of the Party and government regarding the topic, in other words, those texts associated with 'power' relations in the representation Mongolia.

Moreover, the texts selected for detailed examination are considered in this thesis to be a key group: they provide 'guidance' for other text producers on how to deal with the subject of Mongolia in a 'correct' way. However, for the purposes of analysis a much larger amount of 'auxiliary' texts from different discourses, media and genres were drawn upon to support or illustrate concrete cases – to provide the intertextual background.

It should also be mentioned that the study of just sixteen core texts has its advantages when it comes to the analysis of representations. It is believed that representations which are few in number are the most controllable and influential (Shohat 1995). Representations affect the ways in which individuals and groups are perceived, and very often every single image of the Alter can be seen as representing all of them, because for the Self, the Alter is a homogenous entity. In this regard, the situation became even more exaggerated in cases when the representations of the Alter are scarce. If the representations are few, the negative ones have a particularly harmful impact.

2.4.2 Genre and Intertextuality

Before describing the data in more detail, a few words should be said about general characteristics of the PRC official discourse on Mongolia since 1991. It appears important since it was these general characteristics that to a certain degree presupposed not only the choice of data, but the subject of study as a whole.

2.4.2.1 Official discourse on Mongolia in the 1990s.

Along with the quite noticeable growth of the Mongolia-related publications of all genres in the PRC since the end of the 1990s, the country has become 'officially

familiar' to the general public. The major role in this process of representing the officially-constructed image of Mongolia for the wide Chinese-speaking audience belongs to the different kinds of the authorised publications in central media, reference literature, and electronic resources of the Party and Government institutions.

However, in the first half of the 1990s the situation with the official discourse on Mongolia was such that, although the formal relations between the countries improved significantly,²³ the political rhetoric on Mongolia remained extremely scant, and often highly nationalistic. It was almost identical to the rhetoric of previous decades and largely ignored all the changing realities and newly-appearing practices. Perhaps, the political changes in Mongolia (renunciation of the one-party political system and the socialist ideology) together with the rise of pan-Mongolist ideas in the country were seen by the political elite of China as destabilising factors for the domestic situation of the PRC. The old-fashioned nationalistic rhetoric, therefore, was employed to counter-balance them.

While the PRC political media was balanced between silencing Mongolia-related issues, and resorting to the nationalist perspective in their discussion, PRC academic discourse on Mongolia experienced a real boom: the political and economic changes in Mongolia were the focus of numerous academic studies, some of them provided detailed and professional analysis. This was in sharp contrast to the highly ideologised academic writing on Mongolia of the previous decades.²⁴ However, all the academic publications of the first half of the 1990s could be found almost exclusively in highly specialised magazines or periodicals of provincial universities (Inner Mongolia was one area where many of these were produced). One can say that these publications were produced by

²³ Sino-Mongolian relations began to thaw in 1986, and 1989 saw a significant improvement in relations. This is explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

²⁴ Prior to the 1991 the official Chinese writings represented Mongolia as a 'lost territory' of China, 'historical part of China' that gained the 'so-called independence' only due to the intervention of Tsarist Russia, etc. Interestingly, all types of discourse (political, academic, and popular) were absolutely unified on the issue of Mongolia. An alternative to the nationalistic view on Mongolia could only be an ultra-nationalistic one. For political/academic writings of the 1960-1980s see, for example, articles of *Renmin Ribao* of the time; numerous monographs, such as *Sha e qinlüe hua shi* (1978-1990), *Sha e qin hua shi* (1986), *Sha e qinlue woguo Menggu diqu jianshi* (1979), *Sha e yu 1911 nian wai menggu "duli"* (1979), *Sha e yu dongbeibu* (1985), and many others.

Mongolian experts for fellow-experts and were rather marginalised since they rarely reached a wider audience.²⁵

Those very few publications that did attempt to make a comprehensive survey of the country were often suitable for this thesis merely as a counter-example. For instance, a monograph called *People's Republic of Mongolia* was published by the Institute of Mongolian Studies of Inner Mongolian University in 1991, the same year when MPR became an official parliamentary republic with a multi-party system and was re-named 'Independent Mongolia', and was the only monograph of this type published since 1989. Although it formally follows the standard style of 'country profiling', it seems to present quite a challenge for an average reader seeking to get a general idea of the country. The entire book is a mere compilation of statistics, often very specific, like the number of volleyball teams, the structure of Mongolian kindergartens, the percentage of the reduction in squirrel skin procurement, or the fat content of the milk of Kazakh white-head breed cows.

Furthermore, it cannot even be considered a good statistics reference book since despite the date of the publication, 1991, all the statistics it offers date from prior to 1985. Perhaps, the most interesting and telling fact about this monograph is that all the major events that were taking place in Mongolia at that time, both in political and economic spheres, are not addressed at all. By the same token, issues of Mongolian history, especially the question of its independence, are either ignored or dealt with very briefly. For example, the chapter on the history of Mongolia and its people takes just 16 out of a total of 357 pages.

Despite the examples given, changes were taking place in the discourses in other ways. Along with the rapid growth of the grass-roots-level contacts between Mongolia and China, popular discourse on Mongolia ceased to be a mere 're-telling' of the *Renmin Ribao* articles in common parlance. The popular texts on Mongolia throughout the

²⁵ The majority of the academic writings on Mongolia of this period were published in the following periodicals: *Dangdai shehuizhuyi wenti* of Shandong University; the magazines of Inner Mongolian University, such as *Dongbeiyu luntan*, *Nei menggu daxue xuebao*, *Mengguxue xinxu*, and so on. See Sun (1989), Wang (1990), Wang (1991, 1992), Xi (1995), Xiao (1994).

1990s ranged from personal recollections to fictional accounts, to loose fantasising on Menggu, and they all represented a diverse conglomerate of ideas regarding Mongolia.²⁶ However, all in all, the representations of Mongolia within Chinese political discourse were scant. The discourse was presented by two categories of texts. Firstly, there were accounts of the diplomatic events of Sino-Mongolian relations, which were concerned strictly with the formal interactions between the two countries (treaties, agreements, visits, etc.) and were characterised by the usual rhetorical statements regarding the ‘two brotherly countries’. Secondly, there were sporadic publications, covering different aspects of life and society in Mongolia. These were mostly statistics on its economy and international relations, and a few personal, yet highly formalised in style and cautiously worded, accounts of Mongolia.

These writings required from a reader quite an effort to make a clear and, most importantly, integral picture of ‘what Mongolia is.’ The possible explanation lay most likely in the fact that there was not one unified opinion among the PRC policy makers and political discourse producers on how Mongolia should be represented. Naturally, rapid, dramatic, often rather chaotic political changes which were taking place in Mongolia at that time - democratisation of the Mongolian political system (first of all abolishment of the one-party system), formulation of the country’s new foreign policy doctrine, and the rise of nationalism - required time for consideration and analysis. Sometimes it appears as if the political elite of the PRC was waiting for the situation within Mongolia to ‘settle’ before making any concrete, articulated statements.²⁷

As a result, the academic and popular discourses operating in this ‘ideological vacuum’ offered to the readers rather numerous and, most importantly, diverse ideas and views

²⁶ The publications of this type of literature range from the official memoirs of the PRC Ambassador to Ulaanbaatar Sun Yixian (Sun 2001), to popular personal accounts (normally with titles such as *The Mongols*, *Mongolian Impression*, *My travel through Mongolia*, see for example Zhong 1989; Ye 1998;) to popular ethnography like *Mongolia Expert* (Guo 1999, 2001) to fiction and mere imaginaries on a ‘Mongolian theme’ (for example ‘*Mongolian lad and a Japanese ‘Red Shoe’*’ by Sang 1999). The latter two rarely went beyond the usual stereotypes and exoticism in portraying Mongolia and the Mongols.

²⁷ In fact, the situation did seem to ‘settle down’ for the Chinese political leaders and producers of the official discourse when the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party (communists) won the elections in 2000 and in 2001 and regained its ruling positions in the country. The official PRC texts on Mongolia of that period seemed to be better articulated. Besides, it is at this time when the description of Mongolia as an ‘historical part of China’ started to disappear from the official country profiles.

on Mongolia thereby creating preconditions in which the topics regarding Mongolia could no longer simply be ignored, or under-represented, by the political media. There appeared a clear necessity for the political elite to ‘take a side in the debate’ (Hodge and Kam 1998: 19) on what Mongolia ‘is’, on how it should be represented and interpreted.

2.4.2.2 Political discourse since the end of the 1990s.

Thus, by the end of the 1990s there appeared a totally new *genre* of texts on Mongolia: the ‘country profile’. In 2000, the first article in this format appeared in *Renmin Ribao*.²⁸ The unifying idea in the texts could be stated as an ‘introductory overview’ of the country. Since then, this genre has become the prevailing one among the publications on Mongolia in the Chinese political media, as well as the semi-academic and popular publications (the latter often simply copy the text from the ‘authorised sources’). Such texts articulate a ‘general picture’ of Mongolia, including its geography, history, current socio-political and economic situation, culture and customs - all the *essential* information about the country.

The word ‘essential’ appears to be crucial here. First, the representations, which are the focus of this study, refer to the *essentialist* representations of Mongolia in the Chinese publications. Second, the very format of ‘country profile’ texts presupposes their essentialist nature and therefore suits the needs of the research perfectly. Country profiles, as a genre, seek to present the essential ‘positive facts’ on a given country. The texts provide a ‘quick and easy image without the responsibility of specificity or accuracy’ (Doty 1996: 10). Creating a rather sweeping portrait of the country and its people (for example, ‘Culture and Customs’ of the Mongols are given in a phrase of just fifty-two characters!) the texts’ purpose is to present a simple and straightforward reference by which a reader can easily identify ‘true’ Mongolia.

The usual titles of the texts under consideration in this chapter are ‘Mongolia’ (蒙古 or 蒙古国), ‘General Overview of Mongolia’ or ‘Brief Introduction to Mongolia’ (蒙古国概况 or 蒙古简介). The topics which re-occur in such texts are Mongolia’s climate,

²⁸‘Menggu Jianjie.’ *Renmin ribao wang*, October, 2000.

geography, population, history, traditions and culture, economy, politics, and foreign relations, including relations with the PRC. Thus, the information the texts offer is concise, containing only the most relevant information from the point of view of the text producers - facts about Mongolia.

In this regard, it is very important to try and assess *what* is considered by the authors to be the most important and representative characteristics of Mongolia, what information is included and what is excluded from the texts. Such issues as the country's climate, and geography appear to be very of a very 'stable', set format. These parts of the profile have been repeated from text to text without any changes throughout the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s. There are, however, issues that are subject to interpretation, such as, Mongolia's history, politics, and even economy and natural resources, and one can presume that these interpretations arise from the specific historical circumstances of both China and Mongolia. One of the main goals of this thesis is to observe the different interpretations of Mongolia in the Chinese political discourse and to try to understand their meaning.

The following texts were selected as the key group for detailed examination:

- Four texts from *Renmin Ribao* published between April 2000 and May 2003;
- Two texts from Xinhua News Agency published in June 2002 and July 2002;
- One texts published on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC on May 2002;

The country profiles issued by other official institutions, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (April 2003) and the MOC's Economic and Commercial Counsellor's Office of the Chinese Embassy in Mongolia (August 2002 and May 2003) were not included into the main group of the key texts, but constituted a very important background of the official intertexts.²⁹

²⁹ The web pages respectively are <http://www.people.com.cn>, <http://www.xinhua.net>, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn>, <http://mn.mofcom.gov.cn>.

The earliest text, 'Menggu Jianjie' issued in April 2000 by *RMRB*, online edition (key text 1),³⁰ was chosen because it was the first text of this genre found in the party organ. It summarized the previous, fragmented representations of Mongolia found in *RMRB* publications throughout the 1990s and formulated them into a unified 'standardised template' to create Mongolia's profile. This text served as a key reference point for the examination of other texts of the same institutional framework and genre.

The next selected publication is a *RMRB* article of February 2001 (key text 2). Although it has the same title as the previous text, it has a different structure and, most importantly, different perspectives on some key topics, such as Mongolian history, which presumably reflects some significant shifts in the dominant discourse(s) on Mongolia of the time.

The third text from *RMRB*, 'Menggu' of June 2001 (key text 3), is a peculiar mixture of the two previous texts, accompanied by a photo of Ulaanbaatar. In May 2002 A Mongolian profile was issued by the MFA (key text 4). This publication was an interesting combination of highly qualitative as well as quantitative information on the majority of the aspects of modern Mongolia. The qualitative aspect is interesting because it is the first time such a professional approach was taken. However, its historical section was copied from the *RMRB*'s profile of June 2001.³¹ The texts from the Xinhua News Agency web site – an authorised but mass-orientated medium – of June and July of 2002 (key texts 5 and 6) are interesting due to their discrepancies with other key texts. And finally in May 2003 an updated profile was published again by the *RMRB* (key text 7); this was in fact the profile prepared by MFA, accompanied by another image of the Mongolian capital.

2.4.2.3 Genre

According to Chandler, 'Texts are written within genres' (2002: 204). The texts chosen for this study can be attributed to the same genre according to the most 'traditional'

³⁰ Available at www.peopledaily.com.cn/trswas/Detail.wct?SelectID=6697&recID=2, downloaded on 30 March 2001. It has to be noticed that almost all of the key text do not have the exact day of posting, solely the month and the year.

³¹ Another noteworthy thing about the MFA profile is that despite being the by far the largest texts abundant with statistics, it reviles little from the DA point of view due to its professional, impartial, 'dry' style of the narrative (this will be demonstrated in Chapter 6).

definition: the topic of all the writings is Mongolia and the Mongols. Also, all the texts follow the same rigid linguistic characteristics and structures. However, in the analysis of the texts, the main attention was drawn not to the 'genre-determined' grammatical or stylistic particularities of the texts, but on such issues as the context, purpose of writing, and intended audience. The attention to language is drawn to demonstrate how it operates as a means of promoting certain ideas through control over certain topics, words, grammatical structures and so on.

The typical structure of the texts usually follows the general rules of country profile that can be found in any texts of this genre and that are not specific to Chinese writings. The topics discussed are the country's nature, climate, natural resources, population, economy, politics, culture, history, and 'general facts' and information. Thus, these sections of the profiles often accompany the topics that can serve as central reference points when trying to reach the discourse through these texts. As a rule, they are also the most frequently occurring topics of discussion in all Mongolia-related publications, and the issue of Mongolian history is one of the most important among them. There are, however, some distinctive points that distinguish the Chinese political texts on Mongolia, which appear highly suggestive and will be discussed during the detailed analysis of the primary material.

It was the principle of consistency in genre and institutional origin that determined selection of those texts that illustrated briefly some main points of the Mongolian counter-discourse. The data in Mongolian and from Mongolia features in this work only sporadically as some 'counter-examples' to the Chinese representations of certain Mongolia-related issues. In cases where insertion from Mongolian material seemed necessary, the thesis used the texts with the same characteristics as the Chinese writings, that is, texts of the same genre and with the same 'power'. In other words, only the texts with the same weight and authority (for instance, Mongolia's profiles issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia or Mongolian representative office at the United Nations).³²

³² The texts were obtained from the official web sites of these organisations at <http://www.extmin.mn> and <http://www.un.int/mongolia> respectively.

2.4.2.4 Intertextuality

The term ‘intertextuality’ was first introduced by French semiotician Julia Kristeva and refers to the idea that texts are not autonomous entities, but ‘intertextual constructs’ (Culler 2001: 43). The CDA scholars have an identical approach to the issue holding that a text can be read only in relation to other texts: ‘every text is explicitly or implicitly ‘in dialogue with’ other texts (existing or anticipated) which constitute its ‘intertext’’. Therefore, this thesis considers the selected key texts from the authorised media as being simply ‘links in a chain of texts’ (Fairclough 2001: 233).

It has been mentioned several times already that while only a selection of key texts serve as focal points for the detailed semiotic analysis, a much wider range of publications of different genres and media have been used for this thesis in order to examine how these texts ‘interact’ by supporting, challenging, and commenting on each other. These interactions can be roughly divided into several groups:

a) The ‘country profile’ texts issued by *RMRB* and Xinhua (the most representative of the authoritative writings) as a rule, relate to other publications of the same media on Mongolia-related issues. For instance, almost every appearance of a new country brief of Mongolia in *RMRB* is usually chronologically ‘linked’ to the accounts given by this organ on the major events in Sino-Mongolian cooperation (such as visits of the countries leaders and high ranking officials). Likewise, the message encoded very schematically in the country profile can be reinforced by such texts as, for example, ‘common people’s’ personal accounts of their first hand experience in Mongolia. Such texts mostly *elaborate* on or *extend* certain issues which are important in the eyes of the text producers, but only briefly touched by key texts: the former rarely *modify* the latter. In other words, this type of intertextual dialogue produces a gradually evolving and largely homogenous and consistent statement.

b) There appears to be an ‘internal dialogue’ within the selection of main country profiles when one group of key texts issued by *RMRB* and Xinhua ‘interact’ with another group of key publications issued by the MFA and the MOC. The texts of both groups have equal illocutionary force and equal authority to represent Mongolia. These texts are in a state of ‘power negotiation,’ often due to different ideas, interests

and goals their authors promote and pursue through them. The texts support or contest each other's message(s) and thereby act to reciprocally *transform* and *modify* each other. The resulting products of these intertextual interactions are those consensual 'hybrid' texts mentioned earlier in this chapter.

c) The key texts of the thesis often allude to the texts from other central and the Party media. As was already mentioned, such media (like *Guangming Ribao* or *Jingji Ribao*) currently enjoy greater autonomy from the political and ideological dogmas or at least show greater diversity in the content of their articles and the views and opinions the articles present. The priority in 'ideological guidance' traditionally belongs to publications of *RMRB* and *Xinhua*, however, the 'professional' texts of the MFA and the MOC, are becoming more influential on texts from other media.³³ Although the *Guangming Ribao* and similar media show quite a diversity of opinions regarding Mongolia, the key texts serve (particularly in cases when there are debates or polemics on Mongolia-related issues) as a *reference point* of what the official *unified* position on these issues is, and what side of the debates the *unified* official opinion of political leaders is on.

Another function of the texts from such 'liberalised' media is *explanatory*: they provide more information on certain key points of the country profiles that 'facilitate' the readers interpretation of the latter. For example, as soon as country profiles began to emphasise the role of the Yalta conference in Mongolia's independence, numerous articles appeared in *RMRB*, *Xinhua*, *Guangming Ribao*, and *Beijing Qingnian Bao* that gave detailed information on the meaning of the conference for the international order in general, and China in particular.

d) The nature of the intertextual dialogue of the key texts with the academic publications is rather diverse: the latter ranges from texts in absolute conformity with the 'official line' to those with dissident or at least 'alternative' voices. The main types of 'intertextual relations' are three-fold: firstly, the *use* of academic material in the 'scientific' sections of the key country profiles, such as geography, climate,

³³ As will be demonstrated in the following chapters the country profile produced by the MFA was not only adopted as officially sanctioned by *RMRB*, but also found its way into the semi-official and non-official media.

demographic situation, which often make up the bulk of the texts. The quotes are 'borrowed' by the text producers from, say, *RMRB* from academic textbooks or references. Secondly, there is *support* for the 'loyal' academic writings, provided by the texts that are meant for a wide, non-specialist audience. The ideas produced by the 'loyal' academics are often later reinforced and popularised in the non-specialist texts. These 'supportive' texts are usually of anonymous authorship, appear in 'semi-academic' references like encyclopaedias and maps and published by such central institutions as the Chinese Academy of Science or Zhongguo ditu chubanshe.³⁴ Thirdly, there is a *contest* to disprove the existence (or to anticipate the potential) alternative academic texts which might challenge the official version of Mongolia and which are usually produced by individual authors who are experts on Mongolia and published in highly specialised and/or provincial academic periodicals.

Perhaps the most interesting, but also the most complex intertextual dialogue is between the key texts and those from popular discourse. This can be seen as a site where texts with the most officially authorised views meet popular ideas, perceptions and stereotypes about Mongolia and tend to be embedded in texts of semi-official or non-official media (for instance, internet sites and forums, tabloid press, and popular fiction).

2.4.3 Institutional framework

One of the central issues in the study of representations is 'who represents whom?' 'Power' texts examined in this thesis were issued by the central government ministries (the MFA and the MOC) and the party organs (*RMRB* and XinhuaNews Agency), those who have the authority to speak on Mongolia and represent it in the 'right' way, that is, according to the present socio-political needs. Detailed is a brief outline of the institutional origin of the key texts and the media through which they were disseminated.

2.4.3.1 Media

Language can be controlled through the restriction of the material means of its dissemination, the 'media'. As was mentioned before, the producers of texts dealing

³⁴ Zhongguo ditu chubanshe (Sinomaps Press) is the main map publisher in the PRC; it issues up to ninety percent of all the maps published in the country.

with official information on Mongolia are: the Party organs (*RMRB* and Xinhua) and the official websites of some governmental structures dealing with Mongolia (MFA and MOC).

RMRB (self-described on its website as ‘the most influential and authoritative newspaper in China’) is a mouthpiece of the CCP and the government, with current circulation of its printed edition standing at three million copies. However, the printed version of *Renmin Ribao* circulates in the country only by subscription and cannot be bought at the newsagents: it is also still read quite formally and ideologically. Therefore, the texts for this study were chosen from the *Renmin Ribao wang* - its online Chinese edition at <http://www.people.com.cn>,³⁵ which since its launch in 1997 has turned into a large ‘reader-friendly’ portal with news, chat-rooms, forums, and boasts a very wide audience.

The Xinhua News Agency is the national news agency and the largest news and information gathering and release centre in China. It is a source of information on Chinese government affairs (as well as many other topics); it disseminates the official point of view on international affairs. Together with *Renmin Ribao*, it serves as part of broader information apparatus for the Chinese leaders in translating and providing analysis of global and domestic news. Being directly controlled by the Central Committee of the CCP, Xinhua serves as the official authority of news, setting the general tone for other media organizations to follow. Similarly to the case of *Renmin Ribao*, the official website of the Agency at <http://www.xinhua.net> serves as a source for the articles under examination in the paper.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC is another source of Mongolia-related publications. This governmental unit operates under the control of the Central Government and is in charge of formulating and implementing official policy regarding relations with other countries and consular affairs. The official website of the Ministry at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn> (Chinese edition) provides information in ‘country profile’-

³⁵ In all the cases when the text were obtained from the electronic resources of the abovementioned media, the search for the texts was done by inserting into the search engines of *RMRB* and Xinhua websites the key words ‘Mongolia’ and ‘Outer Mongolia’ (蒙古, 蒙古国, 外蒙古).

style on almost all the countries in the world. Although the text producers from the MFA do appear to be pragmatic and professional regarding their approach to Mongolia, on some of the most controversial issues they follow the 'official line' provided by the CCP through its mouthpiece, the *RMRB*.

Perhaps, the only medium of this strictly official and ideological type, which gives to the non-specialist readers really comprehensive information on many aspects regarding contemporary Mongolia, including a wide range of statistics, which is highly professional, up-to-date, useful and; moreover, the least ideological, is the Department of Foreign Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Commerce of the PRC and the Ministry's representative office based in Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia. The full name of the latter is The Economic and Commercial Counsellor's Office of the Embassy of the PRC in Mongolia. Hereafter these sources will be referred to as MOC.

The MOC's task is to formulate and implement specific policies and reform plans of foreign trade and economics. The MOC is also in charge of China's foreign economic cooperation. It drafts and implements multilateral economic and trade policies. It also undertakes many other assignments given by the State Council. The official web sites of the Department and the Ulaanbaatar office at <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn> and <http://mn.moftec.gov.cn>, although focuses mostly on economic and legal aspects of China-Mongolia interactions, providing the business sector with reliable data to use in making investments and commercial decisions. The website is also useful for anybody considering visiting Mongolia or just getting a less ideological and more 'down-to-earth' picture of contemporary Mongolia.

2.4.3.2 Authorship

When the thesis first approached the task of examination of the key texts the first question to answer was naturally 'Who is speaking?', that is, who among the totality of people who might speak on Mongolia has been given the right to speak here and disseminate their views through the authorised media? Given the fact that none of the texts have an individual authorship (discussed below) the answer to this question lies more in the institutional position of the text producers and the media that have been

discussed in the previous section of this chapter. However, some points regarding the texts' authorship require further attention.

According to Foucault, the author is a 'function of discourse' (Foucault 1977: 124). Foucault holds that social subjects do not autonomously produce discourses; rather, they are the function and effect of discourses. In his works Foucault examined linguistic performances in which subjects are empowered to make truth claims because of their training, institutional location and mode of discourse. Barthes (1977) announced the 'death of author' whose status is just that of a compiler of the 'already-written' and therefore none of the texts are truly original.³⁶

This study advocates Foucault's approach and sees the issue of authority in speaking on Mongolia as very significant for the argument of this thesis. Following Foucault's idea that one of the 'rules of exclusion' that operate discourse is the privilege or exclusive right to speak of certain subjects (Foucault 1972), this thesis tries to answer the following question: What gives authors the right to speak on Mongolia? The analysis of the data led to the conclusion that it is first of all text producers' institutional site, belonging to the PRC political elite and therefore having access to the mighty apparatus of the official mass media.

There are other two components that would allow, following Foucault's approach, the authors of country profile texts to claim power over representations of Mongolia. Firstly, the author's recognized training. In the texts analysed here the author's training is not specified unless he belongs to a certain institution. Secondly, according to Foucault, power comes from the social positioning reflected in the used language that gives 'legitimacy' to author's statements. The latter, however, was not possible to establish due to the anonymity of the texts under consideration.

Focusing on the 'author factor' when interpreting a text, the main issues revolve around author's intention and authority. In accordance with CDA, text analysis involves not only an examination of the text lexicon, syntax, semantics, and grammar, but also how

³⁶ Often the Chinese media texts are a compilation of different texts published previously by the same media. That is almost always the process that texts on Mongolia from *RMRB* and *Xinhua* have evolved since the appearance of the first country profile on Mongolia in 2000.

the language is used to encode the author's worldview and intent. Discourse Analysis however, does not interpret the author's intention as 'personal thoughts' in the mind(s) of text producers, but as a public, social act. Perhaps it can be connected with the nature of texts with illocutionary force ('power' texts), that is their claim to 'transform reality' by transforming social identities, roles and relationships. For example, there is a clear tendency of the recent authoritative texts issued by professionals from the MFA and the MOC to construct a truly revolutionary identity for Mongolia by representing it as a sovereign state with all the attributes of such, member of international society, China's valuable partner and so on.

Not having an individual authorship is a very common practice for the publications that form the PRC political discourse. The anonymity of the publications is presupposed by a 'tradition' of Chinese official media where an individual author is not named, unlike Western media. For instance, the mechanics of the production of a text published by Xinhua would be as follows. A Working group from the Party Propaganda Department would meet weekly to draw up detailed guidelines for what issues Xinhua should cover, how they should be handled and what should be censored. Xinhua officials are then briefed and will pass the guidelines along to lower levels. Journalists are told to ponder on the consequences of their reports prior to publication and refrain from revealing information that could 'harm' society.³⁷

By the same token, the texts under consideration in this thesis are not only anonymous, but almost certainly a product of collective thinking and writing. Unlike the study of literary texts, when analysing the 'political texts' of the PRC published by the government and the Party, it is hard to tell the author's social, ethnic, educational, and professional background. However, it seems reasonable to expect the creators and the 'instigators' of such texts to be experienced professionals/ganbu of high rank and social status, most likely Han Chinese, or at least educated in spoken and written Chinese. Having said that, it should also be noted that the task of examining the text producers appears both difficult and not always necessary since the actual authors represent as a

³⁷ CIA (1997), see also Xinhua News Agency website.

rule not their personal opinions but the unified (as a result of negotiation and consensus) view of the political elite.³⁸

One can only presume that the actual producers of articles from *Renmin Ribao* and *Xinhua* are journalists and not the professionally trained Mongolia experts, whose main objective is to follow the ideologically correct line, to make a careful selection of information regarding the country so that the facts and details are firmly tied up to the dominant *Zhonghua* discourse, rather than to give accurate factual information on Mongolia. This idea is supported by examples of some cases of inaccuracy in the ideological texts. In this regard, the texts from the MFA and especially the MOC give a strong impression of having been written by professionals in the field. But the difference between these two groups is not only in the amount of factual information they provide. There is a clear difference in their respective approaches to Mongolia due to different goals and aims pursued by the two major text-producers.

2.4.3.3 Readership

The previous section of this chapter pointed out that the key texts under examination in this thesis are produced by those with power to speak authoritatively on Mongolia and that the text assessment involves an understanding of the status of the issuers of the text and their intentions. However, texts do not acquire power only because they are issued by power-holders. Authors of high status have this position supplemented by the use of language considered authoritative and persuasive and the effect of this language on the audience. Text producers need to know which forms/topics/representations work best, and avoid those that do not. They need to know what can, and cannot be said to have the maximum impact on the readers.

Different approaches to text analysis offer different conceptualisations of the audience and its role in the construction of 'textual reality.' The audience, in Foucault's work, is

³⁸ The existing discrepancies within the official discourse indicate that in fact the view currently does not appear that unified. According to Schoenhals, 'there are few questions over which the CCP leadership has not at one time or other been divided' (Schoenhals 1992: 5). The sites of production of Mongolian discourse are not only the CCP but also the government (MFA, MOC), PLA, regional authorities, and other discourse players pursuing different aim and goals. However, as Chapter 4 demonstrates there are efforts to make the official line at least *look* unified not to 'create ideological confusion among the masses' (Ibid: 8).

not a passive entity to be acted upon (Foucault 1977). Their reactions and judgements shape the 'power' discourse and set its agenda. According to Barthes it is readers that 'construct authors' as well as the text. He states that 'unity lies not in its origin but in its destination' (Barthes 1977: 148). For the scholars of critical theory and postcolonial studies, any act of reading has important social and political consequences (Spivak 1988). CDA also emphasise that in the process of analysing text it is important to consider the target audience and 'the role of previous knowledge and beliefs of the readers in this process of understanding' (Van Dijk 1985: 10). Thus, considering that the texts issued by the *RMRB* represent the PRC's collective elite and need to balance the different discursive messages that represent various interests within the elite, the audience's possible reactions and evaluations of the texts also form an important part of the analysis.

Moreover, there are several points that appear to be very important for assessing the meaning of the representations of Mongolia encoded in the texts and the message and of the official discourse embedded in them. The first thing that distinguishes the current authorised texts on Mongolia is that they are meant not only for the Chinese audience (IMAR first of all), but for the international community and Mongolia itself.³⁹ The Chinese text producers therefore face the dilemma of having to address the expectations of both domestic and foreign audiences and to promote through the texts ideas, views, and goals regarding both the domestic and foreign policies. This has proved to be a very difficult enterprise in case of Mongolia.

The thesis also takes into consideration the question of provision of the texts for readers. As was mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, the sources of the texts were electronic versions of *RMRB*, as well as the official web sites of the Xinhua News Agency, the MFA and the MOC. The choice was made in favour of these electronic texts because while the printed editions of authorised media, for instance *RMRB*, are losing circulation,⁴⁰ its online versions⁴¹ are growing rapidly and becoming popular

³⁹ Analysis of the data from Mongolia shows that all the publications in the official Chinese media regarding their country are very closely monitored and promptly reacted upon by Mongolian politicians, scholars and the general public.

⁴⁰ For example, *RMRB*'s circulation fell from 3.1 million copies a day in 1990 to 2.2 million in 1995 (CIA 1997). And the tendency appears to be persistent.

portals with their own news service, discussion forums (also on rather apolitical topics of social life), chat rooms and so on. The same can be said about the web site of Xinhua News Agency – the Xinhua wang. The MFA and particularly the MOC (its Representative office in Ulaanbaatar runs the website on Mongolia) are more ‘specialised’ and provide information for public consumption on Mongolia only in electronic format.

However, this is not to say that it is only the subscribers of *RMRB* or internet users who have access to the authorised texts selected for this study. *Indirect* access to the texts is extremely wide. These texts exist in printed form all over the country and cover all the strata of the society. The analysis of numerous semi-official periodicals and tabloids of both central and provincial origin, and printed materials issued in the PRC in the last decade, show that a very large part of them *reprint* the key texts whenever the need for a country profile of Mongolia arises.⁴² Thus, mass media, reference literature, travel guides, teaching materials and so on simply copy the Mongolia briefs produced by the authorised media.

Copying authorised texts is even more prevalent in the case of the electronic media. It is enough to insert ‘Mongolia’ as a key word into any search engine of the Chinese internet, for example Sohu,⁴³ and one would find dozens of websites of different kinds. These websites, which usually in the section on Mongolian minzu can now give a profile of Mongolia,⁴⁴ range from big news portals, websites of other media and

⁴¹ Although it exists in the majority of European and Asian languages, the thesis works only with the Chinese version of the website which is orientated towards the Chinese-speaking audience.

⁴² Interestingly, it is true almost exclusively in cases of country profile-genre texts that other media and discourses show ‘solidarity’ with *RMRB*, Xinhua, etc. That was one of the reasons why the thesis decided to focus on this type of texts in the first place. The thesis argues that it is a need to comply with the ‘official line’ and not just lack of information; see for example Mongolia profile from the Bureau of International Cooperation of the Chinese Academy of Science: the authors chose not to go for the ‘alternative’ texts produced by their fellow scholars, but to go for safer option, that is reproduction of the profile from *RMRB*. Therefore, the role of the censorship and self-censorship in this should not be underestimated.

⁴³ <http://www.sohu.com>.

⁴⁴ <http://www.casbic.ac.cn> (Chinese Academy of Science, profile downloaded on the 8/4/2003); <http://www.tianshannet.com.cn> (website of the Xinjiang-Uigur local government, profile downloaded on 5/5/2003. Identical texts on similar websites of Fujian, Sizhou, etc.); <http://www.afemap.com.cn> (maps and tourism, profile downloaded on 30/3/2001); <http://culture.9c9c.com.cn> (Shijie wenhua, popular portal, profile downloaded on 30/10/2001)

governmental structures, academic organisations, countless travel agencies, and even some websites popularising 'ethnic diversity of China'. They reproduce the exact copy of Mongolia's profile issued some time earlier by *RMRB* or Xinhua. The only websites that venture to introduce some 'adjustments' (discussed below) to the key texts before publishing them are those whose main focus is on ethnicity, patriotism and nationalism (both Chinese/Han⁴⁵ and Mongolian⁴⁶).

Another issue that this study is most likely to come across when examining the hypothetical readership of the key texts is, who reads them and why? The interest in Mongolia among the Chinese audience appears to go along with the improvement in China-Mongolia relations and the concomitant increase of the contacts that is currently witnessing a sharp rise of trade, tourism, as well as cultural and academic contacts. In both cases, one can expect that the potential reader can be a student, businessman, or a tourist. Besides, rising nationalist and patriotic sentiments in China in the 1990s raise interest among the general public in such issues as China's modern history, and more recently the 'reunification of Motherland' and 'rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'. For instance, an overview of all the data shows that the 'Mongolian question' is attracting more and more attention from different media from academic circles to tabloids.

No less important for understanding the reader's interpretation of the texts is how the texts are read; that is the convention of reading/interpreting such authorised texts. It would be natural to suppose that official, authoritative texts are still read quite formally and even ideologically. That would be particularly true in case of the printed edition of *RMRB*. However, the electronic format of the publications is believed to affect the

<http://www.163.com> (NetEase, popular portal similar to Yahoo); see also <http://www.cng.com.cn> (*Chinese National Geographic*) and many others.

⁴⁵ <http://www.china-hero.org>. The key topics of publications and discussions on this website are Taiwan, Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet. Extremely well functioning and thriving, the website now even issues a printed edition.

⁴⁶ <http://www.morinhor.com>. Although this website appears to be similar to the 'traditional' ones that represent Mongolian *minzu* as a part of the 'glorious Chinese nation', it differs from them significantly: first of all, it has an 'integral approach' to Mongolian nationality and talks about the Mongols of China, Mongolia and Russia. Secondly, its profile of Mongolia (downloaded on 3/9/2003) is a copy of a truly alternative academic profile produced by collective of scholars from Inner Mongolia (Tumenqiqige et al 2002). The website also provides a large number of photos, video and music from Russia, Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. Another interesting website is <http://www.qingis.com>. It has similar integral approach to covering the issue of Mongolian *minzu*. It lists all Mongolia-related web resources from around the world and the Mongols from Mongolia and Russia are frequent visitors at its forums and discussions.

conventions of their interpretation by text-receivers. The internet as a medium of discourse produces a different impact on reader than the conventional paper (especially one with such strong ideological connotations as *RMRB*). The websites (even the official ones) are more 'reader friendly'. Moreover, the above mentioned phenomenon of popular portals reproducing the authorised texts creates the situation in which a reader (for example a student, the most active social group of internet users in the PRC) can end up reading authorised texts on popular websites like NetEase somewhere between gossip about Britney Spears and reports on a China-Japan football match.⁴⁷

Certainly, there are a number of other no less important issues to be considered when investigating the audience of the texts. For instance, the reader's social expectations and delimitations are important. The thesis argues that the texts are interpreted differently according to the regional identity of readers. For example, the reading of texts by people of IMAR who have first hand experience of direct contacts with Mongolia would be different from that of a reader from, say, Henan. Cultural assumptions are also important. The ethnic Mongols of China would interpret/read the texts in different way to Han Chinese for whom Mongolia is probably just a 'culturally different Other.' It is very interesting to see for whom the 'semiotic codes' of the texts are most familiar and how far the texts reflect or depart from popular stereotypes. The following chapters of the thesis will return in more detail to these issues when discussing concrete cases.

By the way of conclusion, it should be said that the framing of texts by other texts is important for readers. Such 'framing' of texts was briefly overviewed in the section discussing intertextuality. However, it is not only other texts that constitute the 'framework of interpretation' for the audience; the much broader context needs to be addressed to see what constitutes this frame within which the reader interprets the texts. Therefore, having outlined the methodological approach employed by this study, the next chapter will provide an overview of the historical background of China-Mongolia

⁴⁷China's Internet population grew 28 percent over the past year to 87 million. The research conducted by Press et al (2003) shows that the internet users are mostly big city dwellers of high education. Over 300 Chinese universities and 200 research institutes have direct connectivity. In 2002 Chinese internet providers issued two million accounts in a thousand campuses. 31 percent of users are in Beijing and 29.4 percent of users are in Guangdong or Shanghai. See also Hughes and Wacker (2003).

interactions; together with an outline of the socio-political situation in Mongolia and the PRC since the 1990, it forms the context for the texts studied in the thesis.

CHAPTER THREE

Discursive Formation: Ideologies, Narratives, Institutions, and the Context

It was mentioned in Chapter 2 that discourse, especially according to CDA, always involves ideologies and power, is historical (connected to the past and the current) context, and can be interpreted differently by people of different backgrounds, knowledge, and positions of power. One of the central concepts in discourse analysis is the order of discourse, that is, the hierarchal organisation of the established discursive formation. The struggle for power between discourses (in this case for the power to represent the authoritative account of Mongolia) and for dominance, is achieved through the control of ideologies and narratives. Thus, this chapter starts with examination of the main ideologies that set the limits and reinforce different discourses on Mongolia. It then proceeds with an overview of the power balance between the institutions where these discourses are produced. Finally it looks at the context in which the texts on Mongolia are produced and interpreted.

3.1 Ideologies and their Narratives on Mongolia

According to discourse studies, the aim of ideology is to maintain existing power relations. Since the early 1990s, China has been exposed to a wide ideological spectrum: from Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to post-modernism, from Catholicism to Falun Gong, from feminism to individualism. However, this chapter focuses solely on the ideologies, divided schematically into three groups, nationalist, Marxist, and teleological, which support the mainstream discourses on Mongolia. Control over the ideologies is imperative in the struggle between these discourses for dominance. These ideologies are supported by certain narratives which operate with certain styles, language patterns, key terms, etc., which require closer examination as well.

3.1.1 The Nation-building Project and its Language

The rise of alternative ideologies in the PRC in the 1990s was significant, and nationalism was one of these which held a particular appeal for many among the population and the government, the latter often heavily promoted it. Although the concepts of nation in contemporary China are highly contested and controversial, nationalism (in all its variations) played a more important role throughout the 1980s and 1990s than the Marxist system, particularly for nation building.

A brief overview of the project of nation-building that has been taking place in the PRC in the 1990s-2000s and the official discourse that is meant to reinforce it can help to shed some light on the central question of this thesis: what is the place of modern Mongolia in the state-sponsored concept of Chinese/Zhonghua nation. Certainly, the topic of nationalism and nation-building is one of the most addressed among scholars of Chinese Studies and the academics from other fields, as well as mass media. Numerous theses and monographs have been dedicated to the examination of the Chinese nation, exhibiting a wide variety of approaches to, and explanations of, this phenomenon.⁴⁸

The development of modern Chinese nationalism and its lexicon can be attributed to tension between ethnic (Han) nationalism and the creation of a multiethnic state at the beginning of the 20th century when a state-seeking, anti-Manchu, and mostly Han-led movement emerged. Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the Republican China, attempted to overcome the contradictions between Han nationalism and the desire to keep within the new Chinese nation-state's borders all the territories (mainly of non-Han nationalities) gained during the Qing Empire.

Sun Yat-sen advocated a new identity for the nation that would not be confined only to Han culture and history; thus, the concept of 'citizens' (guomin) was promoted after the 1911 Revolution. As a result Mongolia (together with Tibet and Qinghai)⁴⁹ was represented in the nationalistic rhetoric as an integral part of the nation-state and the Mongols (as one of the main 'five peoples') were defined as part of the

⁴⁸ See for example Dikötter (1992, 1997, 2003), Whiting (1995), Harrison (2001), and Lilley (1996).

⁴⁹ All these territories were recent acquisitions of the Qing dynasty, an idea that would be challenged later by the official account of the Zhonghua minzu.

Chinese/Zhonghua nation. This policy was partially due by concern that the Mongols' might attempt to create their own nation-state, given that it was the period when Outer Mongolia gained its independence from China. Since then, the Mongols have been firmly placed in the multi-ethnic Chinese nation-state. As Chapter Four demonstrates, the term *multi-ethnic* (duo minzu) is one of the main categories and a key term of the Zhonghua discourse that makes the question of Mongolia's identity particularly difficult for authors to deal with.

All the Chinese constitutions since the Xinhai Revolution have declared China as a multiethnic state. The PRC's 1954 constitution stated that the 'new China' is a multinational state composed of fifty-six ethnic nationalities. The dominant policy of the PRC was termed as a process of 'fusing' these ethnic minorities (shaoshu minzu) and the Han majority into a single Chinese nation (Zhonghua minzu). Although the basis of this policy was the socialist ideal of a 'family of equal nationalities', Han was still defined as the 'developed' majority that 'helped' the more backward ethnic minorities in their historic development.

The CCP leaders introduced a programme of Four Modernizations in 1978 that brought along the concept of dealing with economic and social issues in pragmatic ways, without being overly constrained by ideological boundaries and hence facilitated the reduction of the official Marxist ideological influence. During the decades since then, there have been further shifts in the PRC leaders' domestic and foreign doctrines away from classical Marxism. For instance, revolutionary, internationalist foreign policy gave place to a more state-centred concept, orientated towards pragmatic needs of nation-building.⁵⁰ In domestic policies during the period of reform, there have been significant changes too. The main priority was first given to the economic development of the country. This presupposed the necessity to (re)construct the country's ethnic, cultural, social, and political identities to cope with changing domestic and international environment (Zheng 1999).

As far as the political establishment was concerned, nationalism and nationalist rhetoric was adopted as a new principle, and means for legitimisation of the communist state/the

⁵⁰ See Goldstein (1998) on the example of Sino-Soviet relations.

CCP leadership due to a significant decrease of popularity of Marxist ideology by the 1990s, and as the new means to mobilise masses was established (Seckington 2002). On the other hand, post-Maoist leaders favoured a new approach to minority politics that downplayed the cultural, ethnic and historical differences between the nationalities (Hao 1999), and focused on providing the non-Han Chinese with larger share of economic prosperity, political power, access to education, etc., in order to prevent them from developing independence aspirations and to keep them loyal to the PRC state.

At the same time, economic growth created an increase in awareness and a revival of traditional culture and nationalist views once considered 'reactionary'. These views were often widely spread in mass media, and promoted popular cultural and racial stereotypes and biases about the national minorities and the affirmations of Han superiority.⁵¹ In this light, the full embrace of Chinese nationalism that revolves only around Han culture and history was seen by the PRC political elite as a counterproductive move, since it undermined the aspired to ideal of a multinational state of the PRC. The political elite of the PRC never officially endorsed this type of nationalism. Paraphrasing Schoenhals, the 'wrong formulation' of nationalism started to hamper the implementation of the nation building policy (Schoenhals 1997: 9).

3.1.1.1 'Patriotism' or 'Nationalism': the right wording

The official line on representing Zhonghua minzu postulates that it is a 'two thousand year old' entity with an 'uninterrupted cultural and historic tradition' which went through a linear development from Neolithic times to the modern period. The ethnic identity of the Zhonghua nation is constructed as a fusion of all the 56 nationalities of the same ethnic origin and ancestry, and has Huaxia/Han at the centre of its evolution. In its historical course it passed through a sequence of states (where even non-Han ones are termed as *Chinese* dynasties) up until the PRC, which is represented as the continuation of that ancient (mythic) China, and 'the culmination of all previous Chinese history' (Hao 1999: 17).

⁵¹ The ideas widely spread from popular perceptions to authorised academic works to theatrical shaoshu minzu theme parks.

The official discourse in the 1990s-2000s is one of patriotism not nationalism: by downplaying the cultural and ethnic differences between the nationalities comprising the Zhonghua minzu, (mostly between the Han and non-Han) the CCP leaders shifted the accent to patriotism (*aiguozhuyi*) and loyalty to the state and the party, and emphasised socio-economic prosperity as a basis for 'great Chinese nation cohesion.'

The examination of the official texts for this thesis showed that the official discourse on Mongolia often do not resonate (and are sometimes in obvious conflict) with the views on Mongolia generated by the semi-official and, in particular, the popular discourses. This reflects the current situation of a rapidly growing popular nationalism in the PRC, which often goes beyond the limits of officially-sanctioned discourse on the nation and is even sometimes very critical to the Chinese leadership and its actions.⁵² For instance in the 1990s-2000s this was repeatedly manifested in cases when the 'defence of China's interests' were concerned: often the pragmatic interests of the leaders towards a foreign state and popular desire for the Chinese leaders to take a 'stronger' line towards it were in outright conflict. By the same token, different discourses approach the Mongolian question in rather different ways when it comes to assessing what the national interests are vis-à-vis Mongolia.

3.1.1.2 Pragmatic Nationalism

The tendency to 'put the national interest first,' however, was present throughout the history of the PRC, but was strengthened in the 1980s-1990s. As a result, the radical, internationalist Marxists among the political elite were gradually replaced by pragmatic nationalists (Wang 1994, Zhao 2000). Economic growth was the top priority in the PRC's development concept. In practice, this entailed a range of pragmatic policies to promote economic development of the country, by abandoning the 'self-reliance' isolationism or anti-traditionalism of the early years of the PRC while focusing on closer engagement with the world, primarily in the form of foreign trade, acquisition of advanced technology and management expertise, gaining access to the foreign markets and attraction of foreign capitals, as well as expansion of cultural exchange. The roles of nationalism and nationalist rhetoric were designed to serve as an ideological backup for

⁵² Seckington (2002).

the official policies aimed at achieving economic growth and thereby restoring national greatness.

It should be noted that this thesis distinguishes between the ‘primordial nationalism’ (based on the idea of an unchanged national identity) inherent to popular nationalism and fed by Han-centrism, and the official nationalism; that is, the official Chinese national identity discursively constructed to meet the current needs of the political elite. Unlike popular nationalism that manifests itself most vividly and mainly in relation to other nations (for instance popular nationalistic discourses on China’s inter-relations with the US or Japan), the officially sanctioned nationalism is more concerned with the agenda of China’s nation building project, which involves, first of all, such goals as consolidation within the Chinese nation and the fulfilment of the needs of the state. The Zhonghua concept of pragmatic, teleological nationalism, as identified by PRC pragmatists, is situational and instrumental. The Zhonghua concept is constructed, and promoted through state institutions such as the education systems, academia or official media.

Another peculiarity/characteristic of the official Zhonghua discourse is that this concept of nationalism is represented as a) state-centred and b) CCP-led. The official nationalist discourse emphasises the party’s role as the centre of nationalist sentiment and national revival. The PRC political elite can ‘utilise’ popular sentiments and nationalist rhetoric to support its goals and policies, and to mobilise the masses, etc.⁵³ Although, like popular nationalism, it is firmly rooted in the past (references to foreign invasions, Xinhai revolutions, foundation of the PRC, for example), it appears to be very much ‘future orientated’: that is, the future of becoming a strong, powerful China is associated (or should be associated by discourse-receivers) with the state, socialism and the leadership of the CCP.

These two factors – its instrumental nature and the role of state/CCP as its central category - make the rhetoric of pragmatic nationalism a universal ideological tool that can be used differently for different domestic and foreign objectives. For instance, from

⁵³ For example, the state-led campaign of patriotic education started in the 1990s. Its main theme was/is the earlier humiliation and suffering of *China* (again, an abstract apolitical entity) at the hands of the West, Russia, Japan.

this one can seek an explanation of why official discourse on Mongolia often sends very mixed messages: according to what is needed, Mongolia can be portrayed as either a 'part of China' ('orthodox nationalist' approach) or as a sovereign friendly state ('professionalised pragmatic' approach). In each case to play up or play down popular xenophobia or official recognition of Mongolia's independence depends on the political elite's (of both camps) calculations of the benefits and costs at any particular time.

3.1.1.3 Placing Mongolian Minzu into Zhonghua Nation

While the Zhonghua nation is understood by popular nationalism as mainly Han centred, official nationalism faces a range of challenges from national minorities and, in particular, ethnic separatists. Firstly, discontent about the often chauvinistic interpretation and perceptions of the Chinese national minorities by the majority Han (the views that are rarely represented in the official discourse however), where minzu identity is allocated a marginalised place patronised by 'more developed' Han brotherly nationality, prompts ethnic minorities to attempt to construct their own national identity independently from the popular discourse and, in some cases from state-produced discourse too.

Secondly, as some scholars point out, ethnic minorities challenge the state-imposed political Chinese identity by emphasising their ethnic, cultural and historic differences from Han and China. For instance, the Mongolian 'splittists' view their identity as a coherent cultural and *political*; an identity which is clearly distinctive from Han and from China.⁵⁴ To accommodate these aspirations in practice would require the PRC to re-establish the borders of the state, and that is a direct threat to the China's territorial integrity.

In the case of Inner Mongolia, however, the recent tendency appears to be that of multiple identities – ethnic 'Mongolian', regional 'Inner Mongolian,' political 'Chinese' - when a person can choose any of them according to the context. Since the beginning of the 1990s the ethnic Mongols of IMAR appear to be more willing to identify themselves as Inner Mongolians (Nei Menggu ren) than just 'Mongols' (Menggu zu).

⁵⁴ See Hao (1999) and Bulag (2002) for a detailed analysis of inter-relations between the Mongols and the Chinese state.

Moreover, 'when some Inner Mongolian Mongols seek their own ethnic regional identification with respect to Outer Mongolia as another nation, their action (not motivation) simultaneously enforces their Chinese national identification' (Borchigud 1996: 180).

Interviews conducted during the fieldwork in Hohhot also showed that, although the 1990s witnessed ethnic unrest and independence-seeking movements among a certain part of the Mongolian population in IMAR, almost all the interviewees were rather sceptical about pan-Mongolian ideas⁵⁵ and were more inclined to reconcile their ethnic Mongolian, regional Inner Mongolian and national Chinese identities. This suggests that the official policy of pragmatic nationalism was not a failure after all.

Hao agrees in that Mongolia, for the Inner Mongols, does not represent the idea of secessionism and the demand of a merger between Inner Mongolia and the Mongolian state is not the content of current Mongolian nationalist discourse. He believes that the impact of an independent Mongolian state on Inner Mongolian nationalism depends upon the desirability of its economic and political system (Hao 1998: 29). After the 'de-communisation' of the MPR in 1990, the Mongolian state began to evolve towards a western-style parliamentary democracy. If the merits of the newly-gained democracy are reinforced by a more prosperous economy and an improvement in people's living standards, the Mongolian state would be more attractive to Inner Mongolians and have a bigger influence upon Inner Mongolian nationalist sentiments, a prospect that is likely to be unwelcome among the PRC officilldom. This, however, appears at the moment to be a rather hypothetical prospect.

3.1.1.4 From Xiongnu to Qing subjects

The nationalist narrative on Mongolian minzu places particular emphasis on representing the Mongols as descendants of Xiongnu.⁵⁶ The question of the ethnic origin of Xiongnu, as well as their status as the direct ancestors of the people who later

⁵⁵ Not for the least due to the realisation which came upon the beginning of the contacts between the people from IMAR and Mongolia, that their Mongolian identity lacks authenticity in the eye of the Mongols from Mongolia.

⁵⁶ Chapter 4 discusses the importance for nationalist narrative to identify Xiongnu – the 'real aborigines' of the territory which is now Mongolia – as ancestors of the Mongols.

became known as the Mongols, remains highly contested in Western academia. Whilst some of the scholars advocate their Turkic or Mongol ethnic belonging, others believe Xiongnu to be an absolutely indigenous people different from both.⁵⁷

Thus, the PRC key texts examined for this thesis tend to state that the ‘Mongolian minzu has a history of thousands of years’ clearly referring to Xiongnu and other tribes who lived in the territory of the contemporary Mongolia for several millennia. Interestingly, for once Mongolian official discourse is in accordance with its Chinese counterpart – the former is also very firm on dating ‘Mongolian people’ as far back as the second millennium BC and portraying the history of Mongolian Plateau inhabitants as ‘several states of the Mongolian tribes’ who succeeded each other up to the 12th century AD.⁵⁸ It should also be added that this point of view is common not only in the official/political discourses of Mongol history, but also in accounts produced by academics in both China and Mongolia who believe in the Xiongnu ancestry of the contemporary Mongols.⁵⁹

By the 3rd century B.C., the inhabitants of the territory of today’s Mongolia had begun to form tribal alliances and state organisation. Leaving the discussions of ethnicity and language of Xiongnu people outside the boundaries of this thesis, it should be said that the Xiongnu state as a *political* confederation consolidated many ethnicities of Inner Asia, which would also include Mongolian (or perhaps ‘proto-Mongolian’ would be a more correct term) tribes. The Xiongnu territory stretched from Korea in the Far East to Tian Shan Mountain in Northern China and from the southern section of the Great Wall to Lake Baikal in southern Siberia. It is at this point that Chinese and Mongolian discourses differ – for Mongolian historiography Xiongnu territory is ‘Mongolia,’ while for the Chinese official discourse it is included into the *Zhonghua dadi*.

After a period of war-peace relations with the neighbours, the Xiongnu state went into decline and dispersed into numerous tribes, which one by one submitted to the Han state.

⁵⁷ Pulleyblank (1962), Gumilev (1974), Yu (1990), Psarras (2003).

⁵⁸ See for example history section of Mongolia profile issued by the Mongolian Embassy to Tokyo at <http://www.embassy-avenue.jp/mongolia/index.htm>.

⁵⁹ See for instance Jagchid (1991), Tsevendorzh (1995) for the Mongolian academic writings, and Bai (1996), Amuerbatu (1997), Tumenqiqige et al (2000), Chen and Wang (2000) for the Chinese.

In the following years some of the tribes gained independence and some remained vassals to the Chinese dynasties. After the disintegration of the Xiongnu confederation, several tribal nomadic and ethnically disparate states – ‘frontier states’ or even ‘China’s national minorities’ in terms of the nationalist historical narrative – such as Xiangbi, Turks, Kidan, etc. succeeded each other for the next several centuries.

In 1203 A.D., a single Mongolian state was formed, based on nomadic tribal groupings of different ethnic origins, under the leadership of Chinggis Khaan. He proceeded to carry out reforms of the religion, laws and politics and military organization of the newly united peoples. Chinggis Khaan and his immediate successors conquered nearly all of Asia and European Russia reaching as far as Central Europe and Southeast Asia. China⁶⁰ also became a part of the larger political entity, Mongolian Empire, and where the Mongol rulers established the Yuan Dynasty. However, *how* it came under Mongol rule, or more correctly, how it is *presented* in the official Chinese discourse, is another example of the ‘right’ formulation – the expression ‘the Mongols conquered China’ is an absolute taboo in Chinese official writings (nationalist or otherwise). The event is usually described as ‘the Mongols founded the Yuan Dynasty,’ a *Chinese* dynasty.⁶¹ Another interesting example of the nationalist narration of the events is that the official discourse particularly emphasises that the Mongol rulers largely adopted Chinese (Han) administrative and political methods as well as cultural models.⁶²

In 1368 the Mongol rule in the Central Plateau was eventually overthrown by the Ming Dynasty, due to the disintegration of the internal political cohesion of the Mongolian empire and anti-Mongolian uprisings inside China. During the next centuries Mongolia underwent a period of feudal disintegration, where it was ruled by a series of constantly warring tribal leaders. As a result, it ended divided into three parts: southern Mongolia, eastern Khalkha and western Oirad, which in turn were subdivided into many small feudal possessions.

⁶⁰ It must be noted though that ‘China’ here is a rather loose term: in the early 13th century Chinggis Khaan conquered the ‘frontier states’ of the Western Xia kingdom in the north-west and the Jin Empire, then turned westwards and seized the Western Liao Empire. Khubilai Khaan continued to annex Chinese territory: he established the Yuan Dynasty in 1271 with his capital city at Dadu (present day Beijing), and eventually Southern Song capitulated in 1279.

⁶¹ This issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

⁶² The fact by itself is widely accepted also by western scholars like Morgan (1986), Rossabi (1988), Franke (1994).

Facing the growing power of the Manchus in the east and the Oirads in the west, the nobles of Southern Mongolia swore fealty to the Manchu Khans in 1635. In 1644 the Manchus defeated the Ming dynasty, and took control of China, where they established the Qing Dynasty. By the same token, the princes of Khalkha submitted to the Manchu dynasty in 1691 in order to gain support against the Oirad (Sneath 2000: 8-9). In fact, the Chinese claims over Outer Mongolia as a 'historical territory of China' following the establishment of the Republic have rested largely on the oath given by Mongolian nobles to the Manchu rulers of China. The contemporary nationalist discourse supports these claims by presenting Mongol-Manchu interrelations as a Chinese *domestic* event.

It can also be added that the period was marked by the Russian Empire's extensive expansion eastward, which was considered a threat by the Qing court. Thus, to gain control of Mongolia as a base for possible war with Russia was of vital geo-politic importance for the Qing. In 1727, Russia and Manchu China established the Treaty of Khyakta, delimiting the border between China and Khalkha Mongolia that exists in large part today. In 1757, Qing's forces overwhelmed most of the Western Mongols (Oirads), while Russia incorporated the rest (Urianhai) into its eastern domain. It was no earlier than this, that the first administrative/political distinction, as a result of Manchu administrative policies, was made between Khalkha (Outer) and southern (Inner) Mongolia.

3.1.1.5 Menggu Wenti

The 'Mongolian question' is one of the main phrases of the contemporary nationalist discourse on Mongolia. The 'question' attracts no less attention than the notorious 'Taiwan question.' In fact, drawing parallels between Taiwan in Mongolia-related texts is a popular strategy that allows authors to formulate it as a problem or even an objective of policy of the 'new, stronger' China. This section discusses the origin of the Menggu wenti and its place in the nationalist narrative.

By the mid nineteenth century, the turmoil in China caused by internal rebellion and by pressures from the West resulted in serious administrative failures of Qing politics in Outer Mongolia. Mounting debts and higher taxes led to a growing impoverishment of Outer Mongolia and gradually fuelled Mongol dissatisfaction with the Manchu rule.

Anti-Manchu and anti-Chinese riots and incidents occurred with increasing regularity in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Outside help was sought from Russia in 1900 (a mission was sent to St. Petersburg), but was not granted.

The Qing rulers began to introduce some reforms in Mongolia as part of their overall 'New Administration' policy in 1901. This policy led to the violation of many restrictions including the prohibition to allow Han migrants to settle in Mongolia, to work at gold mines, to farm or utilize water resources, etc. The eventual arrival of Chinese settlers led to farming the land, influencing not only the traditional economy, but also the religion and customs which had provoked the resentment of the Mongolians and had naturally met with widespread protest (Lan 1999).

According to the nationalist rhetoric on events, the end of the Qing Dynasty as a result of the 1911 Revolution saw participants of the anti-Manchu/anti-Chinese movement - mainly some of the Khalkha princes, high rank officials and lamas⁶³ - 'instigated' by the government of Tsarist Russia. On December 1, 1911, Outer Mongolia proclaimed its independence on the basis that its allegiance had been to the Manchus, not to China, and 'despite the wishes of the masses.' On December 28, the eighth Jebtsundamba Khutuktu became Bogdo Khaan (holy ruler) of a theocratic monarchy government and the establishment of a Mongolian state was proclaimed (Onon 1997).

In 1913 though Mongolia was forced into suzerainty to China under the Sino-Russian agreement, and had to renounce 'independence' for 'autonomy' in 1915 under the Chinese-Russian-Mongolian tripartite treaty of Kyakhta. However *de facto* Mongolia existed as an independent state up until 1919, when the troops of Republican Chinese invaded the country from the south while baron Urgen's White Russian troops - from the north.⁶⁴

⁶³'Entire strata of the Mongolian society' according to the Mongolian official discourse (see for example Mongolia profile by Mongolian Embassy in Hong Kong at <http://www.mongolia.org.hk>, or Ochirbat 1996).

⁶⁴Detailed account (based on extensive Russian, Mongolian and Chinese primary sources) of Russo/Soviet - Mongolian relations in 1911-1919 see Belov (1999).

A new government headed by the Mongolian People's Party (MPP)⁶⁵ - the first ever political party in Mongolian history, supported by the Socialist Russia, came to power in 1921. The Mongolian people mounted a national liberation movement and the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) was proclaimed in November 1924 after the foreign troops (of Republican China and the White Russians) were driven out of the country by the Mongolian People's Army with Soviet support. In the same year the country's first constitution was adopted.

In 1945 during the Yalta Conference negotiations between the leaders of United Kingdom, USA and Soviet Union reached an agreement regarding the independent 'status quo of Outer Mongolia (Mongolian People's Republic)'. Consequently, a national referendum was carried out in the same year. After the overwhelming majority of the Mongols voted for their independence from China, the Chinese Guomindang (GMD) government had to recognise the independence of the MRP and in 1946 it signed a protocol establishing diplomatic relations with Mongolia.⁶⁶

The events of the first half of the 20th century are perceived in completely opposite ways in Mongolia and in China. Thus, 1911 for the Mongols is the date when their country *re-established* its national independence, a beginning of a new era of renaissance, and 'awakening of national consciousness'. Interestingly, in all the Mongolia profiles issued by the Mongolian official organisations, 1911 is very often the chronological point after which China is not even mentioned *at all*. The only reference to the country after 1911 is made only in the context of establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1949.⁶⁷

In the PRC, on the other hand (especially in the nationalist narrative) the events are represented as the period of national humiliation when China lost part of its historical territory - the idea at the heart of the 'Mongolian question,' debates on which were revived with a new strength in the 1990s-2000s. It should be also noted that the 'original' meaning of 'Mongolian question' referred simply to the fact that [Outer] Mongolia gained independence and consequently separated from China. In other words, it was about 'how it all happened.' The recent tendency, however, particularly explicitly

⁶⁵ Later re-named into Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP).

⁶⁶ More on the 'second partition' of Mongolia from China can be found in Atwood (1999).

⁶⁷ See for example Mongolia profiles issued by Mongolian Embassies to Tokyo (in English) and to Beijing (in Chinese).

expressed in the popular nationalistic discourse, which links the Mongolian question with that of Taiwan, is to highlight the need for ‘rectification of the historical injustice,’ especially now that China is gaining its place as a world power. To put it simply, the new connotation of the ‘Mongolian question’ is ‘how it all happened and how the problem is to be solved.’

3.1.1.6 Who ‘Let Mongolia Go’?

The question of who is to blame for the ‘loss of Mongolia’ is another much debated issue in official and, especially, popular discourses. Interestingly, the strategies of its presentation in the media share distinct similarities with the topic discussed above. Firstly, the question also has its ‘parallel’ theme, the Yalta Conference and its significance for the past, present and future of the PRC. This major topic entails a range of sub-themes constantly occurring in Mongolia-related narratives, for example legitimacy of the referendum which might lead (of have led) to China’s territory disintegration (with allusions to Taiwan situation again). Secondly, it concerns ‘dragging’ the question from a purely historical domain (‘who let it happen then’) into the present (‘who is to blame that the problem is not yet resolved’). Thirdly, it also employs the strategy of tabooing: for instance, the point at which official and non-official nationalist discourses differ most of all is that whereas the latter can put the responsibility for the loss of Mongolia on the CCP (for establishing diplomatic relations with Mongolia in October 1949), the authorised nationalist narratives, on the other hand, never mention the CCP or the PRC government in connection to the ‘Mongolian question’ and represents either GMD (‘the Chinese government of the time’) or the main aggressors, Russia and the West. Chapter 4 discusses these strategies considering concrete examples taken from the key profiles and their supportive texts in more detail.

3.1.2 ‘Revolutionary’ view on Mongolia

In the PRC the last two decades have seen similar ideas of the diversity of the Chinese nation, there is no consensus on the concept of communism either. With the success of the economic reforms, the role of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology, which in fact is now more socialist than communist, is in decline. ‘Nobody believes in the Party’ is one of the main leitmotifs in recent assessments of the place of the socialist ideology in the

Chinese society and politics (Schell 2002). The reasons for this range from externalities over which ideology has no control and which affect its performance and legitimacy, to purely 'pragmatic' – Marxist ideology (particularly its internationalist form) may hamper the implementation of the practical goals of the domestic and foreign policies of the PRC. Besides, socialist ideology (at least in its canonical form) seems to lose appeal to people, and therefore its potential for mass mobilisation.

However, Seckington (2002) points out that the terms and ideas of the Marxist ideology 'continue to be an important means of communication within the elite, and still frame what is and isn't permissible in the reform programme.' Very often it is used as *post factum* justification and explanation of certain events, actions, policies, etc. As far as the research focus of this thesis is concerned, the Marxist narrative of Mongolia singles out quite different nodal points of the official discourse on Mongolian history.

Firstly, Mongolian 'so called independence' was a result of imperialist ambitions of the Tsarist Government of Russia which gained support from the Mongolian 'exploiters' – nobles, high rank lamas, etc. Usually, the chronological point at which history of Mongolia 'begins' according to this narrative is 1921, the year when Mongolian 'People's Revolution succeeded under the leadership of the Mongolian People's Party.' The leading role of the communist party is especially emphasised.

Secondly, the role of the Soviet Union in these events is recognised, but with an important proviso – Lenin, as a 'true Marxist' was in favour of the 're-unification' of Outer Mongolia and China. For instance, in Mongolian history overview issued by the PLA we read: 'In 1917, after the Russian Great October Socialist Revolution, Outer Mongolia returned to China' (Beijing Junqu Zhengzhibu Lianluobu 1994: 1). Interestingly, in this narrative the Yalta Conference is often not even mentioned, a point at which nationalist and Marxist narratives differ completely.

3.1.3 Alternative voices

As mentioned in the Introduction Chapter, the thesis defines the officialdom's approaches to Mongolia as 'orthodox nationalists' and 'professionalised pragmatists'. It underlines though that this does not imply that the former camp's approach is not

pragmatic. On the contrary, both camps consider the discourse on Mongolia as an instrument to serve the current objectives of the Chinese nation. However, the difference between the two camps appears to lie in the way they define the Chinese national interests regarding Mongolia, and what type of official rhetoric on Mongolia they employ to support their approaches to the country.

By the term 'orthodox nationalists' this thesis refers to a section among the Chinese leaders who prioritise the objectives of the Zhonghua project: they see revival of the nation as revival of Zhonghua minzu, and the re-unification of China as a re-unification of Zhonghua dadi. These concepts are very much rooted in the past, especially past humiliation,, for instance, 'the loss of Mongolia.' One can speculate that many among the CCP top leaders could be defines, somewhat schematically, as the 'orthodox nationalist' as it is the CCP media organs as *RMRB* and Xinhua News Agency that till recently have been the sites of the orthodox nationalist representations of Mongolia. The orthodox nationalist discourse constructs Mongolia as primarily an issue of the PRC's *domestic* policy and addresses mainly the domestic audience, the IMAR first of all.⁶⁸

However, this thesis argues that alternative discourse(s) on Mongolia have been emerging and even finding their way into the central CCP media like *RMRB*. The producers of these different approaches termed in this paper as 'professionalised pragmatists,' the policy makers attached to state institutions who appear to hold that it is in China's interests to position Mongolia as an issue of the PRC's *foreign* relations and take into consideration international audience, not in the last Mongolia itself, when formulating discourse on the country.

The term 'professionalised' follows the Lampton's argument that there have been four dominant tendencies in the PRC foreign relations making, which he defines as professionalisation, corporate pluralisation, decentralisation and globalisation (Lampton 2001). Professionalisation for him means that the process of foreign policy making in the PRC is becoming more influenced by the input of experts. Moreover, he also point out the growing professionalisation of the participants of policy making, singling out

⁶⁸ And Taiwan as well.

such bureaucracies participating in the formulation of foreign policy as the MFA and the MOC.

This thesis hypothesise, that the alternative to the nationalist discourse(s) on Mongolia are to be generated by professionals primarily from these institutions, whose employees are the experts in International Relations and economy theories, often with degrees obtained from the western universities. They approach foreign relations from the perspective of China's economic growth, which they see as a result of closer cooperation with the international community. While sharing with the nationalists the view that Chinese national interests lie in the country's territorial integrity and national consolidation, they appear to be aware that to become an influential world power, China needs to comply with the international norms and build its prestige in the eyes of international community.

This thesis argues that examination of the official publications will reveal that pragmatic approach to Mongolia implies that it should be dealt with as an independent state and represented accordingly. The thesis proposes that the strategies of this newly emerging discourse are to downplay (or even exclude all together) the 'historical issues' regarding Mongolia from the official rhetoric, to avoid essentialistic and stereotypical representations of Mongolian culture and society, and to focus instead on interpreting the Mongolian state in the official discourse as a co-player in international arena, an economic partner and an important geo-political neighbour, in short, as an *independent* state.

This argument is further developed in the next section of this chapter which deals with the issue of new 'balance of power' among those who have authority to construct official representations of Mongolia and how it affects the production of the official discourse(s) on the country.

3.2 Power Distribution

According to CDA, text analysis should include an examination of the institutional origin of the texts, which can provide an insight into the degree of the text's

illocutionary force. This section provides a brief overview of the PRC institutions within which official discourse(s) on Mongolia is/are produced. It should be noted that this is not an in-depth examination of the PRC's political system and its mechanism, but only a brief overview of its elements that concerns the distribution of power to formulate approaches from which discourse(s) on Mongolia stem.

Sutter states that there are three major formal institutions currently in the PRC: provincial units, central institutions and the military. All three can be considered to be sites from which different views on and approaches to Mongolia originate. Sutter also claims that in the Jiang Zemin and post-Jiang eras in China a power balance among political actors could be obtained due to the political institutionalisation and functional differentiation that took place in the 1990s and beyond. The latter, he suggests, actually means that political power can be divisible. Thus, the political system of China of the time when the key texts (and the majority of the paratexts) were produced was such that it allowed for the possibility of 'multiple winners' (Sutter 2004: 717) in terms of political outcome. As far as this study is concerned, one can suggest that there were such multiple winners of the struggle for the authority to represent Mongolia according to different agendas of the main political players, such as the CCP, the government, the PLA, the local authorities and influential business groups.

3.2.1 Political Elite

According to Seckington (2000), at the elite level of policy-making, it is not so much institutions as individuals that are important. Sutter (2004), on the other hand, argues that the political institutionalisation resulted in stronger formal (as opposed to informal) substructure of politics, increased institutional (as opposed to personal) loyalty, and deepened functional differentiation, factors which on the whole increased decentralization of the leadership. Moreover, Dittmers argues that the end of 1990s-beginning of the 2000s were marked by the most extensive transformation of China's leadership since reform was initiated 25 years ago. He terms it "elite democracy". Initiated during the period of Jiang Zemin's leadership, it translated into the inducting of "trustworthy experts" from a broader cross-section of society into the top echelons, recruiting officials into the mid-ranking bureaucratic levels through "public exams" and other such adjustments (Dittmer 2003: 909). Moreover, in the 2000s the CCP has

adopted the doctrine of the 'three represents' to revise its official ideology and mission statement. The doctrine was the political declaration of the formation of a newly institutionalised alliance among the Chinese political elites, economic elites, and intellectual elites (Wang 2005: 681).

The majority of observers agree that the key figures of the PRC 'fourth generation' leadership, 'the pragmatists of post-Mao China' (Seckington 2000), can be defined as very reform-orientated, practical and realistic political actors who see economic success more than ideology as the best way for the PRC leaders' legitimisation. Experts note that the professional backgrounds of the new high-rank officials are increasingly diverse, and that the new political elite combines expertise and political loyalty, is relatively young and has the highest educational attainments in the history of the PRC (Dittmer 2003: 910). They advocate further integration with the world sometimes to the extent that it makes their rather conservative, *status quo* foreign policy rather unpopular among the orthodox nationalists on the all levels of Chinese society, especially considering that 'a large segment of the Chinese people are increasingly more nationalist than communist' (Wang 2005: 682). In fact, the number of semi-official and non-official publications that employ the most nationalistic, irredentist rhetoric regarding Mongolia is in sharp contrast to the official discourse which delivers the same message in a much more toned-down and subtle way.

To summarise, the rapidly growing economy, deeper engagement with world affairs and the international economy, an increased level of professionalisation, pluralisation and decentralisation of the policy makers and their modes of policy formulating, can be considered signs of the gradual transformation of China's elite.

3.2.2 The CCP

Theoretically, the Chinese Communist Party and the government of the People's Republic of China are two separate entities. However, in spite of the political reforms, the CCP is still active in all government bodies and institutions, and its decisive role in Chinese politics will probably continue unabated for quite some time. The Central Committee of the CCP can be considered a 'regulator of the market of discourses' as it balances the conflict of interests among the top political players and makes sure that

none of them prevails, often doing so through its propaganda apparatus: *RMRB*, Xinhua and local party media. Another role of *RMRB* and Xinhua is to translate the policies, and, most importantly, to convey information relevant to foreign policymaking for the Chinese politicians. Some scholars argue that the CCP has not only decisive influence over the Chinese official media, but also a 'monopoly on education' (Wang 2005: 686).

The Politburo was formally appointed by the Central Committee, but actually was rather independent and more powerful, especially in the 1990s when its members were younger, more educated, often with 'external orientation' (Dreyer 2000: 127) at the time that the foreign minister and the minister of foreign trade joined. Another important characteristic of the Politburo since then is that it often relies on other individuals and organisations for information and guidance. For instance, research institutes such as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Shanghai Institute for International Affairs, and the Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations, are often called upon for data and analysis. According to Galser, 'Beijing's increased involvement in the international community created demand for in-depth research and analysis to aid Chinese leaders in making informed foreign policy and national security decisions' (Galser, 2002: 597).

The CCP is reportedly paying more attention to the strategy aimed at increasing Chinese influence and prestige in foreign affairs. Thus, its Leading Group on Foreign Affairs has knocked into shape a multi-pronged approach to boost China's status in the international community while ensuring good relations with key powers as well as the country's neighbours, including Mongolia (Lam 2004).

3.2.3 Government

The State Council is the executive body of the Chinese government and is responsible for formulating rules, making policy decisions, and coordinating the work of various state bureaus. Although it is the Politburo, and the secretary general of the party in particular, who to a large degree decide the leadership of powerful ministries, the latter are gaining much broader autonomy, and are able to assert their own interests in the execution of power. Their leaders represent institutional interests and their employees

are generally loyal to their ministries rather than the CCP. Heads of ministry are members of central government.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is one of the most influential ministries. It is in charge of state-to-state matters; this once overlapped with the activity of the CCP's International Liaison Office (deals with party-to-party relations), but after the collapse of communism frictions between them lessened and now the CCP has to build relations with other ruling parties regardless of ideological affiliation. However, the relations between the ruling Mongolian party MPRP and the CCP are reported to be on the rise, providing a solid channel for China's political influence in Mongolia. The MFA's structures that oversee Mongolian policy are departments responsible for the study and analysis of geographic areas of the world, Asian Affairs Department, and research centres (Institute of International Relations and Institute of International Studies). The MFA, like the other influential ministries, have their 'own' universities for staff replenishment and similarly to the CCP turn to academics for expertise. For instance, experts of the China Institute of International Studies (*Zhongguo guoji wenti yanjiusuo*) write reports and provide briefings to MFA officials but their influence rarely extends beyond the MFA; the Foreign Affairs College (*Waijiao xueyuan*) conducts research and holds conferences in support of the MFA; the largest and most well-endowed research institute remains the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (*Zhongguo xiandai guoji guanxi yanjiusuo*), which is the central government's main civilian intelligence organ and is institutionally under the Ministry of State Security (Glaser 2002: 598).⁶⁹

The main activity of the Ministry of Commerce is to formulate development strategies, guidelines and policies regarding domestic and foreign trade, and the international economic co-operation. Given the extent of China's integration into the international economic order, some experts name the MOC as one of the most influential political players (Lampton 2001: 18). The MOC, together with the China Import-Export Bank which is also concerned with foreign relations of the PRC, is responsible for formulating and implementing policies on China's foreign economic co-operation (including foreign aid), establishing intergovernmental liaison mechanisms and

⁶⁹ The chapter refers to these institutions as some of the Mongolia country profiles used in this study are produced by them.

consulting businesses. The MOC handles major issues in China-Mongolia economic and trade relationships and presumably participates in formulating China's approach to the country in general.

On the whole, Lampton, who argues that PRC policy-making has been experiencing growing decentralisation and pluralisation (at least as far as foreign policy making is concerned), suggests that 'power over all but the broadest and the most strategic decisions has moved from high-level central organs to government ministries,' initially to the MFA and the MOC (Lampton 2001:27). He particularly underlines the professionalisation of the foreign policy making. This could be attributed to the growing education level and professional preparation of the ministries' employees (mainly the MFA and the MOC) who often studied abroad (in western universities), are aware of the theory of IR and international political economy, collaborate with academics and researchers from other institutions, and so on.

3.2.4 The Central Military Commission and People's Liberation Army

The Central Military Commission is the highest policy-making body in the People's Liberation Army and the country's top military command authority. The Central Military Commission is composed of a chairman, vice-chairman and other members. The current chairman, residing in a very influential position, is the president of the country, Hu Jintao. The main tasks of the PLA are in relation to national defence – 'defending and building up the motherland.' However in recent years, the PLA has reportedly become more assertive on foreign policy issues. The PLA was granted by the National People's Congress the right to enforce the law, which unilaterally declares the PRC's sovereignty over the disputed territories. Moreover, the earlier reforms have concentrated on separating the army from the party and government. Some experts admit that this separation made it possible for the military to develop corporate interests of its own that may not coincide with those of party and government (Dreyer 1998). Besides, the PLA is also believed to harbour the so-called 'hard-liners', be it ultra-nationalists or those who advocate Maoist radical values and methods.

3.2.5 Local authorities and influential business groups

In the early 1990s power continued to be distributed from the centre towards the periphery. Economic decentralisation led to situations in which the central and local authorities and interest groups would favour different policies and goals, or follow the central policies guided by their own needs (Shuja 2005). It should be said though, that this appears to be more the case for economically developed and independent provinces as, for example, Guangdong which has bred this new type of regional elite. The autonomy of such regions as IMAR is constrained by their economic dependency on the centre which is further undercut by the programme for developing the Chinese western regions. The regional media, and the media from IMAR as well as the academic circles of the regions are one of the main sites in China where discourse(s) on Mongolia is produced, it appears important to see to what extent the 'local' representations of Mongolia differ from or comply with the images of Mongolia produced by the central media and institutions.

Another result of the economic reforms has been the creation of a new business elite in China, who are also emerging as a political group (Sutter) and 'at the head of a new form of state-society relations in China, a hybrid of 'socialist corporatism' and 'clientelism' (Pearson 1997) as many CCP officials and leaders are believed to be devoted to economic growth and increasingly pro-business. The new economic elite no longer pressure the Party from the outside; they have their ideologues, promoters and policy-makers inside the regime (Wang 2005: 683, Petras 2007). The economic elite's interest regarding Mongolia is becoming more prominent especially as far as the interests of China's leading corporations are concerned. For instance, in the Standard & Poor's survey of the Top 100 corporations in China, the majority of companies on the list are in the heavy-industry sector, such as steel and iron production, the petroleum and mining industries (Beiley 2005). Notably, a great deal of these corporations are already running or negotiating the possibility of running business in Mongolia (see, for instance Delaney 2005, Heilongjiang jingjibao, 2005) and are becoming more assertive in pursuing their interests regarding Mongolia. Their views on and approaches to Mongolia may differ from the agenda pursued by, for example, the foreign policy makers from the CCP.

3.2.6 Foreign Policy making

The exact process of foreign policy formation is still unknown due to, among other reasons, the lack of open public debate among the leaders and very little, and only indirect, media involvement. One of the reasons for this is the desire of the top leaders to represent the nation (at least its leadership) as united behind a foreign policy decision, 'however dissonant with reality this image of harmony might be' (Dreyer 2000: 307). The supreme leader (Hu Jintao), the Politburo of the CCP and its Standing Committee, and the State Council are usually named as the main policy-makers. One can presume that views and approaches to Mongolia may differ significantly among these political actors.

Many Western scholars writing on Chinese international relations hold that China has become essentially a *status quo* power (with the major exception of Taiwan) whose foreign policy can be characterised as pragmatic, institutionalised, consensus-oriented, and whose policy-making is marked by professionalisation, pluralisation and decentralisation. Another factor significant for this study is the expansion of the number of players involved in Chinese foreign policy making, hence differing policy interests. Moreover, some scholars also note the importance and complicated nature of the domestic needs that play an important role in foreign policy making. For instance, PRC domestic policy towards the IMAR is inseparable from formulating and implementing the policy towards Mongolia and these complex relations are manifested in the official discourse on the country. The recent tendency in China's foreign policy implementation is the acceptance of certain generally agreed-upon international norms and regimes. The implications of this for China-Mongolia interactions (considering also Mongolia's increasing integration into the international community through membership of almost all the key international organisations) mean that they are no longer confined to solely bilateral relations but have a stronger international perspective.

The main goals of the PRC's foreign policy appear to be a) recognition of the CCP as the only legitimate government of China; b) economic prosperity; c) enhancement of China's international status and prestige; and d) preservation of China's territorial integrity. The holders of stronger nationalist views would also include in the list the recovery of lost territories considered to be part of the PRC with recovery of Taiwan

being one of the major goals. In this light, the situation with Mongolia is somewhat ambiguous: on one hand it is also a sovereign state whose status China officially recognises; on the other hand it is a 'lost territory' and China has 'historical rights' to claim it back. Thus, China's idea of Mongolia's sovereignty is most likely to be conditioned by concrete needs of the moment: it can be a 'part of Chinese land' at one time, and sovereign state-international partner at another.

Wang Fei-ling in her analysis of what motivates Chinese foreign policy states that the main motives are preservation of the existing political system, prosperity and international prestige. She claims that 'some of the major foreign policy issues are mainly linked to one of the motives while others may fall in the overlapping areas of one, two or all three.' She goes on to say that 'those issues located in the most overlapped areas tend to be some of the most essential issues in the Chinese foreign policy' (Wang 2005: 691). While she names Taiwan as an example of such an issue, this thesis argues that Mongolia too falls fully under such a categorisation: it is linked to the task of political preservation of the CCP as the heavily US-supported 'democratic enclave' between Russia and China may pose (if spills across the border) a threat to the existing political system of the PRC; Mongolia's exceptionally rich natural resources face demand from the growing Chinese economy; and besides Mongolia plays a significant role in the development of IMAR and Xinjiang; China's territorial claims over Mongolia have in the West long since become the canonical example of the PRC's aggressive and militant nature undermining China's efforts to build a positive national image for the international community.

In this regard, it appears of high importance for the PRC's officialdom to 'update' its official discourse on Mongolia according to the new agendas. Thus, this thesis argues that analysis of the official discourse on Mongolia in the PRC should reveal the plurality of views on Mongolia. It also hypothesises that the most pragmatic and professional of these views (those of the MFA), the ones that take into consideration all the complexity of the domestic and foreign policy motives and goals, will receive at least the same degree of authority to represent Mongolia as the orthodox nationalist approaches to the country.

3.3 The Context for the Study

The previous section discussed distribution of power and discourse that directly affect interpretation of the key profiles. However, according to DA and especially CDA, a text's meaning lies also in concrete historical, social, and political milieus. The author's intended meaning expressed in language should be seen in connection with elements of the contexts; the reader's interpretation also takes place within a certain context in which the texts have been produced. Thus, the issue of the broader historical and socio-political background for the study is not just a convention of thesis-writing, but a necessity dictated by chosen methodological framework. This section is going to look at the socio-political situation in Mongolia and China, and, although it covers a range of issues from economic development, to recent political changes, the emphasis is given to the interpretation of national identity and nationalism aspired to by the official discourses in Mongolia.

3.3.1 Mongolia in the 1990s-2000s

The period since 1990 Mongolia witnessed enormous changes in almost all aspects of its society, economy and politics. This part of the chapter provides a brief overview of issues that are directly relevant to the examination of the Chinese publications regarding Mongolia that will be carried out in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and especially Chapter 6.

3.3.1.1 Economic and political situation

Since 1990 there has been a time of great change in Mongolia when the country went through a transition from autocracy to democracy and from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. Free elections held in 1990 resulted in the collapse of the one-party system and hence formation of a multiparty government. The new government economic 'shock therapy' was not very successful: privatisation was often mismanaged, inefficient, and corrupt. The government's engagement in speculation resulted in the loss of more than 80 per cent of the country's foreign currency reserves (Rossabi 2002); industry was collapsing and unemployment rose dramatically while production declined. The withdrawal of Soviet economic aid (that used to amount to more than 30 per cent of the country's GDP) severely undermined the government's efforts.

Unsurprisingly, in 1992 the MPRP won a significant majority in parliamentary elections, securing 71 of the 76 places in the Ikh Khural.⁷⁰ The aim of the new government was to curtail the “shocking” effect of the economic policies of the previous regime, and to focus on stability. Due to the favourable prices for copper and cashmere, two principal items of Mongolian export, the government stabilized the economy: inflation was reduced and the gross domestic product rebounded from losses in the period 1990-1992, to modest gains by 1994. Privatisation of small-scale enterprises persisted, but privatisation of large companies slowed down. Grants and credits from Japan, U.S., Russia and China also benefited the government. Yet the government did not cope effectively with several serious problems: low wages that did not keep up with inflation, unemployment, reductions in budgetary allocations for educational, medical, and social services; corruption, etc.

In 1996 the Democratic Coalition defeated the MPRP putting to the end its rule for the first time since 1921, by winning 50 out of 76 seats in the parliament. However, its success may be attributed, not only to the errors of the previous government, but also (if not largely) to the activities of domestic and especially foreign non-governmental organizations. This government’s policy was to keep moving toward a market economy, through shock therapy, if necessary. Privatisation was among its principal objectives. Government leaders also emphasized the creation of a fairer and more broad-based tax structure and the rooting out of corruption within the tax system. It renewed the privatisation of large state enterprises and enacted laws facilitating privatisation of housing and lands in urban areas; removed controls on energy prices, leading to a 50 per cent rise in the cost of fuel and electricity. By the end of the term 36 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line (Rossabi 1998, Nixon et al 2000).

On the whole, the Democratic Coalition was unable to govern effectively, thereby creating an unstable political climate in which the organised MPRP opposition turned to their political advantage. Thus, in 1997 Natsagiyn Bagabandi, chairman of the MPRP, was elected the president of Mongolia (in 2001 he was re-elected for the second term). Moreover, in 2000 the MPRP almost swept parliamentary elections, winning 72 out of

⁷⁰ The unicameral national legislature of Mongolia.

76 seats. A few months later the party won 80 per cent of all seats in local town council elections. However, that did not mean abandoning the path of the political reforms and liberal economic policies⁷¹ or a return to the old-style socialist system. The goals of the new-old government were slower reforms in order to minimise their social 'backfire.'

Therefore, from 2001 to 2004, the MPRP controlled both the presidency and parliament. However, despite the gains of their policies, Mongolia remained among the least developed nations with GDP per capita hovering around US \$400. Economic growth, although positive, was painfully slow, as the undiversified economy was still constrained by its heavy dependence upon mineral resources and animal husbandry. In June of 2004 Mongolia saw the latest parliamentary elections that resulted in the weakened position of the MPRP: its number of seats in Ikh Khural was reduced to 36. The opposition Motherland Democratic Coalition took 34 seats, and in August 2004, its leader, Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj was appointed Prime Minister to lead a coalition government.

3.3.1.2 Foreign Policy

A few words should be said about the new foreign policy pursued by Mongolian governments since the 1990s. While there were/are rather competing ideas regarding the domestic policy among the leading political forces of the country, in the sphere of the foreign there is a much larger unanimity. First of all, the main priority of Mongolia's international relations concept is the development of omni-directional and a non-aligned foreign policy.

While emphasising the special status of the relations with China and Russia, Mongolian leaders have undertaken impressive work in engaging the country in cooperation with majority of the countries of Asia, Europe and America, mostly through the participation in the multinational organisations. Particular attention is given, however, to participation in those political and economic international organisations of which the

⁷¹ For example, the rate of privatisation was even increased.

PRC is a member. This can be seen as a strategy of securing Mongolia's independence and freedom by becoming more closely integrated into the international community.⁷²

Given the importance given of the issues by the official Chinese discourse, Mongolia's relations with two the countries should be singled out, that is its interactions with Japan and US. Japan has been extremely active in developing its ties with Mongolia since 1990: its relations with Mongolia range from political cooperation to wide scale economic and humanitarian aid and cultural exchanges, etc. The official PRC discourse, especially the years right after the Mongolian democratic revolution, holds that Japan's policy in Mongolia was aimed at promoting the pan-Mongolist sentiments with the potential infiltration of these ideas to China's IMAR.

Another of Beijing's concern is Mongolia's close economic and political relations with the US. Mongolia is a strategy for the PRC geopolitical position. Since 1990 Russian presence (especially military) in the country diminished and no longer presents a threat to China's security. At the same time, throughout the 1990s the US activity in Mongolia intensified. The American government allocated significant financial aid, US businesses furthered trade and investment activity in the country;⁷³ and American non-governmental organisations (especially such as "Open Society Foundation" of George Soros⁷⁴) are believed to be providing informational (and financial) support for the MPRP's opposition, etc. Thus, the US's increasing presence in Mongolia raises certain suspicions among different layers of the Chinese officials.

3.3.1.3 Nationalism

The democratic revolution of 1990 resulted in a revival of the national identity quest among the people. However, it appears to be the case that in Mongolia, unlike Eastern Europe, nationalism took a rather moderate form with almost no movement of historical revisionism. Perhaps the most politicised nationalist concept is that of pan-Mongolism, which holds that all the Mongols currently divided between Mongolia, Russian Buriatia

⁷² For example, Mongolia became a full participant in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), a full member of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council and APEC, and many others.

⁷³ For example in such spheres as gold mining and oil industry, the fields in which the PRC is highly interested to develop its cooperation with Mongolia itself.

⁷⁴ Which is 'Amrecian' from the Chinese point of view, regardless Soros's self identification.

and Chinese Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region should be [re]united. However, as Kaplonski correctly points out, even this, the most 'extreme' nationalist perception, 'is now largely relegated to the sphere of cultural exchanges, and is not generally seen as politically sensitive in Mongolia and has no political proponents' (Kaplonski 2004: 15). It should be noted that Mongolians are a small minority in IMAR, so therefore it is politically impossible to see any unification. However, that does not overcome the problem that there are more Mongolians in IMAR than in Mongolia, and that accommodating them is still, whether Mongolians like it or not, an important issue in defining what it is to be a Mongolian.

The relatively weak spread of pan-Mongolist sentiments can be also explained by the fact that it is very much counter-balanced by the 'Khalkha-centred' nationalism. Khalkha as a geographical term means the central and eastern part of Mongolia, and as an ethnic term refers to the dominant ethnic group of the country (more than 80 per cent of the total population), and linguistically to the Khalkha Mongolian language spoken by the majority of the people in the country. Khalkha-centrism put in simple words is the idea that only Khalkha Mongols can be considered carriers of 'true' Mongolness, while other ethnic groups are just nominally Mongols. For example, Bulag (1998) describes this phenomenon and his own experience of being an *erliiz* – a half-breed – that is an ethnic Mongol from the Chinese IMAR.

It is not the aim of this section to give a detailed analysis of the Mongolian nationalism. However, with the major goal of the thesis (Chinese official discourse on Mongolia) in mind, an important event that took place in early 1990s which needs to be addressed. In 1993 in Beijing there was a book published entitled 'Secret story of Mongolian Independence' (Shibo 1993). The book addressed the notorious 'Mongolian question' and featured a 1946 map where Mongolia was represented within the state borders of China. The publication naturally caused discontent among the Mongolian government and people. However, the reaction to the book inside Mongolia bares no resemblance to the wrath of the western scholars and all kinds of China-watchers.⁷⁵ In fact, it has become *the* example, repeated again and again, of the PRC's 'hidden agenda' regarding

⁷⁵ This can be found in whole range of publications from academics to journalistic (Reuters and many other western news agencies reported the 'incident'). For example, the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, which usually does not pay much attention to Mongolia-related topics, returned to the topic in three consecutive issues in 1993.

Mongolia and, on the whole, of China's latent colonialism, expansionist sentiments, of the 'trans-border' nature of the Chinese nationalism that does not limit itself to the 'dealing' with the ethnic minorities inside the country, and so on.

Kaplonski believes that the most prevailing form of nationalism in the early 1990s in Mongolia was neither pan-Mongolism, nor Khalkha-centrism, but the concept that was centred on the Mongolian state as opposed to other states (Russia and China first of all) (2004: 17). Nevertheless, in that period pan-Mongolist sentiments not only existed (if only much more on *popular* than on the *official* level) (Ginsburg 1999:252), but also got publicly expressed: for example meetings and demonstrations organised by some activists in front of the PRC Embassy in Ulaanbaatar in support of the Mongols of IMAR. This thesis considers that it was this which *caused* the abovementioned Chinese publication.⁷⁶

The thesis argues that many of the 'irredentist' Chinese publications about Mongolia in the early 1990s were to a certain extent a reaction to a series of events at the time. Firstly, a section of the most hard-line Mongolian nationalists in IMAR were actually inspired by the events that took place in Mongolia those years. Here are just a few quotations from an on-line periodical of 'The Allied Committee of the Peoples of Eastern Turkistan, Inner Mongolia, Manchuria and Tibet' issued in 1992: 'Mongolians have never given up the dream of pan-Mongolian nation'; 'Mongols in both areas revolted against the Chinese in 1911, but only Outer Mongolia was recognised as an independent state', and about the democratic changes in Mongolia – 'As independent Mongolia explores its new-found freedom, political repression of fellow Mongolians continues to the south, in Chinese-controlled Inner Mongolia,' and that the revival of national awareness that began in Mongolia is 'seeping into China and stirring long-dormant or long-suppressed feelings of Mongolian nationalism'.⁷⁷ The period also witnessed ethnic unrest in IMAR (Humphrey 1996). Thus, political changes inside Mongolia, pan-Mongolian sentiments among some in the country and ethnic unrest in IMAR were interconnected.

⁷⁶ C. Humphrey, however, believes that existence of pan-Mongolism in Mongolia is a 'bogey erected by the Chinese political elite as a 'reason' for their policies' (private communication).

⁷⁷ "Mongolia: a Nation Divided", *Common Voice*, vol. 2 (1992). Available at http://www.taklamakan.org/allied_comm/commonv-2-4.html.

Secondly, there is another important point that needs to be kept in mind when approaching the PRC's reaction to nationalist movement(s) in Mongolia at that time. The period was marked by the liberalisation of all the social institutions, the media first of all, and the eagerness with which people embraced their newly achieved rights of freedom of speech and expression. However, the most remarkable thing about it was the speed with which these changes in Mongolian society happened - being within two to three years after decades of a situation when every publicly spoken word had to be carefully forethought, authorised, and regularised.

Thus, the publication of this ostensibly provocative for Mongolia book a) reflected the Chinese government's⁷⁸ misjudgement of the degree of the official/political status of the pan-Mongolist movement in Mongolia; and b) was a message clearly orientated to the ethnic Mongols of IMAR and not Mongolia. This example demonstrates that the official Chinese publications on Mongolia (including those that will be examined in this thesis) can not be approached as 'individual acts' but should be firmly placed into the context of China and Mongolia.

3.4 Conclusion

An ideology that claims power over representations has to be stronger than other ideologies or be able to co-exist with other competing frameworks. This chapter sought to demonstrate that the orthodox nationalist discourse in the PRC, although still dominant in the official representation of Mongolia, is also challenged and questioned by the (diminishing) ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the (rising) 'professionalised pragmatic' approach to Mongolia.

The chapter also offered an overview of the broader context in which the key texts about Mongolia are being produced and interpreted. There are fundamental similarities between Chinese and Mongolian history, at least in the official discourse that represents them; firstly, in the creation of unity from a very diverse ethnic and political pool; and

⁷⁸ This assumes that it was a publication actually sanctioned by the Chinese government, but the PRC refused its involvement, revoked the licence from the publisher and banned the book from the official circulation. However, the book can be still obtained from second-hand bookshops and there are numerous web sites that offer its full version.

secondly, in the way in which they both embarked on a very similar political project – the creation of a Marxist-Leninist socialist state – in the last century. However, in the 1990s their paths have diverged: Mongolia has become a wholly different, democratic, system with much broader scope to question and assert competing notions of national identity. In the PRC a similar process has been initiated but on much smaller scale.

Thus, the context over the last fifteen years has changed greatly for nationalist discourse in Mongolia and China, along with the sense of national identity sponsored in each state. Mongolia and China have competing interpretations of nationalism and the national identity of their citizens and of ethnic Mongolians. They have different historical narratives, especially with regard to the ‘shared’ period). In China there is a strong orthodox nationalist perspective with a continuing commitment, at least superficially, to ideological socialism and an emerging professionalized pragmatism. The two countries have different national goals – while the main issue for Mongolia is to preserve its independence, the PRC aspires to the status of great power.

Having provided the background and context against which to study the PRC official discourse, the following chapter will analyse the key and background text, looking first, in Chapter 4 at the construction of the historical identity of Mongolia, the most controversial issue of the Chinese official rhetoric and the source of Sino-Mongolia frictions. Then the thesis moves on to the modes of representing Mongolian culture and society by the official Chinese media, which is examined in Chapter 5. Finally, the Chapter 6 will look at how the official discourse deals with the task of representing political and economic developments that have been taking place in Mongolia since 1990.

CHAPTER FOUR

Historical Identity of Mongolia

This chapter examines one aspect of the construction of Mongolia's identity(ies) in the PRC's political discourse, that is the construction of the *historical* identity of Mongolia through textual representations. It looks at how official PRC publications issued by the top CCP and government media and institutions represent Mongolia's past, within the ideological limits of the Zhonghua concept. The chapter seeks to identify the discursive construction of Mongolia's historical identity by establishing the main nodal points that characterise the discourse. The chapter argues that in terms of representing Mongolia's past, the orthodox nationalist discourse does not encounter substantial or strong 'opposition' from other discursive constructions, and assesses the significance of this.

4.1 Historical Identity of Mongolia as a Political Issue

The question of authoritative accounts of history is central to the studies of representations of Other. Thus, scholars from the school of Subaltern Studies focus on subordinated (subaltern) groups marginalised, or even excluded from history by a dominant/hegemonic discourse. In the words of Duara, 'historical configurations [are] designed to include certain groups and exclude or marginalise others' (Duara 1996: 15). This chapter looks at key texts, seeking to investigate how the official discourse represented the historical status of Mongolia vis-à-vis the concept of Zhonghua nation and China.

It is a widely accepted concept in [post]modern Social Sciences that history is closely connected with politics. In fact, official PRC discourse represents the history of Mongolia from the broader socio-political context of the present, with certain political/ideological aims in mind. Accounts of history, or debates about its meaning are seen by the PRC leadership as ways of legitimising or contesting the existing political order. This means therefore, that they need to be tightly controlled. In contemporary

China, and particularly in the last years, there has been a tremendous expansion of mass media.⁷⁹ On the one hand, this has been used as a channel to facilitate the nation-building project, for instance by spreading official texts through semi-official and even non-official channels. Thus, the developing media has created a situation where it is easier to disseminate what are seen as ‘correct’ representations of Mongolian history.⁸⁰

The liberalisation of media means that the same technology can also enable the construction of alternative representations (Duara 1996:9).⁸¹ Thus, we can find representations of Mongolian history that are critical or alternative to those produced by the official discourse. For example, the growing publications regarding the ‘Mongolian question’ and its ‘solution’ today issued by semi-official and non-official media, which adopt much stronger nationalistic rhetoric regarding Mongolia’s status and its relationship with China. Some others offer an alternative account of the history of Mongolian people that undermines the coherence of the nationalistic representation of Zhonghua and Menggu minzu.⁸² In this light the country profiles on Mongolia play an important role in providing guidance on what the ‘right’ view on the issue of Mongolian history is.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the country profile as a genre of authoritative writing on Mongolia, only appeared in 2000 and since then became an important way of conveying the official view on the country. There had been very few attempts to produce similar types of texts in other media and discourses before that date. For instance, the magazine *Zhongguo Guojia Dili*, is an example of how the history of Mongolia had been represented in the state-produced mass media (Huang and Duan 1996).⁸³ Given the absence of any explicit ‘official line’ on how the issue should be represented, the

⁷⁹ The number of national newspapers in China has increased from 42 mainly CCP papers in 1968 to more than 2000 by the end of the 1990s; there are more than 7,000 magazines and journals. Moreover, some 25 thousands of printing houses and hundreds of individual bookstores produce and sell non-official material (CIA 1997).

⁸⁰ For instance in Chapter 1 it was mentioned that quite often country profiles from the *Renmin Ribao wang* start to circulate in unofficial websites.

⁸¹ On the challenges to the Chinese authoritative discourse from Internet see Chase and Mulvenon (2002).

⁸² A completely different representation of Mongolia is offered, for instance, in the Mongolia profile issued by the Mongolian Embassy in Beijing in Chinese for audience inside China (<http://www.mongembbj.org.cn>).

⁸³ *Zhongguo Guojia Dili* is an official periodical with huge circulation in Greater China and Japan, an ambitious Chinese analogue to *National Geographic* of 150 thousands of copies in simplified Chinese, 70 thousands in traditional complex Chinese and 30 thousands in Japanese.

authors of the text faced rather a difficult task. On the one hand they needed to produce something different to the outdated PRC historical accounts of Mongolia's historic development of the 1970s-1980s; but on the other hand, they did not have clear parameters within which they could work to introduce any novelties or new perspectives. This resulted in the representation of the history of Mongolia appearing to be both confusing and confused:

In the 13th AC century the Mongols under the rule of Chinggis Khaan, established Mongolian Khanate and then, conquered Central Asia, Persia, and Russia and founded the Yuan Dynasty in China. In 17th-18th centuries AC Mongolia was ruled by the Qing Manchu government. Before the 1921 revolution almost all the Mongols were involved in animal husbandry; the major means of transport were horses, camels, and oxen. At the time in the cities of Tsetserleg and Bachantumen as well as in other regions there were more than 2500 of monasteries, the number of lamas living in celibacy reached more than one hundred thousand. The population did not grow and the economy was very backward. At present there is still a minority of the population who profess Lamaism and Shamanism. By 1958 Mongolia had already developed into a country with agriculture, animal husbandry and industry (Huang and Duan 1996: 41).

The authors have no clear idea about which historical events to lay stress on (for instance the establishment of Mongolian Khanate neighbours in the text with main locations of monasteries) and which historical events can be addressed at all. Even though the authors do address more sensitive issues, they use rather ambiguous statements. If, as they state, Mongolia was ruled by the Qing only in 17th and 18th centuries, this begs the question of who ruled before them and, more importantly afterwards, in the 19th century. The most potentially sensitive issue of Mongolia's independence from China in the 20th century is simply omitted, with the Mongolian revolution mentioned only in connection to issues like 'backward means of transport' and economic production of that time.

Why has the issue of Mongolian independence is not been addressed? Certainly not because it was 'unimportant'; apart from being one of the central historic events in Mongolia's historical development, it is the central issue during the intensification of nationalistic debates on the 'Mongolian questions' in the 1990s both in the PRC and the MPR. The importance of Mongolian independence for China is illustrated by the fact that in 1999 the China News Agency published an article listing one hundred of the

most important world events of the last century. Together with such events as the two World Wars, the foundation of the United Nations, and the unification of Germany, this places Mongolia's separation from China at 'Number 3' on the list (Zhongguo xinwenshe 1999).

The authors of the article from the *Zhongguo Guojia Dili* either ignored the issue in order to make a 'silent' statement or, most likely, simply did not know how to represent it, as well as many other sensitive issues of history of Mongolia. Key texts which appeared later provided exactly that – the official view on how it should be represented. By examining these key texts (or to be exact, their history sections) this chapter attempts to see how the official line on what the 'true' Mongolian history was has been constructed and propagated through the official political media.

However, it must be kept in mind that different views on Mongolia, its history and how it should be officially represented in the political texts appear to exist also among those who produce this official line. Thus, one of the first tasks of this chapter is to examine the 'evolution' of the key texts in terms of how the different representations of history of Mongolia have developed since the issue of the first official country profile in *Renmin Ribao* in 2000.

The methodological assumption on which this thesis is based is that the discourse is a part of official political activity. Thus, the PRC discourse on Mongolia is part of broader 'Mongolian policy' formulated and implemented by the Chinese political elite. The second task of the chapter, therefore, is to reach, through analysis of the evolution of these political texts, a better understanding of how views on Mongolia and how it should be represented and 'dealt with'⁸⁴ have developed among those with concrete power to officially represent Mongolia and take political decisions.

⁸⁴ Doty in her concept of representations insists that representational practices are closely connected with actual actions by providing the readers a 'guideline' on how the represented should be acted upon (1996:3).

4.2 Contextualisation of the Construction of Identity

Before proceeding with the analysis, a few words need to be said on the issue of the context in which this discourse has been produced. Although many of the relevant points regarding the socio-political background in the PRC and Mongolia have been addressed in Chapter 3, this part of the chapter will briefly outline some ‘sites’ of the PRC context where representation of Mongolia’s history comes into play. Holding that the historical identity of Mongolia is constructed in and according to the concrete socio-political needs of the moment, the thesis argues that it is connected (explicitly or inexplicitly) to such issues as nation building and the modernisation of China.

These ‘needs’ can roughly be divided into two large areas – ideological and pragmatic. ‘Ideology’ refers here not to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (unless stated otherwise), but to the ideological concept of Zhonghua – that is, the theoretical basis that surrounds and supports the nation building project. According to Duara, nations seek the ‘ultimate mooring’ in history (Duara 1996: 3). By the same token, Zhonghua building in the PRC needs ‘right’ history for its legitimisation and in this light Mongolia’s history – as a ‘difficult case’ for the nationalist history narrative - can neither be completely ignored nor represented ‘incorrectly’. The solution to that is creation of an official orthodoxy that needs to be imposed on the reader.

Thus, the project of the ‘unification of Motherland’ resulted in Chinese eyes in the successful ‘peaceful re-unification’ of Hong Kong in 1997 and Macao in 1999 with mainland China. This was underpinned by the emotive idea of ‘return of the lost territories.’ The ‘Taiwan question’ continues to be one of the most important issues of Chinese politics, reigniting these issues of returned territories. Mongolia is still occasionally represented as one of China’s territorial losses, albeit viewed with less political urgency than Taiwan. Even a superficial overview of recent publications on Mongolia shows that parallels are often drawn between the Mongolian and Taiwan ‘questions’, both of which are rooted in history. Consequently, some believe that to tone down the representation of Mongolia as ‘historically Chinese’ or, even worse, to ‘liberalise’ the historical image of Mongolia would set a ‘bad example’ for Taiwan.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Although the cases of Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Mongolia can seem to be very different examples for Western observers and scholars, the examination of the Chinese media

Seen from the domestic dimension, Mongolia still maintains its ability to 'set bad examples' – the issue of Mongolia's history is too closely connected to that of the Mongolian minzu, so to recognise the independence of the historical development of the Mongols would undermine the historical narrative of Zhonghua.

The pragmatic needs to represent Mongolia's history in the 'right' way stem from two main points: a) nation building is not solely an ideological project, it also presupposes modernisation of the country through its economic development; and b) the modernisation often involves closer cooperation with foreign countries and international organizations. Thus, Mongolia is no longer a completely 'detached' state; it is closely involved in cultural, economic, and political cooperation with the world, as well as China, as its equal international partner. Relations with Mongolia have an impact on domestic political issues, like the development of Inner Mongolia and other western regions. In this regard, the issue of history - one of the most sensitive issues in the whole complex of China-Mongolia interactions and mutual representations by the state-sponsored discourses in the countries, something with a good track record of provoking troubles in the past – also requires 'modernisation.'

Some of the historical sections of the key texts as well as other framing writings addressing relevant topics, put greater stress on the ideological aspects of representing Mongolia's history, while others emphasise the precedence of the pragmatic goals and 'non-importance' of history. The negotiation for of power to represent Mongolia's history that take place between these competing views, manifests itself in the political texts issued by the CCP and governmental organisations. Thus, the next part of the chapter provides an analysis of these texts in order to see how the officially sanctioned historical identity of Mongolia has developed since 2000.

shows a significant increase of writings where Taiwan and Mongolian 'questions' are closely linked and represented as issues 'of the same origin' and of the same 'solution', examples include Li (2002). The article, originally produced in Hong Kong, proved to be extremely popular on the mainland, and circulates now on numerous PRC websites (often in its full version – that is, using harsher nationalistic rhetoric); refer to "Yannan Review" at <http://www.yannan.com/data/detail.php?id=3058>.

4.3 Evolution of the Political Texts on History

The following is the examination of the country profiles (the historical sections of the profiles) issued by the party and government since 2000. The texts are analysed according to the chronological order of their publication, however the analysis is done from the perspective of the recurring terms, topics and themes –Laclau’s nodal points – that create a net of meanings within the texts.

Significant attention is drawn to the first key profile because a) it was the first official profile of Mongolia published in the authoritative media since 1990; and b) it established the basic set of these recurring themes which were then ‘revised’ in subsequent key texts. In other words, it served as a reference text against which the other key texts were examined, in order to see how these themes were modified, eliminated, complemented by other themes, and so on.

To examine the development of the language and the content of the historical sections from text to text is crucial for understanding the evolution of the discourse of Mongolia’s history. The task is not only to see the changes the discourse underwent since the publication of the first key text, but to assess the reasons and meanings of these metamorphoses. It would be impossible to get a comprehensive analysis of the official discourse by focusing on the key texts only, so the chapter often refers to examples from the whole body of the official, and non-official where necessary, writings that explain and inform the readers on the issues which the key texts raise only briefly. It should also be added that the texts are examined not only in their ‘intertextual’ space but also in relation to the concrete socio-political developments in China and Mongolia at the time of publication.

The task is executed through actual textual analysis of the writings by focusing on the structural organisation of the sections, its content (what topics are address by the authors), the language the text producers employ to represent historical events (words, grammar, visual images, etc.), any cases of *suppressio veri* - the topics and concrete events that have not been covered, and the words that were avoided, and the significance of this.

4.3.1 'Triple Emphasis' (Key Text 1)

The first country profile of Mongolia appeared in *Renmin Ribao* in April 2000. It re-appeared again later that year in October and December on within the online edition. The bulk of the text was devoted to an overview of Mongolia's geography, natural resources and economic situation. The historical section of the profile is extremely succinct consisting of only six sentences. Interestingly, out of these six, three sentences that open the section can be classified more as statements of Mongolia's status, rather than factual accounts of the historical events. They are: a) 'the Mongolian nationality has a history of many thousands of years'; b) 'Mongolia's original name was 'Outer Mongolia'; and, c), it 'is/was part of China' (为中国的一部分). Although all three of them merit closer scrutiny (and will be examined below), it is the last of them stir the most heated debates— both in China and Mongolia.

4.3.1.1 *Mongolia - Part of China*

It is curious that in the whole range of official publications on Mongolia since the 1990s, for a decade the political media did not publish anything on the subject of Mongolian history. They confined themselves to 'neutral' accounts of diplomatic events, economic cooperation, personal impressions of the 'common Chinese people' visited Mongolia on contemporary situation in the country, etc. Then in 2000 the first profile (reprinted three times) was issued containing a strong statement - 'part of China,' something that had proved to be very provocative through out the 1970s and 1980s.

There was nothing worrying for PRC officials in Sino-Mongolian relations at this time on a par with events from the beginning of the 1990s, which witnessed the brief rise of nationalistic, even pan-Mongolist sentiments in Mongolia. Such a statement therefore stemmed from domestic political needs. These are most likely to be the 'unrest' in the IMAR in the second half on the 1990s and strengthening of the nationalistic rhetoric there.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ The issue will be discussed in more detail below.

This phrase – ‘part of China’ - is one of the most frequently used in texts on Mongolia in different discourses and media, and sometimes virtually the only thing an average Chinese person can say about the country (together with usual stereotypes of remote steppes, horse-back herders, etc.). Although the political texts are not about ‘what people think,’⁸⁷ but what the political leaders believe they *should* think, this idea of Mongolia being ‘historically part of China’ is a good example of the *consensus gentium* fallacy – it must be true simply because ‘all the Chinese’ believe it to be true.

Of course, this type of statement may appear sweeping. However, such ideas about Mongolia in China appear to be very widespread. A simple explanation of this could be found in the fact that until recent time these two neighbours had lived in almost total isolation from each other; in public discussions (in mass media, academic writings and so on) the emphasis have been also almost always on the issues related to the history of Mongolia-China interactions. Thus, ‘history’ (and everything that it means for an ‘average person’ – folklore, customs, ethos, etc. – is *the* connotation ‘Mongolia’ bares for the Chinese.

This message about the ‘historical belonging’ of Mongolia is reinforced by the text producers of the first key profile by another two statements of ‘facts’ from Mongolian history – its ‘true name’, Outer Mongolia, and the historical connection to Mongolian minzu – making it a rather anaphoric ‘triple emphasis’ on the issue of Mongolia’s historical status vis-à-vis Zhonghua nation and China, which appeals more to the readers emotions rather than their logic or actual knowledge.

4.3.1.2 *When a Name Stands For History*

The usage by the text-producers of the term ‘Outer Mongolia’ in this case does not appear casual. The term is still widely used in a colloquial speech by Chinese where it refers to Mongolia only in order to distinguish it from ‘our’ Nei Menggu. In the same way nobody in everyday conversation would refer to the latter as ‘Inner Mongolian

⁸⁷ The expectations and possible reaction of the audience, though, are taken into account when texts are produced and interpreted.

Autonomous Region’.⁸⁸ However, in the PRC political texts the term has a particular meaning, especially when the text is so synoptic that ‘every word counts’. To start a historical overview of Mongolia by referring to it as ‘Outer Mongolia’ is a political statement.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the terms Inner and Outer Mongolia refer simply to the *geographical* division of the Mongolian geobody (regions to the south and to the north of the Gobi desert). The original *political* division between Inner and Outer Mongolia started at the end of Ming Dynasty due to the inter-tribal tensions *inside* Mongolia. As a term of Chinese politics it was formally introduced by the Qing court when Outer Mongolia submitted to the Manchu government (in 1691) and became a political part of China.⁸⁹ Since then official Chinese and then PRC historiographies as well as semi-official and popular accounts of the historical events have operated with this term. Thus, Wai Menggu evokes a direct association from a Chinese reader having a connotation of the ‘Outer-Mongolia-part-of-China.’

While the political texts under examination in this thesis may vary in details on different topics of Mongolian history, they all begin with an overt statement regarding the country’s ‘original’ name – Outer Mongolia. This equates to a claim of the country’s subordinated historical status vis-à-vis China: ‘Chinese territory.’

Texts are read by text recipients not in a vacuum, but in relationship to other texts already experienced. Text recipients also use interpretive traditions to understand texts. In this it involves a history of the interpretation of the term ‘Outer Mongolia’. While the usage of the term in the context of studying the Qing period of Chinese and Mongolian histories is correct, a survey of recent publications containing the term shows that it is widely used by all types of media, discourses and genres in different kinds of context: starting from current issues of the PRC politics (‘Taiwan Question’) and finishing with speculations on Mongolia’s future prospects. In recent years, the official, semi-official

⁸⁸ It has to be mentioned here that, as many of the authors writing on China-Mongolia encounters point out, a large part of the Chinese population, especially from the regions geographically remote from Mongolia are simply unaware of the very existence of ‘foreign’ Mongolia, for whom there is simply a ‘Menggu.’ See for example Khan (1995a).

⁸⁹ Some nationalistic writings state that Outer Mongolia (even as a geographic entity) was on maps of China since Jin Dynasty, for instance in texts circulating on the numerous nationalistic websites mentioned in this thesis.

and popular media, both central and regional, have been flooded with publications featuring terms ‘Outer Mongolia,’ ‘Mongolian Question,’ etc.⁹⁰ The Chinese internet serves as the most impressive example.

Inserting the characters for Wai Menggu as key words in a Chinese search engine shows the scale of the terms’ popularity among Chinese users of the net. Thus, the search made through the Sohu search engines brings more than six thousand results – from articles of the online versions of the official media to fictional accounts on literary sites, to passionate essays and even chauvinistic rages on websites and forums devoted to the issues of patriotism, the Chinese nation, etc.⁹¹ As far as political electronic publications are concerned, the term ‘Outer Mongolia’ is mentioned in different contexts in more than a thousand articles issued by the online edition of *Renmin Ribao* since 1999, mostly relating to foreign powers’ politics towards China, Republican China policy, China’s territorial losses, the ‘Taiwan question,’ and so on.

The connotations of the term are so powerful that one of the most zealous nationalistic web sites – mentioned in Chapter 2 China-Hero (*Zhonghua yingxiong*)⁹² – offers interested readers numerous articles on the ‘Mongolian question’ propagating the most intransigent views on the country, and recently reprinted one of the most alternative profiles of Mongolia (the hybrid text produced by MFA and *Renmin Ribao* discussed in sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2) with *only* one change made to it – throughout the text *Menggu guo* is substituted by Wai Menggu. Thus, the mere name can affect the interpretation of the whole text. Hence, using one name in preference to another means changing the whole direction of the text, with *Menggu guo* not complying to the same hierarchy of geopolitical domination as Wai Menggu.

Dissonance on the issue of ‘naming’ Mongolia was found only in three texts among all the numerous publications (about 200 articles and 70 books) examined for the thesis (the largest part of which was not eventually included) in which the very term ‘Outer Mongolia’ was not mentioned once. Firstly, in the article on ethnic situation in

⁹⁰ For the official media see for example *Haizhou Ribao* 2003 (Originally published in 2001 in *Zongheng* magazine; now circulates all over the Chinese internet), *Hebei Ribao* 2004 (the article has since appeared on numerous web sites).

⁹¹ <http://www.sohu.com>; the last search was made on June 07 2004.

⁹² <http://china-hero.org>.

Mongolia (Tumenqige et al 2000) the authors offer an overview of the country's history in which they provide plenty of detailed information on the subject, *and* manage to completely avoid the term 'Outer Mongolia'. This text stands as a good example of non-ideologised, independent academic writing on the issue.⁹³ They refer only to term 'Khalkha', that is the central and eastern parts of *geographical* Outer Mongolia, which would carry absolutely different political meaning.

This text, like those on Outer Mongolia mentioned above also appeared later in the Chinese internet, albeit with much lesser 'success', that is, it didn't appear there much.⁹⁴ Perhaps its lesser popularity can be explained by the text's subtle idea that nothing in the course of [Outer] Mongolian history indicates that its independence from China can be seen as an 'historical injustice' – an idea unpopular both among many of the official discourse producers and (particularly) among popular nationalists and 'patriots'. Tellingly, in the next year all the key texts from the political media appeared with an 'adjustment': the opening phrase now went: 'the original name is Outer Mongolia, or Khalkha,' to familiarise the term with the public and send a clear message on how the latter term should be correctly interpreted – as a mere substitution for 'Outer Mongolia.'

The second text not using the term was a Mongolia country profile issued by China Oil, a Beijing consultancy company, which dealt with the issues categorically:

Mongolia's proper name is the Mongolia[n state] (蒙古的正式名称是蒙古国).⁹⁵

Mongolia is given the title of a 'state' without any references to the 'historical background,' avoiding any possible ambiguity of Mongolia's status. This is a good

⁹³But unlike the majority of serious academic publications marginalised into tiny specialised journals not always available even in the Beijing National Library, this writing (produced by a collective of ethnic Mongol scholars from Inner Mongolian University) although originally was published in *Xibei Minzu Yanjiu*, was also re-printed a year later in Beijing by the Minzu Chubanshe; the book is still widely available in the majority of the bookshops.

⁹⁴The only examples of appearance of this text on the net are at <http://www.morinhor.com>. (downloaded on 3 September 2003, see Note 48 of Chapter 2), and as a part of Mongolia profile provided by the School of International Studies of Beijing University available at <http://www.sis.pku.edu.cn/wanglian/mzwt/world/mongolia/gk.htm> (downloaded on 15 July 2004).

⁹⁵<http://www.chinaoilonline.com/corporation/decorum/decorum.asp?id=303>; downloaded on May 1, 2002.

example of how different representations/linguistic forms (a name in this case) are used to promote certain group interests: although the site does not state its interests directly, the reader can get an idea on the matter by the other – framing – news regarding Mongolia provided by this company:

Soco International has announced the discovery of large oil deposits in Mongolia; Mongolia is willing to become China's new source of oil; International oil companies show interest in building oil-pipes from Mongolia to China, etc.⁹⁶

Sometimes the attempt to name Mongolia 'correctly' can take rather peculiar forms. Thus, in the third text that avoids usage of term 'Outer Mongolia', the Mongolia brief produced by the Bureau of International Cooperation of the Chinese Academy of Science,⁹⁷ the authors have excluded the historical section entirely, providing instead an overview of 'the origin of the country's name.' It says:

'Mongolia' is the name of [the country's] main nationality. It is believed to be originally a toponym or a tribal name. In 1924 the name 'Mongolian People's Republic' was formally adopted. In 1992 an official decision was taken to change this name 'Mongolian People's Republic' into 'Mongolia.'

Even though the authors do not refer to the country as 'Outer Mongolia' (and therefore, by implication, to the period of its history when it became a part of China), there is still the leap from a 'tribal name' directly to the name 'Mongolian People's Republic' in 1924 omitting such seminal events/names as the foundation of the Mongolian state by Chenggis Khaan in the 13th century or the establishment of the Theocratic Monarchy of 1921. In fact such a selective approach to Mongolian history is a common strategy of the producers of the political texts: certain events are at times emphasised or completely obscured depending on the 'needs of the moment' serving a good example of edited history.

In fact, looking further at the key text under analysis in this section, one can see that, having made the 'triple statement' about the 'long history of Mongolian minzu', the 'original name' of Mongolia and its historical status as 'part of China', the authors proceed directly to the year 1921, when the 'Mongolian People's Revolution won and

⁹⁶ See the website's "Daily News" sections on May 20, 2002; February 20, 2004; July 8, 2004.

⁹⁷ <http://www.casbic.ac.cn>, April 2003.

the theocratic monarchy was established.’ Thus, together with the other two components, the name – Outer Mongolia – stands here for all the Mongolian history prior to 1921. In all the key texts that were issued between 2001 and 2004, the explicit *positioning* of Mongolia as a ‘part of China’ disappears, but the emphasis on its ‘original name’ remains. The term ‘Outer Mongolia’ therefore functions in the political texts as a metonymic signifier for ‘Mongolia before 1921,’ where the geographic aspect of the metonym is suppressed and the historical-political one - emphasised.⁹⁸

Although the term ‘Outer Mongolia’ originated from rather recent period of the Qing Dynasty, none of the key texts (as well as all the background publications used for this study) make any mention of it. One possible explanation for this is that, apart from generating the term ‘Outer Mongolia’, the period of Manchu rule was the time when [Outer] Mongolia formally submitted to the jurisdiction of Qing Dynasty/China;⁹⁹ however, stating it directly would undermine the main message of the text: how could Mongolia *submit to* China if, according to the text’s idea, it was *part of* it? The Qing period therefore, has been excluded from the historical representations of Mongolian history from 2000 until 2004 inclusive.

Before considering the ‘gaps’ in representations of Mongolian history and their significance in the interpretation of the texts (section 3.2 of this chapter deals with the issue), a few comments should be made regarding the importance of the first statement of the triple emphasis about the ‘thousands years-long history of Mongolian minzu’ which functions in a similar way to the strategy of naming mentioned above.

4.3.1.3 History Belongs to Minzu

The title of this section may be perceived as paraphrasing Duara’s deconstruction of ‘the certainty that history belongs to a nation’ (Duara 1996: 3), however the meaning of the statement differs significantly depending on what minzu we are talking about – Zhonghua or Menggu. So, apart from establishing Mongolia’s ‘true’ historical name/status, the key text also draws particular attention to the long history of the

⁹⁸ According to Lakoff (1996) suppression of one aspect of metonym and emphasising of the other can influence readers’ thoughts, attitudes and even actions.

⁹⁹ To Qing Dynasty according to the Mongolian publications, and to *China* according to the PRC official discourse.

Mongolian minzu, rather than the history of *Mongolia*, or even Outer Mongolia. Once again, the achieved effect is that another metonymic signifier - Mongolian minzu - functions as a substitution for Mongolia or Mongolian people (*Menggu ren*). The connotation of this signifier is obvious - the Mongolian shaoshu minzu, a part of the Zhonghua nation.

The conception of Mongolian minzu of China in the official nationalism discourse has been discussed elsewhere.¹⁰⁰ The focus of this study is to assess the degree to which Zhonghua discourse - 'the central reference point' in post-Maoist China (Bulag 2004: 174) - dominates representation of independent Mongolia and what the possible meaning of this is. The authoritative discourse on the Chinese nation embedded in political texts, particularly the *Renmin Ribao* and *Xinhua* - the mouthpieces of the CCP - heavily relies on the concepts of Zhonghua minzu, Zhonghua dadi, Zhonghua wenming, etc. In fact, there are very few articles issued by these media in the 1990s-2000s that would not refer to one or all of these concepts at one point or another. Thus Christiansen in his analysis of the *Renmin Ribao* articles mentions such statistics: only from 1998 to 2000 the hunt through *Renmin Ribao* search engine brought back almost one thousand results where the word 'nation' (minzu) appeared at least once (Christiansen 2004: 186). The field work for this study showed that a similar search with key words as Zhonghua minzu, Zhonghua wenming, etc. brings no less impressive results.

However, such authoritative publications, while using the terms widely and in different contexts (from descriptions of Chinese New Year celebrations to political leaders statements to accounts of the PRC economic development), do not explain the meaning of these concepts. These texts usually do not go much beyond clichéd statements that 'Zhonghua minzu has a history of five thousands years,' that the Chinese nation is 'a family of brotherly nationalities creating a glorious national history together,' and so on.

To get an insight into the 'theoretical bases' of these concepts this thesis has examined a range of authorised academic writings on the topic of Zhonghua nation (and all the derivative concepts) which sought to provide the scientific explanations and

¹⁰⁰ See for example Hao (1998), Bulag (2004).

justification for the concepts.¹⁰¹ All of the publications had been issued by the date of the publication of the first key text, thereby providing a ‘theoretical background’ for the mass-orientated texts on Zhonghua. A few examples will demonstrate this including several extracts from academic works published through the 1990s with comments on their possible functioning as a background for interpreting historical sections of Mongolia profiles.

Firstly, it should be noted that the authors state the ‘endogenous’ (自在) development of Zhonghua minzu as one of the main characteristics in the formation of the Chinese nation – the course of this development is presented in the PRC historiography as a linear process governed by the principles of the ‘same origin’ and ‘uninterrupted cultural tradition’.¹⁰² The Chinese nation is presented as a naturally developed multiethnic conglomerate where national minorities ‘clustered around Huaxia’ (later developed into Han) which was the ‘core’ of the evolution of Zhonghua minzu. Thus, already in Qin/Han dynasties¹⁰³ China (中国) was a ‘multinational state’ (多民族国家) (Chen 1992: 20).

Moreover, although economically ‘China’s national minorities’ were at different stages of development,¹⁰⁴ *politically* they formed a unified state (政治上结成了统一的国家) (Bai 1996: 57). The role of the Xiongnu and later Menggu minzu in the evolution of the Chinese nation are of particular importance for the PRC authors of Zhonghua-related works since these two nationalities are usually represented in their writings as ‘major national minorities of China’s north’ (Wang 1995; Yang 1995; Bai 1996; Bo 1996; He 1996).

At the centre of virtually all the discussions on the historical and political development of the Chinese nation is the concept of ‘Chinese land’ (Zhonghua dadi) since ‘Chinese

¹⁰¹ Here the focus is on those academic writings that provide the ‘scientific legitimisation’ for the Zhonghua discourse and reinforce it.

¹⁰² Chen (1992), He (1996), Bai (1996), Bo (1996), and majority of the authors of the authorised writings on the topic.

¹⁰³ 221BC – AD 220.

¹⁰⁴ In fact, all the wars between Han and ‘northern national minorities’ although accepted as ‘historical fact’, explained solely due to the economic reasons – the ‘backwardness of animal husbandry’ in comparison to sedentary agriculture.

land was the place where the Chinese nation originated from' and each minzu (or their ancestors) participated in 'establishing the borders of the Motherland' (Chen 1992: 14). Xiongnu made a major contribution in forming the northern borders of Zhongguo as they 'united nomadic territories of northern China' and thus the region became a 'large multinational region of China' which geographically stretched to Xinjiang and Central Asia in the west, Lake Baikal in the north, and Songhua River Basin in the east (Chen 1992: 15). Thus, the territory of contemporary Inner and [Outer] Mongolia are represented as 'integral parts' of the 'Chinese sacred land.'¹⁰⁵

The place of the Mongolian minzu in this land is also clearly stated. Although 'Mongols are the nationality that for a long period have been living in the vast grasslands of northern China' (Wang 1995: 1), 'a thousand years before the Mongolian minzu entered the historical arena, ancient nomadic people of China's north regions had already been roaming Mongolian grasslands in search of pastures' (Bai 1996: 62). Thus, the Mongols are even denied the rights to call 'Mongolian grasslands' their own land since according to the concept of Zhonghua they have no historical justification on which to base this.

Particular attention is drawn to the Qing period of Zhonghua dadi formation, suggesting the 'Mongolian question' is one of the main reasons for this. The idea commonly held by the PRC official historiographers in the 1990s was that by the time of the Qing Dynasty, the unified 'multinational China' had been 'firmly established'. It was a state that included the territories of all the nationalities who won their allegiance to Qing rulers (including Mongolia). Thus, by the time of the Western intervention in the second half of the nineteenth century China was not only a consolidated multinational state, but also had 'clear and definite' state borders (Chen 1992: 18). In this context, [Outer] Mongolia was represented by the dominant historical narrative as 'clearly and definitely' legitimate Chinese territory.

One could take these historiographic investigations as purely apolitical scientific exercises (forgetting for a moment the common Chinese saying about 'using the past to serve the future') were it not for the fact that the authors seem determined to 'drag' them into the present. Firstly, the development of Zhonghua is said to be a so far

¹⁰⁵ Zhonghua shendi is a very common substitute in the PRC discourse of nation for the term Zhonghua dadi.

unfinished process. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, they themselves insist that ‘contemporary China is a continuation and development of this historical China’ (Chen 1992: 15).

The latter locution is common in many academic and political writings, for instance it appears in one of the numerous articles published in the last decade by *Renmin Ribao* titled “Zhonghua minzu” (*Renmin Ribao*, June 26, 1997). The focal point of the text is that one of the major characteristics of Zhonghua minzu - its ‘internal integrity’ - has always been the basis of the country’s unity (*Zhongguo tongyi* or *zuguo tongyi*). It is represented not only as an historical fact, but also as the main issue for China in the 21st century the author believes that although there were/are ‘splits’ within Zhonghua minzu/dadi, they must be considered exclusively as ‘China’s internal affair.’

Another popular idea of the authors writing on the nation issue when discussing ‘splittism’ is that the entire history of Zhonghua demonstrates that ‘they [minority nationalities] always come back to the Motherland’. In fact, the idea of a ‘common Motherland’ has also been very actively propagated in the discourse of nationality (Yang 1995). Thus, when talking about the ‘shaoshu minzu regions’ of the ‘Chinese land,’ Chen states that ‘the Han lived everywhere apart from Tibet’ and this has resulted in the situation of cultural assimilation and blood interrelations between Han and other shaoshu minzu; linguistically it is encoded in the expression ‘we are among you, you are among us’ (你中有我, 我中有你). From this the authors draw a conclusion that the interests of [non-Han] minzu and the interests of Zhonghua nation are ‘inseparable’ (Chen 1992: 20).

The references to Mongolian minzu in the context of representing independent Mongolia’s history give the latter some basis for discontent¹⁰⁶ This basic analysis of the academic publications concerning the issues of the Mongols’ place in the Zhonghua nation suggests that the representational strategy employed by the discourse embedded in these texts is again that of positioning – here though the Mongols are represented as

¹⁰⁶ In the Mongolia profile provided (in Chinese) on the website of the Mongolian Embassy to Beijing it is particularly highlighted that ‘Mongolia had always been an independent and sovereign state and only in 1634 became a part of the Manchu empire’.

‘complementary’; ethnically they are part of Zhonghua minzu and geographically part of Zhonghua dadi.

Subaltern Studies focus on the deconstruction of hegemonic historiography and deal with the issues of exclusion of subaltern narratives by dominant ones. The official PRC discourse achieves this by positioning Mongolia (both Inner and Outer) within the historical, ethnic and geographical ‘borders’ of Zhonghua thereby *including* them in the discourse on Chinese nation as an integral part of the latter. In fact, some of the PRC historiographers of the nation see it as evidence of why history of Mongolia should be read as a ‘history of China’; they appeal to the fact that pre-modern/Confucian historiography although holding biased and even discriminative opinions on ‘frontier people’ and shaoshu minzu, always included them (the non-Han dynasties of China and frontier states) in the standard histories.

PRC historiography, while strengthening this tradition of ‘exclusion by inclusion’, allocates a higher status to the shaoshu minzu since ‘all the nationalities contributed equally to the formation of Zhonghua.’¹⁰⁷ As far as the status of Mongolia vis-à-vis China is concerned, the result is often such that Mongolia is merely *negated* by such inclusion; that is, represented by the contemporary PRC official historical narratives as historical, ethnical and geographical ‘blank space,’ which can be filled only by *Chinese* historiography of Zhonghua nation.

Certainly, when trying to assess the meaning of representing Mongolia as an ‘inclusion into the Zhonghua’, one of the main questions to ask is who the target audience for this discourse is. To a large extent the discourse on Mongolia was and is a means to send a political message to Chinese Inner Mongolia. Taking into consideration that the second half of the 1990s witnessed the ‘second wave’ of ethnic unrest in the IMAR, it would appear rather natural for the PRC political leaders to employ the discourse on Mongolia for the ‘domestic purposes’ of strengthening the emphasis on national unity and the territorial integrity of the country.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ It may appear as if the narrative is moving right away from key texts to historiography; however the interpretation of the highly succinct country briefs would be incomplete without taking into account the writings of the official state-sponsored historiography.

¹⁰⁸ In the 1990s in general and its second half in particular there appeared a large number of websites (set mostly in the US) of ‘suppressed peoples of West Turkistan, Southern Mongolia

Thus, it appears reasonable to suppose that at the time the ‘domestic’ audience was more important than the international one. Moreover, the situation in Mongolia then also played its part in articulating Mongolia’s profile in 2000 by the PRC discourse producers; in 1995 hundreds of Mongolians protested in Ulaanbaatar against what they called widespread abuse of human rights in IMAR. In 1997 a much smaller group (a few dozen) gathered in front of the Chinese Embassy with the same slogans (Bayasakh 2000: 79-80). The 1998 parliamentary elections resulted in the victory of the coalition of democratic forces and, although President Jiang Zeming’s visit in 1999 was the next positive step in Sino-Mongolian relations, the PRC political elite seemed to remain highly cautious regarding the political development in Mongolia and its possible influence across the southern border.

In fact, the elections of July 2000 which ended in the victory of Enhbayar (of the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party) as new Prime Minister (and particularly the later parliamentary elections of 2002 with landslide victory of the MPRP), were one of the elements that affected the change of line of the PRC discourse. Since then the phrase ‘part of China’ disappeared and rhetoric started to gradually soften.

4.3.1.4 When Did The History of Mongolia Start?

The question of ‘when did the history of Mongolia start’ (or, more correctly, ‘when did it ‘begin’ according to the PRC political texts?’) has been an undercurrent in the analysis of the texts used for this thesis. Different Chinese authors at different times offer different dates for this. For example, the authors of the key text issued in 2000, having ‘sorted out’ the historical status of Mongolians as a Menggu minzu, leaps directly to the establishment of the theocratic monarchy after the victory of the Mongolian People’s Revolution of 1921.

and Tibet’ that focused on the issues of the PRC minority policy; see for example <http://www.innermongolia.org>; <http://www.uygur.org>; <http://www.taklamakan.org>; <http://www.hunmagyar.org/ar.org/mongol/smong.html>; and some others. NGOs (Asia Watch and Amnesty International), Western governments and media also actively participated in ‘Inner Mongolia debates’ from ethnic unrest situation analysis (Gladney, 1996), to professing of soon disintegration of China (*The Economist* 1998), to situation with human rights: <http://www.einnews.com/mongolia/> (electronic partner of *US Politics Today*), Dillon (1999), US Congressional-Executive Commission on China regularly addresses the issues of situation in Inner Mongolia (for example 16 December 2002).

The text's narrative goes 'from Xiongnu - through Outer Mongolia - to 1921' leaving the readers to guess what happened in the 'gap' before 1921. Did Mongolia have no history, or did it have no history *of its own*? Once again, such a 'gapping' narrative strategy appears to be what Doty classified in 1996 as the representative practice of 'negation' when the Other is denied the active agency (in this case as an historical subject) and 'exists' only within the Chinese/PRC 'self-writings.'¹⁰⁹

The idea was even further reinforced by the direct statement of Mongolia's status as 'part of China', so the readers are supposed to remain with no doubts that, putting it in simple words, 'for everything before 1921, go to the "History of China" link.' Since the beginning of the 1990s a large number of such 'hyper texts' have been published explaining the place of the Mongols in Chinese history,¹¹⁰ although none of them is about the 'history of Mongolia' (Menggu), because that could be interpreted as a hint that Mongolia was actually a sovereign state in its own right. Instead the title of the publications (political and academic) is always the 'history of Mongolian nationality (Menggu minzu).'

Why the authors did chose the year 1921 as a reference point, and not 1911 (when the actual 'split' from China took place) or 1924 (when the Mongolian People's Republic – the MPR - was established)? The tradition to date the 'beginning' of history of independent Mongolia from 1921 by academic and political discourses belongs to the larger Marxist-Leninist-Maoist tradition of the PRC historiography, common in the

¹⁰⁹ Thus, while it is possible to find articles by Mongolian (from independent Mongolia), Russian or Western authors on Mongolian traditional culture or some apolitical historical issues (see for instance Nemenggedaoerji [Namenkhdordzh] 1990, Zhukefusikaya [Zhukovskaya] 1993, Baixihe [Pelliot] 1994, Hashilun [Haslund] 1999), there is no way to find anything on its modern history, especially on such sensitive issues as its independence. In the PRC official discourse all the 'outside' voices are not represented. In discourse analysis (and subaltern study of representation) it is very important to see whose voice has not been included in text. All the material for Mongolian counter-discourse has been collected and thoroughly studied, but it appears to be a subject for a separate study. There are only occasional references to Mongolian political texts (with equal status of the 'Chinese key texts): country profiles issued by the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mongolian Embassy in Hong Kong and Beijing. The latter is carefully worded but firm on the subject of Mongolia's ethnic and historical separateness. The Mongolian Embassy in Hong Kong issues much stronger statements regarding China-Mongolia historical encounters, however only in English. The Chinese version of this had been 'under reconstruction' for the last few years.

¹¹⁰ See for example Wulanbilige (1993), *Mengguzu Tongshi Bianzu* (2001).

previous decades when the revolution was seen as the event from which the history of the ‘people’s Mongolia’ began.

The discourse embedded in the academic/political texts on Mongolia in the early 1990s¹¹¹ functioned through the categories like *class* (the idea that the Mongolia’s ‘split’ was initiated exclusively by the Mongolian nobles against the wishes of the ‘masses’), *revolution* (both Russian, after which Mongolia ‘was returned to China’, and Mongolian) and *party* (the ‘positive’ Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party as the vanguard of the socialist changes in the society, and the ‘negative’ GMD that ‘let Mongolia go’, that is, recognised its independence).

Thus, the first key text, while still following the Marxist ideological tradition of narrating Mongolian history, introduced to the discourse a totally new concept of representing strategy - through the category of *minzu*, the central ‘nodal point’ of the Zhonghua discourse. Thus, we can see the first signs of the shift from an overtly ideological rhetoric to a nationalist one in Mongolia-related political texts. This gained momentum in later key texts of the 2000s.

4.3.2 Filling up the ‘Gaps’ (Key Text 2)

The next key text under consideration was issued by *Renmin Ribao* on February 2001 and had some significant adjustments compared to the previous profile. First of all, although the name ‘Outer Mongolia’ remained, the most controversial part of the previous text that defined Mongolia as a ‘part of China’ had disappeared from the authoritative country profile (and has not, as yet, come back). However, there are definite signs of strengthening presence of the Zhonghua discourse as a reference for the text producers - rather than disappearing, the Menggu *minzu* nodal point was reinforced by references to Chinggis Khaan and the Yuan Dynasty.

4.3.2.1 Chinggis Khaan and Yuan Dynasty as New Focal Points

In these sections two sentences from the second key profile of Mongolia are considered. While the first key text provides only an abstract reference to the ‘long history of

¹¹¹ For instance Bao (1991).

Mongolian minzu', the second one amplifies the topic and gives the readers more 'moorings' for identifying Mongolian history:

In 13th century Chinggis Khaan united all the tribes in the Northern and Southern Gobi¹¹² and established a unified Mongolian Khanate ('Menggu jianjie.' *Renmin Ribao wang*, February 2001).

The use of the historical figure of Chinggis Khaan in authoritative political discourses (both in China and Mongolia) is a well researched topic. For example Kaplonski (Kapolinski 2004) addresses the issue of historical image(s) of Chinggis Khaan in Mongolia and his role in official and unofficial accounts of Mongolian history during socialism and in post-socialist Mongolia. The issue of Chinggis Khaan's place in the official PRC accounts of Mongolian history has also recently attracted the attention of scholars interested in analysing how discourse on the Chinese nation and propaganda constructs his identity as a 'Zhonghua hero.'¹¹³

In the PRC, the figure of Chinggis Khaan exists on two levels: unofficially, it is a wide symbol representing for ethnic Mongols the essence of 'being Mongolian', and 'not being Chinese' (in the sense here of being non-Han without any strong explicit political aspect). Thus, there is hardly a Mongolian household in Hohhot that does not have a picture of this historical 'hero of all Mongols' on the wall even if the people hold no anti-China sentiments. Mongolian nationalists, however, see their 'being Mongolian' not just as a mere cultural difference from Han, but interpret his figure primarily from his political importance as the founder of an independent unified Mongolian *state*.

In the official PRC discourse on Mongolia, Chinggis Khaan is given a central role in constructing the Mongolian minzu history, interpreting him 'much more as an ancestral figure than a political one' (Kaplonsky 2004: 167). In other words, his historical significance is first of all as an ancestor of Mongolian nationality which *politically* was a component of China even during the time of the Mongolian empire. Official PRC historiography expands on the schematic outline of the topic given by the political text. Bai in his representation of the period of Chinggis Khaan says that 'from the early 13th century Mongols have entered the historical arena as an ethnic community' emphasising

¹¹² That is what was later known as Inner and Outer Mongolia.

¹¹³ See for example Khan (1995), Bulag (2003).

their ethnic rather political unity (Bai 1996: 57). Zhou develops the idea by making the connection with China even more explicit: Chinggis Khaan ‘united all the ancient nationalities of China which lived in the Mongolian plateau since the Qin and Han Dynasties’ (Zhou 1997: 74).

Chinggis Khaan here is a means of promoting the concept of *Zhonghua minzu tuanjie* – the unity of the Chinese nation. In this role he features in all the discourses: political, academic and popular. The recent decade has seen a flood of representations of this historical figure in mass culture (films, soap operas, etc), and as a tourist attraction (the Mausoleum of Chinggis Khaan in Inner Mongolia). Bookstores all over the country sell numerous books on Chinggis Khaan, usually advertising him in the strap-line as one of the ‘Famous Commanders of the Chinese Nation,’ ‘Great Heroes of China,’ ‘Ancient Imperial Founders of the Chinese State,’ and so on.¹¹⁴

All this creates a very solid background for interpreting the symbolic meaning of Chinggis Khaan for the average Han Chinese reader. In this regard, the fact that the extremely concise historical overview in this key text gives space to Chinggis Khaan and Yuan Dynasty suggests that it is done with a specific purpose in mind; through the connotation of this symbolic figure as a Chinese hero to make the association Mongolia-Zhonghua more vivid.

Once again, it should be noted that while for an average Han Chinese reader the interpretation of Chinggis Khaan in this manner would be natural, for some Mongols in Inner Mongolia (as well as in Mongolia proper) he acts as a symbol of the restoration of the former glory of a unified Mongolian state and even arouses pan-Mongolist sentiments. Perhaps due to this ambiguity, in the later key texts any mention of Chinggis Khaan and the Yuan Dynasty in the context of independent Mongolia has been eliminated.

¹¹⁴ See for example Wang (1999), Cheng (1999). The only exception I came across while researching this thesis was Gan’s (1999) book on Chinggis Khaan which has no references to the Chinese nation or Chinese land. Interestingly, while Cheng (1999) was issued in Beijing by Junshi Kexue Chubanshe, Gan (1999) was published by Renmin Chubanshe in Heilongjiang; perhaps this can account for the differences between the two publications: they convey different discourse – highly nationalistic (military) and alternative liberal (academic).

However, there is still a reference to Yuan Dynasty in this key text which is even more synoptic and obscure than the sentence about Chinggis Khaan analysed above:

1279-1368 the Yuan Dynasty was established (1279-1368 年建立元朝).

Due to the fact that the sentence has no subject, one can only guess who performed the action: Chinggis Khaan? Mongolian minzu? The text is unclear on this. However it appears reasonable to think that it is not factual information the text seeks to provide for the reader, but the nodal points by which to identify Mongolian history 'correctly'; the countless – and officially approved - Chinese publications on Yuan Dynasty usually state that it was 'the era of China's unification,' 'the territory of Yuan Dynasty was still within the boundaries of traditional territory of China' (Chen 1992: 17) and that the Mongolian minzu in six hundred years since Yuan period have become 'an active member of the big multi-national family of our current Motherland' (Zhou 1997: 81). Thus, the reference to the Yuan dynasty in this key text functions in a similar way as other metonymic signifiers discussed above.

4.3.2.2 1911 - The New 'Starting Point' of the History of Independent Mongolia

The key text of February 2001, having made the usual references to the 'true' name of Mongolia and its historical connection with Mongolian minzu, 'adds' to the history of Mongolia ten more years by shifting its chronological borders from 1921 to 1911. Once again, given the nature of the political texts and brevity with which they approach the issues of Mongolian history, this shift does not seem an accidental one. However, nor does it appear to be a symptom of accepting that history of independent Mongolia dating back earlier than 1921. Instead, this change in the authoritative historical narrative has been initiated through the Chinese discourse of nationalism.

The ideological (Marxist) accounts of Mongolian history, especially issued in the 1970s-1980s usually dated the 'beginning' of Mongolian history from 1921 leaving out very important historical events. These events – first of all Mongolia's break away from China – are currently among the topics most actively addressed by the official and particularly popular nation discourse(s) because they are directly connected to such central rhetorical issues for the concept of Zhonghua as 'territorial disintegration of the

Motherland' and China's past humiliations due to foreign involvement into the country's 'domestic affairs.'

The ideological accounts of the history of Mongolia occasionally referred to events that happened prior to the Mongolian Revolution and the establishment of the monarchy in the country even when the 'official beginning' of independent Mongolia was stated as 1921.¹¹⁵ However, the purpose of mentioning these earlier events was done in order to lay stress on their class nature: the 'so-called independence' of Mongolia from China was always represented exclusively as initiated by Mongolian *feudal lords* with the support of *Tsarist* Russia against the wish of the 'masses' and without their participation in the process. Although the role of Russia has always been considered as central in the events leading to Mongolia's independence, it was always the *Tsarist* Russia. Moreover, the producers of the ideological texts usually emphasised that as a result of the Russian Revolution of 1917 Mongolia 'was returned' to China.¹¹⁶

The dominant Zhonghua discourse of the 2000s, however, shifted the accent from *class* to *nation*: 'Chinese nation' against other – foreign nation(s).' Thus, now the focal point is mainly on Russia (which in the official and non-official publications on the topic is often referred to as 'Russia' 俄国 and no longer as 'Tsarist Russia' 沙俄) which 'engineered' the 'split' of Mongolia from its Motherland – China - long before 'the chaos of the *Xinhai* Revolution' broke out.¹¹⁷ Sometimes, the discourse can even take curious forms; thus, in the article mentioned above on the hundred most important events in twentieth century world history, the 'separation of Outer Mongolia from China' features as entry No 3, while the *Xinhai* Revolutions follows it as Number 4.¹¹⁸ And although such an historical account is totally incorrect in terms of chronology,¹¹⁹ it is 'correct' in terms of its discursive importance in the current socio-political context. It

¹¹⁵For a good example see Beijing Junqu Zhengzhibu Lianluobu (1994).

¹¹⁶ Beijing Junqu Zhengzhibu Lianluobu (1994: 1).

¹¹⁷ The search through *Renmin Ribao* and Xinhua nets brings numerous articles on the topic. To name just a few, *Hebei Ribao* 17 January, 2004; *Haizhou Ribao* 5 December 2003; interesting account of the events is in Lin et al (1995); particularly explicit on the matter is "Modern History of China" by Wang (1989), which is still used as a teaching material for schools (reportedly first edition was reprinted recently; although this has not been personally accounted for). See also the references for the previous discussion on the term 'Outer Mongolia.'

¹¹⁸ Zhongguo xinwenshe (1999).

¹¹⁹ Xinhai Revolution is traditionally dated by 10 October 1911, while Mongolia declared independence in December 1911.

also reinforces the message that Mongolia's independence was not a result of China's domestic situation but was imposed on China by a foreign power. Here Mongolians in both Inner and Outer Mongolia, as parts of Zhongguo and Zhonghua, are opposed to the foreign power that 'divided the Motherland.'¹²⁰

However, while the overwhelming majority of the framing texts provide to the readers the picture outlined above, the key texts are much less explicit in their representation of Mongolia's history and incline more (at least formally) to the traditional ideological texts:

In December 1911 Mongolian princes under the support of Tsarist Russia proclaimed 'autonomy'; in 1919 the 'autonomy' was abolished.¹²¹

Another terminological issue is present here. Although it may sound like a lexical nuance, at least for Mongolians it is of principle importance. This is the issue of whether the right word here was 'autonomy' or 'independence'? Certainly, there is no second opinion on the matter in independent Mongolia¹²² as well as in the PRC among some of the academics which favour the latter term.¹²³

In fact, as mentioned in Chapter 3, in 1911 Mongolia proclaimed independence from China and the foundation of the Great Mongolian State. In 1915, as a result of the Russia-Mongolia-China treaty, 'independence' was substituted by 'autonomy' although Mongolia's deference to Chinese 'suzerainty' was purely nominal. In 1919 the troops of the Northern Warlords entered the territory of Mongolia, and it came under the direct rule of the Republican Chinese Government: the autonomy was formally abolished. The 'second-time' for independence in Mongolia came with the victory of the Mongolian Revolution and with Soviet military support.

¹²⁰Yang (1995) in his discussion of Mongolian patriotism focuses on how Mongolian minzu expressed in songs their opposition to foreign invasions and their anger and sorrow of the division of China (Zhongguo).

¹²¹In 2001 this phrase appeared for the first time in the key text 2. Since then it could be found in all the consequent country briefs which have history section.

¹²²For example, in the country profiles from Mongolian MFA at <http://www.extmin.mn/aboutMongolia.htm> and Mongolian Embassy to Beijing at <http://www.mongembj.org.cn>, and to Hong Kong at <http://www.mongolia.org.hk/english/index2.htm>.

¹²³Many the academic texts do not have second opinion on the matter (see for example Tumenqigige et al 2000). The only concession to the authoritative discourse in such academic publications is that the word 'independence' appears in inverted commas (" "), which in this thesis is usually translated as 'so-called independence' (see for example *Mengguzu Tongshi*, 2001).

Despite these clear historical facts, all the key texts under consideration in this thesis (as well as many of the supporting texts) solely use the term ‘autonomy.’ In fact, the word ‘independence’ is not even mentioned, either in the context of the events in 1911, or in the contexts of the 1921. All the text producers show curious form of logomasia – the very word ‘independence’ is either completely suppressed or appears in double quotation marks. Paradoxically, the texts speak of the establishment of the monarchy, victory of the revolution, the foundation of the MPR etc., without even enunciating Mongolia’s actual status vis-à-vis China. This can be interpreted as subliminal reference to the popular idea in Zhonghua discourse of the ‘illegitimacy’ of Mongolia’s partition from China.

Thus, we can see that although the ‘gaps’ in the authoritative account of Mongolia’s history were ‘filled up’ by moving its historical boundaries to 1911, it was due less to the official acceptance that Mongolia’s quest for independence started much earlier than 1921, than to the hegemony of the Zhonghua discourse that represents the events of 1911 as an issue related to the nation’s past disintegration and present reunification.

4.3.2.3 Yalta Conference as the Central Nodal Point

Although the second key text is interesting due to its new emphasis on the events of 1911, it is not only this that makes it very different from the previous country profile. There is also its emphasis on the significance of the Yalta Conference in Mongolian/Chinese history. This is a very powerful topic in terms of its effect on the readers; unlike hypothetical appeals to an audience’s feelings about minzu and the ‘big family of brotherly nationalities’ or a remote historic figure like Chinggis Khaan, the issue of the Yalta conference (similar to the ‘1911’ topic) is chronologically recent and involves much more emotional issues – historical injustice, recent losses of national territories, and the humiliation of China by foreign powers.

The organisation of the text is enough to see that the Yalta conference is the new central point of the texts: while everything else is in simple outlines, Yalta is not just mentioned, but gets a rather detailed explanation unusual for texts of this genre and the historical sections in particular:

In February of 1945 the leaders of the United Kingdom, United States and Soviet Union at the Yalta Conference stipulated that they would 'keep intact the status quo of Outer Mongolia (Mongolian People's Republic),' which was one of the conditions for the Soviet Union's participation in the war against Japan.

In ideological (Marxist) texts on independent Mongolia published in the previous decades Yalta was usually not mentioned (with the exception of specialised academic works). All the 'blame' for Mongolia's partition from China used to be placed solely on the GMD and its poor domestic and international policies. By contrast, in the political texts of the 2000s although there is still a reference to the 'Chinese government of that time',¹²⁴ which recognized Outer Mongolia's independence, the main emphasis has clearly shifted to the Yalta Conference as the main factor of these historical events.

In recent years (1990s and especially 2000s) the Yalta Conference has been one of the topics most addressed in Zhonghua discourse(s) being widely discussed in all types of media, particularly nationalist and ultra-nationalists. The promotion of the 'Yalta topic' by the official discourse started much earlier than the appearance of the first country profile on Mongolia. At the beginning, the publications were of a more general character which, however, provided a good background for the 'correct' interpretation of Mongolian briefing material. 'Being a Chinese, I feel particular disgust towards the Yalta Conference' is a typical example (Xiao 1995).¹²⁵ But if this article made only some abstract allusions to China's 'territorial losses', the later texts contained more concrete references regarding Mongolia.

On the whole in the Yalta-related discussions there were/are usually two leitmotifs: 'foreign interference' in China's domestic affairs, and the territorial disintegration of China. For example, in 2001, after publication of the key text in February, there appeared a number of articles in the official media that meant to explain to the readers the history of Yalta conference and its significance for today's China. As a rule, these texts represented the event as totally dominated by UK, US and USSR, and 'in which

¹²⁴ The key texts do not mention the GMD explicitly.

¹²⁵ An editorial in *Renmin Ribao* written by Xiao Qian, a renown and influential in China intellectual: writer, translator and publicist, who spent a large part of his life working as lecturer and journalist in Europe and US. More on this legendary person can be found in Teresa Poole's article in *The Independent* on November 20 1994.

China naturally did not take part' (Xiao 1995); during the conference the foreign powers 'made China's territorial rights an object of their negotiations' and the GMD simply 'swallowed that bitter pill' (*Beijing Qingnian Bao*, June 12 2001).

China's territorial losses are the object of particular scrutiny. According to the text authors, the conference was initiated by the desires of the three foreign powers to 'divide China's north-east into their spheres of interests.' The day when the GMD recognised its humiliating results – leading to the independence of Mongolia – was a 'day of shame' for the whole nation (*Jiefangjun Bao*, September 17 2001). China is seen as a victim that has been 'sacrificed' (*Beijing Qingnian Bao*, February 3 2002) by the foreign powers and 'Mongolia, originally our country's Outer Mongolia' is seen as becoming a 'buffer-zone of Siberia' 'governed by Soviet Russia' (Fu 2001).

Yalta is not only addressed frequently in the framing texts from different official media, but it is also a topic explicitly linked to Mongolia. In this regard these supporting writings can be considered as facilitating the interpretation of the otherwise rather obscure messages given in the key texts for the readers. It is not just the official media (liberalised or otherwise) that approaches the issue; primarily semi-official and unofficial 'patriotic-nationalistic-military' sites of all sorts discuss it regularly and in great length.¹²⁶ The topic has found its way into Mongolia country briefs in such media as tourist guides and maps (*Yazhou zhishi ditu ce* 2001, *Chaoxian, Hanguo, Menggu* 2002).¹²⁷ Finally, the Yalta Conference has always been of high interest in academic studies,¹²⁸ which discuss the 'Mongolia issue' in the context it provides.

¹²⁶The official paper of PLA, *Jiefangjun Bao* (<http://www.pladaily.com.cn>), usually expresses views on Yalta-Mongolia matter similar to dozens of other semi-official and non-official 'military' websites like Military News at <http://www.milnews.com>; China Army League at <http://www.junmeng.org>; Red Stratagema <http://www.chinamil.com>; Chinese Army <http://www.chinaha.net>; New Military Affairs at <http://www.cnarmy.net>; Military Affairs <http://www.unitedcn.com>, and numerous others. These websites although operate through the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist rhetoric and symbolic system, are in reality nationalistic or ultra-nationalistic. For more on military discourse (the shift from ideology to nationalism) see Nan (2001).

¹²⁷While tourism is booming and more and more Chinese are going abroad, including to Asian countries, the bookstores are stocked full with all types of guides. However, the ones just mentioned are two of a very few which include Mongolia.

¹²⁸ See for instance Fang (1997), Lu (1998).

Tumenqiqige's book published in 2001, goes against the official line when giving an account of history of independent Mongolia, it does not even mention the Yalta Conference. Instead the author's idea is that recognition of Mongolia by China happened due to the results of the *referendum* carried out in Mongolia with the agreement of the GMD. In fact, the referendum in which almost 100 per cent of the Mongols voted for their independence from China is another taboo word/topic in the Chinese political texts as none of the key texts ever mention it.

One of the first problems with this is that it would undermine the message that Mongolia's partition was solely the result of 'foreign interference' and second, it would go against the main linguistic strategy in all the key texts; not allowing the Mongolian people to be represented as active subjects. *None* of the key texts feature Mongolian people – 'China' and the 'Chinese government' take positive actions. All the events relative to Mongolia – partition, revolution, etc., are given only in the passive voice with the exception of Chinggis Khaan. Giving active agency to the Mongolian people would have also undermined the myth of the 'Mongolian patriotic masses' who 'cried over the split of the Motherland.'

Discussion of the Mongolian referendum cannot help its striking resemblance to a similar issue – that of Taiwan's independence, its past, present and especially the future. Recent years have witnessed a growing number of publications in official and unofficial media in the PRC that directly link the Mongolian and Taiwan 'questions.' This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. At this point it is worth quoting a rather symptomatic statement made by an article from *Renmin Ribao*. Although it concerns the Taiwan's intentions to carry out referendum in Taiwan regarding its independence from the mainland China, it shows the PRC attitude to the legitimacy of referendums in general:

Regardless the eventual results of the referendum, it is not going to change the fact that Taiwan is Chinese territory (*Renmin Ribao*, February 10, 2002).

It remains hypothetical if likewise it can be said that in the eyes of the Chinese political leaders there is a parallel 'regardless the results of the Mongolian referendum....' Yet in the light of the explicit and inexplicit statements about Mongolia's status vis-à-vis

Zhongguo lingtu, it does not appear very farfetched and also feeds the traditional fears of the Mongols from independent Mongolia regarding their southern neighbour.

In fact, similar attitudes to the legitimacy (historical and, most importantly, current) of 'unsuitable' elections, referendums, treaties, etc., in comparison to the 'historical facts' is well represented in the following quotation: an article on the significance of the Yalta Conference in the current historico-political context sent to the readers a very important message - it stated that due to the new international situation and especially the new - strong - position of the PRC in the world the agreements achieved at Yalta Conference are 'no longer valid' (*Renmin Ribao wang* and *Huanqiu Shibao* both on September 7, 2001). For many in both Mongolia and China it would raise a question whether this statement is to function as purely rhetoric or as a basis for future political actions.

In conclusion to this section, it must be said that although such explicit (and clearly irritating for Mongolians) statements as 'part of China' were eliminated and the language of this key text and its standpoint softened (if compared with the previous one), the desirable effect, however, is achieved through covert linguistic strategies of representing the history of Mongolia through suppressing certain words/topics, particular grammar usage (i.e. use of the passive voice) and, especially through linking the discourse on Mongolia (and its historical status and place in a 'historical hierarchy' vis-à-vis China) with the most prominent nodal points of Zhonghua discourse - Mongolian minzu, 'territorial losses of the Motherland' - Outer Mongolia's partition from China, 'foreign interference' - Russia and the events of 1911, and 'unjust and humiliating treaties imposed on China' - Yalta conference. This illustrates the official discourse on the Chinese nation not only greatly influenced the official textual representations of Mongolia but also took the dominant (compared to the ideological Marxist discourse) position.

4.3.3 From Nationalism to Patriotism and the Return of the Party (Key Text 3)

The next of the key texts to be examined in this chapter is a *Renmin Ribao* article issued on their website in June 2001, just half a year after the publication of the previous key profile discussed above. Perhaps the necessity to produce another country profile of Mongolia can be explained by the need to make certain 'improvements' to the previous

one. Certain shifts in the account of Mongolian history were made following the developments in the domestic and international context. The particular features of this text are, therefore, what had been excluded and what added compared to the previous profile.

Firstly, the account of the 1921 revolutionary events in Mongolia became ostensibly more ideological. The adjusted new version of the sentence on the event now went like this:

In 1921, the People's Revolution *under the leadership of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party*¹²⁹ won, and in July of the same year the theocratic monarchy was established.

Two main factors appear to have influenced the 'return of the Party' (the MPRP) into the political texts on Mongolia. First of all, this comes from the impact of the situation inside Mongolia: not only in August of 2000 the parliament elections resulted in the victory of the MPRP, and the party candidate became the new Prime Minister, in May 2001 (a month before publication of the key text 3) another MPRP member, Bagabandi, was elected a president.¹³⁰ As far as the PRC leadership was concerned, this was not only an 'ideological' victory of a fellow communist party, but also a practical one – the turbulent (economically and especially politically) situation in Mongolia of the 1990s did finally settle down with the arrival of the new/old leadership.¹³¹

Moreover, since consolidation of the leadership in hands of MPRP, the new Mongolian political elite placed a firm emphasis on good relations with China in the spheres of economical, political and military cooperation. The political interrelations (especially as far as 'historical issues' are concerned) sometimes take a rather paradoxical (although pleasing for the PRC) turn. For instance, the government of Mongolia took every opportunity to make rather ambiguous 'negotiations' with China – for example, official

¹²⁹ Incorrect: in 1921 the name of the party was Mongolian People's Party, it changed into Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party in 1924.

¹³⁰ The event accompanied by the *Renmin Ribao* article "Menggu Rengedang dongshan zaiqi" ('Revival of the MPRP'), July 8, 2000, p.3.

¹³¹ In less than a year the situation in Mongolia 'settled' even more: during the parliamentary elections of 2002 the MPRP had a landslide victory by winning 72 out of 76 seats in Ikh Khural.

statements in support of the PRC's policy of 'one China' regarding Taiwan in return for the PRC assurances that Mongolia is considered a sovereign state.¹³²

There appears to be a second highly influential (if not though so direct) element affecting the official discourse on Mongolia, which characterises the general situation with the national discourse(s) in the PRC. By bringing mention of the Party back into the country profile, the official discourse (provided by the CCP through the medium of the *Renmin Ribao* texts) not only nods approval to the ruling political forces of Mongolia, but also sends a strong message about the central role of the communist party in historical events,¹³³ be it the MPRP in Mongolia or the CCP in China. As Seckington (2002) points out, it is currently a highly important issue for the CCP to remain 'the centre of official accounts of the nation's achievements' and 'the focus of patriotic sentiment.'

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, 'patriotic' is the category highlighted by Seckington. Analysis the official discourse of the "Fourth generation" of the PRC leadership on the Chinese nation, he points out the new tendency: the strengthening dichotomy between the official (authorised/produced by the CCP) discourse on state-centred patriotism and popular discourse on nationalism. This shift 'from nationalism to patriotism' in the official line was crucial for this thesis' approach to the analysis of what was *excluded* from the June 2001 key text. In this profile there are no references to such central nodal points of nationalist discourse highlighted by the previous key texts on Mongolia as *Menggu minzu*, Chinggis Khaan or Yuan Dynasty – categories that directly connect the narrative on Mongolian history to the Zhonghua nation *per se*. On the other hand, the texts still kept those categories that alluded more to the Chinese state – its territorial integrity and the humiliation by foreign powers. The elimination of the categories which position Mongolia in the nationalistic account of Chinese history from the country profile's language indicates that the official discourse on Mongolia manifested in this key text reflected the new tendency to represent Mongolia more in the context of China *Zhongguo* rather than *vis-à-vis* the Chinese nation *Zhonghua minzu*.

¹³² For the last joint statement on the topic see for example *Renmin Ribao* of July 2004 made on the occasion of the Mongolian prime minister's visit to the PRC. Although all the governments of Mongolia 1990 carried out this tactic, it appears that in the 2000s this rhetoric has intensified.

¹³³ In fact, from the perspective of the linguistic analysis of the section, the MPRP is the only subject apart from China that actually performs action.

4.3.4 'Clash Of Representations' (Key Texts 4, 5, 6)

The key texts examined in the previous sections of this chapter were all issued by *Renmin Ribao*. In the year 2002 the enterprise of 'introducing Mongolia' for the Chinese audience was taken up by two other organisations - Xinhua News Agency and the MFA. Each of them issued Mongolia briefs which represented Mongolia in quite different ways – different to *Renmin Ribao* as well as to each other - conveying competing messages about the country. This part of the chapter makes a 'comparative analysis' of the historical sections of these two texts in order to demonstrate how the different representations of Mongolia and its history negotiated for the authority to portray 'two different Mongolia' and assesses the significance of this.

Looking at the sections on history in these key texts, there is nothing new – the profile from Xinhua copies the historical section from the *Renmin Ribao*'s Mongolia brief of February 2001, while the MFA chose for its profile of the country the historical account from *Renmin Ribao*'s brief of June 2001. Thus, two top official organisations – Xinhua (as representative of the CCP) and MFA (a government ministry) - use different accounts of Mongolian history for their country briefs. The differences between these two accounts as well as the meaning of these differences in the concrete historico-political context were discussed above. The focal point of this part of the chapter is not these differences/discrepancies *per se*; rather, it is: a) the institutional aspect, that is, why did Xinhua and the MFA choose what they chose, and b) the structural aspect, that is how these historical sections were framed – in this case not by their intertexts or the context in which they were produced, but by other sections of the same profiles. Through the examination of these aspects this chapter seeks to analyse the image(s) of Mongolia these two key texts constructed.

4.3.4.1 *Orthodox Nationalists vs Professionalised Pragmatists*

The key text issued in 2002 by Xinhua used not the updated ('less nationalistic, more patriotic') version of the historical section published in *Renmin Ribao* in June 2001, but the old one issued by the paper in February 2001. As already argued above, this was the

historical narrative on Mongolia transfixed by a set of nodal points inherent in the dominant Zhonghua discourse with particular emphasis on the category of minzu.

The Xinhua News Agency is the medium that conveys the PRC political elite's political views and propagates them. Thus, the selection of the outdated history section was not a casual action, but more a deliberate strategic move in order to comply with the orthodox nationalist reading of Mongolia, and therefore remain at the centre of still dominant nationalistic discourse of Mongolia whether it is produced by the 'hard-core' nationalists of the PLA¹³⁴ or the popular nationalism of 'enthusiastic masses.'

The next task is to see what the position of the historical section within the Xinhua key text is. Some background is needed here. In 2002 two profiles of Mongolia were issued by Xinhua in only a short period. The first one appeared on the Xinhua website in June, and the second just a month later in July. In both texts the 'history' sections were identical; however the framing parts differed significantly. The first Xinhua profile can be characterised as extremely synoptic. The historical section was clearly the central point of the text because other sections of the profile were schematic and somewhat lifeless descriptions of such issues as the country's geography or population (that appears as if taken from a 1970s encyclopaedia). It was an example of a very old-fashioned, 'archaic' overview of Mongolia, with the authors trying to tell the reader that 'there is nothing much to tell about the country apart from its history, which is in fact *Chinese* history.'¹³⁵

Just one month later (which by itself indicates that there was a certain need for it) Xinhua issued another Mongolia profile. The historical section remained the same, but other sections of the text underwent changes. First of all, the whole profile displayed a more 'open-minded' approach to representing Mongolia. For instance, this updated profile included a map of Mongolia,¹³⁶ small but already updated bits on Mongolian

¹³⁴ A site of strong nationalistic views on Mongolia.

¹³⁵ The only sign in this text that Mongolia is 'alive' and does exist in the *present* is a very brief reference to its politics in 1990s.

¹³⁶ Maps always played a special role in who PRC's handled the 'Mongolian question'; Mongolia has often accused PRC of sanctioning production of maps where Mongolia was represented within China's borders. Thus, the appearance of a 'decent' map of Mongolia in the political text can be considered rather a good sign of changes that this 'tradition' is currently undergoing.

politics (only the MPRP got mentioned though) and economy, and a brief sections on Mongolia's international relations (since 1990) and its relation with the PRC (since 1949). However, despite this 'modernisation' of the profile, the historical narrative remained intact, suggesting that Zhonghua discourse still set the limits within which Mongolia's historical identity (even an updated one) was created by this text.

Almost at the same time – in May of 2002 – a revolutionary profile of Mongolia was produced by the MFA. As mentioned, it was a hybrid, partially copied from *Renmin Ribao*, partially (in fact, mainly) the MFA's own interpretation. Thus, the historical section was that of *Renmin Ribao* of June 2001 with the 'toned down' representation of Mongolia's historical status vis-à-vis Zhonghua nation, and the rest of the profile was written by MFA experts. However, what really makes this profile different from all the ones previously issued is the whole organization of the texts and its content. As far as the structure of the texts is concerned, the historical account was no longer its core: positioned after the '*Main Public Holidays*' section it went under the title '*General Information*' and included information on Mongolia's geographical position and climate. It was not followed by a more traditional listing of, e.g. the country's main cities, but by a plethora of professional up-to-date information on different aspects of Mongolia's modern society, politics, economy, mass-media, etc.

What distinguishes the content of this new profile from other official texts of this genre is not just the professionalism and quality of the expertise they provide or the wide range of aspects of the country's life it covers. The most remarkable characteristics of this key text is that Mongolia is represented in a way which is actually the *norm* in profiling other countries, be it Japan or Hungary. However, before the MFA's texts, the official Mongolia briefs completely lacked such 'normality.' The MFA profile takes a truly revolutionary approach to presenting Mongolia by providing large amounts of information on the country.¹³⁷

In the MFA key text there is credible information not only on political, economic and social life in Mongolia, but, most importantly, abundant information on its foreign relations and cooperation with other countries. A large section is devoted to an

¹³⁷ The only other example of using concrete and Mongolian statistic sources dates ten years back in 1991 when the last MPR survey was published (Bao 1991).

overview of Sino-Mongolian relations. The text's point is that Mongolia is first of all a subject in the PRC's international relations, not the object of discussions on its 'true' status according to the 'historical facts.'¹³⁸ Equally lengthy sections are on Mongolia's relations with Russia, the United States, Asian countries, the European Union as well as its membership in international organisations like the United Nations and cooperation with Non Governmental Organisations. All this sends a very strong message of Mongolia's identity as an independent nation, a valid, full-fledged member of the international community, which therefore should be approached as such by the PRC.

On the whole, the MFA profile of Mongolia represents the country as a dynamic *modern* state, not just a remote piece of land, 'ex-part of China' frozen in time. Both the quantity and quality of expertise on Mongolian despite the history section - that last bastion of the Zhonghua discourse - reinforces the message that Mongolia can and should be dealt with not only in a pragmatic and practical way, which can do without the archaic reference to *Xiongnu*, but also within the international norms and institutions. In other words, the text's authors from the MFA, while including the (toned down) historical section produced by the *Renmin Ribao*, represented the history of Mongolia as a non-contentious issue.

Therefore, the 'clash of representations' embedded in two different key texts issued almost simultaneously and in the same historico-political context, appears, in fact, to demonstrate the existence of the 'clash' between views among the PRC establishment groups competing on the issue of the direction in which approach towards Mongolia should develop: either a future-orientated pragmatic approach or a anchored in the past 'reification of the historical justice' one.

There is an issue of the balance of competing powers between these two key texts. The 'patriotic/nationalist' profile has on its side Xinhua and therefore the Central Committee of the CCP, the major power holders in the PRC political leadership, as well as a very wide audience of general readers. The modern hybrid profile is backed by the MFA, a governmental ministry, which, while not the last in power distribution in the PRC, is not

¹³⁸ In fact, the official website of the MFA provides a separate and even more detailed overview of Sino-Mongolian relations available in both Chinese and English and the fact that both texts are identical (sometimes it can be the case that texts in Chinese differ from those orientated for foreign readers) shows that the same message is sent to both domestic and foreign audiences.

as influential as the CCP. The website of the MFA, where this text is available from, is more likely to have a much smaller and rather specific readership, presumably mostly those actually involved with Mongolia (students, tourists, businessmen, anyone who purposefully seeks information on Mongolia).

All this suggests that it is the Xinhua profile which is to be the 'winner' in this debate and it is this text that will translate the official line in 'how to represent Mongolia correctly' for other media/discourses to follow. To see whether this is the case, further examination of the next official profiles is needed.

4.3.4.2 The 'Winner'

As many authors writing on the issues relating to the functioning of authoritative discourse in the PRC point out,¹³⁹ in the case of the 'debates' on certain issues or conflict of interests between different constituencies, it is the CCP that usually acts as an arbiter that either finds a compromise or gives the official weight to one side rather than the other. The 'right' view ('right' at the moment because the negotiation for power to represent is an ongoing process) is then legitimised by being propagated in the official media (initially *Renmin Ribao* and then moving on to others).

Thus, these two key texts together form a site where the interests of the MFA, constituency involved in implementing foreign/Mongolian policy compete with those of orthodox nationalists from Xinhua, part of information apparatus for the Central Committee more concerned with domestic politics of nation building. This clash between the old-style nationalist profile of Mongolia and the modern hybrid text happened in 2002. In the next two years official publications on Mongolia developed as illustrated in Table 1.

¹³⁹ For instance, Christiansen (1996, 2004), Hodge and Kam (1998), Nan (2001).

Table 1

	<i>Renmin Ribao</i>	Xinhua Agency	The MFA
2002	no profile	'patriotic/nationalist'	'hybrid'
2003	'hybrid'	no profile	'hybrid'
2004	'hybrid'	'hybrid'	'hybrid'

This demonstrates that in 2003 *Renmin Ribao* adopted the hybrid texts produced by MFA as *the* official profile of Mongolia. In 2004 the same text was already circulating in Xinhua and many other official media. That means that the liberal message sent in the hybrid text was adopted as the official guidance on how Mongolia should be represented.

However, it would be incorrect to call it a full victory of the competing message produced by MFA; it appears more likely that the discourse originated in MFA is gradually gaining much more influence in the struggle to represent Mongolia officially and has gradually come to co-exist with the dominant Zhonghua discourse.. Thus, in Xinhua Net the old profiles circulate parallel to the hybrid one. Moreover, it is this old Xinhua profile that still dominates the regional media, for instance the websites of the local governments across the PRC.¹⁴⁰

Thus, it appears that *Renmin Ribao*, by appropriating the MFA's hybrid version of the Mongolia profile has sided with the professional pragmatic construction of Mongolia.

¹⁴⁰ See for example, China North at <http://www.enorth.com.cn>, China South online at <http://www.csouth.com.cn>, Sichuan online at <http://www.scol.com.cn>, and many others, all downloaded in 2004.

The question of how (or indeed whether) this alternative message about Mongolia encoded in the hybrid texts found its way to other social practices/discourses will be discussed in the following part of the chapter.

4.4 Mongolia Profiles as the Guideline

This part of the chapter will focus on how the representations of Mongolian history produced by the official profiles are taken up by other social practices in the PRC. This is an important issue since it can help to assess the real influence of the political texts on the broader scale of the representations of Mongolia by other institutions, media and in other genres. This issue could itself be a topic for a separate study so the following is only an outline of the issue intending to give a general picture of one of the most interesting and telling cases – the representations of Mongolian history in the social institution of education.

The choice in favour of education was made not only due to the important role of teaching in creating the basic perceptions of Mongolia's identity ('what this country is'). It is also interesting because of the form in which information on certain topics on Mongolia is presented not as something for a reader's critical consideration, but as a *positive knowledge*, that is, something given to children in the form of axioms. The media of these representations – learning and teaching materials - are also suitable for the methodological framework of textual analysis.

It is understandable that there are no textbooks exclusively on Mongolia, since it is a rather limited and specialist area. It is harder to understand, however, why 'Mongolia' is only included in a very limited way in general textbooks on the history of the world or Asian history. In such material Mongolia features only in two hypostases: either as 'Chinggis Khaan, great Zhonghua hero of the glorious history of China', and 'Yuan, the great Dynasty in the glorious history of China', etc.; or as an illustration of the foreign invasions in China in the 19th and early part of the of 20th century and 'split' of Outer Mongolia from China (for example Liu 1991, Shijie lishi 2000, Wang 1989, Zao 2000).

Once again, the only way Mongolia is represented is within the historical borders of China. Post-independent Mongolia is simply passed over in silence.¹⁴¹

The ‘Mongolian question’ has drawn particular attention from educational circles in recent years. Before giving a brief overview, it is worth noting that all the texts are available at the official websites of the Ministry of Education (MOE) that provide both learning and teaching materials, and semi-official sites which supply pupils with materials for homework, exam preparation, additional information on certain topics of the official curriculum, etc..¹⁴²

Even a preliminary examination of these texts shows a few similarities shared between them - the language they use lacks any standard circumlocutions inherent in the political texts (key profiles). The statements on Mongolia are very simple and explicit, mostly generically ideological/nationalistic rhetoric. The language presupposes the topic (and vice versa) central for all the texts - China’s territorial losses as a result of foreign intervention. According to the texts, the beginning of the last century was a ‘painful period in the history of Zhonghua nation’ as ‘Russia (俄国) engineered the “independence” of Outer Mongolia’ and, having taken the opportunity of Xinhai Revolution, ‘occupied Chinese territories’ and turned ‘our Mongolia’ into a ‘colony’. In fact, the particular emphasis is made on the *colonial* status of Mongolia since 1911 perhaps to make a parallel with Hong Kong and Macao. The only mention of the Mongolian people’s participation in the process is that ‘some Mongolian nobles welcomed the occupation,’ while many ‘patriotic nobles’ were against it.

¹⁴¹ Anecdotal evidence for this is conversations with Mongolian scholars during the field work for this thesis in Inner Mongolia who pointed out that there are no teaching materials on post-independent Mongolia not only at schools but also at higher education institutions, unless one specialises in Mongolian studies. Even in this case students would have to rely more on their lecture notes/lecturer’s handouts rather than proper teaching materials.

¹⁴² For instance, ‘Zhongguo de bantu shi zeyang youhai tangye biencheng qiongji de’ at <http://www.prcedu.com/exam/text/file02/0813893.htm> posted on February 22, 2002; “Sha E cedong de Wai Menggu duli,” at <http://resource.yqedu.com.cn/statistics/jsjx/gzpd/xkjj/g1ls/unit03/kztl04.htm> posted on March 6, 2002; ‘Diguo zhuiyi jiajin jinlüe Zhongguo’ at <http://edu.cqwin.com/hj/xuesheng/xsxxpt/hudong/lishi1/di-4/03.htm> posted on 01/21/2003. Interesting example is atlas for children issued by the Department of Geography of Beijing Normal University (Beijing Shifan Daxue Dilixi 1996): on its maps Mongolia is not included into Chinese territory, but it appears as merely a blank space (literally – with no colour, no name on it) between China and Russia.

Although the texts mention the Yalta conference between the three powers, it is not directly linked to the 'Mongolian question'. Instead, stress is placed on the personal decision of Stalin, who did not 'return Mongolia to China' because 'he was first of all a nationalist, and only then a communist'. The texts do speak about the referendum on independence from China in Mongolia, but only to represent it as invalid, since 'there were no observers.'

The rhetoric the texts employ is often stronger than that in the official political texts making an impression of being nationalism in an ideological package. The texts serve as an interesting example of no-nonsense nationalistic accounts: no references are made to Mongols or Mongolian minzu, nor does it represent Mongolian nationality as a 'member of the family of brotherly nationalities', which 'contributed to the nation's history/prosperity', etc. Mongolia is represented as merely a *territory* of China without stating explicitly whether they speak about historical territory, or territory that should still be part of China now.

The most impressive examples are two texts produced in 2002 by the People's Education Press of Ministry of Education that provides teachers with instructions how to use the textbook *The Modern History of China* meant for high school pupils. The first text focuses on the chapter 'Imperialists Intensify their Aggression against China' and lists the most important and difficult points of the topics that should be highlighted by teachers during teaching and addressed during examinations. The second text gives concrete directions on how exactly these points are to be presented for the pupils during the classes.¹⁴³ Below are some examples of this followed by the guidance to the teachers given in bold:

- 'Outer Mongolia is the territory of China from time immemorial', it is so 'according to the Russia-China treaty of 1727' - **in the class use map to show pupils where the Sino-Russian border would have been;**

¹⁴³ 'Eguo cedong wai menggu duli' at <http://www.pep.com.cn/2002120ca40585.htm> and at <http://www.pep.com.cn/200212/ca29014.htm> posted on December 1, 2002; both text downloaded on March 6 2003.

- ‘Russia was the aggressor who always had ambitions to invade Chinese Mongolia’ – **amplify the topic; give pupils additional information to deepen their understanding of Russia’s aggressions;**
- ‘Outer Mongolia’s “independence” was engineered by Russia’ - **use texts of China-Russia treaties to demonstrate that it was Russia’s illegitimate policy to cause China to disintegrate and turn Outer Mongolia into its colony;**
- ‘Tangnu Ulianghai¹⁴⁴ had always been under the jurisdiction of the Chinese government’ - **[give pupils additional information]: the land is very rich in gold, coal, salt and cashmere; in 1914 Russia occupied these 170 thousand square km of Chinese territory, and so on.**

The representations of Mongolia meant for children are very nationalistic. There are no references to ideological symbols like the communist party, the Mongolian Revolution, or the establishment of the People’s Republic, etc. Certainly, such facts as the national-liberation movement in Mongolia, and its first national constitution endorsed by the first parliament, etc, are passed over in silence. Mongolia figures here merely as a piece of land, a business to be negotiated solely between China and Russia.¹⁴⁵

These texts were issued in the same year as the hybrid (MFA’s) Mongolia profile. The influence of the latter on the former is weak. Perhaps the producers of the educational text did not have time to ‘adjust’ their writings according to the new line. However, the texts issued in subsequent years show that the later youth-oriented writings sometimes employ even harsher rhetoric on Mongolia. In 2003 one of the numerous websites on ‘homework and exam preparation’ published a text under the title “[Independent] Mongolia – is Chinese Territory” (蒙古国 – 中国的领土).¹⁴⁶ The China Youth net (partner of Chinese Communist Youth League and All-China Youth Federation)¹⁴⁷ discussed the question of ‘who let Mongolia leave the family’ (China) despite the ‘iron-strong historical fact’ that ‘Mongolia (蒙古) is Chinese territory.’

¹⁴⁴ Uryanhai (Oirad or Western) Mongolia, today is Tyva Republic of Russian Federation.

¹⁴⁵ It appears to be a typical ‘orientalist’ discourse since the discussion is revolving solely on ‘whose land it is’, China’s or Russia’s; the voice of Mongolia is not only not-present, the very existence of such is not recognised.

¹⁴⁶ “Menggu guo – Zhongguo de lingtu,” available at <http://www.hz-dzh.zj001.net>; posted on May 14, 2003.

¹⁴⁷ See the organisation’s official website at <http://www.cycnet.com>.

The incorrect terminology (contemporary ‘Independent Mongolia’ or even one ‘whole’ Mongolia instead of historical Outer Mongolia) used by the authors produces an even stronger effect by bringing the discussion from an historical to a contemporary context.¹⁴⁸ The tendency to bring the historical term into the discussion of contemporary Mongolia-related issues is even more vivid in the educational text “The whole story of the Mongolian Question.”¹⁴⁹ The author starts his article with a very emotional (even for a ‘patriotic’ teaching text) statement: ‘Today’s “[Independent] Mongolia” (“蒙古国”) is the piece of land that Chinese people (中国人) – the descendants of the Yellow Emperor on the both sides of the Strait, to the north and to the south of Yellow River, inside and outside the Great Wall, in every corner of the world – used to call affectionately (亲切成为) Outer Mongolia’. In the following overview of independent Mongolia the author refers to it only as ‘Outer Mongolia’ and employs other strong nationalistic rhetoric.

All this suggests that the identity of Mongolia constructed by the textual representations from the authoritative media (the hybrid text in particular) found little way into the educational practice of the PRC. It is hard to say whether *not* having the *Renmin Ribao* texts as an ‘ideological guidance’ happens because of the Ministry of Education or individual authors. Another explanation could be that the educational texts’ authors followed some other ‘line’, for example, one conveyed to them through restricted (neibu) directives. It is thus possible that there is a neibu version of how Mongolia should be represented and taught.

4.5 ‘Balancing’ Between Different Readerships

The previous section has looked at the influence of the political texts on the social practice of education and attempted to demonstrate that there appears to be little ‘correlation’ between the representations of Mongolia’s history in political texts and

¹⁴⁸ “Guomin Dang zhengfu zhengshi chengren Wai Menggu duli,” posted on January 10, 2004, available at <http://cyc7.cycnet.com:8091/cycmis/history/contentjsp?id=528>.

¹⁴⁹ “Wai Menggu wenti Shiwei,” available at http://www.hricn.com/edu/Article_Show.asp?ArticleID=1737 downloaded on 21 May 2004.

teaching materials. As texts are written with certain audiences in mind, one can suppose that the key texts did not merely have the participants of educational process (both teachers and students) as the specific audience. This part of the chapter will focus on the issue of interactions between the text producers and the targeted audience. Certainly, a text is not an actual dialogue since the writer and readers are distanced from each other in terms of space and time. However, the audience, its expected reception and responses do affect the text producers' choice of discourse and particular linguistic and semiotic forms.

The analysis of the MFA hybrid text's history section demonstrated that while the rest of the profile underwent immense updating (not only in terms of factual information but also in the very approach of representing Mongolia in a modern way), its historical sections did not show any signs of emancipatory change. It functions in fact as a toned down historical account produced by *Renmin Ribao* in June 2001. It reached its maximum emancipation limit and simply could not move beyond that glass ceiling. The historic section may strike the readers as rather 'archaic' in terms of its language/content compared with the rest of the text, and make them ask 'why does it not change?' This thesis holds that this is due to the audience, or to be exact, rather *different* targeted audiences that the producers of the text tried to address at the same time.

The historical section performs two functions. It constructs an historical identity of Mongolia closely tied to China *Zhongguo* (excluding though explicit claims over Mongolia's territory), and minimizes the allusions to the *Zhonghua* nation. The historical representation of Mongolia as a 'historical part of the Chinese domain' is aimed at the Chinese Mongols, especially those with potential 'splittist' ambitions. At the same time it is an idea the majority of the domestic (Han) readers of hybrid text expect to find in the historical account of the country. Examination of a wide range of the inter-texts between country profiles, as well as interviews with people during fieldwork indicates that average reader would *anticipate* seeing this statement supporting the idea that Mongolia is part of China.

Growing popular nationalism is kept in mind by the writers when representing the historical account of Mongolia for readers from this perspective. As Seckington (2002)

states, if the CCP does not live up to expectations of this particular part of the PRC society, it risks losing its leadership of the whole project of nation building. In recent years in the Chinese mass media (mostly semi-official and non-official) there have been heated debates on ‘who let Mongolia go’ – the GMD when it recognised the independence of Mongolia in 1946 or the CCP when it established diplomatic relations with the MPR, and thereby recognised it as independent state. For PRC leaders this debate can be potentially threatening as it undermines their authority; especially recently when popular nationalism sentiment makes people increasingly critical of the leadership and more free to express these criticisms. The need to represent the ‘right’ account of Mongolian history becomes even more important in this light.¹⁵⁰

However, the rhetoric was toned down because of the changing context in which this material was produced. The appearance in the PRC for instance of an audience with better informed alternative views on Mongolian history (e.g. academics, who claim to have larger influence on the politics in nowadays PRC) or those with alternative views on how the issue should be approached (such as liberals and professionals for whom pragmatic goals are more important than the issue of history). Finally, the readership outside China – who have some influence on China’s development in Mongolia and the international community - has also had an impact.

The CCP (through the political texts) has to ‘balance’ and create consensus between the international and domestic audiences and between liberals and nationalists inside China. The historic section of the hybrid text is in a way a compromise between the camps, which is why it remains intact. The thesis argues that historical identity of Mongolia constructed by the hybrid text is not a reflection of the actual plans of the PRC leadership to ‘give Mongolia back’, rather a concession to the nationalists inside China and the message to the ‘domestic’ Mongols.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Thus, the survey of the texts on the issue of Mongolia’s secession from China shows that a heavy accent is made either on GMD or Russia (Tsarist or otherwise) as main perpetrators in order to ‘shift the blame’ from the communist government of the PRC. For the CCP it appears to be of vital importance not to be presented in these debates as ‘betrayers of the Motherland.’

¹⁵¹ It appears that very often independent Mongolia – all strata of the society – and Western scholars of the Mongolian studies do not take into account the whole complexity of the situation with the Chinese accounts of Mongolian history and instead tend to go for blunt accusations of the PRC leadership of ‘colonialist ambitions.’

4.6 Locating the discourse(s)

When a synopsis of this thesis was presented some time ago at a conference, one of the questions after the presentation was rather challenging. – “Which concrete PRC organizations are ‘locations’ of alternative discourses on Mongolia and which ones produce a nationalistic one?” Although one could say that the texts issued by PLA, for instance, are more likely to have a strong nationalistic or Marxist perspective on the ‘Mongolian issue’ than MOC, as Nan (2001) points out, even the military discourse in the post-Deng PRC is no longer a homogenous entity. DA helps to know that there *are* different views and approaches to Mongolia. Throughout this chapter ‘pragmatic professionals’ (the MFA, MOC and some other organisations with professional/business interest in Mongolia) as producers of challenging representations of Mongolia have been referred to. However, not even they can be considered carriers of some ‘unified line’ on Mongolia.

Here is a brief example of how the issue of Mongolian history is dealt with in the official country profiles issued by professionals of both governmental and private business organisations. Three of the profiles were issued by the governmental organisations concerned with the PRC international relations and economic cooperation: the country profiles issued by of MFA and the MOC described in Chapter 1, and Mongolia brief issued by Beijing TP- the Chinese Government Cooperation with the United Nation Conference on Trade and Development.¹⁵² The two other texts acquired from business organisations China Oil,¹⁵³ and China-Mongolia-Russia Trade International Business Net¹⁵⁴ specialising in international consultancy and mediation business services.

It is the main characteristics of the hybrid text of the MFA that it provides modern representations of Mongolia while still approaching the issue of history from the

¹⁵² Trade Point Beijing (Beijing TP) at <http://www.tbjc.gov.cn>; text issued on February 17 2004 is available at <http://www.tbjc.gov.cn/104/2003-2-17/2@2177.htm>.

¹⁵³ China Oil at <http://www.chinaoilonline.com>; the text issued on May 1 2002 is available at <http://www.chinaoilonline.com/corporation/decorum/decorum.asp?id=303>.

¹⁵⁴ China-Mongolia-Russia Trade at <http://www.cmrtrade.com>; issued on July 8 2004, available at <http://www.cmrtrade.com/wwwroot/1/6/118.html>.

positions of the *Renmin Ribao*. Although the producers of the text from the MFA can be described as professionals negotiating their own interests regarding Mongolia, they are still a governmental organisation subordinate to the CCP and therefore are unlikely to produce a true alternative to the historical account in the *Renmin Ribao*.

The country profile produced by the MOC lacks a section on the history of Mongolia, which is noteworthy by itself, especially because the website of its representative office in Ulaanbaatar (from where the country profile was downloaded) provides abundant high quality information on Mongolia. Moreover, the information concerns not only the issues directly relevant to its politico-economic activity (like Mongolian law, taxation system, etc.), but also covers the country's culture and customs, and even has a photo-gallery depicting the country's landscape. The history of Mongolia is in fact the *only* issue which is not addressed by the website. This can be interpreted as a political statement, signifying dissatisfaction with the officially approved account of history, and the constraints on producing an alternative one (after all it is organisation of MOC which is also under direct rule of CCP).

The text issued by the China-Mongolia-Russia Trade Net, a private business company, serves as a good example of a compromise between the Mongolia profiles of the two governmental structures described above. It addresses history by giving officially sanctioned version of the hybrid text and at the same time its website is a good source of up-to-date professional expertise on contemporary Mongolian society. Such necessity to find compromises is attributable to the fact that CMR Trade Net is a state-owned company based in Hohhot in Inner Mongolia, and its goals are not solely economic, but also political – promoting cooperation between the countries, with particular emphasis on IMAR's place in this process.

China Oil, a private consultancy company, gives a different impression due to its purely businesslike, pragmatic style in providing information. It does not feel politicised in the way it presents information. Thus, in its Mongolia profile it goes even further than the MOC: it not only provides the history of Mongolia outside its brief, but also reinforces the message by laying stress on Mongolia's 'proper name being [Independent] Mongolia (with no references to 'Outer Mongolia', Menggu minzu, etc.). The only occasion China/PRC is mentioned in the text, is when the author writes of Mongolian

foreign relations. Put in simple words, the message can be translated as ‘the only connection between China and Mongolia is that they both are subjects of international relations, building cooperation on this basis.’

This contrasts sharply with the country profile produced by the Beijing Trade Point. Interestingly, since it is an internationally-orientated organisation (cooperating with the United Nations) as well as pragmatic (working in trade and development) orientation, one would expect its Mongolia brief to offer an alternative, more ‘open-minded’ approach to the issue to Mongolian history. However, Beijing PT authors take an individual approach to the issue and produce a rather large account of Mongolian history where no stones remain unturned where all the nodal points of both nationalistic and ideological discourses get covered. Starting the text directly from *Xiongnu* period and going traditionally through the Yuan Dynasty and ‘territory of China’ reference points, it puts particular emphasis on Tsarist Russia, revolutions (both Russian and Mongolian) and the role of the GMD which ‘recognised Mongolia’s independence in exchange for Soviet aid.’

As we can see, although the discourse on Mongolia by the professionals and pragmatics are on *the whole* ‘milder’ than, for example, that of the popular nationalists or *Jiefangjun Bao*, it would be incorrect to try to locate discourse(s) of Mongolia and especially discourse on how its history should be officially represented, in terms of the institutional status of the texts.¹⁵⁵

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the development of the language and the content of the historical sections from text to text in order to understand the evolution of the discourse on Mongolia’s history. For this it examined how the representations of Mongolian history

¹⁵⁵ There appears to be the same situation regarding the historical accounts produced in the Chinese academic circles, although here the division between different representation is based on other principles: the governmental organisations like the Chinese Academy of Science often choose the authorised hybrid profile (<http://www.cas.ac.uk>), while the individual authors do now produce an alternative, critical to the official discourse on Mongolia and its history (Tumenqige et al 2002; many articles on the analysis of the Mongolia’s politico-economic changes in the Mongolia in the 1990s mentioned in the Introduction chapter).

in the key texts constructed certain historical identity(ies) of Mongolia and its historical status vis-à-vis the Chinese nation.

The analysis demonstrated the existence of discrepancies among the official representations of the history of Mongolia among the different text producers. More importantly (and perhaps more correctly), it demonstrated the existence of different opinions of how the history of Mongolia should be represented for both domestic and international audiences.

The analysis of the texts discerned two main 'approaches' to the subject among the authors: the orthodox nationalistic approach that prioritises the importance of the ideological bases of Zhonghua building, and the professionalised approach of the pragmatists with more *present-future oriented* goals and interests regarding Mongolia. The CCP, acting as an arbiter in this 'market of discourses,' adopted the hybrid text produced by the MFA as its final (by the time of the last publication in 2004) Mongolia profile. A consensus thus emerged between those who advocate formulation of the policy towards Mongolian as 'marooned' in nationalistic reading of the history and those who argue for history to be a 'non-issue'. The findings suggest that Mongolia's historical identity is constructed according to the concrete socio-political needs of the moment, in this case the needs of the dominant discourse on China's nation building project.

CHAPTER FIVE

Cultural Identity of Mongolia

The main objective of this chapter is to analyse the process of the discursive construction of Mongolian cultural identity since 1990. The focal point of the research is, therefore, the PRC official rhetoric on, and the mode by which it represents, the fundamental elements of Mongolian culture, such as customs, ethnicity, beliefs, and so on. The chapter examines a wide range of official publications, the key texts first of all. Firstly, it tries to establish the stages of the official discourse's evolution throughout the 1990s until the mid-2000s. Secondly, it examines the key texts in chronological order and charts the appearance of certain nodal points that pinpoint the Chinese discourse on Mongolia: for example, Mongolian ethnic origin, foodways, religious beliefs, national symbols, and so on. It also draws attention to the background texts that often provide a supplementary interpretation of these nodal points. Thirdly, the chapter pays particular attention to the discursive strategies and linguistic devices employed in the official rhetoric in order to represent Mongolia in a certain way, such as 'grouping' or 'inclusive-exclusive' strategies or a *quid pro quo* approach of visual representations used by some of the key texts. It also attempts to establish the significance of such strategies and tries to assess the possible goals they are meant to achieve.

The chapter argues that there are in fact political objectives in creating Mongolian cultural identity in certain ways. The process of representing Mongolian cultural identity appears highly situational and dependant on the purposes the text producers are aiming to achieve. The chapter suggests that this is so because the construction of a cultural identity for the Mongols of Mongolia is closely linked to that of the Mongolian minzu of the PRC. This in turn is closely related to the Zhonghua politics.

5.1 Mongolian Culture and Society in Official Publications since 1990.

Although there is no standard definition of culture, it is mainly understood as the system of shared history, beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, institutions, ethnicity, religion, place, nationality, and artefacts – in other words, the elements that the members of a society use to communicate with their world and with one another and which are socially rather than genetically transmitted. The discussion of the concept of culture is outside the scope of this study; this chapter is primarily concerned with the discursive construction of Mongolian cultural identity and looks at how the task of representing main cultural traits is approached in the key texts and the background publications.

The very genre of country profile makes the task of representing any given culture a very difficult exercise given that often the whole complexity of the culture has to be expressed in merely three or four sentences. Thus the country briefs that do undertake such a task can be easily accused of promoting highly essentialist representations, some fixed ‘truths’, generalisations, stereotypes and so on, which would be true even in the case of a mono-ethnic country like Mongolia (where approximately ninety per cent of the population are Khalkha Mongols) with a high cultural homogeneity. However, from a DA point of view, it is precisely the brevity of the key texts that makes ‘every word count’ and offers good research material to study the ‘essence’ of Mongolian culture as seen and represented by the texts’ authors.

Among the central media which published materials regarding Mongolia in the 1990s it was mainly *RMRB* which addressed the issue of the country’s cultural identity. During the decade the newspaper issued a rather large number of very brief news reports that mostly addressed such topics as diplomatic events or certain social issues, for example increases in crime and death rates, Mongolia’s economic problems since 1990 and so on.¹⁵⁶ In the middle of the 1990s *RMRB* also published a series of personal accounts that were meant to represent life in present-day Mongolia through the eyes of ‘ordinary people’ (Modegema 1995, Ju 1995, Qinqi’er 1996, Wang 1998a). Interestingly, the articles could be characterised as rather positive in sharp contrast to many personal accounts of those visiting or living in Mongolia of the early 1990s when the country

¹⁵⁶ The rhetoric would change from highly negative to highly optimistic depending on the results of the elections in Mongolia. This topic will be addressed in more detail in the Chapter 6.

lapsed into economic and social chaos and which were published in the regional Chinese media at that time (the most striking example is Ye, 1991). Also notable about the ordinary people's accounts from the *RMRB* is that despite telling different stories, they shared a number of common characteristics: a) the usage of extremely poetic language and a focus primarily on the country's beautiful landscapes, and the type of 'politically correct' rhetoric which is usually employed to describe Inner Mongolia in the official publications in China; b) a lack of any information on the political life of the country and simultaneous praise of the economic reforms (often with reference to those that were simultaneously taking place in the PRC); c) an emphasis on the country's modernity rather than Mongolian traditional culture; d) a focus on the ordinary people's 'restored optimism and sense of stability' and their sentiments toward the PRC in general and the Chinese Mongols in particular.

These publications flagged up the topics that would be addressed in subsequent publications and in a way set the pattern of representing Mongolian culture and society that appeared a few years later. This chapter therefore examines how the discourse on Mongolia culture and society has evolved since the early 1990s and especially, since the appearance of the first country profile in 2000, by establishing some nodal points that fix the Chinese discourse on Mongolian cultural identity.

5.2 Mongolian Ethnicity and Customs (Key Text 1)

The first key text (October 2000) stands out amongst all the other Mongolia country profiles for two reasons: firstly, its section on Mongolian socio-cultural particularities is the shortest among all the key texts. From the point of view of the content, it addressed only the topics of Mongolian ethnicity and folkways. The first was under the section 'Population' and read as follows: 'The predominant majority are the Mongols, mainly Khalkha Mongols; the minority nationals are Kazakhs, Russians, and others.' At the very end of the country profile there was a section on 'Customs' which reported that 'the Mongols worship horse-milk vodka, which is offered as a sacrifice to the ancestors and spirits of heathen; they offer it to friends who come from afar. Mongols love horses. Mongolian nation is a horse-back nation.' Despite their extreme brevity, these sections

provide interesting material for analysis when examined against the background publications and in the broader context of the PRC politics of the Zhonghua discourse.

5.2.1 Vanished Ethnicity

Concepts of culture and ethnicity are interwoven, ethnicity being an important feature of the cultural identity. By ethnicity scholars usually mean a population of human beings whose members identify with each other, either on the basis of a presumed common genealogy or ancestry or recognition by others as a distinct group, or by shared culture, religion, language, or geography. By the same token ethnicity can be considered an important feature of the cultural identity. The following is the examination of the modes of Mongolia ethnicity as represented in the official publications since 2000 and how this adds to the construction of the PRC official version of the Mongolian cultural identity.

5.2.1.1 A Nation without Ethnic Origin

According to the methodology of DA, in text analysis it is equally important to examine the content of the texts, things that are in it, as well as things that are being omitted, 'suppressed'. The thing which is clearly missing in the first profile (as well as in all the other profiles and majority of the supporting text drawn for this study) is any mention of the ethnic origin of the Mongols [from Mongolia]. The previous chapter demonstrated how [Outer] Mongolians were denied a 'history of their own' and in this regard the issue of the ethnic origin of the Mongols was also briefly addressed.

Chapter Four demonstrated how the question of ethno-genesis of the Mongolian nation was placed firmly within the borders of Zhonghua discourse. Menggu minzu was represented in the official publications as a nationality developed in the 'Chinese world' and as one of the components of the Chinese nation. By the same token, none of the official publications that address questions of Mongolian cultural identity speak about 'ethnic history' when talking about Mongols from Mongolia. Again, the latter are portrayed as a 'dead end branch' of Menggu minzu.

The previous chapter also addressed the issue of the appropriation of the historical figure of Chinggis Khan by the Zhonghua discourse and how history was used for

creation of identity for the Mongols of Mongolia and Mongolian minority of China. Chinggis Khan is also an important ethnicity marker (since he ‘united all the Mongolian tribes’) yet it is represented as such in the official publications solely in regards to *history* of the Menggu ren, the Mongols of Mongolia. Indeed he is mentioned in the history sections of many key texts. However, he very rarely features in the representations of *contemporary* Mongolia, often in sharp contrast to similar discourses on Inner Mongolia. It is as though since the ‘break away’ from the Chinese Motherland, [Outer] Mongolia lost the copyright for this historical figure.

A part of the target audience for the country profiles consist of tourists and visitors, so many briefs, including the key texts on Mongolia, include information on the country’s tourist attractions and sightseeing. All the Mongolia watchers, including those from the PRC, remark upon the rapid expansion of the tourist industry in Mongolia. Apart from the beautiful landscapes and opportunities for extreme sports, one of the main features that attract foreign tourists is the perception of Mongolia as ‘the land of Chinggis Khan’. However, on this point the Chinese profiles of Mongolia differ dramatically from the profiles issued in other countries – none of the key texts mentions Chinggis Khan as Mongolia’s tourist attraction.

One can suggest that an explanation for this can be found in the compact format of the country brief. However, background publications reinforce the message of the key texts. For example a travel guide has a rather extensive chapter on Mongolia and on the country’s attractions, yet none of the Chinggis Khan-related places, so important for the Mongols themselves¹⁵⁷ as well as highly attractive for the tourists, are mentioned. In fact, the text does not mention any historical sites at all. According to the book, the only things to see in Mongolia are steppes, traditional nomadic life-style, cave paintings and Lamaists temples (*Yazhou zhishi dituce*, 2001).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ The importance of the Chinggis Khan figure can be illustrated by one example. When, in June 2007, the Foreign Minister of the PRC started his visit in Mongolia the very first activity on his itinerary was to “pay honour to the monument of Chinggis Khan”. UB Post, June 30, 2007, available at <http://ubpost.mongolnews.mn/content/view/359/1/>, downloaded on 30 June, 2007.

¹⁵⁸ Even the personal accounts (for example Oct 1995) report that the tourist industry in Mongolia is booming, and then suggest that ‘foreigners are attracted by Gobi landscapes.’

At the same time, a tourist guide for Inner Mongolia issued the same year has a whole chapter devoted to Chinggis Kahn and begins with the statement that 'Inner Mongolia is not only the land where Chinggis Khan's story began, but where the history of all the Mongolian nation originated' (Li 2001: 35),¹⁵⁹ because Inner Mongolia is the land inhabited from 'pre-historical times' by Han, Xiongnu, Xiangbi, Zhirzhen, Mongols and other nationalities' (ibid, 54). The book has also a very thorough account of the sites related to Chinggis Khan: for example, to his tomb,¹⁶⁰ which, according to the authors, is 'the only place where the memorial ceremony for Chinggis Khan is held'. Thus we can see how such crucial elements of Mongolian self identity as its ethno-genesis and the historical figure of Chinggis Khan have not been included in the construct of the cultural identity for the Mongols from Mongolia.

5.2.1.2. Russians in Mongolia – 'red herring' minority

The Mongolian population is the only other aspect of the country's socio-cultural representation described in the first Mongolia country profile published in the PRC. Moreover, the only topic that is addressed is the ethnic composition of the country's people, rather than any other demographic statistics which characterise a country's population. On the whole, the section on the Mongolian population is the shortest section in the profile and consists of only two phrases: 'The predominant majority are the Mongols, mainly Khalkha Mongols; the ethnic minorities are Kazakhs, Russians, and others.' It appears to be no coincidence that such a brief description of the Mongolian population draws particular attention to its Russian component. The previous chapter demonstrated the importance of 'Russia' in the creation of the historical image of Mongolia in the key texts. This chapter argues that 'Russia' once again serves an equally significant purpose as a device to represent Mongolian cultural identity in a certain way vis-à-vis China. To be able to interpret this discursive strategy,

¹⁵⁹ The place of the origin of the Mongolian nation generates the most heated debates between the Mongolian and the official PRC historical-political discourses. For example, in the Mongolia profile issued by the Mongolian Embassy in US the proclamation of Mongolia as the only place of 'Mongolian race origin' features twice and in bold font showing its significance for the authors. Mongolian Embassy in the US, 'Mongolia: Land and People' available at www.mongolianembassy.us/eng_about_mongolia/land_and_people.php#05, downloaded 16 march 2004.

¹⁶⁰ The exact place of Chinggis Kahn's death is considered unknown by the Western scholars of Mongolian studies.

it should be placed firmly into the historical and current socio-political background of foreign presence in Mongolia and its importance to the PRC.

There are few hard statistics on the Mongolian demographic situation since 1990 despite the Population and Household Census conducted in 2000. The majority of the sources used for this chapter suggest that the Mongols (mainly Khalkha as well as other Mongolian ethnic groups like Buriad, Dorvod, Barga, etc.) account for 85 per cent of the population. The other largest ethnic category is the Kazakh people who make up about 7 per cent of the population, live in western Mongolia (as well as in Kazakhstan and in China's Xinjiang-Uygur Autonomous Region), are a pastoral, Turkic-speaking, and traditionally Muslim people. 5 per cent are Tungusic minorities (reindeer people of northwest of the country) and 3 per cent classified as other groups, including Russians and Chinese.¹⁶¹

There is even less hard data on the number of Russians and Chinese residing in the country by 2000, but as will be demonstrated later, in quantitative terms the Russian minority was not the greatest. Therefore, one would naturally wonder why only the Russians are mentioned in the Chinese profile of Mongolia. It appears that this question is significant in regard to the general aim of examining the images of Mongolia this profile creates. It should be added that it is not the exact number of Russian or Chinese minorities in Mongolia that is important, but the dynamics of these two minorities, the history of their residence in Mongolia and the political context.

When one examines issues concerning the Russian or Chinese segments of the population in Mongolia, it is vitally important to distinguish between the so-called autochthonous minority and the migrant minority. Autochthonous minorities are officially recognised cultural minorities who have historical ties with the state they reside in and the link to a traditional area of settlement. As a rule they are citizens of the state, however it differs in the case of Mongolia which does not allow double citizenship, thus only a really tiny minority of Mongolian Russians or Chinese are the holders of a Mongolian passport. Migrant minorities, on the other hand, are mainly short-term foreign-born immigrants (including the illegal ones).

¹⁶¹ See for example Batbayar (2001), Van Arsdol (2003).

A brief overview of the Russian and Chinese presence in Mongolia is of relevance here as past China-Mongolia encounters continue to influence the present and can often provide explanations for current issues in Sino-Mongolia relations, as well as the modes by which they are represented in the official media in the PRC. Until 1911 Russian commerce and the number of Russian citizens in Mongolia was relatively small, by some estimates no more than seven to eight hundred (Startsev 2003, Boikova 2002). Originally they were predominantly merchants from the bordering Siberian regions of Russia, and trade was spontaneous and uncontrolled by the Russian authorities. In 1910s the attitude of the Russian government changed and the Russian population began to grow, reaching 1500 people in 1912 (Boikova, 2002). However, they lived in a very isolated community and perhaps exactly because of this their relations with the Mongols remained on the whole amicable (Startsev, 2003).

The number of Chinese merchants and settlers was much greater due to the new strategy of Qing government in Outer Mongolia. It gradually relaxed its strict policy which forbade the Chinese from crossing the Mongolian border, cultivating pastoral lands, and from marrying Mongolian women. As a result, some scholars argue that by the end of the 19th century there were up to 100,000 Chinese settlers in Mongolia (Batbayar, 2001). Many of the Chinese married or had liaisons with Mongolian women and their descendants were considered Chinese by the rules of patrilineal descent common for both Mongols and Chinese. This period can be considered a symbol utilised by all the Mongolian discourses since then; a symbol of the fears of Chinese cultural and ethnic assimilation still rather common among the large part of population in Mongolia (Sanjdorj 1981, Onon 1989). The period of the 'colonial rule' during the Qing dynasty signifies not only a loss of independence and statehood, but also alludes to prospects of cultural and ethnical assimilation. The period is commonly characterised in Mongolian official (let alone non-official) publications as a 'degrading period in the Mongolian history.'¹⁶²

In October 1919, the Chinese government abolished Outer Mongolia's independence by bringing in an army of 10,000, which was later driven out of the region by White

¹⁶² See for example the Mongolia profile issued by the Mongolian Embassy in Japan available at www.mongemb-jp/aboutmongolia.html.

Russians (the majority of whom later moved to Northeast China). In the 1920s many Russians began to settle in the bordering Mongolia Siberia, however border crossing was rather rare and mostly done by non-Russian ethnic groups, for example Buryats and Kazakhs. In the first half of the 1920s there was a group of Soviet soldiers and military advisors. After Mongolia gained its independence from China, a large number of the Chinese left the country. However, several hundred Chinese companies continued in business, for example in 1925 there were more than 23 thousand Chinese in Mongolia (Batbayar, 2001).

The period from the end of the 1920s to the end of 1930s was characterised by the growing influence of the Comintern and the USSR in Mongolia. In particular, by the end of the 1930s the Mongolian government's policies were under the strict control of Soviet diplomats and advisors. In 1936 Soviet troops entered the country again and many Chinese along with other foreigners were driven out of the country (Luzianin S. G 2000).

After 1949 Sino-Mongol relations received a new momentum and, during the period from the 1950s until the mid-1960s which was marked by smooth Sino-Soviet relations, Mongolia experienced an inflow of Chinese specialists and experts, which amounted to about 18,000 (Batbayar). Mongolia's 1956 census counted Chinese as constituting 1.9 per cent and Russians as 1.6 per cent of the population (Library of Congress 1989).

After the souring of Sino-Soviet relations, many Chinese were forced to leave Mongolia. The number of Soviet and other East European specialists kept arriving in the country due to the demands of the massive industrialization of Mongolia in the 1970s and 1980s. Thousands of Soviet nationals were working in Mongolia as technical experts, advisers, and skilled workers; they were a noticeable presence in Mongolian cities until the late 1980s. However, these were mainly short-term contractors. The Chinese specialists, on the other hand, were leaving the country, not always voluntarily – for example, 7,000 were expelled in 1983. However the balance of the autochthonous Chinese and Russian minorities remained the same: 2 per cent Russians and 2 per cent Chinese (Library of Congress).¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Mongolia, Ethnic and Linguistic Groups. Library of Congress 1989.

After 1991, the dynamics of Chinese and Russian presence in Mongolia changed once again. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the following Russia's withdrawal from Mongolia (especially by the military), virtually all Russian contract workers left the country, as well as some of the long-term residents (many with their Mongolian spouses) due to the difficult economic situation and the anti-Russian sentiment which spread in the country in the first half of the 1990s. By contrast, Sino-Mongolian economic relations, political cooperation and grass-root contacts started to develop very rapidly, so much so that it aroused concerns about the 'Chinese peril' among the ordinary Mongols.

According to the Mongolian Immigration Service in 2001 there were 1493 permanent Russian residents and some (no exact figures available) contract workers in the major Mongolia-Russian joint ventures set up during Socialist period, for example the Erdenet copper plant. The same source states that by the end of 2000 Chinese autochthonous minority and immigrants accounted for 1, 520 people, and there were also about 2, 000 short-term contractors (Batbayar 2001). However, the real issue of the 2000s became the problem (at least as declared by the Mongolian side) of Chinese illegal immigrants to Mongolia, with an estimated 10, 000 by the end of the 1999 (Bedeski 1999). The Mongolian Statistical Yearbook 2000 offers the following statistics for 2000:

'Arrived in Mongolia:	Russians - 49,456;	Chinese – 57,546.
Departed from Mongolia:	Russians - 48,712;	Chinese – 48,024'

(Mongolian Statistical Yearbook 2000).

It should also be noted that the issue of the illegal immigration from China to Mongolia is still one of the most sensitive points in Sino-Mongolian relations and one of the most common topics raised by the Mongolian media, reinforcing popular fears of Chinese expansion.

Thus, in the year 2000, after ten years of Russians' hectic exodus from and the Chinese' 'triumphal return'¹⁶⁴ to Mongolia, the first official profile on Mongolia published in the

¹⁶⁴ Later the chapter will address in more detail the ways in which China's return to Mongolia is represented in the official media in the PRC.

PRC since 1990 still characterised the Mongolian population by emphasising its 'Russian' aspect which was a convention during the period of Sino-Soviet confrontation.

One can suggest that it was not only due to the orthodox mode of representing Mongolia adopted in 1970s-1980s, but that political objectives were also at play. The emphasis on the Russian presence in Mongolia can, therefore, be understood in three ways: geopolitically, socially, and ideologically. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Mongolian independence and 'recession from the Motherland' at the beginning of the 20th century are still often represented in the current PRC publications as having been 'engineered' by Russia which secured its independent status during the Soviet era. 'Russians' controlled Mongolia's domestic and foreign policies, especially those towards the PRC which actually aimed at forcing China out of the territory it considered its own. Moreover, the recent development of the Russo-Mongolian relations allow to suggest that Russia is 'coming back' to Mongolia as an investor, business and trade partner, the fact that raises some anxiety among the PRC officialdom.

In terms of a social explanation for the emphasis on the Russian presence, the texts aim to deflect attention away from the issue of Chinese illegal immigration to Mongolia and to prevent insinuations regarding China's possible latent expansion into Mongolia by emphasising a strong Russian presence in the country. Finally, seen in ideological terms, and as demonstrated later in this chapter, the issue of Mongolia's Westernisation/Russification¹⁶⁵ is one of the mostly frequently addressed themes in both official and popular publications. Representing Mongolia as 'having lost its cultural identity' helps to reinforce the image, produced by the Zhonghua discourse, of Inner Mongolia as the only 'real' Mongolia, the centre of the entire Mongolian nation and Mongolian culture. The following section of the chapter will examine further the role of the 'foreign' component in creating Mongolian cultural identity in the PRC official discourse, and its significance.

¹⁶⁵ Interestingly, in the official Chinese publications on Mongolia "the West" and "Russia" are often used interchangeably. The significance of this will be discussed later in this chapter.

5.2.2 Mongolian Folkways

The last section of the first profile on Mongolia issued by the *RMRB* has a title “民俗.” It can be translated as ‘folkways,’ the term which stands for practices, customs and beliefs shared by a group as a part of their common culture. The concept also includes the patterns and norms of conventional everyday behaviour of groups in society. The section on folkways, therefore, aims at presenting readers with information about the patterns and norms that characterise Mongolian cultural identity and modes of conduct. Similar to the section on Mongolian population, the folkways part of the profile is very brief; it is placed at the very end of the profile and merely states that ‘the Mongols worship horse-milk vodka. It is offered as a sacrifice to the ancestors and spirits of heavens, and to friends coming from afar. Mongols love horses. The Mongolian nation is a horse-back nation.’ These three phrases are employed to depict the quintessence of Mongolian culture and norms of everyday behaviour and are worth examining in more detail as in doing so they aim to represent Mongolian cultural *identity*. This part of the chapter will specifically focus major issues regarding construction of Mongolia’s cultural identity, including the issue of ‘foreignness’ that, according to the Chinese official writings, affected and indeed altered Mongolian culture.

5.2.2.1 A “Horse-back Nation”

The perception of Mongolia as a ‘horse-back nation’ appears as commonly shared by the non-specialist writings on Mongolia and its people. There is some truth to this as historically Mongolian culture was a nomadic one, especially the culture of Khalkha Mongols, who have been considered ‘nomads’ nomads’¹⁶⁶ and whose nomadic identity was particularly strong. Little wonder then that all the country profiles – issued by China, West, and even Mongolia for that matter – at one point or another present Mongols’ affection for horses as one of the main components of their traditional culture.

The main difference between the country profiles produced by the Chinese authors and those written by the Mongols themselves, however, is that the country briefs published

¹⁶⁶ ‘Khalkha Mongols have been the most thoroughly pastoral of all the Mongol tribes or subethnic groups, the nomads’ nomads, and *the least affected by foreign influences*’ (Italic own). US Library of Congress, <http://countrystudies.us/mongolia/38.htm>.

in the PRC often choose, as in key text 1, the stereotypical image of a horseman roaming the endless steppes of Mongolia as the main (and sometimes *the only*) representation of Mongolian culture, both traditional and contemporary. By contrast, country profiles produced by the Mongolian authors, that is, Mongolian self-representations, also point out that only the small part of the country's population continues to lead the traditional nomadic life style.¹⁶⁷

Along with the industrialisation and modernisation of the country initiated in the 1950s, the cities grew rapidly, with the urban population increasing by about twenty-five per cent in the 1950s and by fifty per cent by the early 1990s.¹⁶⁸ Thus, to represent Mongolia as a horse-back *nation* is not entirely correct yet is a common strategy used by the official Chinese discourse to classify Mongolia, based on popular stereotypes, as a traditional, undeveloped land that is 'frozen in time'.¹⁶⁹

5.2.2.2 Foodways

"The Mongols worship horse-milk vodka..."

The largest part of the only other culture-related section in the first official Mongolia profile is devoted to horse-milk vodka and its role in Mongolian folkways. Horse-milk vodka is a significant aspect of Mongolian traditional culture since it is used not only as a food item, but also as an important element of social interaction and religious activities, and even as a popular remedy in traditional Mongolian medicine. However, having recognised its significance, one should point out that it is only *one of* many core elements that together comprise Mongolian traditional culture, and it is clearly not the most important one. The fact that the official discourse (the majority of the key texts include this section, as do most of the background publications) ascribes to this drink the role of the sole representative of Mongolian folkways requires further analysis.

¹⁶⁷ Mongolian Embassy in the US specifically states that the contemporary Mongolia is a *modern* society with a half of the urban population, [www.mongolianembassy.us/eng/about/mongolia/land and people.php#05](http://www.mongolianembassy.us/eng/about/mongolia/land%20and%20people.php#05).

¹⁶⁸ Fifty-four per cent by 1994 according to Global Environment Outlook-2000, by UNDP available at <http://www.grida.no/geo2000/english/0070.htm>.

¹⁶⁹ It should be noted that the issue of Mongolian 'traditionalism' or 'modernity' addressed by the official media in the PRC is rather complicated, but this will be discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

From the point of view of cultural anthropology, which postulates that people use food to develop a sense of themselves as ethical beings, any 'food event' (food preparation, consumption, its mythology and signification, etc.) is performed for a particular purpose. Food embodies the cultural and social identity of the participants, and it communicates 'tradition' (Counihan 1997: 3). One can presume, therefore, that the key text(s) singled out vodka in order to draw particular attention to a certain Mongolian tradition that this element represents.

At the level of popular perception, vodka *drinking* is indeed one of the most distinctive traits that characterises, in the eyes of ordinary Han Chinese, Mongolian folkways. However, these beliefs rarely find their way into the official texts, especially the publications of such media as *RMRB* or Xinhua Agency. There appear to be several explanations for this. Firstly, drinking is traditionally associated with masculinity. According to many scholars conducting research on ethnic Minorities in China and the PRC, it is conventional to represent the dominant Han ethnic majority as masculine while associating the ethnic minority with femininity (Schein 2000). Thus the Mongols of Inner Mongolia are rarely linked with drinking in the official publications.¹⁷⁰

Moreover, Mongolian horse-milk vodka is perceived as something exotic, though not necessarily in a good sense of the word. Excessive consumption of vodka is not considered to be a positive trait at the popular level either. In fact, when the official Chinese texts speak about the Mongolian national minority of the PRC and mention vodka as an aspect of Mongolian culture, they usually do so very briefly and with a certain emphasis. For instance, a thick volume on the folkways of the Mongolian nationality of Inner Mongolia, *The Mongol Expert*, refers to the drink as just one of a number of traditional dairy products; the book then gives a very detailed explanation of how it is used for rituals and a very lengthy description of the modes of its home preparation (Guo 1999: 379-381). The description takes only to three pages out of 517,¹⁷¹ while the Mongolia profile represents vodka as the main marker of cultural identity of the Mongols from Mongolia (apart from the admiration of horses).

¹⁷⁰ Nasanbayar, Inner Mongolian Institute of Mongolian Studies, interview, July 2000.

¹⁷¹ Likewise other travel guides or personal accounts (see for instance Na 1999: 108).

Furthermore, *The Mongol Expert* refers to vodka as a predominantly ritualistic utensil, and emphasises that it has been used for rituals since the Yuan Dynasty. A travel guide on Inner Mongolia follows similar themes: it also emphasises the role of vodka among the Mongolian nationality of Inner Mongolia as something highly cultured and sophisticated, used in religious rites, for expressing friendship, for enjoying the beautiful views of the steppes, or used as a medicine, etc.; the book specifically underlines that the drink 'does not make one drunk' (Li 2001: 29).

The situation is different when the horse-milk vodka is represented as an element of culture in Mongolia proper. On the one hand, although the profile starts with the statement that 'Mongols worship vodka', it then proceeds to describe it as a part of sacrifice rituals and a means of expressing hospitality. Here then it is represented as the core component of Mongolian cultural identity, along with the love of horses. To comprehend fully the possible significance of this, one should once again examine the background texts that expand upon some of these elements. One good example can be found in the *People's Republic of Mongolia* monograph (the *MNR*). The book, an academic work of 357 pages, represents Mongolian cultural identity also in terms of the vodka, yet is more explicit: 'among the Mongols, almost all adult males drink vodka.' As we can see vodka here loses its 'spiritual' status and is described merely as an alcoholic drink, of which almost the entire adult male population of Mongolia are regular users (Bao, 1991: 15).

Such particularity in representing the same element of Mongolian culture depending on whether the author is describing Mongolia or IMAR can be found in many official publications, even in the texts belonging to the personal accounts genre. The only difference is that personal accounts are even more explicit in their description of the affection the Mongols from Mongolia hold for drinking. For instance in Yang's account of his travels to Inner Mongolia, he addresses the 'drinking culture' of the Mongols, but depicts it merely as a type of folkloric show: 'beautiful Mongolian *women* in national costumes offer horse-milk vodka while singing the drinking songs' (own italics) (Yang 1999).

An account of a Chinese university lecturer's one-year stay in Ulaanbaatar is completely different: it claims to be a 'cultural examination' of Mongolia and devotes a large part

of the article to the drinking culture in Mongolia. However, a reader will find no picturesque ethnographic portrayal here. It begins with a statement that ‘Mongols like drinking alcohol’ and they do so ‘because of the harsh climate’ and in order to ‘express their masculinity’, and then says that alcoholism is a serious problem in Mongolia (Mou 1999: 73-76). Yang employs even harsher rhetoric in his article “Do Not Mention Booze to the Mongols.” According to him ‘vodka is an inseparable part of Mongolian life.’ Significantly, while the texts on Inner Mongolia represent the fact that horse-milk vodka is used in traditional medicine as something peculiar but ‘cultural’, here the author ridicules the practice, representing it as ‘barbaric’ in contrast to traditional Chinese medicine. The article concludes with a statement that ‘the drink problem in Mongolia is enormous, and the Mongols have reached the point where they have become addicts’ (Yang 2000).¹⁷²

These are but some of many examples of different modes of discursive representations of Mongolian culture. It should be added that the drinking of strong spirits appears to be a trait common to Mongols in both IMAR and Mongolia; the problem in Mongolia is indeed more visible since in Inner Mongolia the Mongols are simply greatly outnumbered by Han Chinese. However the conventions of the Zhonghua discourse do not permit the Mongolian national minority of the PRC to be represented using such a ‘negative’ characteristic as alcohol addiction, nor does it favour its ‘masculine’ aspect. Thus, Mongols from Mongolia become the site where the Han Chinese stereotypes and not-so-favourable perceptions of the Mongols in general can be placed safely in the official publications.

The representational strategy may also be trying to achieve another objective: while vodka in the Inner Mongolian folkways represents the high spiritual culture of the ethnic minority, in Mongolia proper it is often narrowed down by the official Chinese discourse to just a food stuff, to which the Mongols have an addiction. This creates for the reader an image of Mongolian culture in Mongolia as being ‘lowered’ or ‘altered,’ and, most importantly, as ‘impure’ alluding to the foreign influence, namely that of

¹⁷² A big article “Do Not Mention Booze to Mongols available from www.qingis.com, one of those numerous portals meant to propagate [Inner] Mongolian culture. They also collect articles on Mongolia published in Chinese media. Unfortunately not always they indicate the source, thus this article has only an author as a reference (I have a hard copy retrieved on 14 June 2002).

Russia. In fact, other Mongolian foodways are also described by Chinese publications in similar ways.

Traditional foods and 'Western vegetables'

On the whole the topic of foodways is one of the most favourite themes in the textual representations of Mongolia in Chinese media. Even such a genre as the country profile often includes food customs in the essential descriptions of Mongolia. The first official publication after 1990 that sets the trend and provides a detailed description of the role of food in Mongolian social and cultural lives is the *PRM*. According to the book, Mongolian traditional food consists of meat, dairy products and cereals. However,

because of the great foreign influence, the structure of the Mongols' diet has changed. They gradually started to eat Western foods like vegetables, rice, bread, sweets, etc. Under the promotion of the government, recently they started to consume foodstuff which historically was never part of their diet – chicken, duck, eggs, and fish (Bao 1991: 12).

Interestingly, although the Mongolians from IMAR have also incorporated into their diet all the above listed products under the influence of Han Chinese majority, there is hardly any reference to this fact in the official texts. According to the official version of the cultural identity of the Mongolian national minority, there has been no Han Chinese influence. The authority of the Zhonghua discourse requires that Mongolian culture in IMAR is presented as 'real' and 'pure;' the interaction of the two cultures is presented as a process of 'mutual enrichment.' At the same time, the same vegetables or eggs somewhere in Ulaanbaatar are termed as 'Western.' In fact, while during the Soviet presence in Mongolia some Russian products did come into the Mongols' everyday life, their choice and quantity was negligible when compared to the rapid increase in the variety and quantity of imported foods at the end of the 1990s. Ironically, many of these foods were, and still are, imported from China.¹⁷³

This example once again illustrates that the project of Mongolia's cultural identity production undertaken by the Chinese official discourse resorts to various representational strategies in order to emphasise foreign influence on Mongolia's

¹⁷³ Considering that this passage appeared later on in other profiles that intended to present food customs of Mongolia, the message of Mongols' 'cultural impurity' becomes wide spread.

culture and society, and thereby to create separate cultural identities for the ‘foreign’ Mongols of Mongolia and the ‘domestic’ Mongols from IMAR. This mode of representation will be also discussed later in this chapter in the section on the linguistic strategy of grouping.

5.3 Population, Religion and Nationhood (Key Text 2)

In the next country profile issued in February 2001 by *RMRB* there were a few but significant changes. On the structural level, the most obvious thing is that the section on culture, analysed above, was eliminated from the profile all together. Instead, the profile featured a completely new section on Mongolia’s national flag and emblem. This section appears at the very beginning of the text and is the largest section of the profile, which, presumably, indicates the significance attached to the topic by the authors. At the same time, the section on the population of Mongolia is greatly expanded and includes data on the size of the population and its structure, ethnic composition of society, the language and the religious beliefs.

5.3.1 Population Updated

The section on population in the second country profile is, in fact, not merely a revised version of the previous one but a complete re-writing in both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Firstly, it gives a more ‘scientific’ than ‘political’ description of the ethnic minorities in Mongolia and drops the ambiguous reference to Russian minority nationals. Moreover, it offers solid and up-to-date statistics to support the statements about the Mongolian population. The section emphasises in particular the fact that traditional rural dwellers engaged in animal husbandry and nomadic pastoralism make up just a small part of the Mongolian population, and that the majority were living in urban areas by the 1990s.

The profile also broaches the topic of religion in Mongolia which had received little attention in the official publications in the 1990s. In the *PRM* monograph published in 1991, for example, the issue had been addressed in an ‘ideological’ way: ‘Lamaism penetrated the Mongolian land during the Yuan Dynasty and by the beginning of the

20th century had had a devastating effect on the national economy and culture.’ The text went on to explain that after the victory of the People’s Revolution, Lamaism became a belief held only by a small number of herdsmen, and that ‘at present its influence on the life of Mongolian society is small, however there are still some people who keep an image of Buddha at home’ (Bao 1991: 10). The situation, however, was not exactly as described at the time of the book’s publication, as this was the period when Lamaism began its revival and became widespread in the Mongolian society.¹⁷⁴ Yet this was precisely the mode by which pre-1990 Mongolia was represented, when religion was considered ‘reactionary’ and ‘anti-modern.’

The second profile abandons such value judgement and presents Lamaism as ‘the population’s main belief and the state religion.’ It also says that part of the population follow indigenous religions and Islam. The only thing that should be added here is that the statement that ‘Lamaism is the state religion,’ when dragged out of the broader context sounds rather strong, with hints of ‘dominance.’ In reality it refers to the intent of the state to support Mongolia’s traditional religions – Lamaism and Islam – from all types of churches and sects that flooded the country since 1990.¹⁷⁵

On the whole, the beginning of the 2000s witnessed religion, Lamaism first of all, gaining a prominent position in Mongolian society and becoming very influential not only in the sphere of individual spirituality, but also in the socio-political life of the country. Interestingly, simultaneous to the profile that refers to the rise of religion in Mongolia, the Inner Mongolian Institute of Social Sciences published a monograph under the title *Findings in the History of the Mongolian’s Atheism* which gives an overview of the history of religious beliefs, especially atheism, among the Chinese Mongols (*Menggu zu*). According to their account of the history of Mongolian religious thought, ‘the seed of atheistic thinking of the Mongolians were sown by the cult of heaven in ancient times.’ In modern times, however, Outer Mongolia became influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, while the Mongols from Inner Mongolia became ‘exposed to other nationalities’ materialistic thought’ thereby ‘strengthening their atheistic thinking.’ (*Menggu wushen sixaing* 2001: 37). There appears to be little mystery as to

¹⁷⁴ Whether it was a question merely of it to be ‘in fashion’ is not an issue here.

¹⁷⁵ Tumenqiqige (2001) gives a very sound overview of the situation with the religion in Mongolia today.

the identity of this ‘other nationality’ which exercised its civilising influence over the [Inner] Mongolians.

Nevertheless, one could say that such new modes in writing on Mongolia and the Mongolian people still represent Mongolian cultural identity rather discursively, yet have a tendency to undermine the image of the traditional nomadic society constructed in the previous profile and shows a certain development in the official discourse on Mongolia. The message is further reinforced by the introduction of a new section on the Mongolian national flag and emblem, the main symbols of Mongolian nationhood. Together these new nodal points of the discourse on Mongolia can be considered a further step in the official discourse development and in the construction of the image of Mongolia as a politically and culturally separate entity in contrast to what the orthodox nationalist rhetoric.

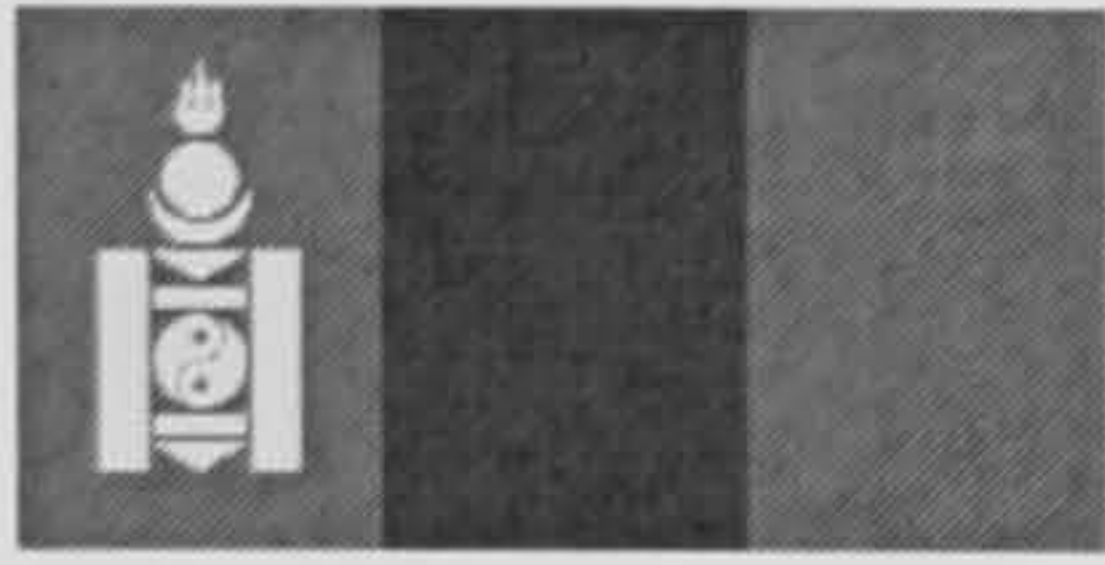
5.3.2 The Flag and Emblem: the Nationhood Nodal Point

Flags and emblems are important and powerful symbols of nationhood¹⁷⁶ and unity, which represent freedom and independence. As mentioned above, the second official profile on Mongolia issued by the *RMRB* not only introduces two new sections – the flag and emblem of Mongolia - it also places them at the very beginning of the profile and makes them the longest parts of the profile providing a very detailed description of both. By doing so it draws readers’ attention to these symbols and communicates a completely new message about the representation of Mongolian nationhood in official writings.

The national flag and emblem are created by the nation and endowed with certain attributes based on national shared values. Mongolian national symbols are no exception to the rule. Certain features of the Mongolian flag and emblem can be considered universal: symbols that refer to freedom, unity, loyalty to motherland, and readiness to protect its independence, etc. The specific elements of the Mongolian flag and emblem are those associated with Lamaism, the symbol of Yin-yang, and some

¹⁷⁶ The term nationhood here refers to the state or quality of having status as a separate and independent nation, for instance Outer Mongolia that achieved nationhood after restoring its independence from China.

specific graphical features that particularly emphasise Mongolia's relations with its enemies. The latter can probably be explained by the fact that flags and emblems usually carry an element of the nation's history.



The flag of Mongolia consists of two red stripes flanking one blue stripe in the centre, with a golden Soyombo – the national emblem of Mongolia – placed on the red stripe closest to the flag pole. Soyombo consists of the following elements: flame, sun and moon, two triangles, two horizontal rectangles with the yin-yang symbol between them, and two vertical rectangles. Interpretation of the symbolism of the flag and emblem as provided by the Chinese profile differs slightly from conventional Mongolian interpretations.¹⁷⁷ For instance, Soyombo, which is often attributed to a leader of Mongolian Lamaism of the 17th century, is given no religious connotation in the profile. Instead, it is represented as a 'symbol of national freedom and independence.' By the same token the fire, the sun and the moon are believed in Mongolia to symbolise the origin of Mongolian people and are linked to the pre-Buddhist animist religion of Mongolia still rather popular among the Mongols. The Chinese text, however, interprets these elements as symbolising 'prosperity and eternal life for all generations of people.'

The most important difference in interpretation lies in the readings of the two triangles in the middle and at the bottom of the Soyombo. In ancient Mongolian symbolism a triangle pointing to the ground meant death. In this case the two triangles signify death to internal and external enemies and express the Mongolian people's determination to defend their country's freedom and independence. The Chinese profile does not refer specifically to the triangles at all. By the same token, the two vertical rectangles on the sides of the emblem signify 'the walls of the fortress' and allude to the Mongolian people as the foundation of the nation's strength. The Chinese country profile tones down the Mongolian rhetoric and interprets the symbols as merely 'walls of the fortress' without linking it to the Mongols' perception of the cultural and political identity as separate from the 'external enemies,' a metonym here for China.

¹⁷⁷ See for example Major (1990: 183).

On the whole one can conclude that reference to the symbols of Mongolian nationhood in the profile is a significant development in the mode of representing Mongolia in official writings. Although the significance of the elements is somewhat downplayed, the text nonetheless relates them to the concepts of Mongolian national freedom and independence. At the level of the general structure of the profile, though, one can not help noticing the co-existence of two supposedly opposing messages. On the one hand, the history section alludes to Mongolia as ‘Outer-Mongolia-part-of-China’, and in a political sense, Russia’s creation. On the other hand, the authors included significant sections on the symbols of Mongolia’s nationhood, ‘freedom’, and ‘independence’ and so on. The official discourse therefore does not challenge Mongolian national symbols by negating them, or by simply not including them in the texts as it was the case with the previous profile. In fact, all subsequent country briefs have continued to include sections on the Mongolian flag and emblem, which could be interpreted as a sign of the PRC officialdom’s readiness to represent Mongolia as an independent state.

One possible explanation for this contradiction could be that by 2001 the PRC could ‘afford’ to be more ‘liberal’ with the representations of Mongolian nationhood given its growing confidence in the context of retrocession of Hong Kong and Macao. In addition the rapidly growing economic and political dependence of Mongolia on China imbues the PRC with sufficient confidence to demonstrate formal recognition of Mongolia’s nationhood and, therefore, independence from China as an accomplished fact. Such mild rhetoric ‘soothes’ Mongolia and enhances the PRC’s image in the international arena.

5.4 Holidays and celebrations

The next Mongolia profile was issued by the *RMRB* in June 2001, and merely combined the two previous *RMRB* Mongolia country briefs. It included the sections on Mongolian folkways (“vodka and horses”) and population from key text 1, as well as the passages on the Mongolian national flag and emblem described in key text 2. The third profile therefore was an attempt to combine the highly ‘essentialist’ approach of the first key text (that represented Mongols exclusively in terms of their drinking habits

and traditional life-style) together with the second key text's attempts to introduce into the discourse the topic of Mongolian nationhood.

The nationhood theme was further reinforced by another Mongolia profile issued this time by the MFA in May 2002. As mentioned in Chapter 4, this text offered a new, 'modern' way of writing on Mongolia in the genre of country brief in the official media – it is written in a almost ideologically neutral, 'professional' way and in a very similar style to Mongolia profiles issued outside China in Europe or North America (apart from the history section, of course). The profile offered in abundance up-to-date statistics and data on many aspects of life in Mongolia, although the main focus of the brief was politics, economics and international relations of Mongolia. Obviously, in a profile of this kind, a passage on Mongolian folkways similar to that offered by the key text 1 would be something of an anachronism. In fact, the MFA country profile approaches the 'cultural representations' of Mongolia in a very careful manner; much greater emphasis is placed on the aspects that do not require a value judgement, but instead could be expressed with statistics or hard data.

5.4.1 Mongolian Culture and People According to MFA

First of all, the section on popular customs is abandoned all together. Instead, the profile introduced the section 'Culture and Education,' though it refers solely to education: the profile provides a description of the educational system in Mongolia, information on the literacy rate, a list of higher education institutions in the country, statistics on Mongolia's cooperation with foreign countries in the sphere of education, and so on. This new information on Mongolia helps to portray it as a country with one of the highest literacy rates not only in Asia, but also in the world,¹⁷⁸ with a well-developed system of general, compulsory and free education and a range of higher education institutions. This message challenges the conventional image, found in the majority of

¹⁷⁸ Although the statistics on this were chosen by the text authors for the year 1996, when it reached the lowest level in Mongolia since 1990, the rate was still higher than that of the PRC. According to UNICEF, adult literacy rate for Mongolia for 2000-2004 was 98% for both males and females (http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/mongolia_statistics.html); the same source for China indicates 95% for male and 87% for female population (http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/china_statistics.html).

Chinese writings, of the Mongols as a nation of illiterate, ‘innocent’ savages unaware of the achievements of modern civilisations.¹⁷⁹

The profile also gives a detailed and more accurate account of the country’s demography, especially the ethnic structure of the population. It is the only profile that mentions the fact that there are fifteen national minorities in Mongolia, apart from the Khalkha majority, and names the largest of these (Kazakhs, Buryats, etc.). The profile makes no specific reference either to Russian or Chinese residents of Mongolia.

The most significant characteristic of the text, as far as the discourse on Mongolian society and culture is concerned, is the appearance of a new section in the profile – ‘Important Holidays.’ The issue of national holidays and ceremonies is directly related to the issue of nationhood symbolism discussed above, and needs to be examined in more detail since it is a completely new topic introduced to this type of writing on Mongolia. Moreover, as in the case of the flag and emblem, the section on holidays is placed at the beginning of the profile. Further, it is the only other section, apart from the section on education discussed above, which represents Mongolian ‘culture.’

5.4.2 Mongolian National Holidays and Ceremonies

National holidays and ceremonies, as well as national flags and emblems discussed in the previous section of this chapter, are closely linked to the construction (or reconstruction) of nationhood. Similar to national symbols, statutory holidays relate to national identity. They encompass the idea of nationhood and reinforce the sense of belonging to community (Elgenius, 2006), and they are, in fact, a very important part in the present day Mongolia’s campaign to re-establish its national identity.

Mongols hold certain days each year as special days of national meaning which they celebrate with special events. First of all is Naadam, the day when Mongols celebrate their nationhood. The day is a public holiday (it actually lasts for three days, usually from 11 to 13 July each year) and it marks Mongolia’s independence from China. The name of the festival means ‘games’ or ‘sports’ which refer to the ‘three manly games’ –

¹⁷⁹ It should be noted that this concept of Mongolia is not China-specific, and is as common in Western publications as it is in Chinese.

archery, horse racing and Mongolian wrestling. The origins of the Naadam festival go a long way back: in ancient times, Mongolian tribes would gather on Naadam to negotiate treaties, trade, and disputes and so on, and an athletic competition was always a part of that gathering. The holiday had been held for centuries also as a form of religious festival and a memorial celebration of the community. It should be said, however, that hard historical evidence for this is not available.

5.4.2.1 Naadam in Mongolia and in IMAR

As all national holidays, Naadam can be considered a practice institutionalised by the state; as such it often refers to the national community and mythology. Thus, since 1922 it has been a holiday commemorating People's Revolution of 1921, to mark the point at which Mongolia [re]declared itself a free country.¹⁸⁰ Thereafter, 11 July was proclaimed the National Day of Mongolia. Since the end of the 1980s, Mongolian government launched a campaign of the 'national identity search,' that is to say the revival of national cultural heritage that had been considered a hamper on the way of modernisation of the society and therefore rather suppressed during the communist years. Mainly it concerned reconsideration of the figure of Chinggis Khan, revival of Lamaism, traditional Mongolian script and promotion of the traditional festivals as Tsaagan Sar and Naadam. The later therefore has lost much of its socialist meaning in the 1990s and, following, the Naadam in Mongolia has become an appeal to 'Mongolness' tightly linked to 'tradition.' It is also often associated with the figure of Chinggis Khan, the interpretation of whom in Mongolia since 1990 'shifted from that of cultural ancestor figure to a political actor' (Kaplonski 2000: 43). This, in fact, initiated the struggle between the Mongolian and the PRC official discourses for power over the right to incorporate the holiday into their nation-building projects.

The following is a brief overview of how the Mongolian National Day-Naadam has been represented in the official PRC publications since the 1990. The writings chronologically preceded the MFA profile but appear to be important for the

¹⁸⁰ On 10 July 1921 soldiers of the Mongolian People's Party succeeded in driving the White Russian army out of Urga (the capital of [Outer] Mongolia, now Ulaanbaatar); the White Russians had, in turn, driven out the Chinese troops and re-established the theocratic government, which had been originally established after the proclamation of independence from Qing dynasty in 1911.

interpretation of the latter. As was often the case with previous examples, the text that broached the topic was the *MPR* monograph of 1991. The book contains a whole section on the Mongolian holidays; however it begins with the statement that “there are not many traditional holidays in Mongolia, the historical chronicles recorded only the lunar New Year. After the victory of the People’s Revolution, the government established several holidays one by one.” This was followed by a list of ‘constructed’ holidays like the Army Day, Mongolian Teachers’ Day, Light Industry Workers’ Day, etc. and all the other socialist holidays established by the government during the communist years. The National Day was placed in the middle of the list with a brief description informing the readers that this was the day to mark the People’s Revolution of 1921 and that the holiday is celebrated by holding leisure and sports activities (Bao 1991: 15-16). The book therefore provides no information as to the historical origins of the tradition of Naadam holiday of Mongolia.

One telling example of the artificially constructed cultural boundaries between Mongolia and Inner Mongolia can be found in two very short articles published one after another in *RMRB* on 10 and 12 July 2001. Both reported the beginning of Naadam festival respectively in IMAR and in Mongolia. This is how the *RMRB* article depicts the Naadam festival in Mongolia:

[Naadam is] Mongolia's national day; the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) led the victory revolution in 1921 and henceforth 11 July became the National Day of Mongolia.

In sharp contrast, the *RMRB* article on IMAR provides a different description of the festival:

Naadam, which means ‘entertainment and games,’ has a tradition of more than seven hundred years.

Thus we can see how the same traditional event which is common for all the Mongols - from Russian Buryatiya, Chinese Inner Mongolia and Mongolia proper, - is ascribed a different history according to the contemporary political borders which currently divide the Mongolian people. It is supposedly the lack of historical evidence that prevents Chinese authors from ascribing an ‘old tradition’ to Naadam celebrated in Mongolia, yet for the same festival held in IMAR Chinese historiography offers even a calculated

historical period – ‘seven hundred years.’ Once again, the prerogative of having possessing cultural tradition and history belongs according to the Chinese authoritative writings solely to the Mongolian ethnic minority of the PRC.

This mode of representing Naadam in Mongolia is carefully observed in the country profile issued by the MFA: it refers to Mongolia’s National Day merely as a celebration of the Revolution:

In 1921, the People’s Revolution under the leadership of the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party¹⁸¹ won, and on the 10 July in Kulun (today’s Ulaanbaatar) the theocratic monarchy was established. The following day became National Day. On 13 June 1997, the third meeting of the Mongolian National Day Committee decided to change the holiday’s name to ‘National Day – Naadam.’ ‘Naadam’ stands in Mongolian for ‘games’ or ‘entertainment.’ Since 1922, when it was decided to celebrate the National Day on 11 July, Naadam became an important part of the National Day ceremony.

Here we can see that the MFA profile follows the official line in representing the Naadam as a *modern* holiday. However, there is a major difference between the texts from the *RMRB* and the MFA profile: unlike the *RMRB* articles on Naadam in Mongolia, the MFA country brief also emphasizes that the holiday:

originally referred to the Mongolian nationality’s old historical ‘three manly sports’ (archery, horse racing, and wrestling). Nowadays it refers to types of sport and leisure activities which are organized in an ancient traditional way. It is full of rich ethnic characteristics.

It should be added, however, that when the text talks about the Mongolian people here, it specifically refers to Menggu minzu – the term which is mainly used in the official PRC discourse to signify the Mongolian minority of the PRC (the discursive use of the terms Menggu *ren* and Menggu *minzu* and its significance will be discussed in the final section of this chapter). The choice of the term therefore allows the authors of the texts to reach a compromise – to admit the historicity of Naadam festival in Mongolia on the one hand, while tying it up to the PRC nationalist discourse on the other. In other words,

¹⁸¹ This is actually incorrect: in 1921 the name of the party was Mongolian People’s Party, it changed into Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party only in 1924. The same mistake is made in history section of the same country profile.

according to the PRC official discourse the Naadam in Inner Mongolia should be represented as a solely cultural phenomenon with no political reference to nationhood. The same festival in Mongolia, on the other hand, is rarely linked with tradition and is meant to signify the socialist state of Mongolia which came to being in 1921.

5.4.2.2 Lunar New Year

The second major holiday in Mongolia mentioned in the MFA profile is the lunar New Years. The Mongolian New Year – Tsagaan Sar, which means ‘White Moon’ - is usually celebrated in January or February depending on the phases of the moon. It generally coincides with other lunar New Year celebrations in China, Korea, and Vietnam. However, Mongols often deny any Chinese origin or influence (Verboom 2002). Tsagaan Sar is a big family celebration which is accompanied by various traditional ceremonies and one of the most widely celebrated holidays in Mongolia along with the Naadam festival. During the 1960s and 1970s the holiday was moulded into a socialist-type ‘Herders’ Day.’ However, following the government campaign for the revival of the traditional values and search for national identity initiated at the end of the 1980s, it again has been constructed as a public holiday with a strong focus on tradition and kin ties.

The official PRC discourse does not negate the long history of the tradition of celebration of the lunar New Year in Mongolia, however it represents it as a *Chinese* tradition. For example the MPR monograph admits that the Tsaagan Sar is the only traditional Mongolian holiday mentioned in the historical chronicles, and at the same time begins its description with the statement that ‘the holiday is identical to the Chinese New Year; there are only a few differences in some aspects of celebrating the holiday’ (Bao 1991: 15). The MFA profile offers a similar account of the Tsaagan Sar by making a link between the Tsaagan Sar and the Chinese calendar tradition. It also states that the holiday is identical to the Chinese New Year. Moreover, in the *MPR* book the holiday is termed ‘Lunar New Year’ (阴历新年) and accompanied by a phonetic transcription of the Mongolian word Tsaagan Sar; in the MFA profile, on the other hand, the holiday is called ‘chunjie’ (春节), a term which, for the Chinese audience, has strong connotations of the *Chinese* New Year. Thus, the employment of this particular

word facilitates for the readers to link Mongolian Tsaagan Sar with the Chinese tradition of celebrating the holiday.

After the publication of the MFA text, the sections on the Mongolian national holidays were incorporated in all the subsequent profiles issued by the Xinhua Agency and the *RMRB*. While not exactly challenging the nationalistic perspective on Mongolian culture and society offered in previous profiles, this at least introduced a new element to the dominant discourse on Mongolia.

The MFA profile follows the line suggested by the previous profile and introduces to the Chinese readers the symbols of Mongolian nationhood which can be an indication of a overall shift in the official views on representing Mongolia. However, there are certain limits which had to be observed in doing so. For instance, the text (as well as all the other background publications) does not make any reference to what makes the essence of the Naadam holiday for the Mongols – the celebration marks the long history of Mongolian statehood and the country's independence from China. In the MFA profile, as well as other official publications, the holiday is associated only with the People's Revolution and therefore young socialist Mongolia as it came into being in 1921. The pre-1921 tradition of Mongolian nationhood is simply ignored as this would be considered, in the PRC official historiography, to be the history of the *Chinese/Zhonghua* nationhood.

In short, although Naadam as well as the Tsaagan Sar are represented as traditional festivals, they are directly related to the tradition of the Menggu minzu of China. This actually places Mongolian national celebrations within the Zhonghua cultural tradition. Thus although the MFA profile represents Mongolian society and culture quite differently from previous texts (for example, no arguable folkways, a focus on education, reference to diverse ethnic composition, information on traditional holidays, etc), it does not pose a serious threat to the dominant nationalist discourse in terms of representing Mongolian cultural and social identities.

5.5 Discursive Shift from ‘State’ to ‘Modernity’ (Key Texts 5 and 6)

The next two profiles were issued by Xinhua Agency very shortly after the publication of the MFA country profile, in June and July of 2002. In terms of representing Mongolian culture and society, the profiles were close to the MFA brief in their ‘modern’ way of writing on Mongolia: both included the sections on Mongolian national symbols and holidays, and population and religion. Neither included the essentialist passage on Mongolian folkways introduced in the earlier *RMRB* profiles. On the whole one could say that the Xinhua texts were abridged versions of the MFA profile. These profiles were widely used across the official and semi-official websites of the Chinese internet. The thing that made these two profiles stand out amongst the whole range of the other key texts is that they were the first publications of this genre that incorporated some visual representations of Mongolia – a map and two photographs.

5.5.1 Visual Representations of Mongolia

The construction of a text is a construction of experience. This is especially true in the case of constructing a text on Mongolia in the PRC as although the contacts between the two countries have been growing rapidly since 1990, for the majority of the Chinese people – that is, the readers of the texts - Mongolia remained a complete *terra incognita*.¹⁸² The use of visual representations, so-called paratexts, in such a situation becomes a highly powerful discursive device to reinforce (or subtly subvert) the message embedded in the text.

Thus, the first Mongolia profile used by Xinhua Agency in June 2002 placed a map of Mongolia at the very beginning of the text. The significance of this can not be underestimated. The way Mongolia was often represented in the Chinese and Taiwanese maps – that is, as a part of Chinese territory - has been always an issue for Mongolian and Western observers. Although one can say that the situation has improved since the time of the publication of the Xinhua profile in 2002, it was still a controversial issue in Sino-Mongolian relations in the late 1990s/early 2000s. The

¹⁸² In fact, the majority of the personal accounts analysed for this study often begin their narrative on Mongolia with a statement that although Mongolia is close geographically, it remains largely unknown for the Chinese people.

inclusion of a Mongolia map in the Xinhua profile, therefore, can be considered as yet another evolutionary change in the PRC official discourse. Combined with the other sections of the profile on national symbols and holidays, it adds to the construction of an image of Mongolia as a nation-state.¹⁸³

As mentioned above, the problematic section on Mongolian culture represented in terms of vodka and horses was not included into this text. However, at the end of the profile there was photograph entitled 'Streets of Ulaanbaatar' which portrayed an old rural man dressed in a traditional Mongolian *del* sitting on a small cart pulled by a horse across a central city street. The effect of such a representation of contemporary Ulaanbaatar can be fully appreciated if we take into consideration that photographs could be considered, perhaps, the most powerful among the paratexts since they are generally perceived by readers/viewers as a direct representation of reality: a photograph 'blurs the boundaries... between texts and the world of living experience' (Chandler 2002: 205). Moreover, the photograph was not taken in panoramic format meant to show *contrast* – i.e., a traditional herdsman in the middle of the modern city. Rather, the image was instead taken in close up, so the old man was the *only* visible feature of the 'streets of Ulaanbaatar.' Thus, the photo constructed 'an experience' of the Mongolian capital as a somewhat backward place where people wear traditional clothes and horses are still the main means of transport.

Although the Xinhua profile here substitutes a particular case for a general picture in order to construct an image of Mongolia as an 'underdeveloped' place, at least it does so with help of the contemporary material. A further example helps to illustrate this trend. In 1999, a few months before the first Mongolia country profile appeared in *RMRB*, the same medium published a photograph of Mongolia¹⁸⁴ (with no surrounding text) with the title 'The Current Fashion of Mongolian Women.' In the picture one could see a group of young women walking across the central square of Ulaanbaatar. The first thing

¹⁸³ The appearance of 'politically correct' maps of Mongolia in the Chinese media has been prompted also by the rapidly growing interest in Mongolia as a tourist destination. Thus, the majority of Mongolian maps found on the Chinese internet are situated on the web pages of the tourist agencies. The same agencies are the main 'consumers' of the Mongolia profiles examined in this paper. Compared to them, the number of on-line maps which represent Mongolia as a part of Chinese territory is very small.

¹⁸⁴ In fact, this was the only example of visual representation of Mongolia in the *RMRB* or Xinhua publications (printed or online) after 1990 that I was able to find.

that strikes viewers is indeed the style of their clothes – that of the distinctive Soviet style of the 1970s. In order to rule out the possibility that this was merely the style of clothing preferred by contemporary Mongolian women, I showed the photo to a range of the Mongolian people old enough to remember the period and its characteristics. All the interviewees came to the same conclusion that the photograph had been actually taken at the end of 1970s/beginning of the 1980s.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, the most that this picture could communicate to the viewers is the massive presence of Soviet light industry goods in Mongolia in the 1970s and 1980s. By no means can it represent a fashion popular in the country in 1999. It can, however, and most likely did, contribute to the creation of an image of Mongolia as a country that lags behind in its cultural and social development.

By the same token, the second Mongolia profile issued by Xinhua Agency in July 2002 was very similar to the previous one in terms of its content, and absolutely identical in terms of its structure. The only difference was that there was a new image at the end of the profile. This time it was a picture of the city entitled ‘Today’s Ulaanbaatar.’ On the photo one could see a narrow street with a range of traditional Mongolian yurts along the either side of the road. The whole impression of the picture was that the city was more rural than urban. In fact, in one of the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar there is an area where people live in yurts. Most of the inhabitants are migrants from rural areas who come to the capital in search of a better life; they generally continue to live in the traditional yurt while saving up for an apartment in Ulaanbaatar proper. It is also quite common that during harsh winters, when the temperature drops down to thirty five or forty degrees below zero, some herdsmen migrate closer to the cities and stay there until the spring. Once again we see how a fragment substitutes the whole picture and how the most impoverished and least developed quarter of Ulaanbaatar is deliberately chosen to represent the *whole* city.

It is common practice for foreign (be it Chinese or Russian or Western etc.) media to represent Mongolia mainly (and often solely) in terms of its nature and ‘tradition.’ As a result, official and non-official publications commonly use the usual set of picturesque images of Mongolian nature, popular crafts, Lamaist temples, folklore ensembles, etc.

¹⁸⁵ The period depicted on the photo was ‘established’ by the interviewees judging not by the fashion itself, but mainly by the landscape features specific for the late 1970s – early 1980s.

In fact, the appearance of such pictures in a country profile would be somewhat understandable. The authors of the Xinhua briefs, however, chose to focus solely on those elements of Mongolia's contemporary society whose modernity is in fact questioned by the photographs. In this way, the new approach to depicting Mongolia as a modern nation-state offered by the MFA profile and incorporated into the main text of the Xinhua briefs is simultaneously undermined by the visual representations of the country which convey the opposite message.

These examples indicate a very important shift in the PRC discursive formation: the official discourse(s) no longer resorts to the explicit denial of the Mongolian nationhood (as represented by blunt claims over Mongolia as a 'Chinese territory') common in the nationalist discourse in the 1970s and the 1980s, and partially in the 1990s. The main emphasis of the official publications of the early 2000s is on the Mongolian *state*, but now it is the modernity and the degree of the economic development of this state which is in question, as well as the integrity of its culture which has been compromised by the 'foreign influence'. In fact these are the issues most commonly addressed by the majority of the background publications which were drawn upon for the interpretation of the country profiles.

5.6 Hybridity revisited (Key Text 7)

In Chapter 4 (which examined the construction of Mongolian historical identity) the final key text used for this thesis, the Mongolia profile issued by *RMRB* in May 2003, was in fact the MFA hybrid Mongolia brief. It was termed 'hybrid' as it combined different discursive narratives on Mongolian history constructed vis-à-vis the history of the Chinese Zhonghua nation. This term can be more fully applied to key text 7 in terms of how it articulated Mongolian culture and society.

The *RMRB* picked up the MFA account of Mongolia as its new version of the Mongolia country profile. Similarly to key texts 5 and 6 issued by Xinhua Agency, the hybrid profile also included a visual representation - an image of the Mongolian National Theatre of Opera and Ballet. The title of the photograph, however, was somewhat confusing: "Ulaanbaatar, the Capital of the People's Republic of Mongolia."

Considering that the text appeared thirteen years after the disintegration of the MPR, this could be considered more a 'Freudian slip' of the PRC's official discourse than a deliberate attempt to mislead the readers.

Prior to the hybrid profile, one could discern two main discursive modes of representing Mongolia, which I describe as 'nationalistic' and 'pragmatic.' The former was employed by the so-called 'Chinese nationalists' (the best example of their writing is the first *RMRB*'s profile) whose main priority was to articulate the needs of the domestic Zhonghua project. Hence, the representations of Mongolia were not meant to 'appease' Mongolia and the West, but primarily to serve the domestic political goals of the nationalist agenda (for example to send a strong message to the IMAR through the writings on Mongolia).

Within this narrative, Mongolia was usually presented as underdeveloped, historically and culturally marginalised and insignificant, a timeless land of drunk horsemen and abundant natural resources. Minimal reference was made to Mongolian statehood, while the largest part of the profile was devoted to the country's nature, climate, and natural resources. The only section relating to *contemporary* Mongolia regarded the country's economic situation (this will be examined in further detail in the next chapter). By the beginning of the 2000s this mode of representing Mongolia was clearly at odds with the new realities of Mongolian political and economic development and Sino-Mongolian relations, and therefore began to lose its dominant position as the sole mode of officially representing Mongolia.

It was at this time that a new discursive mode of interpreting *contemporary* Mongolia (and not a nationalistic imaginary of it) appeared. This was a 'pragmatic,' as it is termed in this thesis, discourse (originated from such institutions as the MFA, MOFTEC, influential corporations) which was more efficient at symbolising the new developments regarding Mongolia, China, the world. This discourse was characterised by professionalism, a 'western style' of writing, and a clear shift away from such controversial issues as Mongolian history and traditional culture. That is not to say that the 'pragmatists' did not share the same views or goals regarding Mongolia as the 'nationalists.' It was the way in which such views and goals were articulated (considering that everything that is said officially in China about Mongolia is closely

monitored in Mongolia itself, in Japan and the West) that differed distinctively between the two camps. 'Correct articulation' of the official line and an ability to differentiate the priorities could be considered the trade mark of the 'pragmatic' producers of the discourse on Mongolia. The country profiles produced by this discourse usually emphasise Mongolia's modernity, statehood, political and economic modernisation and its new place in the world.

However, the pragmatists have not yet won the battle with the nationalists over the authority to represent Mongolia, since Chinese domestic problems of national building and preserving the national unity are still at the top of the political agenda for both camps. Nevertheless, the dominance of the nationalist discourse as the main 'interpreter' of Mongolia has been seriously challenged. The appearance of the hybrid Mongolia profile in *RMRB* in May 2003, on the other hand, demonstrates that a compromise was found as the country brief managed to incorporate the elements of both discourses.

5.7 The Questions of Mongolian Modernity and Cultural Integrity

'How modern is Mongolia?' This is the question to which the official Chinese discourse does not, as a rule, give a straightforward answer.¹⁸⁶ The sub-question (or more often a statement), which usually accompanies it, concerns the degree to which Mongolian traditional culture and lifestyle have been compromised in the process of modernisation of society. The latter is usually linked to the issue of foreign influence over Mongolia after its break with China in 1911.

The process of modernisation in Mongolia since the Revolution of 1921 was similar to that of the Republican China when, by following Western ways, 'a new modernising elite marked themselves as citizens of the Chinese nation state' (Harrison 2002: 165). By the same token the Mongolian political and intellectual elite often adopted a Russian

¹⁸⁶ For a typical example one can see the *MPR* monograph (Bao 1990) which first claims that 'Mongolian people still lead a traditional life of pastoral nomads, so their life is a traditional one. The housing is the traditional Mongolian yurts.' A few pages later though, it states that currently the majority of the population is settled and urbanised, and use yurts only in summer as country houses' (Bao 1990: 49, 57).

or Western, but most importantly non-Chinese, style as a statement of newly acquired nationhood. Unlike in Republican China, there was no antipathy to such innovations at the popular level in Mongolia. Thus, the Mongolian President Ochirbat in his statement on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the People's Revolution in 1996 emphasised that 'we, Mongolians, have been able to record in the 20th century a progress which was not possible during the previous three centuries' [under Chinese rule]. We 'safeguarded and consolidated our national freedom and independence and orientated ourselves towards the common values of human civilisation' (Ochirbat 1996).

Indeed since the [re]gain of the independence from China in 1911 and then in 1921, Mongolia has been able to assert itself as a modern state by having built its own national economy and industry,¹⁸⁷ infrastructure, political institutions (such as nationhood, elected government, constitution) and centralised bureaucracy, army, educational and healthcare systems, sciences and arts, media, and so on. Certainly, the bulk of this came with the aid, and later the strict control of, the Soviet Union, yet the improvement in the standard of living, social innovation and general economic growth were undeniable. Thus, by 1990 the Mongolian population had experienced considerable social change and modernisation. The majority could be characterised as skilled professionals, living in urban areas, belonging to particular social groups with a diminished role for family/clans and religion. In this regard Mongolia could not be distinguished from other countries with a developed economy.

Between 1990 and 2000, although the country experienced severe economic decline due to the transition from a planned to a market economy, Mongolia still managed to preserve the 'human resources reserve' accumulated in the previous decades. Moreover, having made great steps towards a true mass democracy (characterised by multi-party system, elected government and president), it still remained a 'modern' country despite the serious economic difficulties. Furthermore, the democratic revolution of the 1990s

¹⁸⁷ The Soviet Union and other COMECON countries aided Mongolia's industrial development with large amounts of technological and financial assistance. Joint mining investments with the USSR helped accelerate the growth of industrial output. Industrial production increased sixfold in the twenty years between 1960 and 1980. During the 1960s and 1970s, Mongolia's economy expanded rapidly; Mongolia also received substantial amounts of foreign aid from the Soviet Union. By integrating Mongolia with the economy of the COMECON countries a large market, was provided for Mongolian exports and a steady supply of its necessary imports (Bilskie 2002).

opened Mongolia up to the world and resulted in the development of close political, economic and cultural cooperation with developed Western countries.

In these circumstances being a Mongol no longer meant living in the yurt in the middle of the steppe, or riding horses wearing the traditional dress. One can see how this message carefully seeps into the official discourse on Mongolia. For example, the first personal accounts of Mongolia published in RMRB in 1995 particularly emphasised the fact that the authors found Mongolia and especially Ulaanbaatar a beautiful, clean and modern place which respects tradition and culture by combining tradition and modernity, European, Mongolian and Chinese styles (Modagama 1995, Ju 1995).¹⁸⁸

Later on, in the 2000s similar accounts in central media appeared only occasionally. For instance, here is what a journalist of the Beijing Youth Daily says about his trip to Mongolia in 2001:

‘Ulaanbaatar turned out to be completely different from what I had expected it to be: unlike what I had imagined, people there did not wear traditional costumes, were not galloping across the city streets on the horseback, and the yurts could only be seen in the city suburbs’ (Liao 2001).

However, by 2000s such favourable accounts of Mongolia became an exception to the rule. One could argue that there are political explanations for this. Even with the strong presence of the Mongolian Revolutionary People’s Party in the country’s leadership, Mongolia in the 2000s was no longer the Mongolia of the socialist era: the one party system was abolished, all the elections held in the country since 1990 were recognised by western observers as legitimate and democratic, the population of the country fully enjoyed freedom of speech and expression and so on. This new democratic Mongolia, even given its economic difficulties and the problems of the transitional period, could be considered by the PRC leadership as a potential source of aspiration for the Mongolian minority in IMAR and, therefore, a threat to the national integrity.

¹⁸⁸ It should be kept in mind, however, that the appearance of such favourable articles was most likely caused by the political developments in Mongolia - the return of the Mongolian communists to power.

The Chinese official discourse, mainly the nationalist one, on Mongolia had to take into consideration such new developments and re-configure itself. In fact, the examination of the Mongolia profiles and the whole body of the background texts that support their interpretation demonstrate that the official Chinese publications (with the exception of the writings issued by the ‘pragmatists’ from, for instance, the MFA), began to play down the issue of Mongolia’s achievements in the sphere of economic, political and social modernisation. Instead the dominant discourse chose three main strategic modes of representing Mongolia: 1) to downplay the image of Mongolia as a modern state; 2) to emphasise its economic decline; and, 3) to assert Mongolia’s loss of a ‘cultural essence’. And these will be described in the next section.

5.7.1 New Strategies of Representing Mongolia

The topic of how the PRC official discourse represents the Mongolian economy and related issues, will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 6. This section will give a brief overview of the functioning of the other two discursive strategies mentioned above – the positioning of Mongolia within the ‘nature’ vs. ‘civilisation’ juxtaposition (where China is represents ‘civilisation’ and ‘modernity’ and Mongolia – ‘nature’ and ‘tradition’), and the classification of the Mongols as a people who have lost their ‘Mongolness’.

5.7.1.1 ‘To Go to Mongolia to Do What?’

As was demonstrated earlier in this chapter, one of the new tendencies in the authoritative writing on Mongolia is not so much to question the legitimacy of Mongolian nationhood (although the history sections, analysed in Chapter 4, of the profiles are still aimed at exactly that), but rather to look at the country’s ‘developmental level,’ especially in contrast to the PRC. The issue of ‘nature’ takes a special place in Chinese representations of Mongolia. Visitors to the country, Chinese or otherwise, point out the country’s beautiful landscapes and natural diversity, as it has all types of terrains such as mountains, valleys, *taiga* forest, steppes, desert and semi-desert zones.

To depict the beauty of Mongolian nature is somewhat of a convention in writing on Mongolia whatever the genre of the text. Of course, personal accounts (for instance Wang 1998a) employ a much more elaborate language full of poetic metaphors about the bucolic scenery than do, say, the country profiles. But even the latter devote large sections of the texts to detailed descriptions of Mongolian geography, climate, flora and fauna, natural resources and even ecology (Xinhua profile July 2002).

However, it is often the case that nature is represented in the PRC official discourse on Mongolia as the main or even the only characteristic of the country. As one Chinese writer, a member of the very first PRC delegation to Mongolia after 1990, put it:

Upon arrival at Ulaanbaatar airport, at Customs they barely checked my passport! The reason was obvious – why would anyone get a false passport in order to get into Mongolia? To do what? To ride horses? To rear sheep? To drink milk tea? (Ye 1991:184)

Interestingly, the author is perhaps the only person who does not succumb to the beauties of nature while describing his trip to Mongolia. This is particularly noticeable considering that the author stayed for ten days in the countryside and his account of that event is the most detailed of its kind. The author referred to nature only on one single occasion when he stated that ‘it is no good having great scenery if you haven’t got anything to eat!’ alluding to the ‘terrible poverty’ of the Mongolian people (ibid: 185).

Sometimes the idea of ‘nature’ is projected directly onto the people creating an image of a particular ‘naturalness’ of the Mongolian people. Thus, some of the official profiles on Mongolia have sections on the Mongols’ ‘personal traits’ where the authors underline such characteristics as ‘straightforwardness’, ‘simplicity’, etc. (see for example Chinese Academy of Science’s profile published in April 2003). Here is how this idea is expressed in the literary magazine:

The Mongols are people who live in the endless steppes and who are engaged in the nomadic pastoral economy. What they eat, what they drink, what they use – all is the produce of animal husbandry. The Mongols are a people with the closest links to nature in the world (Guo 2001: 27)

This is a common strategy by which a dominant majority constructs an identity for a minority group - through the binary opposition of a ‘civilized’ Self and a ‘natural’ Other.

Very often such ‘naturalness’ is extended to the society and in this case functions as merely a metonym for ‘under-developed’ and ‘backward.’ Some Chinese authors imply that such Mongolia’s a vast landmass, but small population are indicative of the country’s backwardness: in Ulaanbaatar the ‘streets are very wide which gives one a sensation of emptiness’, ‘the buildings are low’, and ‘the city is very quiet’ with a ‘slow way of life’ (Ye 1991). Thus, the elaborate and lengthy descriptions of Mongolia’s nature, combined with the characteristics of its society as mentioned above, produce an image of Mongolia as a timeless and pastoral opposite to the frenetic pace of modern life in China.

5.7.1.2 Fishing and the ‘Americanisation’ of the Mongols

Representing Mongolian development since its break with China posed another difficulty, an ‘ideological pitfall,’ when the official PRC discourse could not bluntly question the modernisation in Mongolia since 1921 *per se* since it was a *socialist* modernisation project, fundamentally similar to that taking place in IMAR. The democratic revolution in Mongolia in 1990 helped to overcome this problem to a certain extent,¹⁸⁹ though the fact that the Mongolian communists stayed in power for the major part of the period forced the official PRC discourse to stay within the ‘ideological limits’, at least formally. Hence the main emphasis tends to be on the ‘foreign’ – first Soviet and then Western – nature of modernisation and the ‘devastating effect’ it had on Mongolian culture and tradition.

The role of a foreign presence in Mongolia has always been among the most widely addressed topics in the Chinese media, official or otherwise. For instance, Chapter 4 demonstrated that the PRC official discourse tends to present the idea of Mongolia’s ‘national independence’ as a totally foreign concept which was planted on Mongolian soil by Tsarist Russia with the help of Mongol nobles. By the same token, there is rarely a publication on Mongolian contemporary culture which does not contain an accusation of it having lost its ‘Mongolness.’ The examples given by the authors of such publications are striking: for instance, it is due to ‘Westernisation’ that people in Mongolia have hot water and heating in the houses, wear brand clothes, listen to

¹⁸⁹ An examination of how the official discourse represents Mongolian political and economic development since 1990 will be covered in Chapter 6.

‘American pop music’ and so on (Mou 1999: 76). Thus, what is considered to be a ‘sign of progress’ in, say, IMAR, is a ‘loss of tradition’ in Mongolia.¹⁹⁰

As mentioned earlier, the fact that the contemporary Mongolian diet includes non-traditional foodstuffs is also often used in the Chinese discourse as an example of the impure character of Mongolian culture (ibid: 75), while the increasing popularity of, say, McDonald’s restaurants in Hohhot leaves the cultural essence of Menggu zu intact. The consumption of vegetables by Mongolians in IMAR is ‘mutual enrichment of tradition’ between the nationalities within the Zhonghua nation. The same vegetables in Mongolia are labelled as ‘foreign influence’ and not as a part of the health care modernisation initiated in the 1950s in order to eliminate micronutrient deficiency common in people with protein based diets.¹⁹¹

In 1999 a Chinese university lecturer wrote in the *Nations of the World* magazine about her impressions after a one-year stay in Mongolia: ‘The Mongols are like Europeans and Americans – they appreciate leisure and holidays’ (Mou 1999: 76) Evidence provided to support her argument is the fact that in summer the Mongols go fishing. The irony of this example is that, strictly speaking, fishing was not a traditional pastime for the Mongols as, according to the popular belief, fish were considered a low form of incarnation and were almost never included in the traditional Mongolian diet. One would expect that fishing became popular under Russian influence, where it is a traditional activity and hobby. The author instead uses this summer pastime to argue for Mongols’ ‘fondness of leisure’ (often a euphemism for laziness) that puts them on a par with Europeans and Americans. According to Mou, other indicators of ‘Americanisation’ are hunting, country houses, mushroom picking, skiing and the Naadam festival (ibid).

However odd these examples may sound, the official discourse is trying to reach an objective through such representations of Mongolia. The objective is not merely to label

¹⁹⁰ It should be said though that this is a very popular argument in the Western publications on Mongolia as well where it is curiously attributed to the ‘Russification.’

¹⁹¹ Huang (1996: 41) is one of the very few examples who attributes the introduction of non-traditional foodstuff into the Mongolian diet not as a succumbing to foreign influence, but as a way ‘to meet the requirements of adequate nutrition.’

contemporary Mongolia as ‘westernised’ and therefore ‘alien’ to the PRC and to the Mongols of the PRC. In the above example, the author makes no distinction between different sources of influence – she speaks first of Russian (or sometimes Soviet) influence and then immediately draws a conclusion that because of this the Mongols now resemble Europeans and Americans! Thus, ‘Russia’, ‘Europe’, ‘America’ are blended into a single entity – something ‘foreign’, ‘Western’, ‘non-Asian.’

In fact, the author herself states that Mongolia is a ‘part of *Asia*, where *European* cultural influence is prevailing’ (own italics). Thus, the author also admits that Chinese cultural influence is in evidence too, yet Chinese influence is not considered as something alien or negative: ‘Chinese’ culture does not oppose ‘Mongolian’ culture, the former enriches the latter (so that now ‘Mongolian traditional cuisine includes Chinese dumplings and noodles’) (Mou 1999: 75). Here we can see how an opposition is constructed by the use of an inclusion-exclusion discursive strategy: the out-group is the West (Russia, Europe, US) and the in-group is Asia (Mongols, Chinese, etc). In fact, Mongols’ cultural closeness with China is no longer merely one of the recurring themes in the official publications; it is a ‘myth’ – a ‘social imaginary’ constructed by the dominant discourse.

5.7.2 The Myths

The methodology chapter of this thesis named the theoretical concept of discourse dislocation as one of the analytical tools for the study of the evolution of the PRC official discourse. The concept refers to a phenomenon that occurs when new events, or practices, cannot be integrated or explained by the existing discursive system, hence causing its dislocation. Re-articulation of the dislocated elements is possible with the help of a ‘myth’ which involves the construction of an imaginary in order to solve the systemic crisis (Laclau 1990).

Thus, the underlying concepts of the nationalist Zhonghua discourse in China regarding Menggu and Menggu minzu (that is, ‘Chinese land’, ‘Yellow Emperor’, ‘Mongols as an integral part of Zhonghua with Han as a core’, ‘Chinggis Khan as Chinese national hero’, etc.) did not attempt to integrate Mongolia into its discursive formation or else

did it by default. Prior to the 1990s Mongolia and its people were merely marginalised and ignored in the dominant nationalist discourse.

However, the events that took place since 1990 (for example, Mongolia's own identity formulation *outside* the limits of the Zhonghua paradigm, the affirmation of Mongolian nationhood, the growth of strong anti-Chinese (anti-Han) sentiments, increasing democratisation and involvement in world affairs as a fully-fledged member of international society, etc) began to seep into China along with the rapid expansion of China-Mongolia interactions, causing the disruption of the Zhonghua discourse. This in turn created an urgent *political* task of articulating a new order in order to 'domesticate' these new phenomena. Thus, certain 'myths' regarding Mongolia have been constructed around the political ideology of Zhonghua. Such myths are meant to operate on both a macro level for the whole of Chinese society and, in particular, on a micro level, for the IMAR and the Mongolian nationality of the PRC. The following is the examination of some the most relevant for the study myths created by the official discourse: 'Mongols and Chinese are a family,' 'China as an object of Desire,' 'The PRC is the Site of Real Mongolness,' 'The Chinese Language Boom,' and 'The Mongols Harbour no Anti-Chinese Sentiments.'

5.7.2.1 'Mongols and Chinese are a family'

All the texts examined in the previous sections aimed to present the 'foreign influence' on Mongolian culture and society. The texts usually paired such statements with a strong emphasis on Mongolia's cultural and ethnic closeness to China. Strictly speaking, this idea cannot be considered a completely new phenomenon, or a new myth. Rather, it has been a constant, since the concept of such closeness is common to all PRC discourses (ideological, nationalist, pragmatic, etc), of all genres and media. The concept is considered a myth here (following Laclau) due to its new *functioning* within the discourse – the idea of Mongolia-China common roots is no longer presented only in terms of what Chinese anthropologists, ethnologists, historians and politicians have to say on the topic. Since 1990, and especially by the 2000s (when the first Mongolia profiles started to appear together with the numerous background texts), the official writings have represented the idea in terms of how the Mongolian people themselves

perceive it and act accordingly. In the texts it appears as a manifestation of Mongols' self-discourse, which is further reinforced by the use of the direct speech.

For instance Ye (1991) stated that his ten-day stay in Mongolia would have been a nightmarish experience had it not been for the Mongols attitude towards him: he quoted the words of a Mongolian woman who told him that in her life she had seen many 'Soviets' or 'Westerners', but never 'felt close to them'. It was only when she met him, 'the first Chinese person in her life,' that she had the immediate feeling of seeing 'a member of the family.' The author concluded that although Mongolia was 'not a nice place', his difficult experience there was compensated when he saw how this woman and her family were 'moved to tears' by meeting him.

A very similar story is told on the pages of *RMRB* by Modegema, a Chinese ethnic Mongolian. When the people in Ulaanbaatar learnt that she was a Mongol from China they could not control their emotions and would 'cry' and 'hug' and 'kiss' her (Modegema 1995). Mou narrated similar anecdotes of her stay in Mongolia. Moreover, the section on 'Westernisation of Mongolia' in her article begins with the statement that the 'Mongols are like us – they belong to the Mongoloid race' (Mou 1999: 75). These examples illustrate how the idea of China-Mongolia closeness has been put into the mouths of the Mongols themselves in order to lend the 'myth' greater authenticity.

5.7.2.2 *'China is an Object of Desire'*

Very similar to the myth of closeness is the idea of China as a source of aspiration for Mongols. According to the publications, Chinese economic prosperity and its modern lifestyle is most attractive to the Mongols. Thus, Ye quoted the words of a Mongolian official who had just returned from China: 'Beijing is like a paradise – full of goods!' The author goes into great detail describing the 'horrible poverty' of the Mongols and how he 'made them happy' by giving away disposable lighters, torches, key-rings and so on. In the evenings, instead of watching television on an old black-and-white set ('obviously Russian') his new Mongolian friends preferred to ask him about 'life in China' (Ye 1991).

By the same token Qinqi'er described her stay in the Mongolian countryside in a family of a Mongolian herdsman. She reported how the old man and his family complained about the hardships of nomadic life in Mongolia. She told them that in IMAR Mongols are also involved in nomadic pastoralism but their life is 'modernised' – 'yurts are electrified, of lighter construction and different styles.' The Mongols listened to her with great interest 'feeling refreshed' (觉得很新鲜) (Qinqi'er, 1996). In fact the message of IMAR as a modern and developed place (as opposed to Mongolia) is one of the most common recurring themes in the publications (see also Guo 1999).¹⁹²

5.7.2.3 'The PRC is the Site of Real Mongolness'

The PRC official discourse on the Mongolian ethnic minority places particular importance on the task of representing the 'domestic' Mongols as possessing a modern nationality while still managing to preserve their cultural heritage. It is particularly odd then that the topic is rarely raised within the official discourse on 'foreign' Mongolia, even when discussing the foreign influences and cultural 'damage' of the latter. The concept that the Menggu minzu of China are the only carriers of the 'real Mongolness' is a favourite topic in the semi-official and non-official writings. The theme is much more carefully approached by the media like *RMRB* and *Xinhua* though, and discussed even less often vis-à-vis Mongolia. It appears as if the official discourse attempts to represent the PRC, China, and the Chinese state as the object of desire and the source of aspiration, rather than 'Mongolness', ethnic Mongols, or even Inner Mongolia.

An explanation for this lies in the desire of the PRC officialdom not to encourage trans-border pan-Mongolist sentiments and to ensure that all 'Mongol-to-Mongol' contact is mediated by the Chinese state. For example, although majority of the texts mentioned in this chapter referred to Mongolia's decision to revive the study of the traditional

¹⁹² Interestingly, the emphasis on modernity of IMAR is especially intensified within the discourse on Mongolia, whereas for the 'domestic' use the representations of the region can differ dramatically. Wu (1999) examines the problems of the modernisation in the IMAR, and claims that the main reasons of the region's *underdevelopment* (Italic own) are too high population, too low education rate, and too low urbanisation level - the characteristics exactly opposite to that of Mongolia.

Mongolian script used in Inner Mongolia,¹⁹³ much greater emphasis is placed on the Mongols' desire to learn Chinese. Thus, according to the Chinese official publications, even when Mongolian students come to the IMAR to study, they choose to learn Chinese language and Chinese (Zhongguo) culture. For instance, Mogedema (1995) described a scene in Ulaanbaatar's bookshop when three Mongolian students did not have enough money to buy a book they wanted. She began talking to them and thus they discovered that she was a Mongol as well. She was so moved by their enthusiastic welcome of the fact that she gave them the missing sum to buy a Chinese dictionary.

5.7.2.4 'The Chinese Language Boom'

As the example from Mogedema shows, it is China and the Chinese language that are represented in the official discourse as the focus of Mongols' interest and desire in the 1990s and early 2000s. In fact, an overview of recent publications suggests that this is *the* myth of the moment.¹⁹⁴ It was initiated by the *RMRB* article published on 3 December 2002 entitled 'Mongolia experiences the Chinese language boom.' Since then the article has been frequently re-published in other media, official or otherwise, and is widely circulated on the Chinese internet. The article states that 'in the past everybody wanted to study Russian or English, now the situation has changed – children choose to learn Chinese. There is a real Chinese language boom!'

It should be added, however, that the idea of a 'Chinese boom' in Mongolia does not appear as a mere 'social imaginary' – the 'myth' receives very strong governmental (participation of the Chinese Embassy, the Chinese Ministry of Education, and other official institutions), financial (scholarships for the Mongolian school pupils and university students, sponsorship of China and Chinese language-related events and so on¹⁹⁵) and media support (both in China and Mongolia).

¹⁹³ This was the original intention of the Mongolian government in 1992, however it turned out to be quite an unrealistic a project (see for example Bayinjirigela 1999), so the traditional Mongol script is taught at schools and universities *in addition* to the Cyrillic alphabet.

¹⁹⁴ This was the case when the first draft of the thesis was written in 2003. At present the myth's positions are even stronger.

¹⁹⁵ For instance in 2002, Chinese was the main foreign language in 10 out of 110 state schools in UB, and even more so in private schools. Many students (about 250 a year) went to China with scholarships from the Chinese government and even more (about a thousand a year) though self-funding. Interestingly, the MFA profile in the section on Mongolia's cooperation in the field of education does not specifically mention China.

The scale of such support makes it look more a public relations project established to promote China in Mongolia and to propagate inside the PRC the image of China's huge popularity among the Mongols. As an ex-Ambassador to Mongolia put it, 'we need to explain China to the Mongols' (Huang 2005).¹⁹⁶ Another point, articulated specifically in the official discourse, is that such a project enjoys particularly strong support from the Mongolian government. Thus, according to the official discourse the 'boom' operates not only at the popular level, but is a part of the official policy of Mongolia. One publication attributed the following quote to 'an official from Ulaanbaatar': 'To be a good neighbour to China we need to learn the [Chinese] language and embrace the [Chinese] culture' (*RMRB*, 3 December 2002).

5.7.2.5 'The Mongols Harbour no Anti-Chinese Sentiments'

Mongolian anti-Chinese sentiment is one of the topics most carefully approached in the PRC official narrative of Mongolia. The main rule for the media such as *RMRB* and *Xinhua* is simply never to admit that such feelings exist in Mongolia either at the official or popular level. Even when news on anti-Chinese feelings of the Mongols does leak into the Chinese official press, they are normally ascribed solely to some 'nationalist elements.' Moreover, the views of these 'elements' are not termed 'anti-Chinese' but 'xenophobic.'

It is interesting to consider how such sentiment is explained by the official rhetoric: firstly, media is massively privatised and since everything China-related increases the circulation, the media is full of 'rumours' and 'lies' about China. Besides, there are no governmental regulations on public speech. Secondly, the poor economic conditions and corruption of the contemporary Mongolia safeguarded that the Mongolian nationalism 'raised its head,' but this is Mongolia's *domestic* problem.

Chinese official publications emphasise the fact that the nationalist elements do not represent general public opinion. In addition, the idea of the Mongols' anti-Chinese

¹⁹⁶He is retired and currently involved in translation of selected works of Mao Zedong. Once finished, his will be distributed free in Mongolia. Such practice is already initiated: the IMAR's magazine 'Red Rainbow' is been already distributed in Mongolia and according to Huang proved to be 'very popular.'

sentiments is mainly promoted by the West (especially Japan), which ‘greatly exaggerates the strength of such views in Mongolia.’ Moreover, despite the harmful influence of the media which defames and demonises the Chinese people, ‘the situation is improving’ (see for example Zhang 2004, Xinhua net on 31 March 2005 and on 2 February 2006).

To summarise, one can say that main goal of the myths is to ‘accommodate’ new Mongolia in the Zhonghua discursive formation, and thereby to send a message to the Mongolian minority of the PRC. The message is that the Mongols and the Chinese (Han) are ethnically and culturally close, and that Mongolia expresses an enormous interest in China, and in the Chinese *state*. One can also presume the existence of one all-embracing myth that encompasses all the abovementioned myths - that Mongolia is interested in ‘returning’ to China. It should be also added that these myths can be challenged only by undermining such underlying values/views, and this appears unfeasible because the producers of both the ‘nationalist’ and the ‘pragmatic’ discourses on Mongolia appear to share them. Where they differ is merely the way these views should be presented in the official rhetoric and by means of what discursive strategies.

5.8 Mongols vs. Mongols: the Strategy of Grouping

One such strategy can be termed the strategy of ‘grouping.’ The ‘History belongs to nations’ section of Chapter 4 examined the selective use of the Chinese words Menggu ren (蒙古人) and Menggu zu (蒙古族) depending on the context of the discussion. Chapter 4 referred to the particular usage of these two words in writings on the history of Mongolia: all history prior to 1911 or 1921, or even 1924 (this may vary from text to text) was termed as ‘the history of the Mongolian nationality (Menggu (min)zu)’; all the events after these dates were classified as either the history of Mongolia or the Mongols (Menggu ren). From this, one can see that the authors used the term Menggu minzu to signify the Mongolian nationality of the PRC, while the word Menggu ren stood for the Mongols from Mongolia.

While such clear-cut differentiation was rather straightforward in the representations of the Mongolian history constructed vis-à-vis Zhonghua nation, the situation with the production of cultural identity is more complex, especially when the texts talk about the

traditional culture of Mongolia and its people. Analysis of the entire set of texts used for the Chapter 5 showed that when the authors referred to the Mongolian nationality of the PRC, the term Menggu (min)zu was used almost exclusively. On the other hand, in the texts on Mongolia's culture and society both terms, Menggu zu and Menggu ren, were used in equal measure. However, it appeared that even within a single text, the choice of one or other word was not entirely random. Rather, there was a pattern for such selectivity which presumably aimed to differentiate the Mongols (of the PRC) from the Mongols (of Mongolia).

According to DA theory, discourse constructs social and cultural identity by defining groups and their relationship to other groups. The discursive strategies of 'grouping,' group definition and differentiation, is a contextual and situational process. Drawing on the Chinese official texts on Mongolia as an example one can see how such categorisation is often applied to group identity construction according to the current objectives of the discourse: it could be 'the Mongols' vis-à-vis 'Han' (as nationalities of Zhonghua nation), or 'the Mongols of Mongolia' vis-à-vis 'the Mongolian nationality of the PRC', or the 'Mongolian state' vis-à-vis the 'Chinese state' and so on. Such a strategy enables the promotion of some of these identities or the suppression of others and the role of the 'correct' terminology in such process should not be underestimated.

The Mongolian word *mongolchuud* stands for 'the Mongols' in the language spoken by both the Mongolian ethnic minority of the PRC and the Mongols from Mongolia. However, if we look up the definition of the term in different dictionaries we can see that the Chinese translation of the word differs from that of the other languages. For example, in two Mongolian-Russian and two Mongolian-English dictionaries it is translated as one term - "the Mongols". The Mongolian-Chinese dictionary (1999), on the other hand, offers two translations: "1. Menggu ren 蒙古人; 2. Menggu zu 蒙古族" (see the list of the dictionaries in the bibliography). Moreover, if we try to look up these two, apparently different terms in Chinese dictionaries, we can see that there is no consistency in their interpretation even among the Chinese-speakers. For instance, the Chinese-English Dictionary published in Hong Kong offers two possible translations of the term Menggu zu:

1. The Mongolian nationality distributed over the Nei Monggol Autonomous Region, Jilin, Liaoning, Heilongjiang, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Gansu, Qinghai, the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Hebei and Henan;
2. The Mongols (of Mongolia) (Wu 2000, sic).

By contrast, the Chinese-English Dictionary issued in Taiwan (Zhang 1996) has no entry at all for the word *Menggu zu* and features only the term *Menggu ren*, which is translated simply as ‘the Mongols’. This can be explained by the fact that in 1996 Mongolia was still officially considered by the Taiwanese government to be a part of Republican China, and there was neither the political nor lexical need for the Taiwanese official rhetoric to distinguish between the PRC national minority and the people of Mongolia.

In the PRC, on the other hand, there was a need to express the distinction between the two in the official language (in common parlance it is very often just ‘*Menggu ren*,’ with many Chinese simply unaware of the existence of such distinction). An overview of the texts used for this thesis shows that in majority of the cases when the texts referred specifically to IMAR or Mongolian nationality of the PRC (for instance Deng 2000, Li 2001, Mao 2001), the term *Menggu zu* was used almost exclusively.¹⁹⁷ The lexicon of the official publications on Mongolia, however, was more diverse – authors would use the three terms *Menggu zu* (蒙古族), *Menggu ren* (蒙古人) and *Mengguguo ren* (蒙古国人¹⁹⁸), although *Menggu ren* occurs most frequently. For example in Modegema’s (1995) account of the episode in the bookshop: ‘when these *Menggu ren* learn that I was a *Menggu zu* from China...’ (own italics). This pattern is repeated in the majority of the publications where the Mongols from Mongolia and the Mongolian nationality of China are juxtaposed.

The country profiles, often due to the conventions of the genre, almost entirely employ the passive voice when referring to the Mongols (for example, not ‘the Mongols proclaimed the independence’ rather than ‘the independence was proclaimed’);

¹⁹⁷ A few significant exceptions will be addressed later in this section.

¹⁹⁸ The only examples when the authors used exclusively the term ‘*Mengguguo ren*’ regardless the topic or period of discussion are either publications of the scholars from Mongolia in Chinese academic magazines (for example Narisi 1999 or Bayinjirigela 1999) or care fully worded interview with the PRC ex-Ambassador to Mongolia (Huang 2005).

alternatively they use expressions like ‘Mongolia’ or ‘the Mongolian population’ though always in regards to contemporary issues (for instance, international relations or standards of living, etc.). When the text does the use active voice, it therefore has a rather powerful effect, emphasising agency. Among the key texts used for this thesis there were only two occasions when the word(s) ‘the Mongols’ were used: in the sections on Mongolian history (‘the Mongolian nationality (Menggu zu) has a very ancient history’) and folkways (‘The Mongols (Menggu ren) worship vodka’).

The only Mongolia profile that clearly stands out from the rest of the texts is the country brief issued by the Mongolian Academy of Science (CAS) which refers extensively to ‘the Mongols’ when describing the culture and tradition of Mongolia. This is accomplished through the ‘strategic’ choice of terminology: the term *Menggu zu* is used to depict the ‘old and beautiful’ Hada ritual,¹⁹⁹ ‘the real tradition of Mongolian nationality,’ and the ‘traditional Mongolian food’; *Menggu ren* are defined as ‘friendly’ and ‘respectful for the elderly people’; and *Menggu guo ren* are represented as leading the life of pastoral nomads who still greet each other with the expression ‘Is the cattle all right?’, have a large number of taboos and superstitions regulating their daily life, and a strong religious affiliation.

In fact the CAS profile follows the mode of representation set in 1991 by the *MPR* monograph in which the term *Menggu ren* was used throughout the entire text (describing the same set of ‘traits’ as Westernized food, vodka and drinking problems, taboo and superstitions, etc.). It employed the term *Menggu zu* only on one occasion – when describing the Mongolian traditional festival Naadam. Another telling example is found in Chao (2002): during his travels to Mongolia he visited the Chinggis Khan Memorial and observed that ‘although Chinggis Khan is a great Mongolian (*Menggu zu*) hero of the Chinese/Zhonghua nation, the Mongols (*Menggu ren*) also worship him’ and do so with ‘particular rituals involving vodka and sacrifices’ (own italics).

Thus we can see a hierarchy constructed in the official discourse. At the top is the ‘zu’ Mongols, which refer clearly to the ‘Mongolian element’ of Zhonghua nation, carriers of bright culture and a real, positive tradition. The term ‘*Menggu ren*’ can be rather

¹⁹⁹ Hada, a long piece of silk used by the Mongols as a gift when greeting people, worshipping celestial beings, and in daily person-to-person contacts.

neutral when it is interchangeable with the term ‘Menggu zu’, but at other times its meaning is identical to ‘Mengguguo ren’, and as a rule implies the negative aspects of traditional culture or cultural alteration due to foreign influences. This hierarchy appears to represent three degrees of ‘inclusiveness’ of the Mongols vis-à-vis the Zhonghua construct: when they are termed Mengguguo ren, they are positioned as separate both politically and culturally; when they are called Menggu ren, they are hence presented as separate politically, but culturally close; when the Mongols from Mongolia are termed by the Chinese texts Menggu zu, they are identified with the Mongolian nationality, ‘an integral part’ of the Chinese nation and carriers of the ‘real Mongolness’. The use of the latter in the writings on Mongolia subtly implies political belonging, as with the example on history. In this officially-constructed hierarchy, the Mongols from Mongolia are positioned at the bottom of the pyramid and are represented as subaltern vis-à-vis Mongolian nationality of China, and as sub-subaltern vis-à-vis the Chinese/Zhonghua nation. These examples illustrate how even simple terms can carry a strong political or ideological charge.

There is, however, an important exception to such a detailed classification of the Mongols as determined by the specific content and the general context of the text. In some of the texts, the authors resort to the opposite strategy by not referring to the people of the country at all. The content of such texts is devoted to detailed poetic descriptions of nature, traditional housing, architecture of cities, etc. This often produces an impression that author is exploring or even ‘discovering’ an unknown deserted place even when talking about cities or yurts, thereby representing Mongolia as a ‘blank space’ (see for instance Ju 1995, Wang 1998a, Wang 2002).

Another discursive strategy used in the official writings can be termed as a ‘synechdochic’ mode of representation. In this paper it refers to the blunt use of the general terms ‘Menggu’ or ‘Menggu ren’ throughout entire articles or even books, without giving the readers any factual reference to which Mongolia and which Mongolians the author is talking about. Such figure of speech is called synecdoche, that is the substitution of part for whole, genus for species or vice versa. When used in non-fiction, non-narrative texts like country profiles, academic articles, travel accounts, and other types of texts that are meant to represent ‘facts’ to readers, the synechdoche

becomes a powerful strategic method creating so-called 'synecdochic fallacy' guiding the reader to perceive the part as an accurate reflection of whole (Barthes 1977: 162).

Sometimes a reader can go through a text of a few thousand characters and only at the end come across a very subtle hint that the Menggu here actually signifies Inner Mongolia and Menggu ren, the Mongolian nationality of China. For instance Guo's articles (Guo 1998, 2001) use the Menggu and Menggu ren throughout the narrative on 'the land and the people' and the only 'anchor' it gives the reader is a phrase that 'Menggu ren are a Chinese national minority who historically guarded the borders of the motherland' (Guo 2001, 28; see also Guo 1998, Zhang 1999).

Such general usage of the terms 'Mongolia' and 'the Mongols' perpetuates the Chinese audience's unawareness of the existence of the 'other Mongolia' beyond Chinese Inner Mongolia and reinforces the Mongolian national minority's belief that IMAR is *the* Mongolia and they are *the* Mongols. Here 'Menggu' stands for Inner Mongolia, while Inner Mongolia stands for the whole Mongolia. Thus, the PRC official discourse creates the identity of Inner Mongolia as the only Mongolia, and the Mongolian nationality as the only Mongols, and at the same time suppresses Mongolia's cultural identity by representing it as somewhat marginalised, insignificant and 'not real.'

The examples above relate to the texts that conform to the nationalist official discourse. The 'pragmatic' discourse, represented by the profiles issued by MFA, MOFE, influential business organisations, etc., as a rule avoid both the categorisation of the Mongols and any topics which may require an ideological or political division between the Mongols and Mongols. For instance, of all the 'pragmatic' texts, only the MFA profile includes the section on Mongolian history which employs the term Menggu zu. On the whole such texts focus mainly on contemporary issues that emphasise Mongolia-China state-to-state relations.

The nationalist discourse on the other hand places greater emphasis on the Chinese nation; the Zhonghua nation 'requires internal unity' (Bulag 2002: 175) and therefore considers pan-Mongolist sentiments as potential threat. On the one hand, strategic grouping promotes a necessary fragmentation of the Mongols, yet on the other hand, can also help to represent China as the 'historical Motherland' of all Mongols. Thus, we

can see how the inclusion-exclusion representational practice (Doty 1999: 11) operates through the linguistic device of lexical choices when Menggu ren and Menggu zu are treated as separate categories, despite their often overlapping cultural identities. Having considered the ways in which the terms are used in the texts, one can conclude that in the Chinese official discourse the terms have a much greater 'geo-political' dimension than a purely semantic one.

5.9 Conclusion

The main objective of this chapter was to trace the evolution of the official discourse of Mongolia in terms of the way in which it approaches the task of representing Mongolian culture and society in the central PRC media. In order to do so, the chapter established the stages of evolution of the discourse by examining three main categories of texts. It firstly looked at the publications issued throughout the 1990s, mainly the personal accounts from the central media like *RMRB*. Secondly, it examined the key texts, the Mongolia country profiles, issued by the *RMRB*, Xinhua Agency and some governmental institutions; it did so in chronological order and charted the appearance of certain nodal points that marked the Chinese discourse on Mongolia: the denial of ethnic origin, representing certain foodways as the essence of Mongolian culture, emerging messages on the national symbols as the markers of the statehood, and so on. Finally, to illustrate the development of the discourse, the chapter drew upon a range of background texts as a means of interpreting further some of the messages encoded in the somewhat laconic style of the country profile genre.

While charting and examining the nodal points of the official rhetoric, the chapter paid particular attention to the discursive strategies and linguistic devices which were employed in order to anchor these nodal points. For instance, the first key text began its narrative on Mongolian culture by giving an overview of the ethnic structure of Mongolian society. The first thing that attracts one's attention here is that the question of the ethnic origin of the Mongols of Mongolia is represented in the same way as that described in Chapter 4 regarding the official rhetoric on Mongolian history – that is, as an issue of Zhonghua history and therefore Zhonghua ethnic development. Thus, using Doty's term, the Mongols are 'negated' or denied an ethnicity of their own, or more

correctly, their ethnic development is represented as the development of the Mongolian minzu, a part of the Chinese nation: according to the official discourse, and the prerogative of possessing cultural tradition and history belongs solely to the Mongolian ethnic minority of the PRC.

Another topic broached in the first key text (which is also is one of the topics most commonly addressed by the Chinese popular media as well) is the question of Mongolian 'folkways' and culture in general. The texts employed the popular stereotypes of Mongolia, referring to it as a land of (solely) beautiful landscapes and unchanged tradition. The message is further reinforced in other publications as the texts focus almost exclusively on the steppes, horsemen, wild nature, traditional life-style, etc. Some of the subsequent profiles also employed the *quid pro quo* approach (where a fragment substitutes the whole picture) in using the visual representations to create 'an experience' of Mongolia as a somewhat backward place. The official discourse therefore sought to construct Mongolian cultural identity as a 'natural' Other opposed to the 'civilised' China-Self.

Another example of discursive representation of Mongolia culture where popular stereotypes and *quid pro quo* strategies meet together can be found in the first *RMRB* profile (as well some of the subsequent Mongolia briefs) which chose, apart from the horses, horse-milk vodka to represent Mongolian culture. Firstly, while being an important element of the Mongolian culture, this food stuff by no means can represent the whole spectre of the Mongolian culture. The hidden message here lies probably in the popular stereotype that the Han Chinese majority holds about 'the Mongols' in general, that is popular idea of the Mongolians as addicted to alcohol consumption. However, here we see a very significant strategy of 'replacement': the conventions of the Zhonghua discourse do not permit the Mongolian national minority of the PRC to be represented using such a 'negative' characteristic as alcohol addiction. Thus, Mongols from Mongolia become the site where the Han Chinese stereotypes and not-so-favourable perceptions of the Mongols in general can be placed safely in the official public discussion.

The chapter also demonstrated how the issue of Mongolian foodways in general are becoming an important channel to transmit yet another message regarding Mongolian

culture – foreign influence. Very often official publications would use the topic of Mongols' 'westernised' diet to reach a much broader conclusion of Mongolian culture being 'westernised' in general; the emphasis on the 'West' is of particular importance here as it creates a distinctive out-group of 'Asian country Mongolia' being altered by a 'non-Asian culture.' The chapter demonstrated how yet another binary opposition was constructed by the use of an inclusion-exclusion discursive strategy: the out-group is the West (Russia, Europe, US) and the in-group is Asia (Mongols, Chinese, etc).

The chapter also observed that, paradoxically, Mongols' cultural closeness, not only with the Mongolian minority of the PRC but with *China*, is simultaneously promoted. The chapter terms it as one of the 'myths', a social imaginary constructed by the dominant discourse in order to sustain the integrity of the Zhonghua discursive formation in times when Mongolia is undergoing the most intensive process of the search for its cultural and political identity and is determined to claim their ethnic and cultural separation from both Han nationality and Zhonghua nation. Considering that such sentiments occasionally spill over the border to the Chinese IMAR, the project of 'separating' the Mongols of Mongolia from the Mongolian nationality of China appears to be an important political objective. In order to do so, the PRC official discourse creates the identity of Inner Mongolia as the only Mongolia, and the Mongolian nationality as the only Mongols, and at the same time suppresses Mongolia's cultural identity by representing it as somewhat marginalised, insignificant and 'not real.'

One of the main findings of the chapter is the identification of a new approach to the Mongolian culture construction embedded in some of the official publications. Thus, some of the key texts began to include in the texts the sections on the symbols of Mongolia nationhood such as national flag, emblem, and holidays, and the concepts of Mongolian national freedom and independence. The new approach was further strengthened with the appearance of the MFA Mongolia profile, which sought to represent Mongolian culture in a more rational, 'pragmatic' way. Professionally done, modern in style, it depicted Mongolia more as a modern nation-state than a land of drunk horsemen 'frozen in time', hence undermining the orthodox way of representing Mongolia as a backward, uncultured place.

The chapter argues that the most important characteristic about the new ‘pragmatic’ approach to representing Mongolian culture and society is that, most importantly, it is able to balance between the two main objectives – to represent Mongolian culture in a ‘correct’ mode which would not cause any criticism from Mongolia or international community, yet does so without seriously compromising the fundamentals of the Zhonghua discursive formation. In fact this new approach to interpreting Mongolian culture became the accepted, official version of representing Mongolian culture when the MFA country profile was reproduced by the *RMRB*. This could be interpreted as a sign of the PRC officialdom’s readiness to *represent* Mongolia as an independent state. At the same time, the multiple discursive strategies and combination of opposite messages within a single text create a somewhat ‘flexible’ identity of Mongolia, highly situational and teleological, which can be drawn upon in order to serve the different, sometimes even opposing, political objectives of the PRC discourse producers.

CHAPTER SIX

Mongolian Politics and Economy

This chapter looks at how the official Chinese discourse represents the most important event in the modern history of Mongolia, the so-called Mongolian Democratic Revolution. This event was chosen as the reference point for this study as it marked a completely new era in Mongolian social, economic and political life, its relations with the world, and with China. The chapter examines how the official media represented Mongolia's transition from socialist state with a planned economy to a new democratic society with a market economy. The chapter demonstrates how the official PRC discourse first emerged after 1990 and attempted to deal with with completely new realities and thereafter evolved worked its way out on how new Mongolia should be officially formulated in the country profiles in the 2000s. Again (and even stronger than in the previous topics) there appears to be a contest between the two tendencies of representing Mongolia - orthodox nationalist and professionalized pragmatic. For instance, the chapter demonstrates that while the later draws attention to the image of Mongolia as an independent state, the former puts the particular emphasis on the role of the Western countries in Mongolian economy and politics, and thereby downplay its actual degree of independence

6.1 Socialist Mongolia on the path to reform

In 1987, Wang Yimin, a Xinhua Agency correspondent in Mongolia and one of the few Chinese people who had lived in the country in the 1980s, tried to summarise the political and economic situation of Mongolia at the end of the 1980s in his article 'My Understanding of the Mongolia People's Republic'.²⁰⁰ He wrote: 'Everybody knows

²⁰⁰ Wang Yimin published a large number of articles on Mongolia in the late 1980s/ early 1990s which were mainly published in journals such as *Issues in Contemporary Socialism*, *Northeast Asian Forum* and *The Inner Mongolian Universities Newsletter*, the main media which published the majority of the Mongolia-related articles that time.

very well that when there is no economic independence, there is no political independence either' (Wang 1987: 74).²⁰¹ By this the author referred to the enormous dependence of Mongolian economy on USSR aid, which at times reached thirty-five or even forty per cent of the national GDP (Nixon 2000: 8) and hence afforded the Soviets a great deal of influence over the Mongolian political life. The author welcomed the new line of the Mongolian government to diminish such influence and to become 'truly independent.' Little did the author know that in little more than a decade China would become Mongolia's number one trade partner, by far the largest foreign investor, and the main market for the Mongolian exports.²⁰² On the whole it would exert 'an extraordinary economic influence over Mongolia,' which 'translated into frequent Mongolian government acquiescence to Chinese policy objectives' (Rossabi 2005).

Until 1990, Mongolia preserved a one-party political system in which the MPRP (Mongolian Communists) remained the main political force. However, the highly personalized and centralized style of politics gave way at the end of the 1980s to an increased involvement of more democratic or representative sectors, following the new line of 'renewal' of the Mongolian socio-political system by 'democratising the party's inner life.' Mongolia's economic development until 1990 was based on the centrally planned model, with great dependence on the COMECON and particularly the USSR's financial aid and market. The economic reforms implemented at the end of 1980s aimed to modernise the economy by decentralising power and economic management, introducing individual economic activity and so on. Yet Mongolia still remained a socialist economy orientated mainly towards the economies of the COMECON countries. One of the main characteristics of the period was the normalisation of the relations with the PRC: the two countries settled their border issues, resumed trade and cultural exchange, reached consular agreements and started air travel between them (Bawden 1989, Bilskie 2002).

²⁰¹ The USSR's economic 'exploitation' and political domination of Mongolia was one of the main themes of the official discourse in the 1980s and, as shown in Chapter 4, even in the 1990s and 2000s, when the teaching materials termed Mongolia as a Soviet 'colony.'

²⁰² China became Mongolia's largest trade partner in 1997, its largest investor in 2000; simultaneously, forty-five per cent of Mongolian exports went to China too (Asian Development Bank 2002).

In the late 1980s there appeared a rather large number of publications on Mongolia with a rather 'positive' view of the country. Although most of them were not published in the central media like RMRB (this medium still resorted to carefully articulated accounts of formal diplomatic events), a series of writings appeared in academic and specialised magazines and journals, and in the regional media. For instance, Wang's 1987 mentioned above provided a good analysis of the economic processes and even admitted that Mongolia at the time had 'the highest living standard among the socialist countries in Asia.' The main emphasis of the article, however, was on the diminished influence of the USSR which allowed for an improvement in the relationship between China and Mongolia ('Mongolian leaders can not wait to go to China'), which he considered 'historically close' as China and Mongolia 'used to be one state' (Wang 1987, 1990a). Similarly, Zhong, in his personal account of his visit to Ulaanbaatar also welcomed Sino-Mongolian improvements, pointed out the high standard of living in Mongolia, and finally concluded that this was achieved due to the fact that 'from the 1940s there have been no political disruptions in Mongolia which allowed for the slow yet steady growth of people's income and wealth' (Zhong 1989: 25).

On the whole, one can say that the official Chinese discourse then, despite the differences in genre, media, professional background of the author, etc., could be characterised by some dominant recurring themes: the normalisation of the Sino-Mongolian relations, the similarity of the Mongolian economic reforms to those of China, and, most importantly, the lack of reference to the fundamental political changes in Mongolia, similar to those taking place in Eastern Europe. According to the Chinese publications of the time, the Mongolian leadership's growing 'independence from the USSR' was the only political change.

In 1990 Mongolia began its rapid transition from a centrally-planned to a market-oriented economy. The disintegration of the USSR threw the Mongolian economy into great difficulties which resulted in a sharp economic depression and increasing poverty in the first part of the 1990s. The country had to turn to the international community for financial aid: it became a member of the IMF, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank in 1991 and has received substantial financial aid since then. However, in return the Mongolian government had to adopt the 'neo-liberal policy package' imposed on the country by these organisations – the liberalisation of prices, trade and finances,

privatisation, deregulation, and small government – policies which according to many experts resulted in the country's slow growth, and large increases in unemployment and poverty (Rossabi 1998, 2005, 2005a, Asian Development Bank 2002, Enkhbayar 2007 and many others).

However, it was the political system that underwent the most rapid and radical reform. Following the patterns set by the USSR and the Eastern European countries, and in contrast to the mode of the Chinese reforms, political changes in Mongolia proceeded apace with economic reform. Thus, in 1990 the one-party system was abolished, and the first free multi-party elections took place (and were won by the MPRP). In 1992 a new Constitution based on democratic values was adopted, and the former Mongolian People's Republic was renamed 'Mongolia.' A new single chamber 76-seat national parliament (to be elected every four years), the Great Khural, was established. Since 1990 Mongolia has also striven to develop an independent and non-aligned foreign policy. One of its major objectives is to keep a good balance between its two neighbours, Russia and China. At the same time Mongolia is also actively developing and deepening relations with the Western developed countries.

Mongolia's peaceful break from communism and its development of a multi-party political system in 1990 did not cause a rupture in its relations with the PRC in terms of diplomatic relations, trade, cultural exchange and so on, and the national interests common to both countries were after all stronger than the ideological differences. The PRC's official discourse, however, had somehow to come to terms with the changes that were taking place in Mongolia and represent them in the media according to the Chinese officialdom's preoccupations and reservations regarding the Mongolian 'Democratic revolution.'

The clearest example in this regard is the *MPR* monograph issued in October 1991. The authors²⁰³ state in the preface: 'for the last twenty years relations between China and Mongolia were broken, so both countries, despite being close neighbours, are strangers to each other. The *MPR* monograph's main objective therefore is to introduce the MPR's society, politics and economics.' (Bao 1991: i). In reality the book does very

²⁰³ A collective of scholars from Mongolia Research Centre of the Inner Mongolian University, all ethnic Mongolians.

little of this. Not only does it use statistics of no later than 1985, it makes no reference whatsoever, not even in the most subtle way, to any political or economic developments of the late 1980s, let alone those of the year 1990. The bulk of the book is devoted to providing detailed statistics on animal husbandry products with exact number of litres of fresh milk produced by the cows of each breed and so on. The image of Mongolia the book creates is that of a country stuck in the 1970s, with no hint at any possible change in the country's socialist development. This is particularly striking given that the monograph's authors were Mongols from Inner Mongolia, attached to a university unit that specialised in research on Mongolia. It appears very unlikely that they were unaware of the socio-political transformations of Mongolia in the late 1980s/early 1990s.

A possible explanation for this is that there appeared to be no well formulated 'official line' yet on how to *present* such knowledge on Mongolia. In 1990-1991 there was very little 'guidance' from *RMRB* or Xinhua Agency on how to interpret the recent events in Mongolia. This can also explain why the first publications, especially those that did attempt to give some evaluation of Mongolia's transition, differed significantly from each other in the ways they represented Mongolia. Thus, an article by Wang (1992) which provided one of the most detailed and least ideologically-charged account of Mongolian developments in 1990, could appear in the same medium, *Issues of Contemporary Socialism*, along with numerous other publications that would discuss topics of, for example, Mongolian economic reforms with no mention of the political changes at all or if they did refer to Mongolian politics of the time, did so with the help of some ideological clichés about 'activities of oppositional factions' (Na 1992).

In the period 1991-1996, the official discourse on Mongolian politico-economic life began to evolve. Those authors who chose to address the issue of Mongolia's political transformation would represent the Mongolian multi-party system, democratisation and on the whole range of political reforms as the reason for Mongolia's instability. For Xiao, political change led to 'chaos in society which destroyed the favourable environment necessary for economic development' (Xiao 1994: 85); For Qing, 'Privatisation was mainly a political rather than economic objective', and 'the political reforms were made without taking into consideration national characteristics and the historical experience' (Qing 1996: 47-48); and for Xi, the Mongolian people 'were not psychologically prepared for such drastic political changes' (Xi 1996: 61). The

discourse on Mongolian reforms was obviously positioned within the paradigm of the PRC's official discourse on the Chinese reforms, which emphasised the priority of economic modernisation over the cardinal change of the political system.

The issue of reform is discussed from a slightly different perspective in the book produced by Political Department of the Beijing Military Command and issued by the National Defence University in 1994. Although the circulation of the book is very small (2000 copies) and it is a classified (*mimi*) material, it is interesting to see how the changes taking place in Mongolia in the early 1990s were interpreted for a restricted audience, specifically, the Chinese military. The authors stated that the rationale for the study was the necessity to examine the implications of Mongolia's political transformation for Chinese national security. The main conclusion of the book was that the Mongolian political system 'under the shocking impact of violent changes in the USSR and Eastern European countries' went through fundamental reform due to 'anti-Party' policies as well as democratisation, liberalisation and privatisation. As a result 'society and economy fell into deep crisis and all sorts of contradictions are currently growing.' According to this view, due to the 'anti-Party' and the 'de-politicisation' campaigns in the army, the MPRP was losing control over the army. In addition, Mongolia had re-configured its 'domestic and foreign objectives' and sought 'to counter-balance the PRC with the help of the USA' (Political Department of the Beijing Military Command, 1994: 17-19). This latter topic (Mongolia as a 'democratic enclave' constructed by the US along the PRC's longest border) would be a recurring theme in subsequent publications in the Chinese media, official and non-official.

Simultaneous to these highly specialised or restricted publications on Mongolia, there started to appear some personal accounts (mentioned in previous chapters) on Mongolia in the central media. The mode of representing Mongolia in these texts differed significantly from the publications discussed above. For instance Mogedema (1995) described Mongolia as a safe and successful country and particularly underlined 'the sense of stability' among the Mongolian people. Ju (1995) drew attention to the role of China in growing economic progress of Mongolia; Qingqi'er (1996) also pointed out that the Mongolian economic reforms modelled on the Chinese, were like 'a spring breeze that woke Mongolia up and broke up the monotony of nomadic life.' The background events to these publications were the victories of the MPRP in the first

parliament in 1992, and then in the president elections in 1993. Mongolian leaders did seem to be inclined to follow 'Chinese style' reforms and develop party-to-party links with the CCP and state-to-state relations with the PRC.

The next step in the development of the official discourse on the Mongolia's new economic and political developments came after June 1996 when the democratic opposition won the parliamentary and, the following year, the presidential elections. The new government's domestic and foreign policies were much more pro-'neoliberal' and pro-Western than when the MPRP was in power. The period was characterised by a series of resignations, corruption scandals and constant flux in the government. Once again, the official Chinese media took a 'wait and see' position and the number of the official publications on Mongolia in the second half of the 1990s was limited. The dominant themes of the texts that did appear at this time were the US involvement in the domestic affairs of Mongolia (Zhang 1996, Qing 1996), and 'overly liberal' policies in the economy. For instance, Xi Rimo, who published a whole range of articles on Mongolian politics and economy, was particularly critical of the new Mongolian government and believed that Mongolia had paid too high a price for initiating 'the so-called democratic movement' which destroyed the socialist political system and annihilated the achievements of many decades of the socialist economy (Xi 1997).

Yet another turning point in Mongolia's political transformation, as well as for the PRC's official interpretation of it, was the year 2000 when the MRPR won a landslide victory in the parliamentary elections, gaining 72 of 76 seats in the Great Khural. and then won the presidential elections the following year as well. The political situation in Mongolia, according to the official PRC publications, 'stabilised' and hence the next evolutionary step of the official discourse on Mongolia was the production of the Mongolia country profiles by the central media (*RMRB* and Xinhua Agency) and influential governmental institutions (the MFA and the MOC). The majority of the profiles dwelled upon the topics raised in the previous publications examined above, but the profiles produced in the early 2000s are particularly significant since it is at this point that the official rhetoric began to lose its former homogeneity. The meaning and significance of this will be analysed in the following sections.

6.2 Discovering a ‘new’ name and natural resources (Key Texts 1 and 2)

The first two country profiles, issued by the *RMRB* in October 2000 and June 2001, were identical in the way they represented the political and economic aspects of Mongolian society, or, more correctly, in the way they *under*-represented the topics. Neither text had a specific section on politics, and although the profiles did contain sections on the economy, their content and presentation contributed little to the construction of a comprehensive picture of the economic development of Mongolia, providing only some, rather obscure statistics, and making no reference to developments of the late 1980s that had changed the nature of the Mongolian economy. The economic sections were preceded by sections on Mongolia’s mineral resources, and together they made up the largest part of the profiles’ content. Similar to the way the two key texts presented Mongolian economic situation, Mongolia’s political development since the 1990 was ‘encoded’ in just one single phrase: ‘In 1992, the Mongolian People’s Republic changed its name to ‘Mongolia’.’

6.2.1 Re-naming the country

The issue of ‘strategic naming’ as employed in the official discourse for the purpose of constructing a historical identity of Mongolia was addressed in Chapter 4. In terms of representing Mongolia’s political transformation, the official rhetoric resorted to the same device. The first two *RMRB* profiles stated that the name ‘Mongolian People’s Republic’ was changed to ‘Mongolia’ in 1992.’ Moreover, the statement was, in fact, placed in the *history* section and was a part of a chronological account: ‘Mongolia -part of China,’ ‘Revolution of 1921’, ‘Establishment of the MPR in 1924’, and, finally, ‘Change of name in 1992’. The *RMRB* profiles provided no further explanation whatsoever as to the reasons for, and the significance of, the re-naming.

The country was re-named ‘Mongolia’ in the new Mongolian constitution adopted in 1992. The constitution reflected and legitimised the reforms of the 1980s and early 1990s. The change of name, therefore, actually signified the abolition of the system in which different members of the population were distinguished by class; the elimination of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the objective of creating a socialist or communist society; and the establishment of a system enabling private ownership and

entrepreneurship. The new constitution also recognised human rights and freedoms in accordance with *international* law, and set up a new state structure with an elected parliament and president, a multi-party political system and so on (Sanders 1992). Thus, a mere ‘change of name’ actually stood for some of the most fundamental transformations in Mongolia since 1921.

Such a strategy is, in fact, employed in the majority of the *RMRB*’s and all the Xinhua Agency’s profiles. By mentioning only one of the constitutional changes in Mongolia, the abolition of the ‘People’s Republic’ part of its name, the profiles left it for the readers to work out the actual meaning of this figure of speech. The only two profiles which did explain the significance of the change of name were key text 4, issued in May 2002 by the MFA (to be examined in more detail below), and the hybrid text published a year later by the *RMRB*. The latter, in fact, simply incorporated the passage from the MFA profile on the new Mongolian constitution, which mentions the re-naming of Mongolia.

One possible explanation for such ‘encoding’ could be that the time of the publication of the two key texts – 2000 and 2001 – was the period when the MRPR in Mongolia significantly consolidated its power. The official PRC rhetoric therefore had to find the correct mode to represent the politics of a country with a pro-democratic constitution and a communist government. On the other hand, the need to downplay the political developments in Mongolia could be also explained by the country’s ethnic and geographical closeness to the IMAR, and the desire of PRC officialdom not to let the ‘democratic movement’ and nationalist sentiments spread across the border. In addition, even with the accession to power of the MPRP, the USA’s activities in Mongolia did not cease and Mongolia was still considered by the American government a very important strategic partner and a base from which to spread democracy in the region.²⁰⁴ It appears that such preoccupations of PRC officialdom were manifested in the mode of official discourse as presented in the key texts on Mongolia’s new constitution, which stipulated not only the new name for the country, but also the main aspirations of its transition towards a democratic society.

²⁰⁴ The American presence in Mongolia, and how Chinese official discourse deals with it, will be discussed in the following sections.

6.2.2 The land of 'timeless' economy and natural resources

As demonstrated above, the only representation of the political life of Mongolia by 2000-2001 in the *RMRB* texts was in the form of an obscure reference to the country's change of name. However, the country's economic development of the previous decade was also addressed in a similarly idiosyncratic way. The country profiles had two sections which together made up the bulk of texts – a section on Mongolian 'natural resources' and a section on the country's 'economic situation'.

The content of the economy section consists of a few somewhat generic statements, such as 'animal husbandry is the base of the economy' accompanied by a list of the 'main types of livestock.' The texts also mention the existence of the settled agriculture in the country and offer a full list of different sorts of agricultural items (grains, vegetables, etc.) grown in Mongolia. The profiles are very brief on the topic of industry, stating only that 'there is processing of mining and agriculture products.' When approaching the topic of trade, the profiles state that 'Russia is Mongolia's main trade partner' and conclude with a list of import and export goods.

As we can see, such a representation can hardly serve as a full description of an economy that had undergone tremendous change. The statistics contained in the profiles have no source of origin or date, and could equally well represent the Mongolian economy of 1975, 1985 or 1995. It appears that the sections on economy were indeed copied from an old encyclopaedia or a statistics book on the Mongolian People's Republic and all it took was just to substitute 'Soviet Union' for 'Russia.' Much of the information was outdated – Russia was no longer Mongolia's main trading partner as stated in the 2000-2001 profile. Rather, the PRC had become Mongolia's number one trading partner in 1999. Moreover, China's leverage was not confined only to trade. By the end of the 1990s/early 2000s, the PRC had gained leading positions in many sectors of the Mongolian economy, and in particular in natural resource industries.

One of the most striking features of the range of Chinese publications on Mongolia since 1990s used for this study, is the way in which Mongolia's significance as a place of rich mineral and energy resource evolved from complete neglect to high importance. Thus the *MPR* monograph (Bao 1991) devotes only one page (of three hundred and fifty-

seven pages of various types of statistics) to the natural resources of Mongolia and its mining sector. By contrast, the country profile of the early 2000s (the first two profiles issued by the *RMRB*) devote about thirty per cent of the text to this topic. This can not be explained by the progress made in the Mongolian mining industry in the 1990s, since the majority of all known sites in Mongolia were discovered during the socialist period. Before 1991, China's only competitor for Mongolian resources was the Soviet Union. The Mongolian government's policies of openness and economic reform that gained a particular momentum after 1990, caused a sudden and massive presence in the country of Western and Japanese businesses, including world-leading mining companies. Thus, perhaps in the view of the authors of the *MPR* book, the PRC's prospects of gaining access to Mongolian resources in such circumstances appeared weak.

However, the mining and energy industries are considered by many Chinese experts as the most prospective sectors for the Sino-Mongolian economic cooperation. For instance, Nalin admits that China, similar to the Western countries, is very interested in cooperation with Mongolia in this sphere but only because 'Mongolia has nothing else to offer apart from natural resources'. Yet unlike the Western countries, 'China is going to help Mongolia to explore and exploit the deposits.'²⁰⁵ Moreover, 'although China still lacks the money and technology of the US or Japan, it has an abundant labour force with valuable experience of working in Mongolia, and a closeness of culture and mentalities with the Mongols' (Nalin 1992:72).²⁰⁶

By the end of the 1990s it became clear that China was gaining the key positions in many sectors of Mongolian economy, first and foremost in the resources sector. As the profiles point out, Mongolia has six hundred and eighty mineral deposit sites including coal, copper, gold, uranium, iron ore, molybdenum, fluorspar, tungsten, silver, phosphor,

²⁰⁵ The exchange of accusations of 'greed' between the West and China regarding their interests in Mongolian natural resources has intensified in the last few years as the competition is getting stronger. The Chinese official rhetoric traditionally accuses western multinationals operating their businesses in Mongolia of being concerned solely about profits. The western official discourse answers in kind. The *entire* section on the Mongolian economy, taken from the BBC Mongolia profile, reads as follows: 'Chinese demand for minerals fuels a mining boom, but many Mongolians live in poverty.' Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1235560.stm, downloaded on 7 June 2007.

²⁰⁶ An article in *The Economist* on China's growing dominance in the mining and energy sectors of the Mongolian economy quotes the words of a Chinese manager of one of the PRC's mining companies in Mongolia: 'Mongolia used to be a part of China, so they think a bit like us' ('Battle for Mongolia's soul', *The Economist*, 19 December, 2006).

and zinc. Oil exploitation is still in its initial stages in Mongolia but many experts consider that oil may become Mongolia's most important natural resource in the coming two decades. Over twenty zones with oil exploration potential are scattered along the Sino-Mongolian border (Asian Development Bank 2002). The mining sector accounted for 8.5% of GDP in 2000 and the value of mineral exports accounted for 40.5% total exports (*The Economist* 2006). In addition, the Mongolian government has taken effective measures in recent years to establish a stable legal system in a bid to protect the interests and rights of overseas investors.

Needless to say, China, which needs to fuel the growth of its economy, is the main destination of Mongolia's natural resources. By the beginning of the 2000s, China was the largest investor in the Mongolian resources industry ahead of Canada and the USA. Moreover, the Russian, Canadian and American mining and oil companies began to see profits made not in their own markets but from selling to China (*ibid*). In the profiles however, all these and many important other processes of the Mongolian economy, and China's place in them, were presented with the use of some dubious statistics and a list of natural resources.

To summarise, in the first two *RMRB* Mongolia profiles of 2000 and 2001, Mongolia's political changes during the decade of reform since 1990 were reduced to a mere change in the country's name. The general image the profiles constructed of Mongolia were that of a country with some 'timeless' economy, no current political change, yet rich in natural resources. Considering that the opening sections of the profiles were about Mongolian history and began with the statement that 'Mongolia used to be a part of China,' one can say that the image constructed by these key texts subtly alludes to the views of Mongolia propagated by the Chinese teaching materials (examined in Chapter 4): 'the land is rich, and the land belongs to China.'

6.3 Sanitised Politics and Foreign (aid) relations (Key Text 3)

The next Mongolia profile was issued by the *RMRB* in February 2001. Structurally it was constructed as followed: the first half of the text consisted of the sections on Mongolian national symbols and history which were discussed in the previous chapters.

However, this profile represents the next step as far as the development of the official Chinese discourse on Mongolian politics and economy is concerned, since in the second half it introduced two new sections: 'Politics' and 'Foreign relations.' As we will see, the overall focus of the profile was more on the Mongolian state and its structure, the political aspect of it first of all.

6.3.1 Political system of Mongolia

Similar to the previous profiles, the history section that preceded the passage on the politics ends with a reference to Mongolia's change of name in 1992. The 'Politics' section further develops the theme, though in a very cautiously articulated way. It still does not provide any explanations for the meaning of the name change, but it does attempt to introduce the political system of Mongolia, however brief and somewhat sanitised this description may be.

In 1990 the 'socialist' Mongolian constitution was amended, deleting reference to the MPRP's role as the guiding force in the country, legalising opposition parties, creating a legislative body, and establishing the office of the President. The new constitution came to force in 1992 and stipulated that 'Mongolia is a presidential republic with parliamentary rule.' In addition to establishing Mongolia as an independent, sovereign republic, the new constitution restructured the legislative branch of the government, creating a unicameral legislature, the State Great Khural, the country's supreme government organ. It consists of 76 members elected for a term of four years on the basis of universal, free and direct suffrage by secret ballot. The new constitution also stipulated that the president is the head of state to be elected by popular vote, rather than by the legislature, for a 4-year term and limited to two terms.

According to the third *RMRB* country profile, however, the political structure of Mongolia is as follows:

The Great Khural is the state's highest authoritative body and the supreme legislative power. It consists of 76 members; each term of service is 4 years; every citizen of Mongolia older than 25 is eligible to be elected a member of Great Khural. In 1990, the Great Khural established the office of President, who is the head of state. The President and the Great Khural make up the core

leadership of the new state system. The chairman of the ruling party takes up the post of the prime minister. In 1999 the constitution went through amendments.

As one can see, on the one hand, this is the first profile that makes reference to Mongolia's new political institutions. On the other hand, this description omits the most important characteristics that define the democratic nature of these new political phenomena in Mongolia and give them meaning. For instance, the profile avoids reference to the Great Khural as 'the parliament', nor does it make any reference to the free and direct elections, even though these achievements in the development of the Mongolian political system can be considered Mongolia's 'trade mark', in sharp contrast to the political processes in its neighbouring Russia and Central Asian countries. Indeed, free elections are *the* characteristic of contemporary Mongolia that distinguishes it from its neighbours, the PRC included.

However, the profile authors could not completely ignore these aspects as the profile had to be in compliance with the other news publications of the *RMRB* and Xinhua Agency at the time. The central theme of those publications was the overwhelming victory of the MPRP, first in the parliamentary elections in 2000, and then in the Presidential elections in 2001. Thus, the text producers had to employ a strategy of 'naming without explaining.' In fact, this double victory of the Mongolian communists made it possible for the Chinese political discourse to tone down its rhetoric (intensified after the democratic opposition in 1996) of the electoral system of Mongolia as a 'Western' imposition.

However, after the Mongolian communists returned to power, the *RMRB* and Xinhua Agency's publications did occasionally refer to the elections. For example the *RMRB* article entitled 'The MPRP is rising again' gives a detailed account of how many people from how many parties took part in the parliamentary elections of 2000, in order to emphasise the triumph of the MPRP who won 72 of 76 seats in the Great Khural. It also cites as one of the main reasons for this success the fact that the party 'returned to the ideology of democratic socialism' (*RMRB* on 8 July 2000). Another *RMRB* article from the same year (also reproduced in the Xinhua online edition) concluded that, although the second half of the 1990s was characterised by turmoil in Mongolian political life, now, with the victory of the MPRP, 'the new millennium ushered in new hope' (*RMRB* on 7 April 2000, 'Menggu guo: fazhan jingji zhu zhong huanbao').

6.3.2 Foreign relations

In 1996 a scholar from the Inner Mongolian University wrote in his article on Mongolia's foreign relations: 'Mongolia is returning to Asia' (Zhang 1996: 90). Although the author also points out the strong influence of the 'West,' the article particularly emphasises the fact that Mongolia's main priority in its foreign relations is in the sphere of regional cooperation. Indeed, following its adoption of a market economy and a democratic political system, Mongolia moved quickly to forge new links with the wider international community, with particular focus on the Asia Pacific region. Thus, Mongolia is a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and it is seeking membership of APEC. Since 1990 Mongolia started to develop a non-aligned foreign policy. One of its major objectives is to keep a good balance between its two neighbours, Russia and China. At the same time, Mongolia is also actively developing and deepening relations with what it calls 'third neighbours,' developed countries and regions such as the US, Japan, Korea and the EU.

According to the 'Foreign relations' section of the year country profile:

After 1990, Mongolia started to carry out an 'omni-directional'²⁰⁷ foreign policy. Simultaneous to maintaining close, balanced relations with Russia and China it particularly deepened relations with the US, Japan, Germany and other Western big countries in order to acquire foreign aid for its economic development.

As we can see, the profile presents Mongolia's international relations accurately but with one significant point of emphasis – the foreign aid. In fact, the issue of foreign aid has become a hotly debated topic not only in China and Mongolia, but also among the Western donor-countries as more experts begin to doubt the positive role of the financial aid.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ The Chinese term is 'duozhidian,' translated here as 'omni-directional'; the Mongolian use the expression 'third neighbour', referring to 'the third countries' apart from Russia and China.

²⁰⁸ See, for example, the debate on the way foreign aid is seen to contribute to Mongolia's low economic performance between a scholar of Mongolian studies, Morris Rossabi, as expressed in his book *From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (2005), and an economist of the Asian Development Bank, William Bikales, in his review of the Rossabi book available at <http://www.mongolia-web.com/content/view/24/33/>.

6.3.2.1 Western aid

Mongolia receives amongst the highest amount of foreign aid when measured on a per capita basis. The fact that prior to 1990 Soviet aid made up for more than a third of the MPR's GDP has become a canonical example of the inefficiency of the socialist economy. Much less widely known are the statistics regarding Western aid provided by the developed countries to Mongolia after the democratic revolution. While many western scholars have only recently started to doubt its positive role in the economic development of the country, the Asian Development Bank stated in 2002 that easy access to foreign funds has had a 'negative effect' on Mongolian economy as 'it has reduced the need for domestic adjustments to maintain a balance of payments equilibrium, and second, external foreign debt has increased by 2002 to more than 82% of GDP and national debt to 92.6% of the GDP (Asian Development Bank 2002).

The formula 'pro-West orientation for financial aid' is repeated in many of the background texts and all the consequent key texts issued by *RMRB* and Xinhua Agency, although not in the MFA profile. The latter contains a short section on 'foreign aid' and makes no connection between this and Mongolia's politics or economics. However, after 2000 the official rhetoric changed slightly as the authors of the official publications had to balance between two competitive representations of Mongolian socio-political life: on the one hand, Western financial support, and hence political influence in the country, had not disappeared with the MRPR's arrival to power; on the other hand, the new communist government had to be represented as a 'positive force' and different from the previous 'so-called democratic government.' A solution appears to have been found, since the post-2000 official publications emphasize the Mongolian government's determination to attract foreign *investment* rather than aid²⁰⁹ (see for instance *RMRB* on 21 January 2001, 'Menggu qiannianlu').

²⁰⁹ Simpson, however, who analysed foreign direct investments in Mongolia since 1990 and their influence on the actual economic development of Mongolia concluded: 'The energy and mineral sector has the most favorable outlook *from the investors' point of view*, whereas the manufacturing of quality products (cashmere, etc) and agricultural processed products are essential for bringing down unemployment and create higher standards of living and wealth and reduce dependence on foreign aid' (Simpson 1999).

In short, the message the Mongolia profile examined in this section is trying to communicate is that Mongolia is in need of financial aid to run its 'Western-style market economy.' While the PRC addresses some of Mongolia's economic problems by being the largest investor in the country, the West provides the financial aid which increases the economic and hence political dependence of Mongolia on Japan, EU, and, of course, the US.

6.3.2.2 US and 'democratisation'

According to the majority of Chinese academics writing on Mongolia, especially those who published in the second half of the 1990s, the economic reforms in Mongolia were in fact part of a political agenda initiated and supported by Western developed countries (Nalin, 1992; Xiao, 1994; Qing, 1996; Baoyina'erchen, 1998). Zhang (1996) argues that, starting from 1990, the US has been taking an active part in 'Mongolian domestic reforms and economic renovation.' Baoyina'erchen (1998) agrees and adds that the 'so-called democratic movement' in Mongolia was sponsored by the US' and that, on the whole, financial and economic help from 'the West' was aimed at promoting political goals. The author also points out that due to the size and population of Mongolia ('unlike China') 'a hundred foreign advisors is enough to get the Mongolian political system and economy under control.'

Along with the Western authors' aspirations and the Chinese discourse producers' preoccupations, Mongolia can serve as a good base for spreading democratic ideas in the region, not least across the border to the PRC. In their Mongolia Report prepared for the American Congress, a researcher from the Asian Affairs Department of the Congress states that 'in 1990, the MPRP declared the end of a one-party communist state and initiated democratic reforms with U.S. assistance.' Then, when the democratic opposition won the elections of 1996, 'the new Mongolian leadership was quoted as crediting the victory to help from U.S. political strategists and to study of American political devices – the 'Contract with America' in particular (Dumbaugh 2007).

Another reason why the 'American theme' recurs in the profiles and background texts is a Chinese preoccupation with the perceived intentions of the US to gain control over the 'strategic space' between Russia and China. In fact, many western scholars hold a

similar view on American activity in Mongolia. 'Due to Mongolia's strategic positioning in Northeast Asia, Ulaanbaatar fits in well with America's new wartime strategy to project superior force in the region. As a result, Washington has begun to push forward many facets of political, economic, and military exchange.' (Wang 2005a, a US-based Taiwanese scholar). Thus, the Chinese government regards the US as a potential foe which is threatening to deploy an encirclement strategy connecting Central Asia (where they have been present since 11 September 2001) to Mongolia. Therefore, developing economic and political relations with Mongolia is becoming important to counter the encirclement strategy of the US, almost as a matter of national security.

6.3.2.3 Japan and 'pan-Mongolism'

Mongolia's close cooperation with Japan is another irritant for the PRC leadership represented in the official texts with such statements as 'Japan is longing for the rich natural resources of Mongolia' Baoyina'erchen (1998). It should be noted that Japan has been Mongolia's largest single aid donor since 1991, providing a total of 140 billion yen in official development assistance. Tokyo sees Mongolia as a valuable pro-Japanese nation, in sharp contrast to Japan's other Northeast Asian neighbours (except Taiwan). In fact, according to an opinion poll conducted in late 2004 by the Japanese Embassy in Ulaanbaatar through the National University of Mongolia, more than 70% of Mongolian people polled said they felt an affinity with Japan. In addition, the largest percentage of those polled - 37.4% - cited Japan as a foreign country with which Mongolia should have the most intimate relations (Masaki 2007).

According to many Chinese publications (official and non-official), Japan pursues a geopolitical agenda in Mongolia and promotes pan-Mongolian ideas. As an example of such pan-Mongolist political agenda, one Chinese academic refers to the fact that Japan has helped to build the Chinggis Khan Mausoleum (Baoyina'erchen, 1998). Interestingly, according to the author, the commemoration of this symbolic figure of Mongolian history and ethnicity, unlike the 'regularized' celebration of this 'Chinese nation hero' in the IMAR, is considered a manifestation of 'pan-Mongolist' sentiments.

It should be noted, however, that not all the texts adopt the same approach to representing Mongolia's international relations. Apart from the profiles issued by the

MFA or MOC, which will be examined in the next section, one could single out the monograph by Tumenqiqige. In a rather large section on Mongolian foreign relations, the author pays particular attention to Mongolia's new policy of respecting international law, and even assesses its omni-directional policy as 'very successful.' The text also mentions, what is perhaps the main principle of Mongolia's foreign relations doctrine since 1990, that is, the maintenance of cooperation with the two neighbours, Russian and China, while simultaneously intensifying its relations with the US, Japan, and EU. No reference to financial aid is made in this regard. Unlike the *RMRB* profiles (key texts 1, 2 and 3), the book offers a rather thorough examination of Sino-Mongolian relations drawing in up-to-date statistics obtained from Mongolian sources (Tumenqiqige 2001: 66-67).

In presenting Mongolian politics and foreign relations the *RMRB* profile employs a discursive strategy of suppressing the use of certain words (parliament, elections, democratisation, and so on). However the fact that reference is made to such political institutions as the Great Khural and the president can be considered a step forward towards the construction of Mongolia's political identity as an independent state with developed political institutions. The particular emphasis on the role of the Western countries, on the other hand, appears to downplay Mongolia's achievements and its actual degree of independence.

In 2002, the *RMRB* published an interview with the MPRP secretary quoting him as saying that 'Mongolia and China started reforms at the same time 20 years ago. But the achievements of China are simply stunning, its role in the world is increasing, and its international and regional influence is getting stronger. All this can be attributed to the constant self-improvement of the CCP and its focus on reforms, development and stability' (*RMRB* on the 1 November 2002. 'Waiguoren shikan zhongguo'). The underlying message of the official discourse on Mongolia's foreign relations can be summed up in a phrase from an academic article that states that 'Mongolia has to renounce its 'third country policy' as its fate lies in good relations with its neighbours (Baoyina'erchan 1998).

6.4 Professionalism and Political correctness (Key Text 4)

The next Mongolia profile was issued by the MFA in May 2002, only two months after the *RMRB* country brief examined in the previous section. However the difference between the two texts, in terms of the content, the presentation of the data, the tone of the narrative (in particular the lack of value judgements), is most striking. Considering the authorship of the text, it is only reasonable that the sections on Mongolia's foreign relations and international participation are addressed in a more detailed way and comprise a large part of the whole profile. The other two topics on which the text offers the most abundant data are Mongolian politics and economics.

Key text 4 stands out from all the other country profiles examined for this study not only because of its volume, although this in itself is impressive: the MFA profile is fifteen pages (A4), while all the other profiles are between one and three pages long. The main difference between the MFA profiles and the texts of *RMRB* and Xinhua Agency lies in the content of the texts and in the mode of representing the data. Firstly, the MFA profile operates with an impressive volume of the most up-to-date statistics (the profile was issued in May 2002 and the text refers to data of 2000-2001). Secondly, in most cases the profile refers to *Mongolian* sources for the statistics. This is significant since Chinese and Mongolian statistics often differ. Interestingly, despite providing a large amount of information and statistics on Mongolia, the MFA profile offers rather little for the DA analysis to dwell on in this highly professional 'dry' type of narrative.

The style of the profile on the whole can be termed as 'modern' as, instead of passages on 'vodka and horses', it offers contemporary data, including such concrete information as addresses, telephone numbers, electronic sources, etc. Besides, almost all proper names are given in Mongolian, and although this is not perhaps the most useful information for an average Chinese reader, it still indicates the high level of professionalism of the text's authors.

The only compromise the profile makes with the orthodox nationalist style of discourse embedded in the *RMRB* and Xinhua profiles is that it incorporates the history section from the *RMRB* profile of June 2001. However, the section looks somewhat out of place in an otherwise very professionally and impartially written brief. In fact, the history

section is, perhaps, the only part of the profile which, rather than providing information on the topic, represents discursively an ideological (nationalist) interpretation of the data. Apart from the sections already featured in the profiles examined at the beginning of Chapter 6, the MFA text not only contains general headings on 'Politics' and 'Economics', but also has very specific sections such as 'Parliament', 'Constitution', 'Government', 'Political parties', 'Political figures', and several sections on specific sectors of the economy sectors.

6.4.1 General political situation

The MFA begins its description of the general political situation in Mongolia with a 'traditional' statement that 'in 2000, the political situation in Mongolia stabilised.' However, unlike the *RMRB* texts, the sentence does not stop here but goes on and adds that 'the current government progressed with the economic reforms and privatisation.' Although 'the current government' refers to the government formed by the MRPR after its victory in the elections, the authors of the text emphasise more the nature and continuity of the reforms rather than the political orientation of the government. Later in the same section, the MFA profile states that the MPRP won a victory in a 'fierce battle with the opposition' in the parliamentary and then presidential elections. However, this does not appear as praise for the victory *per se*, but as a means of demonstrating that the opposition was a strong force able to provide real competition to the MPRP.²¹⁰ The profile also states that 'the democratic opposition recognized the election results.'

By providing such rich information on various aspects of Mongolian politics and economics not previously addressed in the official publications (or even in academic writings), the MFA profile also clarifies some of the more obscure points introduced into the official discourse on Mongolia in the previous profiles, for instance, Mongolia's name change, or the political significance of the Great Khural. Hence, some of the topics which were merely touched upon in the *RMRB* profiles receive a fuller explanation in the MFA text.

²¹⁰ In fact, the last parliamentary elections of 2004 demonstrated just that: the MRPR won 37 and the Democratic coalition got 34 out of the Great Khural's 76 seats.

6.4.1.1. The name change explained

The MFA text refers to Mongolia's change of name in 1992 twice: first, in the history section 'borrowed' from the *RMRB* profile ('in 1924 the Mongolian People's Republic was established; in 1992 the name 'Mongolian People's Republic' was changed to 'Mongolia'), and then in a long section devoted to the new Mongolian constitution. On the latter the profile points out that the constitution stipulates Mongolia as 'an independent, sovereign republic,' and that the country's 'high aspirations are to build a human, civic, and democratic society.' The text also states that 'Mongolia carries out a peaceful foreign policy based on international law,' and 'no foreign troops are allowed in the country.' Only after such a preamble does the text refer to the fact that, under the new constitution, the name of the Mongolian People's Republic was changed to Mongolia, because the country became a presidential republic with a parliamentary system.'

6.4.1.2 Parliament and elections

The profile has a rather extensive section on 'The Parliament' which gives a detailed examination of the Great Khural's structure, function and significance and it places particular emphasis on the political power of the parliament (e.g. to dismiss the prime minister and the members of the parliament, to impeach the president and so on). The profile gives also a very thorough description of the electoral system of Mongolia and, unlike the *RMRB* and Xinhua texts, mentions the MRPR's landslide in 2000.

6.4.1.3. The multi-party system

When addressing this topic, the profile not only notes the existence of a multi-party system in Mongolia since 1990, it gives an overview of the structures and programmes of the main political parties. Interestingly, the descriptions of the ruling MPRP and the opposition Democratic parties differ significantly, but not in the way one would expect from an official text issued by a PRC governmental institution. Thus, on the MPRP the profile reports only the number of members (120, 000) and states that in 1997 the party carried out party reform and changed its code, structure, and decision-making mechanisms and hence became a 'central-left wing party of national-democratic orientation, with democratic socialism as the ideological base'.

Much more attention is given to an introduction to the Mongolian Democratic Party, the largest opposition force, with 100, 000 members. The profile explains that the party is actually a coalition which gathered together the National-Democratic Party, the Social-Democratic Party, the Party of Democratic Revival, and some others. The profile speaks extensively on the party's political position, ideology and objectives, explaining, for instance, that their main priorities are to strengthen the political independence of Mongolia, to build a fairer and stronger economy and open society, to establish professionalism in politics, to promote social development and closer integration with the international community, and so on. Interestingly, the language the profile employs in its description of the democratic opposition differs significantly from that of the other official publications: it uses no such linguistic devices as inverted commas, the 'so-called' expression, omission of certain taboo words and so on.

6.4.1.4. Foreign relations

The presentation of Mongolia's foreign relations is by far the largest part of the whole profile. On the whole, the profile mainly repeats the fundamental postulates of the Mongolian foreign policy doctrine such as the non-alliance and omni-directional policies, good neighbourly relations with Russia and China and simultaneous emphasis on building relations with developed countries, etc. The only thing that differs in this profile is in reference to the decision of the new leadership in 2000 to continue the previous governments' line of independence, openness, and strengthening country's position in the international community. Here, the text emphasises in particular the fact that these policies are to be based on the principles of national interest and stability. In this passage the profile clearly alludes to the foreign policies of the previous government formed by the Democratic coalition, which caused much social tension and political instability and is believed to have paid excessive attention to the interests of Western countries and international organisations over those of Mongolia.

The profile pays particular attention to Mongolia's achievements in terms of its integration into international society, and it represents the country as a fully-fledged member. At the same time, having pointed at the Mongolian eagerness to develop closer links with the international community, the profile, unlike previous country briefs, does

not make a direct link to financial aid as the driving force behind such a policy. In fact, the profile does refer to foreign aid, but not in the section on 'Foreign relations'. Instead there is a specific section on foreign aid which states that 'prior to 1990 the Soviet Union loaned Mongolia more than 10 billion USD.²¹¹ After 1991 about twenty different donor-countries and regions, and ten international organizations and NGOs provided 2.9 billion USD of credits and aid. The country's main donors are Japan (which provides about 40 per cent), ADB, WB, IMF, USA, Germany, Russia, Denmark, China, and the UNDP.' Following its principle strategy the MFA text is again simply listing facts and figures.

6.4.1.5. Relations with China and Taiwan

One of the profile's largest sections naturally provides an overview of the history and current state of the Sino-Mongolian relations including the cooperation between Taipei and Ulaanbaatar. It starts with the usual statement that 'diplomatic relations between Mongolia and China were established in 1949.' It is noteworthy that the term 'China' used in the text (and in fact in the overwhelming majority of all the other publications) is the Chinese word 'woguo', 'our country' (我国). When talking about the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the official Chinese rhetoric rarely uses the terms 'China' (zhongguo) or the 'PRC' (Zhonghua renmin gongheguo). The MFA proceeds then with a description of the development of Sino-Mongolian relations and states that after the problematic period of the 1960s, bilateral relations were revived in 1989. Since 2000 the new impetus to the relationship was given by the active cooperation between the CCP and the MRPR (the profile offers a wide range of statistics on China-Mongolia cooperation in many spheres, from military to trade.

What distinguishes this profile from the other key texts is not only the comprehensive description of Sino-Mongolian relations, but also the fact that it is the only one that mentions Mongolia's contacts with Taiwan. It states that 'Mongolia and Chinese Taiwan have had economic and trade co-operation from 1991', and that Taiwan is one

²¹¹ In December 2003, the Russian government decided to write off all but \$300 million of Mongolia's estimated \$11 billion debt to Russia.

of the donors providing financial and economic aid to Mongolia. Certainly, the profile does not speak about political co-operation between the two, nor does it mention that Taiwan has had a representative office in Ulaanbaatar since 2002 following the Taiwan government's decision to abandon regulations defining Mongolia as part of China.²¹²

Another topic that is addressed specifically in the MFA profile is Mongolia's relations with Russia, the US, EU, Asia-Pacific region, and international organisations. Each section is presented with detailed data and no attempt to evaluate any of the data. Even cooperation with the USA in the military sphere is presented solely with a list of events and the usual neutrality about 'sustaining security in the region' and so on. The descriptions of Mongolia's cooperation with other countries and organisations, including the main financial aid donors, follow a similar pattern.

6.4.2 The Economy

The sections on the Mongolian economy (that is, a general overview followed by detailed accounts of main sectors of the country's economy) adhere to the general pattern of the profile that is to provide factual information and minimum interpretation. When describing the general economic situation in Mongolia, however, the text does emphasise the role of privatisation in Mongolia's economic reforms, stating that since 1991 the country commenced a 'transition towards a market economy mainly by privatising state property'. Later, in 1997, the government adopted a privatisation blueprint for the period 1997-2000 'in order to increase the role of the private sector in the economy.' The profile clearly underplays the role of the mineral and energy sectors in both the Mongolian economy and Sino-Mongolian relations, especially if compared to other profiles. Very little attention is paid to the topic and the profile touches upon the natural resources of Mongolia only very briefly. Perhaps the profile authors, and everything indicates that they are Mongolia experts, are fully aware of the sky rocketing preoccupations among the Mongolian population and government of becoming a mere 'natural resources appendix' for rising Chinese economy.²¹³

²¹² An agreement was reached between the two countries in March 2002, two months before the publication of the profile and it appears unlikely that the event passed unnoticed by the profile authors from the MFA.

²¹³ In fact, during a personal interview conducted in Mongolia during the field work, many Mongolian officials mentioned that the reluctance of the Mongolian government to allow

On the whole, one can say that the MFA profile offers rather little for the DA analysis to dwell on in this highly professional type of narrative. It appears as if the text was written following the principles of political correctness and, in fact, the text almost lacks the ‘Chinese characteristics’ of the *RMRB* and *Xinhua* texts. The MOC profile goes even further and, while adhering to a similar line to that taken in the MFA profile on all other topics, it removes the history section all together. Yet such an ‘ahistorical’ representation of Mongolia was perhaps a step too far to represent the country at the national level. Thus, the MFA version was eventually accepted as the Mongolia profile of choice, and adopted by the *RMRB* as the hybrid text. However, before the MFA profile appeared in the *RMRB* (and subsequently elsewhere), the *Xinhua* Agency issued two Mongolia profiles of its own.

6.5 Dominant discourse after the MFA Profile (Key Texts 5 and 6)

After its publication, the MFA profile was immediately picked up by different sorts of electronic sources (see Chapter 4), from tourist agencies selling tours to Mongolia, to numerous official and semi-official websites on ‘Mongolian culture’ (mainly on Inner Mongolia but some of them also give some basic information on Mongolia proper) to non-official, and even nationalistic web resources. Very often the profile would be shortened, omitting statistical information for example, but without compromising the main message that the profile appears to be transmitting to the readers – the status of Mongolia as an independent state which enjoys the full right of being a member of international community. Ironically, this very version was adopted even by such an ultra-nationalistic website as *China Hero*; there the only adjustment to the profile that had been made was the substitution of the term ‘Mongolia’ for ‘Outer Mongolia’ without changing anything in the content. Perhaps the authors of this ‘improved’ version of the MFA profile felt that the power of the term ‘Outer Mongolia’ (which somehow defines Mongolia’s position in the hierarchy as simply ‘a Chinese territory’) is much stronger than any statistics aimed at creating an image of the country as a ‘foreign state.’

privatisation of the natural resource deposits can be explained precisely out of concern that it will be China, not the West or Japan, that would eventually get hold of them.

However, the official central media like *RMRB* and Xinhua Agency seemed to be less affected by the MFA's professional and up-to-date profile. Thus, *RMRB* went on to report conventional news regarding diplomatic or formal events in Mongolia or in Sino-Mongolian relations, while Xinhua agency, barely a month after the publication of the MFA profile (in June 2002), issued its own country brief (key text 5). The brief not only remained unaffected in any way by the MFA profile, it was in fact, a re-issuing of the old *RMRB* profile of February 2001 (key text 3). However, the following month (July 2002) the agency published yet another profile (key text 6), which differed from the previous one in a number of ways. In fact, the second profile produced by Xinhua was much more along the lines of the MFA text, some parts of which were borrowed uncut, some (the bulk) omitted all together, and some were presented with minor amendments.

The key text 6 begins with the descriptions of the national symbols and holidays; these sections are identical to those from the previous profiles examined earlier in this chapter. The profile then moves on to a short section on Mongolia's current leaders and reports that the president of the country is Nachagyn Bagabandi and prime minister is Nambaryn Enkhbayar. Interestingly, the profile makes no reference to their affiliation to the MRPR.

The profile contains one section which does not feature in any other country briefs, and concerns environmental protection issues in Mongolia. The size of the section is longer than those parts of the profile that deal with Mongolian politics or economics. In fact, environmental issues of Mongolia in the mid-2000s were becoming a theme addressed in the official media of the PRC, and while this was the only case when the topic was raised by a country profile, it did get addressed by other genres. For instance in a personal account published in the *RMRB* in the same year, the article's author reports his conversations with some Mongols of the Mongolian Gobi, who told him about the serious problems the Mongolian environment is facing and expressed their hope that 'perhaps one day the specialists from Inner Mongolia can come and share their knowledge and technology with us' (Liao 2001).

The rest of the profile is devoted to three main themes – Mongolian politics, its economic situation and international cooperation including relations with the PRC. The

section on the country's politics is very similar to that of the MFA text, it gives a very detailed explanation of the structure and function of the Great Khural as a 'unicameral parliament.' Similar to the MFA, it also gives a lengthy description of the electoral system; however unlike the MFA profile it contains, again, no reference to the winner of the recent elections, the MPRP. This is quite a noteworthy thing about the Xinhua text, as all the other texts (key or background) which do mention the elections, usually hasten to emphasise the fact that the MPRP is not losing its position even with the presence of an opposition with whom it has to battle in direct elections.

The politics section is followed immediately by the passage describing the economy of Mongolia. It begins the description of the economy by saying that for a long time the country had a planned economy, but in 1991 it began its transformation to a market economy, by privatising state property. Like many other profiles, this profile also mentions that pastoral nomadism was the basis of Mongolian economy, however unlike the previous texts, it also adds that it is the base of the *traditional* economy, thereby implying that the structure of Mongolian economy is currently undergoing change. After these two preliminary phrases, it goes on to state that 'Mongolia is very rich with natural resources'. The rest of the section is also given over to a detailed account of Mongolia's natural resources, including the names, estimated deposits and current yield of specific sites. The section, with its up-to-date and very specific statistics, creates the impression that it has not been penned by the Xinhua Agency but rather a consultancy in the mining sphere (it even mentions Mongolia's hydro resources, a relatively new but potentially promising sector of the energy industry). It does not come as big surprise then that the section also highlights the resources that are of particular demand in the Chinese market, that is, coal, copper, oil, timber, and so on.

The next section of the profile deals with the foreign relations of Mongolia. The section is a combination of parts of the previous *RMRB* briefs and the MFA text. Thus, the first part of the profile repeats the passage of key text 3, which links Mongolia's policy of multi-polarity, especially the increase in cooperation between Mongolia and the Western countries, with the desire of the former to secure foreign financial aid. The next part, however, is borrowed from the section of the MFA profile that referred to Mongolia's post-2000 foreign policy as being based on national interests aimed at sustaining the country's independence, sovereignty, and international position. As far as

interactions with China are concerned, the profile appears particularly interested in the legal basis of Sino-Mongolian relations: when describing the 1960s, it names two treaties of friendship signed between the two countries in 1960 and 1962, yet adds that from the middle of the decade relations deteriorated. The section also provides a list of the treaties signed between Mongolia and China since 1989, when relations were normalised.

Thus, as we can see although the pragmatic approach to representing Mongolia in the official rhetoric began to penetrate the dominant discourse, the process was at its initial stage and the semi-official and non-official media (electronic first of all) tended to make more use of the MFA profile than the Xinhua Agency. However, the situation changed significantly with the appearance of the hybrid profile issued by the *RMRB* in 2003.

6.6 MFA text as *the* official profile (Key Text 7)

In May 2003 the *RMRB* issued its new profile on Mongolia after almost two years of silence. The text was, as mentioned in Chapters Four and Five, based heavily on the profile produced a year earlier by the MFA, which by the time was already circulating on the Chinese Internet. Throughout the thesis, this profile has been termed as hybrid since it combined in itself two different discourses on Mongolia. The text consisted of a very substantial part produced by the experts of the MFA; this was the ‘pragmatic’ representation of Mongolian current affairs. This fifteen page-long document, however, incorporated a small (merely a paragraph) but significant section produced earlier by the *RMRB* authors, the section on Mongolian history which could be considered a paragon of the ‘orthodox nationalistic’ representation of the country positioned vis-à-vis the Zhonghua project. After its appearance in the *RMRB*, the MFA version of the Mongolia country profile gained a certain legitimacy and became firmly embedded into the official discourse (for instance, many official institutions whose country briefs were examined for this study have since updated their websites and substituted their own texts with the MFA profile) thereby undermining the ‘nationalist’ version of what Mongolia ‘is’ and how it should be interpreted.

Tellingly, it is almost always the hybrid profile that appears on the websites of companies or organisations (state or private) whose activity is related to Sino-Mongolian relations, especially in the sphere of economic cooperation. For instance, it appears on the webpages of China-Mongolia Net, an organisation, which provides consultancy and information services, was established in May 2004 to promote the development of relations between the two countries, in particular closer ties between IMAR and Mongolia, and China's accession to the World Trade Organisation (of which Mongolia is a member and can therefore lobby the interests of the PRC).²¹⁴ Another example is Hulunbeir Business Service Net, a state business organisation (set up under the patronage of the government of IMAR) with the same focus on China-Mongolia, and especially IMAR-Mongolia, relations, which operates as a part of the greater programme of Western Region Development.²¹⁵

6.7 Conclusion

Chapter Six has offered an analysis of the evolution of the official discourse on Mongolia since the end of the 1980s, and in particular since the Mongolian Democratic Revolution in 1990. It examined a range of official publications, the key texts and background texts, in order to see how the official discourse represented the dramatic changes in Mongolian politics and economics.

The first official publications that appeared once relations between the two countries started to recover, that is at the end of the 1980s, praised the 'Chinese-style' economic reforms initiated by the communist party of Mongolia, the MPRP, the diminished influence of the USSR over Mongolian politics and economy, and the subsequent improvement in Sino-Mongolian relations. These texts made no reference, however, to the political changes that had already begun to take place within the party and, on a larger scale, within Mongolian society as a whole. The democratic revolution of 1990 did not prompt any reaction in the publications of the Chinese central media - no attempt was made to explain it or evaluate the political changes in the country. The

²¹⁴ The web address of the organization is <http://www.mongolia-china.com>. Their hybrid profile is available at <http://www.mongolia-china.com/wwwroot/b/1.php>, downloaded on May 17, 2004.

²¹⁵ The web address of the organisation is <http://hulunbeir.com.cn>, the hybrid profile available at <http://hulunbeir.com.cn/classic/mgggk.htm>, downloaded on June 3, 2004.

official discourse, embedded in the publications of the *RMRB* and Xinhua Agency, therefore provided very little guidance on as to the 'official line' on writing on Mongolia. This can explain the appearance of such outstanding examples of Mongolia-related writings as the *MPR* monograph (Bao 1991); its authors, while obviously aware of the wholesale democratisation that was then taking place in Mongolia, were offered no clues as to how to present this knowledge. As a result, the book continues to refer to the 'Mongolia People's Republic' at the very moment that the country ceased to exist in that name. At the same time, other academic writing (Wang 1992), published by a specialised journal *Current Issues of Modern Socialism*, provided a very solid and the least ideologically-charged account of the democratic revolution, indicating that there was no unified line on how the new Mongolia should be represented in official writings in the early 1990s.

There then followed a period when the tone of the publications would greatly depend on the development of the political situation in Mongolia. For instance, prior to 1996 there appeared a number of positive accounts and articles, mainly in the form of personal accounts, in the *RMRB* as well as in academic journals. After 1996, however, when political power in Mongolia went to the democratic opposition, there were very few Mongolia-related publications in the central media, apart from conventional news reports. The academic sphere, on the other hand, reacted with the publication of a number of articles, mainly characterised by a somewhat negative evaluation of the politico-economic situation of Mongolia, emphasising the 'western' nature of Mongolia's democratisation and the country's economic dependence on Western countries and international organisations.

The tone of the official discourse on Mongolia changed once again in 2000-2001, the years marked by the MPRP's return to power. However, even then, in the first country profiles which appeared in the *RMRB*, Mongolian politics was under-represented (apart from the obscure reference to the country's 'change of name' in the history section); even the country's economy continued to be depicted as 'timeless' and undeveloped, 'a land of herdsmen and rich natural resources.' Mongolia's international relations were portrayed simply in terms of the country's attempt to secure foreign aid to shore up its failing economy.

The publication by the MFA of its Mongolia profile in such circumstances was a new way of depicting Mongolia, not only within the genre of the country profiling, but across other genres and media too. The bulk of the text was devoted to Mongolian politics, economy and foreign relations. In terms of the content, it was also a complete break away from the orthodox nationalist way of representing Mongolia as an undeveloped 'former Chinese' land, with a backward economy and no politics of its own. The MFA profile provided a completely new message about Mongolia, as well as a totally new way of communicating such a message – with abundant, up-to-date statistics and a minimum of ideological interpretation of the data. It was both professional and pragmatic. However, the profile still included the section on Mongolian history produced earlier by the *RMRB*. Thus, while signifying a big step forward in the representation of Mongolia as an independent, sovereign state, it was not yet a complete break from the nationalist mode of articulating Mongolia.

The message embedded in the MFA profile remained somewhat marginalised for approximately one year. The dominant official discourse on Mongolia was mainly represented using the orthodox nationalist and Marxist ideological approach which avoided such themes as the democratisation process in Mongolia. When such topics were addressed, the texts would employ such linguistic devices as the suppression of certain words, such as 'democratisation,' 'elections,' 'parliament,' etc. However, gradually, the MFA's profile started to make its way into the dominant official discourse, for instance the Xinhua profile issued two months after the MFA profile, incorporated some of the new information, although it was still a very mixed message with both 'pragmatist' and 'nationalist' views combined not only within one text, but sometimes even within one paragraph.

Finally, in May 2003, the *RMRB* issued its updated Mongolia profile, which was in fact the profile produced by the MFA, accompanied with an image of Ulaanbaatar, indicating that this profile was chosen as the definitive version of the representation of Mongolia in this genre. Since then, the profile has been circulated widely, reprinted in many official, semi-official and non-official media, the Chinese internet, and even some Chinese official institutions. Thus, the new 'pragmatic' view on how Mongolia should be represented in the official writings in China seriously challenged the 'nationalist'

approach and secured a strong position for itself in the PRC's official discourse on Mongolia.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analysed the official discourse on Mongolia since 1990, the chronological point when the country underwent truly revolutionary changes in all spheres of society and the statehood. The impetus behind this research was the realisation that, although the topics of Sino-Mongolian relations and the PRC's policy towards Mongolia since then have been addressed in western academic writings, there have been no systematic attempts to focus on the PRC's official discourse as a significant part of this policy. However, it is important to underline that this is not a study of Sino-Mongolian relations *per se*. Rather it is a study of the way in which the PRC's officialdom constructs the public, authorised discourse on Mongolia which is inseparable from the ongoing process of the formulation of the all-embracing master discourse on Zhonghua. Thus, the research focus is not on the mechanisms of actual policy making on Mongolia, but on the textual manifestation of this policy. In other words it examines the modes by which Mongolia is presented according to the needs of this policy. The focus in the thesis is on texts whose aim is to convey the official line on how Mongolia *should* be interpreted according to the political elite rather than on what it *is* in the Chinese people's, including the PRC leaders', perceptions. It traced the evolution of the discourse to see how official representations of Mongolia have developed since 1990, and to assess their significance.

This thesis has focused on the discourse embedded in the texts with illocutionary force, that is the publications issued by the central organs of the CCP (*Renmin Ribao* and the Xinhua News Agency) and the most influential government structures (Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Commerce). Even a preliminary overview of the texts showed that Mongolia was not the most frequently addressed topic in these media (though this is not to say it was not an important one). Thus, the selection of the texts examined in this thesis was limited, and, therefore, significantly determined by the subject of the discourse. This was especially true when the focus of the study was placed upon the publications of a specific genre – the country profile. The texts of this genre appeared in the PRC official media very recently (the first one was issued in 2000), almost a decade after Mongolia started its reforms aimed at establishing a multi-party political system.

marketisation of the economy and democratisation of society. A selection of publications of this illocutionary force, media and genre formed a group of 'key' texts.

The most striking thing about the key texts was that, apart from the very first profile of April 2000, they all abolished the corner stone of Chinese rhetoric on Mongolia – the key phrase which defines Mongolia 'as a part of China'. Considering that publications of this level undergo thorough collective pre-discussion, any change in the language of the texts holds certain significance. Thus, the removal of this canonic expression is worthy of note. The message was furthered by the increasing emphasis placed by the key texts on the Mongolian nationhood, independence and international position. The primary objective of this thesis was, therefore, to ascertain what these changes in the discourse on Mongolia signified.

It was hypothesised that this change might indicate subtle but significant tectonic shifts in the official discursive formation. The initial assumption was that they signified that the Zhonghua discourse had lost its previously dominant authority and *monopoly* to represent Mongolia in the 'right' way. To confirm or refute this assumption, further examination of the texts was required and thus, Chapter 2 described the methodological framework chosen by this work to complete task - critical discourse analysis. Following this approach the thesis firstly assessed, in Chapter 3, the 'market' of discourses where discourses through certain ideologies compete for control over representations of Mongolia. Schematically, they were divided into Marxist, orthodox nationalistic, and professionalised pragmatic groups, which seek to offer their own narratives on Mongolia.

The research showed the orthodox nationalistic discourse on Mongolia to be the most elaborate and influential, especially on the topic of Mongolian history which it placed firmly within the Zhonghua rhetoric. The Marxist interpretation of Mongolia, which was strong prior to 1990, has since become a sort of anachronism, while the pragmatic perspective on the country is of more recent origin and is not as well established as the nationalist mode to represent Mongolia in the official texts.

Critical reading of the discourse adopts the principle of historicity, where discourse is not confined only to the language it uses, but to the whole context in which it takes place. The textual analysis, therefore, had to be done comparatively against a broader

background gleaned from the supporting writings that constitute the intertextual space for the key profiles and from an understanding of the socio-political milieu in the PRC and Mongolia. Thus, Chapter 3 focused on the domestic and external factors that were considered most influential in shaping Mongolian discourse in the PRC.

The Chapter 3 sought to demonstrate that where the domestic factors were concerned, one could single out first of all the diversity of the domestic and foreign policies of the PRC that in one way or another concern Mongolia, and hence the discourse(s) on the country. First of all, it is the ideological project of the Chinese nation-building that aspires to allocate a certain place for Mongolian minzu within it (termed throughout the thesis as orthodox nationalist). Given the ambiguity of the historical, ethnic, cultural and even political status of Mongolia and its people vis-à-vis Chinese nation, the producers of the official nationalist discourse have on their hands a difficult task – to fit contemporary Mongolia into the ideological construct of Chinese ethnicity and nationhood. The problem could not be resolved simply by either ignoring Mongolia altogether (since 1990 they no longer live in isolation from each other) or representing it merely as a part of China without raising diplomatic tensions with Mongolia and criticism from international society. The full and unconditional acceptance of the Mongolian independence is not possible either as this would cause criticisms inside China, and give a strategic advantage to Taiwan in its polemics with the mainland China. All these factors complicated the task to represent Mongolia within the Zhonghua limits.

The assignment of Mongolia within the Zhonghua discursive formation might be even more weakened by the other domestic policies, which pursue different goals regarding Mongolia, and the discourses supporting these policies: representing the country in the nationalist reading, ‘a lost piece of Zhonghua dadi’, would hamper the implementation of these policies. For instance, the PRC leaders’ ambitious plans for the development of northern and north-western regions of China are bound to take into account Mongolia as a significant factor in the economic development of the IMAR and the PRC’s regional security issues.

Chapter 3 also addressed a very important issue of developments in the power distribution among top policy-makers in China that took place at the beginning of the reforms in 1978, a primary objective being the decentralisation of the processes of

formulating and implementing policies. As a result, the PRC saw a pluralisation of the policy making and implementing, with emergin of new political actors as governmental institutions like MFA or MOC (whose approach to relations with Mongolia often differ from those of the CCP), relatively more autonomous local authorities, influential business groups which would hold different views of Mongolia and pursuer different agendas ragrding the country.

External factors, on the other hand, present yet another complexity: the PRC leaders have to find a balance between a stronger China, capable of fighting for its own interests in the international arena and rectifying or redressing historical injustices on the one hand, and a China seeking a new place (with a new positive image) in the international system which entails the country's deeper involvement and dependence on the latter and necessity to comply with international norms and regimes on the other. In this regards Mongolia is a fitting example of how these two sets of policies come into direct conflict with one another.

Moreover, the situation inside Mongolia cannot be disregarded when interpreting the PRC's official discourse on the country since, as was demonstrated in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, concrete events in Mongolia caused significant changes and 'adjustments' in the country profiles. Thus, after 1990, the paths of Mongolia and the PRC, countries that both embarked on the socialist project in the twentieth century, diverged completely. Mongolia has since being actively building a democratic society, integrating heavily into international structures and organizations, and gaining support from the developed democracies of the West, which replaced Russia as guarantors of its status as a sovereign nation. Mongolia no longer lives in isolation from the world and therefore the Western 'third negbours' of Mongolia, the US and Japan first of all, pay very clos attention to everything officially said in the PRC regarding Mongolia. Moreover, relations between the PRC and Mongolia are developing with extraordinary speed and one can suggest that the relations, as well as interdependence between Mongolia and the PRC (infavour of China though), are only going to increase.

All these factors, from the discourse analysis perspective, can be considered new realities which cannot be accommodated by the orthodox nationalistic discourse and hence cause its dislocation. This in turn requires reformulation of the rhetoric or even

the appearance of an alternative one to use in the official publications in order to accommodate different foreign and domestic developments and different constituencies with the power to represent Mongolia according to their own goals and objectives.

Having established the context for text examination, the thesis proceeded to the actual text analysis, evaluation of key terms and phrases, recurring language patterns, structural organisation, use of grammar and syntax, and so on. The main objective was to see how the key texts have reconstructed Mongolian identities since 1990, starting with historical identities (Chapter 4), then cultural (Chapter 5) and, finally, political (Chapter 6).

Chapter 4 dealt with the textual representation of the historical identity of Mongolia. The most significant shift in the discursive representation of Mongolian history in the 2000s was the removal of the *direct* reference to Mongolia as ‘part of China’. Several other important nodal points were established; they appeared to be reflections of the principle themes of the broader national discussions on such issues as the significance of Yalta Conference (the PRC as a rising power reportedly calls into question the ‘Yalta world order’), motherland reunification which intensified upon the return of Hong Kong and Macao, increasing tensions with Taiwan (the Taiwan question as a parallel to the Mongolia question), and so on. The chapter demonstrated that the orthodox reading of Mongolian history although still in a dominant position, began to employ a more careful articulation of its rhetoric. Moreover, a new professionalised pragmatic approach to the issue of Mongolian history emerged when the issue was either downplayed for the *present*, or completely avoided.

The main objective of Chapter 5 was to trace the evolution of the official discourse of Mongolia in terms of the representation of Mongolian culture and society. The chapter established that the discourse embedded in the key texts have undergone significant change. Thus, the first country profiles issued by the RMRB offered the readers a highly essentialistic image of Mongolian culture based on the popular negative stereotypes of Han about the Mongols. However, such representation was later abandoned and the general shift was made by focusing more on the Mongolian state (however backward and ‘Westernised’) rather than on the Mongols as ethnicity. Once again, an alternative, pragmatic approach to the topic was to either represent Mongolian culture and society

strictly in terms of statistics and state institutions (like education) or to avoid the topic all together.

Chapter 6 examined the evolution of the official discourse on Mongolian politics and economy since the end of the 1980s, and in particular since the Mongolian democratic revolution of 1990, in order to see how the official discourse represented the dramatic changes in Mongolian politics and economics in the reform period. The chapter demonstrated how the discourse that originated from the *RMRB* and Xinhua Agency, represented the political transformation of Mongolia in a very discursive mode, suppressing certain topics and terms in its rhetoric. The alternative approach to representing Mongolian politics and economy emerged in the MFA experts-produced country profile which offered a careful but rather explicit and less ideologically-charged account of Mongolian economy and politics supported by abundant up-to-date statistics. This alternative message represented the appearance of a new 'professionalised pragmatic' approach to representing Mongolia, dealing with politically sensitive issues first of all.

This new professional, pragmatic position towards Mongolia appears to be motivated not so much by the abstract ideals of 'rejuvenation of the nation' and the ultimate goal of 'Motherland re-unification,' but by more concrete and pragmatic *short-term* goals such as maintaining China's good image in the world and stable international relations, along with the country's rapid economic growth. Mongolia here is important for the development of the northern regions of China. Even if 'to get Mongolia back' in one way or another is still on the agenda as a *long-term* objective, it appears reasonable to suggest that the appearance of alternative discourses indicates the emergence of a view amongst the PRC leadership that the goal is to be pursued not through claiming Mongolia as a land that was historically part of China, but through closer economic and political cooperation and through the new modes of representing the country in the official rhetoric as an independent state.

The hybrid text – the result of the compromise between the *RMRB* and the MFA - has become the official profile of Mongolia. However, there are few points to be considered before terming it the 'winner', not least the fact that the website of the Xinhua Agency keeps publishing both – 'old nationalist' and 'hybrid' - versions of the Mongolia profile.

This can be explained as being a strategy of 'sending mixed messages.' This supports the idea that nationalistic discursive representations of Mongolia are by no means to be totally discarded as 'powerless.' Instead, this is to indicate that an active, and ongoing, negotiation for power between the nationalist and more pragmatic discourses is taking place, and for the moment the milder discourse originating from the MFA is more in accordance with the interests of the PRC regarding Mongolia.

Moreover, according to Foucault (1970), an established discursive formation is defined by the contradictory discourses it contains, and this is often a sign of stability rather than conflict and radical disruption. Discursive formations do, nevertheless, display a hierarchical arrangement. The thesis argues, therefore, that the abovementioned changes to a large extent reflect the re-arrangement of the hierarchy among the discourses. At present, a compromise (the CCP propaganda organs, *RMRB* and Xinhua Agency, are a common site for representing *consensual* views) between the most oppositional discourses – orthodox nationalist and professionalized pragmatic – seems to be accomplished by the adoption of the hybrid text as a representation of the official line.

According to Laclau (1990), the plurality of discourses within a text, which present competing views and aim at competing goals, causes dislocation of the dominant discursive formation. This thesis argues that Zhonghua discourse in Mongolia-related official publications is undergoing such a dislocating experience. Laclau points out that the necessity to 'repair' the disruption of a discursive formation causes an appearance of the 'myth' that seeks to restore the order and position of the discourse. Chapter 5 of the thesis suggested that such 'myths' can be found in the key profiles and framing texts.

Firstly, it refers to recent phenomenon where the official media extensively propagated the idea of the 'China boom' that is taking place in Mongolia. The articles in *RMRB* and numerous other media offer a wide range of publications to support the idea, from statistics of students learning Chinese, to personal accounts describing the Mongols' feelings of 'brotherhood' with 'Zhonghua people.' The underlying relevance is that PRC no longer has to *claim* Mongolia back since this is exactly what the Mongols themselves wish.

Secondly, there is a 'myth' for the occasions when the idea that the Mongols 'wish to return back to Motherland' is definitely not the case. In these instances, the strategy of 'grouping' is at work. This strategy states that there are fundamental and well established positive differences between Mongols from Mongolia and Menggu minzu of China; thus, different cultural identities are constructed for Menggu ren of Mongolia, and Menggu zu of China. The border that draws the difference between the two is often utterly artificial and ideological.

The Zhonghua discourse is relinquishing its previous unquestionable dominance in representing the official line in the publications like the key texts. However, analysis of language is not enough to assess the position of a discourse. According to Discourse Analysis, the 'powerfulness' of a discourse can be established by looking at whether it is reinforced by other social practices, especially the existing systems of law, the media and education. Hence, this thesis addressed the issue of how (and indeed whether) the hybrid discourse, newly adopted by the central media, is being taken up by the education system, or whether the latter is still dominated by Zhonghua rhetoric and concepts. The results of the research indicated very strongly that it depends on the sponsorship of educational institution.

An analysis of learning materials produced in accordance with the directives of the Ministry of Education and distributed to students all over the country showed that these texts did not incorporate any 'modernised' representations of Mongolia, they instead adopt the most nationalist rhetoric regarding the country (for instance ascribing Mongolia after 1911 colonial status, and thus alluding to Hong Kong and Macao). In contrast, the School of International Studies of Beijing University, which operates under the patronage of the MFA and prepares cadres for the ministry, has adopted the most 'alternative' Mongolia profile to date, produced by the academics from Inner Mongolia University.

This thesis argues that the appearance of these two (MFA and MOC) profiles indicated the emergence of alternative discourse(s) that were seeking to accommodate alternative (to the Zhonghua project) political agendas of certain groups among the top policy-makers. The objective of these alternative voices was to construct and authorise a certain identity for Mongolia (as an equal sovereign state, not a part of China) in order

to reinforce its newly acquired status (as economic partner and an important, in geopolitical terms, neighbour of the PRC).

The hybrid text produced by the MFA can be termed a compromise between the dominant nationalistic and alternative pragmatic representations of Mongolia. The historical section is identical to that from *Renmin Ribao* profile, hence the use of nationalistic rhetoric, however toned down or euphemistic. However, the whole structural organization of the texts draws a different picture: in fact, the history section of the profile is the only concession to the Zhonghua discourse, as the section is heavily marginalised by other sections, which are significantly larger and employ different rhetoric. Moreover, judging from the whole organisation of the text, the main emphasis is placed on opposite views on Mongolia as sovereign state, which is recognised by, and integrated into, the international community.

In 2002 both *Renmin Ribao* and Xinhua Agency reprinted the hybrid profile (and continue to do so) on their web sites where it has been circulating up to the time of the submission of this thesis. The hybrid text, thus, has been accepted as *the* profile representing the official line on Mongolia. Nonetheless, the official line appears to be of a rather ambiguous nature: the profile contains competing discourses which form a basis for consensus in representing Mongolia as a sovereign state, but with a history which is closely linked to the history of the Chinese nation.

It also should be noticed that the hybrid profile, having been produced by the MFA, was destined initially for a rather limited audience. After being taken up by the CCP media, however, the text, its discourses and messages reached the widest audience including non-official electronic resources which often reprint Mongolian profiles offered by *RMRB* or Xinhua Agency. Considering how far this text departs from the orthodox nationalistic discourse on Mongolia, this can be considered a breakthrough achieved by the producers of the alternative discourses.

The conclusion of this thesis is that there is a clear negotiation for power to represent Mongolia on different levels of society and state. The promoters of the Zhonghua discourse are no longer the only entity with the power to represent the 'official view of Mongolia'; there are new, powerful players whose goals often differ significantly from

the orthodox nationalists. Besides, there appear to be competing views even among the latter about what the official policy on Mongolia should be. This makes the task of finding a consensus between different, and even opposite constructs of Mongolia and its place in the PRC's policies (to build stable cooperation or to put the 'Mongolian question,' together with that of Taiwan, on the agenda) particularly challenging for the PRC's leaders. One can presume that the tendency persists and that Mongolia will be a site of the antagonism between the different discourses and the players behind this rhetoric.

The Zhonghua discourse appears to have lost its monopoly in representing the 'official Mongolia.' Although one can suggest that this 'renewed' image of Mongolia might be meant more for foreign readership, and the 'old' nationalistic construct more for domestic consumption; the fact remains that there have been serious changes in the discursive formation regarding Mongolia with many alternative voices on the market, and in demand, and this appears to be a factor which can have a positive influence on the China-Mongolia interactions.

To summarise, through the analysis of the Chinese official discourse on Mongolia (which is no longer heterogeneous itself), the thesis sought to provide a fuller picture of the PRC's political elite's approaches to Mongolia that often pursue different goals and different agendas. The thesis demonstrated that the alternative discourses (which support alternative approaches) on Mongolia gradually came to co-exist with the dominant orthodox discourse on the Zhonghua nation. This key finding of the thesis offers a perspective to the understanding China's discourse on Mongolia and provides a new dimension to the study of Sino-Mongolian relations.

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