



University  
of Glasgow



**The Relationship**  
**between External Crises and National Narrative Shifts**  
**Cases of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War**

CEERES Master's Thesis

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Department of International Relations and Regional Studies

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*Chia-Lin KAO, 08/26/2023*

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# **The Relationship between External Crises and National Narrative Shifts**

## **Cases of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War**

Chia-Lin Kao

### *Abstract*

The thesis aims to analyze the variations of national narratives in Russia and China through the changes from 2015 to 2020. It focused particularly on the narratives of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War to see how authority shifted narrative approaches in the face of external crises. To assess the variations in the framing patterns during the targeted time frame, the thesis collected elite speeches of 2015 and 2020 on the commemorative events of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War from Russia and China, respectively. The thesis encoded the collected elite speeches to assess the shifts in theme to understand the national narrative framing variations of Russian and Chinese elite speeches. To create the communications between the two datasets and conduct a comparison between Russia and China, the thesis designed a codebook to bridge the analysis and engage the narratives from both countries. The speech analysis was undertaken with Nvivo 12. There are eight main coding themes in the codebook, with subthemes as complements, and they are defined by the primary theme from both datasets to have the analysis parallel. The thesis contributed to the existing literature by confirming three hypotheses regarding the relationship between external crises and national narratives in authoritarian regimes.

Authoritarian governments tend to have a more inward-facing narrative in the face of external crises, including drawing a line between the image of self and others. Apart from that, within authoritarian regimes, different institutional designs also contributed to the narrative formats.

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## ***1. Introduction***

Narrating historical events is often used as a means to shape general ideation either backed by top-down or bottom-up attempts. By prioritizing specific narrative patterns, it is possible to construct a sense of community and build a self-identity that connects all members within.

After the Ukrainian Crisis in 2014, the relationships between Russia and Western countries gradually deteriorated. Combined with Putin's attempts to stay in power, it was inevitable for Russia to modify its general directions of policies, as well as its shaping of national identity. Indeed, it can be observed that since the outbreak of the Ukrainian Crisis, Russia has shifted its stances and attitudes regarding Western countries. The most significant differences are how Russia projects the image of the Western world to its people and how it narrates itself as a regional power. The rise of hostility against the West and the fall of its hospitality towards the international society. On top of its ideology shifts, how Russia relates to history also changed. It intends to build an image that allows it to amplify its dominant role in the region and link Russia with the Soviet Union so as to showcase its greatness and achievements.

Originating in the USSR era, Russia retains the tradition of commemorating the victory of the Great Patriotic War. Every year, a commemoration of the victory takes place in Moscow, with a President's speech and a national military parade. Looking over the narrative shifts from 2015 to 2020, the level of Russia's friendliness and openness toward the West has shrunk. The paragraphs dedicated to the descriptions of the situation among Russia, the

Western countries, and international society became limited. Often, it comes with words that aim to draw a clear line between self and others and create a relatively negative impression on the subjects of hostility. Therefore, it can be deduced that Russian national narratives evolved from a world-visioned stance to a self-centric attitude.

Similarly, a pattern alike can be noticed in China from 2015 to 2020. Around 2012 and 2013, the time when Xi Jin Ping foresaw the transition from the first to the second term, he proposed the “Chinese Dream” as a strategic goal for the upcoming years. The Chinese Dream centers around national rejuvenation. The project reflects the Chinese government’s goal to efface its historical humiliation and restore its national greatness. They envision the prosperity of the country, the rejuvenation of the nation, and the welfare of the Chinese people, emphasizing the guidance of the doctrine of the Chinese’s path, branding Chinese spirits, and uniting the power of the nation. It is not news that the Chinese government resorts to history to unite its people patriotically. However, it was not made a systematic commemoration until Xi’s rule. “Century of Humiliation,” a term that arose in the 20th century, has often been presented to the public eyes under Xi’s governance since 2012. Xi’s government utilizes this narrative to unite its people with national shame, lying as the foundation, aligning the public with official visions. The strength growing out of the expectations to rebuild national pride creates space for the Chinese government to exercise its policies.

Another means for the Xi’s administration to relate its people to history is through commemoration events. Before, the Chinese government did mention the Sino-Japanese War to legitimize its rule and policies. Nevertheless, it was never officially defined as a

commemoration day in the time of prior administrations. In 2014, it was finally decided to dedicate a date to the victory over the Japanese military. Starting in 2015, China began to have commemoration events combined with military parades as a tribute to the Sino-Japanese War. Before the Trade War between China and the United States, the Chinese Dream was not as much regarded as aggression. However, after the outbreak of the trade war, tensions among China and Western countries came to the fore. The statement referred to China's engagements in international society as an attempt to interfere with the world order. Ever since, China's national narratives on self and others have been modified.

Though maintaining friendly and welcoming attitudes, it can be seen that China intended to draw a clearer line between itself and others. Furthermore, it started emphasizing the sufferings caused by external factors and mentioning how the Chinese people managed to overcome the difficulties with their perseverance and spirits. Compared to the previous narratives, China used to display its inclination to contribute to international governance and showcase its willingness to work collaboratively, while it is now less proactive at fitting into the standard mechanisms of the international society. In short, China's national narratives shifted from a more engaging stance to a less proactive strategy.

In summary, the thesis sees similar variation patterns between Russian and Chinese national narratives from 2015 to 2020, and they can be concluded into three main findings.

Firstly, the government uses historical memory to buttress official attempts. In both cases of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War, historical events are used as tools

to underpin official attempts. In most cases, the narrations toward the past vary according to their domestic real-time political trends. In Russia, the tradition of commemorating the Great Patriotic War was passed down from the Soviet times. During the commemoration events, the officials usually narrate the victory in accordance with ongoing situations in order to align people with a preferred mindset. In other words, there has been a consistency for the Russian authority to relate real-time situations to the Great Patriotic War as a guide for people to contemplate on. In the meantime, China shares the same pattern but there exists a nuanced difference. It is rather common to hear on formal occasions where the Chinese government brings up its history to unite its people. Stories about the battles between China and Japan can be mentioned in various events either to highlight Chinese people's spirits and endurance or to denounce the invasion and the deeds of foreign countries. However, though China often mentioned the Sino-Japanese War on different official occasions for political attempts, a national commemoration day was never settled until 2014. Ever since, two countries who often take advantage of its history for political attempts have a day for a commemoration that allows them to convey a narrative in support of their preferences.

Secondly, observing a shift in mnemonic narrative framing. Both Russia and China express a less engaging attitude regarding international society, manifesting in their speeches on the commemoration event of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War over a five-year timeframe between 2015 and 2020. In the case of Russia, their way of framing the Great Patriotic War shifted after the Ukrainian Crisis. With the conflicted positions between Russia and the West going on, the way that Russia views and shapes its identity in international society had no alternative but to be modified. Over the five years, an inclination to become self-centric and a more isolated mindset can be identified through the official

speech on the commemoration day of the Great Patriotic War. China shared a pattern alike. However, the shifts emerged from a more internationally engaging attitude to a less proactive political decision after the unalignments to global trade and economic issues among itself and the Western countries.

Lastly, strengthening the ground for narratives after conflicts. In Russia, narratives on the national commemoration date intended to build stronger emotional ties between the past and the present. In addition, an attempt to patriotize people who underwent the history in the Soviet time beyond Russian territories is also spotted. A noticeable situation is that the speeches direct attention to the common efforts and the historical glory or greatness instead of the leading subjects of the period. This can be due to the less influential role of the communist party and the rising importance of strong-man politics in Russia. The way it can connect two eras is by linking two timeframes without engaging other factors that don't appear vital anymore. While discussing the case of China, instead of solely creating a more grounded connection between the past and the present by emphasizing its historical glory, the narratives stress its sufferings and their common spirit to overcome national difficulties. Furthermore, the weighting of the discussion on the CCP's role also increased. It can be because the CCP remains the primary player in Chinese domestic politics. Therefore, it can be rather critical to address CCP and its relations to people's spirits and past achievements.

This thesis intends to explain the variations of the national narrative framing with a systematic framework. To have the speeches from both countries parallel, a codebook is defined to be the basis for comparisons. In addition, a framework to analyze speech framing is also created to explain the relations between factors and framing structures. In short, the

thesis includes two layers of analysis – speech analysis and framing framework analysis. The speech analysis part consists of the thematic categorizations of the wordings of the collected speeches; framing framework analysis provides a broader theme and factors to group the thematic categories concluded within the speech analysis sections. By this, I hope to contribute to the discussions of the relationships between national narrative framing of history and external factors.

## ***2. The Formation and the Use of Memory***

The relationship between national narratives and the use of memory can be intriguing regarding its implications on commemorative practices. The narrative variations of elite speech framing on the commemoration event of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War in China drew my curiosity to what factors affect the relationship between official narrative framing techniques and foreign affairs. Under what circumstances do those factors enhance official will step in memory framing? Last but not least, what framing theme is dominant and reflective of political power dynamics in national narratives? In order to address the curiosity, the thesis intends to start by reviewing some key concepts of historical memory and its constructing mechanisms. On top of that, explanations will be applied to bridge theories and the underlying mindset behind the research design.

### *2.1. Individual Experience, History, and Memory*

It is hardly difficult to realize that memory doesn't independently exist outside a subject. The core value of the memory consumes real-world events and narratives as well as repeating interplay of recent events and emotional triggers to remain influential to its audiences. In Russia, it has already become a tradition to commemorate the success of the Great Patriotic War after World War Two. In other words, the practice emerged in the Soviet era. Whereas in China, the official commemorative practices remain a new format to the country despite the antagonism against the Japanese and some foreign actors had existed long before the day was inaugurated. It is easy to notice that the government usually takes advantage of patriotic sentiments to favor certain policy stances. Returning to the earlier official Russian and Chinese statements about their iconic wars with foreign actors, the Great Patriotic War and

the Sino-Japanese War, we can notice the interchanging reference to both the contributions of individuals and as a united entity.

As suggested by Assmann (2008) in a study, a society cannot remember history without a subject, although it can decide the themes to be discussed and commemorated. History should pass through three stages – identity between history and memory, polarization between history and memory, and the interaction between history and memory – to be consolidated as a grounded memory. When history is yet to be mediated, we can see a clear identity difference between history and memory. Similar to the structure of the elite speech for the commemoration events, we don't see a statement merely presenting historical facts to the audiences and letting them interpret what is beyond the texts. Instead, we observe the intention to present a more vivid image of a historical event, triggering emotional feedback so the process of merging past and current sensations can happen. Differently put, when early intention appears to lead to the formation of a memory, the differences between history and memory allow the approach of mutual complement. Consequently, various storylines begin to thrive and pile, and here arrives competition among the historical narratives of the past. Over time, some more widely accepted narratives survive and can be underpinned by the use of, once again, historical facts.

But the differences lie in the way that history is used. In the early stage, it was used to create a vision and a narrative to unite the audiences; in the later stage, however, history becomes the reference for younger individuals to study and examine the actual incident before being able to develop their understanding and compassion of the created memory. Only when the two-way interactions begin to thrive with ideas being exchanged can the

connection between the presence and the past be established, leading to “memory complements history, history corrects memory(p.63)” (Assmann, 2008). Such situations do appear in the way that the Russian and Chinese governments attempt to reconnect people to the specific history to create a shared memory. When the authority expects to interfere with the public shared mnemonic narratives, they, on the one hand, emphasize the historical facts and, on the other hand, accentuate the mnemonic narratives created with emotional symbols for attractions. That is to say, the way for a memory to be remembered and passed down is by obscuring the historical facts with emotional factors via a relatively dominant narrative owned by society.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that memory can't exist as a properly functioning organism without being embedded in a community, it doesn't allow us to understand the reason that historical memory can sometimes be so influential to a target individual or interest group by merely looking into the interaction and development mechanisms between history and memory from a societal scope. Hereby, the thesis refers to a prospect to reflect on a situation where the importance of individuals is addressed. Olick (1999) structured a memory typology for the purpose of distinguishing memory. According to the structure, memory can be divided into “individual memory,” “collected memory,” and “collective memory.” The categorization was designed based on the subject who possesses the memory and the agent that serves as the foundation of shared memory. Individuals provide first-hand experiences, and they will be transformed into a story or a memory. We acquire information from or beyond our recognition through our daily routines, regardless of current or past events, which shape our standards and core values, affecting our way of perceiving and behaving. The interplay between our experiences and interpretations causes our memory of certain events to

build up, and they vary because of individuals' diverse backgrounds. When atomic individuals carry memories to society, competitions and compromises may happen during their interactions, where shared memory develops. One approach to understanding is "collected memory," where we believe a shared memory is merely the accumulation of individual memory; whereas another approach, "collective memory," suggests that a common understanding of memory starts with filtering dominant mnemonic narratives naturally and it becomes an active organism capable of initiating public remembrance, shaping common memory repeatedly. When individual memories are compromised, processed by a community, and eventually become a shared memory, the society then has a storyline to be attached to, with the difference of passively or actively shaping it with time or not depending on seeing through a collected or collective perspective.

But there remains a gap to explain the transformation from a shared memory to a more universally recognized memory. A classification of individual memory, social memory, political memory, and cultural memory clarified the process (Assmann, 2004). After a compromised version of the storyline is acquiesced by the majority, a shared memory, namely social memory, is constructed at the social level. But following social memory, interest groups can start a selection of narratives for more support or power consolidation, which can last for a long time. After continuously reinforcing certain narratives, the authority has their preferred mnemonic narratives as political memory. Over time, should the narratives remain and become a symbol, they transform into cultural memory.

Such a pattern is also noticed in the Russian and Chinese national narrative framing approaches. Targeting the selected wars, the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War,

there exist few people who were indeed involved in the incident in person. The manipulation of historical memory nowadays is dependent on the created shared memory. In Russian and Chinese society, the memory of their success during wartime has already become one of the national pride that can unite their people. That is to say, what the commemorative events recall is the final creation of mediated numerous individual memory that has been accepted by the political players as well as the people. They are not only the accumulated memory of the Russian and Chinese people but an existing picture nurtured by their beliefs to become a part of the culture, and are able to trigger the imagination of its people emotionally if similar tensions arise. In this regard, the categorizations successfully provide a channel to explain the relationship between the historical facts and the mnemonic narratives of Russia and China's use of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War.

Through the memory development flow, it becomes more clear to deconstruct the relationship between individual and shared memory, even extending to a more enormous scope of political or cultural memory. Though differences between Russia and China exist regarding the formality of commemorative practices, the transformation of historical events into a shared memory manifests similarly. Surprisingly, it not only applies to the early stage of the formation process of their shared memory of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War but also does in a closer time frame. In the early phase, Russia and China actively took advantage of public narratives against their enemies, nationalizing the public antagonism toward the foreign actors and embedding them into shared memory. People receive the information to have domestic actors and foreign contributors as heroes when their sentiments against their enemies are recorded and encoded into the interpretations of historical events, namely the two wars. Whereas in recent years, we can still identify official

attempts to filter narratives that are detrimental to its support to favor political interests through the connection to historical events that do not rely that much on individual experiences anymore.

In this regard, we can conclude that mnemonic narratives are everchanging because of the characteristics of the relationship between real-world experiences, historical facts, and memory. It can be more domestic-actor-engaging, but it doesn't eliminate the possibility of the engagement of foreign actors depending on the ongoing situations that a government is facing. In the thesis's case, Russia and China. In other words, the inclination of mnemonic narratives – to be more domestic-actor or foreign-actor-engaging – is dependent on the attitude and decision of the ruling authority. However, here comes the question of the potential factors that affect the decisions to a specific mnemonic narrative framing dimension. The thesis expects to explore the factors that affect the way that the authority chooses to approach a mnemonic memory. To be more specific, through what channels do they use to strengthen the public perspective of a particular mnemonic memory? What factors render the government to emphasize domestic or foreign actors and their differentiations? What circumstances cause the government to accentuate its past achievements? Lastly, what factors lead to the decision to address specific domestic actors in mnemonic narratives

## *2.2. Memory Consolidation and National Narratives*

Summarizing the formation process of memory, it is clear that the original element of a shared memory stems from individual experiences. Through interactions in the public domain, different versions of perspectives collide and start a competition. Eventually, we

saw them mediated into levels of shared memory format – social memory, political memory, and cultural memory. Those are the sources for specific interest groups to select the preferred storyline of a memory, reinforcing them and achieving their goal of maintaining or consolidating support.

For such ambitions, there exist approaches of two aspects: the top-down and bottom-up approaches. Starting from a top-down approach, we control the operator as the authority within a community, in most cases, a government. Under such conditions, the government can mobilize all available resources in one community. Among them, the textbook curriculum is the most influential. Gong (2001, as cited in Wang, 2018) defined history textbooks, “Transferring from generation to generation, history and memory issues tell grand-parents and grandchildren who they are, give countries national identity, and channel the values and purposes that chart the future in the name of the past. (p.26)” It concludes the characteristics and provisions of such educational materials. Also, Hein and Selden (2000, as cited in Wang, 2008) brought up the role of official entities by stating that “history and civics textbooks in most societies present an ‘official’ story highlighting narratives that shape contemporary patriotism.” Moreover, Podeh (2000, as cited in Wang, 2008) filled up the gap in the discussion on the essence of education systems and textbooks by equating them to “another arm of the state, [or] agents of memory” with the aim to ensure the transmission of “approved knowledge” to the younger generation.” With that said, we can state that for an authority, textbook is a tool for them to manipulate and consolidate a particular favored memory. By strengthening a certain way of mnemonic narratives, the authority is able to unite and align people for political purposes.

Whereas in the opposite, there also exist bottom-up approaches that can intentionally or accidentally affect shared memory. Be it films, novels, or other forms of artwork, we consider them “historical fiction.” Ann Rigney (2008) stated that historical fiction is "a general umbrella term to designate cultural practices that are governed by the principle of 'poetic license': the freedom in principle to deviate from what is accepted as factual for the purposes of producing artistic works" (p. 82) In other words, perceived values are translated into various forms of fiction to convey symbolic meanings. But the ability to encode social values should be inspected through several aspects. “Fiction” in the sense of making, shaping, and constructing is always implied in their narrative emplotment or visual encoding. (p.67)” (Assmann, 2004), which refers to the techniques to embed mnemonic elements into the artwork. Complemented with Cowan’s (2010) statement, historical fiction is a more effective approach to communicating history than conventional history writing because of the introduction of symbolic elements during the process of fictionalization to make the event more empathetically accessible. Undeniably, mediated history facts can ignite imagination more than a plain explanation of history. Furthermore, Wallace (2005) brought up that “historical fiction” intends to combine “history,” which is a fact or an actual event, with “fiction,” which is not necessarily accurate or invented by the inspirations from actual past events for resorting to emotional triggers. The technique breaks the borderline between history and fiction, and the ambiguity of the two creates a space for narratives and imaginations to fill in. Those conceptualizations present the impression that historical fiction manipulates true events in the past by emplotment or visualization skills to sustain narratives, reckoning the audience's compassion. However, it is also worthy of discussion of the extent of “innocence” of historical fiction as a bottom-up element. Wijermars (2016) mentioned, “non–state actors may choose to act and express themselves in a state-supportive way

motivated by a multitude of different considerations, ranging from actual support or the belief that there is no political alternative, to a desire to maintain societal status or achieve financial gain. (p.85)” In other words, rather than understanding historical fiction as a sole product of narrative interactions, authority’s extensive power over narrative forming should be considered. Even though their intervention might not be as obvious, the underlying impact should be noted. Creators can possibly follow an authority-favored narration approach to grant their own well-being.

With the approaches clarified, the thesis intends to focus on the relationship between top-down narratives and their underlying purposes. The thesis suggests that the fundamental reason for national narratives is to define self and others, which is also stated by Holf (2016), “how one understands oneself in relationship to another. Any individual or state has multiple identities because its identity is different in interaction with different others. (p.5)” When memory is framed into a certain narrative to consolidate a way of perspective toward a particular historical fact, it creates the space for the sense of “identity,” not self-consciousness, to grow. When a primary imagination of self is built, we can easily spot the accumulation of other narratives addressing actual past conduct, which Zajda (2015) states the purpose is to retain the power of the authority to exercise its power in this regard. But to be more straightforward, Lee (2015, as cited in Zadja, 2015):

..... for propelling socio-political development.....a belief that the history of nation-building provides a common ground, regardless of age, race, language or religion, for cultivating a sense of national belonging, loyalty and political consciousness, and encouraging

constructive criticisms towards the incumbent governance structures in order to enable self-improvement.

As such, the authority can more likely have its people stay in line with their political preferences because of the characteristic of shared memory, “The narratives of cultural memory not only transmit and carry group-identity, but characteristic features of group-identity are manifested in them as well. (p.70)” (László, Vincze, and Somogyvári, 2003). Overall, with all the efforts from the authority to consolidate a narrative, the final objective is to justify their governance and existence. In other words, proving the legitimacy of its political dominance. Generally, such need exists in all types of regimes, authoritarian or democratic. However, in democratic regimes, the institutional designs allow the governance to have a certain level of legitimacy by default. As opposed to that, autocratic regimes rule a country without the mechanisms to acquire people’s recognition and consent so it is comparatively more critical for autocratic governments to sort out ways to justify their power – legitimation. It is even more so when an authoritarian government is facing a crisis, with narrative-shaping and propaganda being the most frequently applied methods because of their capacity to affect school curricula and media channels to spread positive information about the government.

Due to this reason, the thesis is more inclined to explore the authoritarian government’s approach to self-legitimation through memory and mnemonic narratives, as observed in the case of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War commemorative events. Alexander Dukalskis and Johannes Gerschewski (2017) designed four mechanisms for authoritarian legitimation, which include indoctrination, performance, passivity, and

democratic-procedural. The paper provides an insight into the potential mechanisms of legitimation; however, it fails to address the interplay between crisis and authority's choices to frame and narrate a memory. Riedel (2022) also attempted to explain shared memory manipulations under authoritarian populism through a proposed mechanism. Though it is insightful to refer to the provided typology to analyze the way they define different groups in society, the paper doesn't point much in the direction for me to explore the interactions between conflicts and mnemonic narratives. There are also other scholars like Schneider (2020), Curry (2014), and Roniger, Senkman & Sánchez (2015), who expect to explain the role that memory plays in contemporary politics. Within this prospect, they focus more on the influence of memory and how it affects the functioning of politics in countries nowadays. For example, they can explain how memory contributes to power transition or how they are used to support some policies. Even though the thesis also expects to see the relationship between policies and mnemonic memory, the thesis doesn't intend to place memory in the center of the paper. Instead, the thesis expects to examine the authority use of memory and its relation to conflicts. Expanding from this, we also see a school of theories that focus more on the legacy of memory. For example, Raimundo & Almeida (2019), Chen, Li & Zhang (2021), and Guzmán-Concha (2023). The school explores more of how the lasting legacy of memory can interact with contemporary politics. Although the thesis admits that the impact of memory to contemporary politics is undeniable, it is more intriguing for the thesis to explore the answer to how the authority uses the impact to achieve its political ambition.

In summary, the thesis identified different schools of literature regarding the relationship between historical fact, memory, and narratives. Some address the relationship between historical fact and memory. Within the dimension, it can include the discussion of the

development from factual experiences to memory as well as how an original memory can be transformed into different types of memory, to say personal, social, political, and cultural memory. The primary concern for them is how memory is built from the day-to-day experiences of individuals and how they can develop into different formats. Others focus on the role that memory plays in political life. It might be related to the use of memory in authoritarian regimes, or the influence memory has in a period of political transition or even regime transition. There are also some emphasizing the power that memory legacy has to influence the political environment. This dimension mostly discusses what positive or negative impact a memory impact might have on a government when forming a policy.

Among the three categories, it can be explained in two aspects from the methodological dimensions – memory as a dependent variable or as an independent variable. On the one hand, in the paper exploring the development from experiences to memory, memory usually serves as a dependent variable. Scholars tend to study how different factors can change or modify the trajectory of the development of memory. To be more detailed, the studies can be divided into discussions of individual, social, political, and cultural memory and how they are affected by different factors as well as to what extent they would be affected. On the other hand, in the paper focusing on the influence of memory legacy, memory is mostly likely defined as an independent variable so as to test the impact it can have on the current political environment. That is to say, the school is inclined to analyze how memory legacy affects elements in everyday political life, such as policy-making or the dynamics of politics, etc..

### *2.3 The Relationship between Mnemonic Narratives and Crisis*

The thesis identified that the schools are the most relevant to the research question though there exist many other disciplines to study memory politics. Among them, I found the interplay of memory in political life to be aligned with the research question. However, rather than having memory as the prime independent factor, the thesis translated some concepts to better communicate with the design of the paper. The thesis acknowledges the authority use of past events and memory to consolidate power and agrees that narrating historical facts in a top-down approach is one of the most common techniques to be observed. Therefore, the thesis expects to contribute by diving into this aspect. Rather than focusing on how the authority exercises its power to reshape memory through national narrative via education or propaganda, like how authorities use memory to foster political transition, etc., the thesis is more intrigued by the circumstances when a government decides to take action and put it into practice and how it is done. Expanding from the discussion, we've come to a preliminary explanation that governments tend to initiate a mnemonic narrative reshaping process in the face of a crisis for the pursuit of legitimation. It is even true for those regimes who are autocratic because of the lack of public consent and support foundation. On account of that, the thesis decided to restrict the target research subject to authoritarian regimes. In short, the thesis will conduct an analysis of authoritarian regimes to explore the relationship between mnemonic narrative shaping and crisis. To assess such variation, the thesis will observe the inclination of openness in a mnemonic narrative and compare the shifts with the circumstances an authoritarian government is facing. Specifically, the thesis expects autocratic regimes to restrict access to foreign information but stress domestic information when a crisis hits and the opposite when there is no such threat exists.

The thesis identified three potential circumstances for a government to take action and weaponize mnemonic narratives for self-legitimation: domestic crisis, external crisis, and elite preference. Firstly, the domestic crisis. It can refer to political unrest and economic recession, etc. In general, the category considers domestic incidents that can potentially cause opposition to the authority. It is already proven that a government usually takes advantage of its power to modify its mnemonic narratives for political purposes. Therefore, the thesis suggests that when the situation of domestic crisis worsens, an autocratic government will address more positive information of itself but fewer negative incidents. Secondly, external crisis. It can be a diplomatic or business conflict, etc. But it generally means the incidents that can lead to objections to the authority. Similarly, the thesis suggests that the mnemonic narratives of a government can be more inward-facing in the face of an external crisis but more outward-facing when there's no threat from an external crisis. Lastly, elite preference. In a democratic country, the importance of elite preference might not be as influential as it is in an authoritarian country because of the existence of checks and balances in the institutional design. But it is not as such in an authoritarian regime. Therefore, the thesis believes it is also critical to put elite preference into a discussion on top of domestic and external crises. There exist political factions in each political entity, but the level of impact can be more prominent in an autocratic country. Therefore, the thesis suggests the political faction that the ruling elites belong to can affect mnemonic narratives too. When a political faction is more prone to international involvement, it reflects on its narratives; if not, it manifests as a less internationally-engaging narrative.

Among the three identified scopes, the thesis expects to focus on the impact of external crises, with domestic crises and elite preference as background conditions. Regarding the domestic crisis, Russia and China have a similar situation where both face latent political and economic pressures. In particular, focusing on the targeted time frame, from 2015 to 2020, we have observed some opposition and social divisions rising in their domestic environments. Furthermore, it is also noticeable that the economic performances in both countries slowed down or even worsened. For Russia, the people face pressure from sanctions as well as the hit of the price fluctuation of gas; in contrast, for China, though the economic situation is not difficult, it can be seen that its economic growth rate is not as surprising as it used to be anymore. When it comes to elite preference, due to internal or external situations as well as the characteristics of authoritarian regimes, the elites tend to be more conservative about narratives. Therefore, the thesis decided to take domestic crisis and elite preferences as the background condition because the overall impacts and potential challenges of the two scopes are similar for Russia and China. Furthermore, previous literature in memory politics primarily studies domestic factors, which include domestic crises and elite preferences. In other words, regarding memory politics, existing literature focuses more on the domestic dimension. However, the discussion of the interactions between memory use and external affairs is comparably less explored. In particular, the study on memory use in narrative and its interplay with foreign affairs. Therefore, one aspect the thesis wishes to contribute to the field is the research on the interactions between mnemonic narrative and external crises. I wish to explore how external crises can or cannot lead to changes in mnemonic memory when governments have certain preferences and governing guidelines to follow, especially in authoritarian countries. On top of that, the second aspect that the thesis also expects to explore further is the relationship between institutional mechanisms and the shifts of

mnemonic narratives. In previous literature, studies mostly condition the government or the authority as a subject. The characteristics of democratic and authoritarian regimes might be discussed, but the nuances that different institutional designs might cause within the same regime type are omitted. Therefore, the thesis combined the two aspects to conduct the research and the analysis, with the elite speeches on the Russian and Chinese commemorative events of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War in 2015 and 2020.

As the most recalled common past during official events, the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War are the primary historical memory and founding stories for the Russian and Chinese society and people. For Russia, it has been a tradition for the government to commemorate the victory on Victory Day since the Soviet times. Every year, the Russian government hosts a parade to demonstrate their gratitude and awe towards the past. As a customary practice, the Russian president would give a speech on commemoration day to appeal to the people and respond to domestic and foreign situations. When it comes to China, the sufferings and the struggles coming from the battles with Japan can revoke patriotic sentiments because of the ‘created humiliation.’ In fact, a large amount of the population considers it to be the “one-hundred-year humiliation.” Even the Chinese government sometimes addresses the term on official occasions. Although it was not until 2015 that China decided on an official date for the commemoration of the victory of the Sino-Japanese War, statements surrounding the rivalry against Japan during wartime had never been mentioned less on specific official events.

In an autocratic country, one of the most common and effective ways to consolidate governing power and shape public opinion is propaganda. Most of the time, official

narratives serve as the tool to direct national narratives for constructing national identity and recognition in favor of political attempts. The blank leaves room for the exercise of memory to fill in. From the perspective of the authority, reframing historical memory can be more fundamental and influential because it allows the narrative to accommodate the largest population in common. Education is the most preferable top-down memory consolidation approach because the authority supervises the outline of pedagogical materials and training. Also, they have access to the intervention of the widespread propaganda organs. Holding on to those channels, the authority can easily deliver and filter the favored messages from the non-feasible ones to defend themselves from domestic and external challenges.

Therefore, the authority's use of memory for narrative shaping manifests itself as power consolidation and the process of legitimation. The memory-pathway strategy guarantees the autocratic regime a direction to unite people from different generations who share the same memory of the same past through emotional triggers from their narratives. Such a sense of unity can not only justify the governance of the autocratic regime but also allow the authority to utilize it to act on or against internal and external political challenges. In some cases, it is observable that autocratic governments counter external shocks by exercising memory on narrative shaping, countering conflicts with foreign countries. On top of manipulating memory, the authority may redirect current tension or situations to the sentiments of the nationally shared memory. Previously, studies addressed more the attempts to utilize common memory for legitimation but less on the interactions between memory exercise and external tensions. Therefore, the thesis expects to contribute in this regard. The thesis observed that narratives in autocratic countries vary in response to everchanging external conditions that they are facing, regardless of the framing of memory or the tone of

situation-explaining. Nevertheless, despite the abundant resources on the studies of the variations of tones in narratives when facing external tensions in autocratic regimes, few works have been dedicated to explaining the pathway of the use of memory reshaping in their national narratives.

Expanding from that, the thesis suggests that in autocratic countries, external tensions lead to a more self-enclosed national narrative framing approach over historical memory. Autocratic regimes seek ways to justify their stances when they are facing external tensions to maintain public support. One approach is to draw a line between themselves and democratic regimes, emulating their good governance in opposition to others' negative public opinions. Another is by connecting imminent crisis with historical memory to manipulate domestic sentiments against international actors. In either case, they exercise public sentiments in order to redirect the attention from external information to focus on domestic affairs. On top of that, autocratic governments also intend to reduce the frequency or involvement of the content about international governance occasions. Therefore, the thesis presumes that national narratives foresee a shift from a more welcoming and open mindset to a less engaging and more self-focused tone. To put it bluntly, the thesis expects less coverage for the framing themes, which are related to foreign actors and international affairs in the five-year time frame. Complementing this intention, autocratic governments may further apply another strategy to reinforce the impression of the differences and the distance between themselves and foreign actors in some other cases. Therefore, the thesis also suggests that in autocratic countries, external tensions direct the official image-shaping of the internal and external actors. Under the circumstances, the autocratic regimes also project the images of the internal and external actors in a different framing approach and the relationship between

both sides instead of merely attempting to bolster its positive image to the recipients. In that case, apart from shrinking the coverage of international governance-related themes and increasing the frequency of the times mentioning historical achievements to fortify the authority and the legitimacy of the elites in power, autocratic regimes usually put efforts into depicting the interactions between themselves and external actors in a way that is beneficial to their governance. Autocratic governments not only have to justify their certain policy decisions but also render conflicted perspectives from foreign countries irrelevant when facing an international crisis. To satisfy this intention, they pay more attention to the positive image shaping of their people when framing narratives based on historical memory.

#### *2.4. Proposition and Argument*

In order to address such situations, the thesis proposed three propositions. Firstly, the thesis believes that an external crisis can lead to a more self-closed mnemonic narrative framing approach because it is necessary for an authoritarian country to justify its political stance and diplomatic decisions. Drawing a line between itself and democratic regimes by emulating good governance in opposition to negative public opinions is one common technique. Another is to connect imminent crisis with historical memory to manipulate domestic sentiments against international actors. Overall, the intention is to distract the public attention from external crises and foreign actors. It is also common to see autocratic governments reduce their involvement in international governance occasions. Therefore, the thesis presumes that national narratives foresee a shift from a more welcoming and open mindset to a less engaging and more self-focused tune under the stress of external crises. Secondly, the thesis presumes that an external crisis can lead to a more detailed image-shaping of self and others. Apart from redirecting public attention, autocratic regimes

can also alter the approach they project images of domestic and external actors, including their relationships. Other than shrinking the coverage of international involvements in elite speeches, autocratic regimes describe foreign actors in different ways because they not only have to justify their political stances and policy decisions but also render conflicted perspectives from foreign countries irrelevant. Therefore, the mnemonic narratives include more positive self-images with emotional symbols. That way, they can distract people from viewing the incident from a practical level but reconstruct the conflict through an emotional appeal. Moreover, the emotions are usually narrated inseparably from historical memory, which amplifies existing negative impressions of the targeted opponents. Lastly, political institutional design can affect an autocratic government's technique to reshape its mnemonic narratives. Though being an authoritarian government, the approaches to centralize power can differ. On the one hand, political elites rely more on individual power to govern and promote policy under specific institutional designs. Therefore, though pursuing rational-legal authority, charismatic authority remains visible in such circumstances. In other words, the role of political parties is not that significant. On the other hand, some institutional designs leave no room for political elites to depend on political parties. Consequently, though political elites still need personal charisma as a supporting source, the influence of political parties is far more critical in such institutional design.

### ***3. Methodology***

The thesis evaluates national narratives framing variations through elite speeches on national commemorative events in Russia and China. Respectively, the thesis refers to the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War for the two countries in order to assess their national narrative variations, framing techniques, and shifts to have a compare and contrast analysis regarding the narrative tendency.

The thesis expects to demonstrate a national narrative framing framework on historical events by analyzing official speech variations within the timeframe from 2015 to 2020 in Russia and China. On top of that, a comparison would be conducted to identify the similarities and disparities of their attitudes and responses towards internal and external factors, displayed within the national speeches between Russia and China. Therefore, to fully explore the variations, the comparative analysis sections would include a discussion on Russian elite speech, the Chinese speeches, and the overall studies on the findings out of the tendency of the speeches from both of the countries.

Simply put, the thesis can be divided into three major parts. The first part would be a brief introduction to the key concepts in memory, national narrative, and framing dimensions. Followed by the second part, the thesis provides an explanation of the techniques and methodology to approach the research questions. Lastly, the thesis includes a comparative analysis between the two case studies to demonstrate the narrative framing variations and official framing framework between Russia and China regarding their most recited historical battles – the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War.

### *3.1. Case Selection*

The thesis took Russia on the Great Patriotic War, and China on the Sino-Japanese War for the analysis of the framing techniques variations from 2015 to 2020 with elite speeches on national-level commemorative events.

Case study selection criteria is based on small-n study approach and the most similar system design (MSSD). Ebbinghaus (2006) listed a few weaknesses of small-n study: “too many variables but too few cases,” “the selection by outcome bias,” “deterministic causality,” and “frequency and historical contingency.” To be more concise, it is a concern that a small-n study is not reflective of all potential variables and fails to display diverse and fair outcomes. Some even suggest that comparative analysis can be biased because of purposive selection criteria, where researchers standardize the way they filter the countries to target as their cases.

However, despite the underlying drawbacks, the advantages of small-n study guarantee a more fundamental analysis of my research question. Small-n study focuses on merely a few cases, enabling the researcher to grasp a broader diversity of observations on each case. Furthermore, more efforts can be devoted to the analysis of the relationship among spotted factors. (Blatter and Haverland 2012) Relating to my research question, the compare and contrast between Russia and China requires not only a rough but a thorough study in order to see the full picture of the framing variation patterns and shifts.

Moreover, to complement the small-n study, the thesis applies most similar system design. (MSSD) Under MSSD model, a precondition is defined that selected cases have more in common than differences. Pennings, Keman, and Kleinnijenhuis (2006) pointed out that "... where we assume that the cases have more circumstances in common than not, we interpret the research outcomes by concentrating on the variation across the cases, focusing explicitly on both the X and Y variable... (p.37)" In short, the MSSD model expects to compare the cases with common values and wish to explain their impacts on the outcomes. Landman (2008) concluded, "MSSD seeks to identify the key features that are different among similar countries and which account for the observed political outcome. (p.70)"

Therefore, the criteria for the case selection of Russia and China to understand the framing techniques is based on the following reasons. Firstly, They share regional great power history experience. Both Russia and China experienced being a player as regional great powers in history. The most obvious characteristic of the era was the superior power of the leader, which was considered to be designated directly from God. The Tsar in the Russian Empire and the Emperor in Chinese dynasties enjoyed great powers to determine and interfere with every aspect of governance without systemically legalized restrictions. Secondly, they share communist government experiences. Both Russia and China underwent a historical period of socialist or communist revolution. Then, when the communist parties managed to come into power, they started dictating the agenda of developments of the countries. Moreover, several political institutions or governing structures of China nowadays were originally constructed with the assistance of the Soviet Union or inspired by the Soviet government. Despite the fact that the communist party is no longer a principal player in Russian politics anymore as it is in China, its impacts and heritage remain traceable in

Russian society. Lastly, they are both authoritarian regimes. Both Russia and China are still ruled under authoritarian regime doctrines. Under an authoritarian regime, the leader or the leading party is able to intervene in society and personal lives to sustain their political interests, directing them to the way that is preferred by the authority and is able to reinforce their take of advantages in the political domain. The necessity to navigate public interpretation of self-image becomes the motivation for the government to frame history memory into their favored narratives. As narrative framing stands as the primary element of the identity-building process, memory manipulation turns out to be the principal concern of the thesis. Authoritarian regimes depend on history-framing whenever their governing subjects expect to mobilize the mass public for certain political outcomes. The political environment in Russia and China follows the track. Therefore, they are highly relevant cases for the thesis to analyze how the official framing of history memory correlates with national identity building.

The time frame for the analysis is set between 2015 and 2020 because they marked the 70th and the 75th anniversary of the victory over the enemies of Russia and China respectively, and had large-scale commemoration events. Ideally, the thesis should include speeches from each year from 2015 until 2020 in order to have a more thorough observation of national narratives framing variations. However, despite the office of the Russian President publishing their speech at the annual event regularly, difficulties arise with the attempt to collect such information from China. China started its first official commemoration of the Sino-Japanese War in 2015 because it marked its 70th anniversary. Because of that reason, they hosted an event with a national-level military march parade in 2015. Nonetheless, in the following years before 2020, they didn't have such a level of

commemorative rituals as they were accentuated by the Chinese government in 2015. Not until 2020 did the Chinese government explicitly hold another commemorative event to memorize their past experiences and reflect on their history. China did not have a national-scale commemoration of the victory of the Sino-Japanese War before 2015. There might have been some small-scale events like conferences or internal talks, but the practices seldom expanded to the public. National commemorations of the war were first proposed in 2014 and officially started in 2015. In the following years, there were annual commemorative rituals, but not as accentuated by their history. Therefore, in order to compare the case studies on Russia and China, the final design of the thesis is to focus on the data in 2015 and in 2020 separately and evaluate the general variation in five years. The thesis aims to discover the way state-framed narratives interact with public discourse and will give an analysis of the patterns of the development shift of their relationship within five years.

The data collection focuses on elite speeches on the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War during their commemoration events. In Russia, the official commemoration day of the Great Patriotic War is Victory Day, which is about the victory over Nazi Germany. Conventionally, the president of Russia will give a speech where they display the official attitude concerning the Great Patriotic War, and they have been holding the events for decades. In my preliminary case selection process, it was noticed that, in most cases, the speech could mention gratitude for the sacrifice of soldiers, the pity of past sufferings, appeals to glorification, and the unity of the Russian people. Therefore, the thesis considers it reliable and valid because Victory Day is specifically made to commemorate the Great Patriotic War and has been celebrated since the Soviet time. After Putin's rise, the

importance of the commemoration increased sharply to promote and strengthen the national image. Meanwhile, in China, they agreed upon the celebration of the Victory over Japanese Aggression Day in 2014 and started in 2015. Beforehand, they usually only had small-scale events and conferences for commemoration. Like in Russia, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, the leader of China gives speeches during the commemoration ceremonies. They also relay the sacrifice and sufferings of the past generation and call for unification. In that case, the thesis also finds it a reliable and valid case of the operationalizations of national narrative for analysis.

### *3.2. Analysis*

The thesis used speech analysis to study the framing variations in Russia and China, targeting elite speeches on the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War and defining the time frame to be between 2015 to 2020. Ideally, analyzing data from each year can provide a more detailed transition pattern. However, though it has been an annual practice for the Russian government to have such events for commemoration, it was not until 2015 did China started similar practices. Apart from that, the Chinese government only held the same national-level commemoration again in 2020 after 2015. Also, it marked the 70th and the 75th of their victory, which can be better mnemonic symbolic targets. On the other hand, both Russia and China's relations and involvement with other countries at the international levels fluctuated, which also made the period a time worthy of more detailed studies. Therefore, the thesis focuses on the elite speeches in 2015 and 2020, given the condition of comparability and similarity of variations.

The thesis mainly follows the logic of discourse analysis to conduct the analysis of the speeches from the Russian and Chinese leaders during commemoration events in 2015 and 2020. For the purpose of having a more profound analysis, the thesis used Nvivo 12 (now updated to 14) as the primary software for the whole analysis. Doing so, the paper creates a codebook that is shared among both the Russian and Chinese speeches with some minor tailored adjustments to fit the specific needs of each country to better deconstruct and interpret the applied framing techniques as well as underlying meanings being mnemonic symbols. The existence of a common codebook allows elite speeches from Russia and China to communicate and enables the thesis to bridge them in order to have relevant comparisons. There are 8 main categories to define the elements embedded within the speeches, which are “actors,” “naming subjects,” “China’s path,” “role of CCP,” “reflection and prospect,” “the achievements,” “the enemy,” and “tribute.”

Theme	Definition
<p><b>Actors</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Actors</li> <li>- International Governance</li> <li>- China</li> <li>- the Soviet Union</li> </ul>	<p>Define the subjects that were mentioned in the speeches, either for general or specific purposes.</p>
<p><b>Naming Subjects</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General Visitor</li> <li>- Domestic Subject</li> <li>- International Subject</li> <li>- Camarade, friends</li> <li>- Military</li> <li>- CCP Institutions</li> </ul>	<p>Define the subjects that participated in the commemoration parade over historical events and who were mentioned in the speeches.</p>
<p><b>Reflection and Prospect</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prospect</li> <li>- Reflection</li> <li>- Condemnation</li> </ul>	<p>Detect the paragraphs that were either for reflecting on past events and learning from historical lessons or for building hopes and prospects for the future.</p>

Theme	Definition
<p><b>The Achievements</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commemoration</li> <li>- Greatness</li> <li>- History Glory</li> <li>- Spirits</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluate the paragraphs that enumerated several approaches for the country to recognize its own success. It can be linked with past or recent events, either physical or mental perseverance.</p>
<p><b>The Enemy</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Naming</li> <li>- Nature</li> <li>- Invasion</li> <li>- Suffering_domestic</li> <li>- Suffering_world</li> </ul>	<p>Identify the paragraphs that were used to describe the enemies of the countries, ranging from calling its actual conduct or to numerate victims.</p>
<p><b>Tribute</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tribute_domestic</li> <li>- Tribute_foreign</li> <li>- Tribute_camerade</li> <li>- Tribute_military</li> <li>- Tribute_patriotic party</li> <li>- Tribute_sacrifice</li> </ul>	<p>Spot the paragraphs that aimed at praising the contributions made by several groups of people or institutions who were engaged in the historical events.</p>
<p><b>China's Path</b></p>	<p>Indicate the paragraphs that were dedicated to the promotion of the ideas or the values which China advocates and pledges to provide an alternative for the international society. (This category is specifically for China's elite speeches)</p>
<p><b>Role of CCP</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contribution of the party</li> <li>- Guideline of the party</li> <li>- Political Elite</li> </ul>	<p>Locate the paragraphs that served as the acknowledgment of the contribution of the CCP or its guidelines and the political elites. (This category is specifically for China's elite speeches)</p>

In the codebook, the thesis defined a two-leveled thematic categories to make clarify potential code. The upped level, which is the main themes, was defined with the most common and overlapping themes that appear in the Russian and Chinese elite speeches regarding the commemorations of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War. However, in order to differentiate the nuances among different codes, the thesis created the

lower level thematic categories, the subthemes, which are tailored categories to adapt the codes to distinguished characteristics by country. Apart from evaluating specific wordings, communications, and interactions among texts and the contents from different years, the thesis also attempts to identify general variations and intends to explain the behaviors of autocratic governments when they're facing external tensions. The speech analysis of both countries was analyzed under the same scheme because the thesis expects to ensure compatibility for later comparisons and examinations.

In order to prevent the analysis from being superficial, the paper will especially focus on the following hypothesis on top of the general analysis of the speeches:

In order to understand how autocratic governments react to foreign tensions regarding national narratives on commemorative events, the thesis firstly proposed hypothesis 1 (abbreviated as H1) – From 2015 to 2020, Russia and China reduced the coverage of actors-international actors, actors-international governance, and naming subject-international subject, enemy-suffering\_world, and tribute-foreign.

Followed by H1, the paper also expects to reflect on the framing pattern shifts in autocratic countries. Facing foreign tensions, it is more logical to create a positive self-image in comparison to groups of others. Therefore, the thesis also proposed hypothesis 2 (abbreviated as H2) – From 2015 to 2020, Russia and China increase the coverage of the achievements-spirits, the enemy-naming, the enemy-nature, the enemy-invasion, tribute-domestic, and reduce tribute-foreign.

Lastly, though being autocratic regimes, the institutional designs of the Russian and Chinese governments differ. The thesis also expects to address the outcome that might be out of the institutional designs. Therefore, the paper proposed hypothesis 3-1 and hypothesis 3-2 (abbreviated as H3-1 and H3-2) – H3-1: From 2015 to 2020, China largely increased the coverage of the role of CCP and China's Path, whereas Russia also increased Actors-Soviet Union; H3-2: Apart from that, both Russia and China increase the coverage of the achievements-commemoration, the achievements-greatness, and achievements-history glory, but Russia does more than China.

To support or deny the hypotheses, the thesis divides the speech analysis section into three parts. In the first and the second part, the thesis analyzes the Russian and the Chinese elite speeches within a setting of a shared codebook. The analysis consists of four dimensions, including themes of domestic and international affairs, domestic and international actors, national and foreign countries' images, and the relationship between self and other countries. The thesis intends to display the transformation of national narrative framing approaches in two countries, specifically the tune, theme, and wordings, regarding the narratives of mnemonic events. In the final section, the thesis will examine whether the speech analysis supports the above three hypotheses and explain the similarities and differences between Russia and China in framing historical war – the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War.

### *3.3. Expectation and Limitation*

The thesis intends to collect speeches from Russia and China for the discussion on the relationship between general framing shifts on historical events and foreign policies. The

thesis adopts discourse analysis. A codebook will be designed similarly, with minor differences tailored to fit domestic characteristics in Russia and China. Usually, a codebook is only needed when there exists a large amount of literature to interact with each other. Nevertheless, the value of the codebook lies in the part of cross-comparisons between two cases. The thesis expects to bridge the communication between framing variations in response to international affairs in Russia and China through the codebook.

The elite speeches of Russia will be analyzed mainly in English. The translation might lose nuances; therefore, the original Russian texts will also be taken as references for cross-checking. At the same time, the analysis of Chinese elite speeches will be conducted mainly in Mandarin Chinese, with English texts as references. The main objectives of elite speech analysis will be the examination of self-identification, the national image, and its distinguished definition from “others.” The thesis wishes to provide insights into the variations of how Russia and China officially narrate “what is it like to be a member of Russia or China” and “how Russia or China should and do interact with other countries,” identifying whether they seem to be more amiable or more self-inclosed under the changing international dynamics.

Yet, there are limitations to be addressed. Firstly, the number of official speeches. Though referencing merely 2 elite speeches from each case in 2015 and 2020 separately, the contextual nuances might be omitted due to the limited pool of speech selection. Talking about Russia, it organizes national commemoration annually, which allows it to have more consistent and more thorough information to examine the gradual changes in national narratives. When it comes to China, it only has a national-level commemoration once in five

years. Therefore, the information appears less transparent and scattered for outsiders to work on. To avoid the incompatibility between cases, the thesis analyzed two speeches for each country. Though it is possible that subtle transitions are not detected due to the omission of the speech in between, the display of a general variation and comparison is guaranteed.

Secondly, language proficiency issues. The office of the Russian President published the speech on Victory Day every year in Russian and English. The thesis added both versions to the database, with the English version being the principal analysis material. However, even if the English speech is officially published, a translation often comes with meaning loss. Therefore, the Russian version of the speech is taken as a supporting source to leverage the gap and prevent as much as possible meaning loss from translation. The elite speech of China is usually published by a state-owned news agency in Mandarin Chinese. By the fact that Mandarin Chinese is my native language, I will analyze the speech primarily in Mandarin Chinese and refer to the English version as supplementary material for any clarification purposes. Furthermore, a codebook is written to have a cross-analysis. It serves not only to decode the elite speeches but also to restrain the analysis within the same thematic frame and avoid further language-led issues to reduce the effect of language efficiency to the most possible.

#### 4. Analysis

This section is dedicated to the analysis of elite speeches from Russia and China. Because of the need to cross-compare the variations in Russia and China, a common codebook is created. Within each major category exist several sub-categories to differentiate the elements embedded in the speeches.

Theme	Definition
<p><b>Actors</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Actors</li> <li>- International Governance</li> <li>- China</li> <li>- the Soviet Union</li> </ul>	<p>Define the subjects that were mentioned in the speeches, either for general or specific purposes.</p>
<p><b>Naming Subjects</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General Visitor</li> <li>- Domestic Subject</li> <li>- International Subject</li> <li>- Camarade, friends</li> <li>- Military</li> <li>- CCP Institutions</li> </ul>	<p>Define the subjects that participated in the commemoration parade over historical events and who were mentioned in the speeches.</p>
<p><b>Reflection and Prospect</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prospect</li> <li>- Reflection</li> <li>- Condemnation</li> </ul>	<p>Detect the paragraphs that were either for reflecting on past events and learning from historical lessons or for building hopes and prospects for the future.</p>
<p><b>The Achievements</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commemoration</li> <li>- Greatness</li> <li>- History Glory</li> <li>- Spirits</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluate the paragraphs that enumerated several approaches for the country to recognize its own success. It can be linked with past or recent events, either physical or mental perseverance.</p>
<p><b>The Enemy</b></p> <p>Subcategory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Naming</li> <li>- Nature</li> <li>- Invasion</li> <li>- Suffering_domestic</li> <li>- Suffering_world</li> </ul>	<p>Identify the paragraphs that were used to describe the enemies of the countries, ranging from calling its actual conduct or to numerate victims.</p>

Theme	Definition
<b>Tribute</b> Subcategory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tribute_domestic</li> <li>- Tribute_foreign</li> <li>- Tribute_camerade</li> <li>- Tribute_military</li> <li>- Tribute_patriotic party</li> <li>- Tribute_sacrifice</li> </ul>	Spot the paragraphs that aimed at praising the contributions made by several groups of people or institutions who were engaged in the historical events.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>China's Path</b></li> </ul>	Indicate the paragraphs that were dedicated to the promotion of the ideas or the values which China advocates and pledges to provide an alternative for the international society. (This category is specifically for China's elite speeches)
<b>Role of CCP</b> Subcategory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contribution of the party</li> <li>- Guideline of the party</li> <li>- Political Elite</li> </ul>	Locate the paragraphs that served as the acknowledgment of the contribution of the CCP or its guidelines and the political elites. (This category is specifically for China's elite speeches)

Instead of displaying the frequency of specific wordings in a speech, the thesis pushed a step forward to analyze through wording percentages on account of the following reasons:

Firstly, the difference in speech length can't reflect the actual coverage. Though it is relatively common to see the use of frequency count when conducting speech analysis, it comes with one potential drawback if data from different years are included. Frequency count can reflect the repetition of a message that the speaker intends to convey in a speech. It can be comparable if one only wishes to spot how common it is for specific wordings to appear in defined occasions. However, the thesis expects to assess how crucial and meaningful a particular theme or frame is for a commemoration event in a 5-year time frame. However, speech length varies. Evaluating a framing selection through percentage enables a fairer assessment of the importance and significance in accordance with text size.

Secondly, the difference between wording and thematic frequency can lead to different analytical results. It can be rather familiar to see researchers using wording frequency counts to observe and study authoritarian countries' policies, especially China. The technique is to stick to a specific wording and a term, marking how frequently they are used on official occasions. For example, one might attempt to explain the relationship between the use of "the Chinese Dream" and their domestic and foreign policy. However, even though the thesis conducted speech analysis by studying four speeches from Russia and China, the way that those results are presented is through thematic categories rather than a fixed term because it is relatively hard to have a specific word repeating in the speeches of different years.

#### *4.1. Descriptive Analysis*

The thesis calculated the percentage of the themes by dividing the subtheme with the main theme so as to better reflect the coding variation from 2015 to 2020 for each country.

##### *4.1.1. Overall Coverage*

Overall, the Russian elite speech marked 14.11% for actors, 11.7% for naming subjects, 5.0% for reflection and prospect, 23.5% for the achievements, 30.6% for the enemy, 14.1% for tribute in 2015. However, in 2020, actors marked 11.1%, naming subjects at 20.0%, reflection and prospect at 1.1%, the achievements at 31.1%, the enemy at 22.2%, and tribute at 13.3%. The most apparent change to be noted is that the achievements saw a significant increase and the enemy a decline in the primary themes, while for the rest, the percentage fluctuates to a relatively subtle extent. This shift underpins the Russian attempts to direct the narrative direction toward a more self-centric realm by connecting the current situation to

past events. However, despite the major shift, variations and details within subthemes should also be addressed.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Percentage in 2015</b>	<b>Percentage in 2020</b>
Actors	14.11%	11.1%
Naming subjects	11.8%	20.0%
Reflection and Prospect	5.0%	1.1%
The Achievements	23.5%	31.1%
The Enemy	30.6%	22.2%
Tribute	14.1%	13.3%

Source: made by the author.

When it comes to China, the speech marked 2.47% for actors, 3.3% for naming subjects, 3.9% for China’s path, 1.92% for role of CCP, 2.39% for reflection and prospect, 14.24% for the achievements, 4.73% for the enemy, 4.23% for tribute in 2015. However, when it comes to 2020, actors marked 0.17%, naming subjects at 3.9%, China’s path at 4.85%, role of CCP at 8.87%, reflection and prospect at 3.05%, the achievements at 13.86%, the enemy at 5.04%, and tribute at 3.13%. The most note-worthy change is the surge in the coverage of China’s path and the role of the CCP. This serves as a piece of convincing evidence that Chinese elites tend to reinforce their authority by circulating the CCP and China’s path. Another to pay attention to is they’ve reduced the engagement with actors who participate in the commemorative events. Apart from those, we only see calm variations for other themes.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Percentage in 2015</b>	<b>Percentage in 2020</b>
Actors	5.0%	2.1%
Naming Subject	20.8%	8.7%
Reflection and Prospect	3.0%	3.1%

The Achievements	40.6%	37.3%
The Enemy	17.8%	27.9%
Tribute	9.9%	20.6%
China's Path	5.0%	4.9%
Role of CCP	5.0%	9.8%

Source: made by the author.

#### 4.1.2. Actors

The theme targets the subjects that were mentioned in the text. Usually, they are those who have participated in or engaged in certain events or had specific relations with the authority. There are two shifts to be noticed based on the observations of the coverage in 2020. Firstly, Russia reduced the frequency of mentioning internationally related actors; secondly, they mentioned the Soviet Union more frequently.

Subtheme	Percentage in 2015	Percentage in 2020
International Actors	3.5%	3.3%
International Governance	5.9%	1.1%
China	2.4%	1.1%
Soviet Union	2.4%	5.6%

Source: made by the author.

When it comes to the coverage rate of China, a reducing shift of international involvement can also be traced in the table. Among them, international actors varied the most.

Subtheme	Percentage in 2015	Percentage in 2020
International Actors	3.0%	1.7%
International Governance	1.0%	0.0%

Soviet Union	1.0%	0.3%
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Source: made by the author.

#### 4.1.3. Naming Subjects

The theme refers to the subjects that were called out by the speakers in order to convey specific messages and dedicate some paragraphs to them. The subjects that are categorized into the themes serve as the symbols for the thesis to identify who the speakers wish to communicate with. We spotted a division in Russian elite speeches: less coverage for general subjects but more coverage for domestic subjects in 2020, including military, as well as international subject.

Subtheme	Percentage in 2015	Percentage in 2020
General Visitor	1.2%	0.0%
Domestic Subject	1.2%	2.2%
International Subject	1.2%	3.3%
Camarade, friends	3.5%	4.4%
Military	4.7%	10.0%

Source: made by the author.

Overall, the outcome of the Chinese elite speech coverage showed a decline for all subthemes in 2020 compared to 2015.

Subtheme	Percentage in 2015	Percentage in 2020
General Visitor	7.9%	0.0%
Domestic Subject	1.0%	0.7%
International Subject	2.0%	0.0%
Camarade, friends	8.9%	6.3%
Military	2.0%	0.3%

CCP Institution	5.0%	2.1%
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Source: made by the author.

#### 4.1.4. Reflection and Prospect

The theme focuses on the paragraphs for self-reflection and future prospects. Russia used fewer paragraphs to mention any lessons or reflections from the historical event but put more effort into projecting prospects in 2020.

Subtheme	Percentage in 2015	Percentage in 2020
Prospect	1.2%	1.1%
Reflection	2.4%	1.1%
Condemnation	2.4%	0.0%

Source: made by the author.

Overall, China used more paragraphs for the descriptions of condemnation and prospect. Except for prospect, other subthemes saw a decrease in their coverage in 2020.

Subtheme	Percentage in 2015	Percentage in 2020
Prospect	1.0%	1.0%
Reflection	2.0%	1.4%
Condemnation	0.0%	0.7%

Source: made by the author.

#### 4.1.5. The Achievements

The theme circulates the applaudable incidents or outcomes to underpin the contribution of the authority. We can notice a division of shifts in the 2020 Russian elite speech: the increase in history glory and spirits; the decrease in commemoration and greatness.

<b>Subtheme</b>	<b>Percentage in 2015</b>	<b>Percentage in 2020</b>
Commemoration	8.2%	5.6%
Greatness	4.7%	4.4%
History Glory	3.5%	5.6%
Spirits	7.1%	15.6%

Source: made by the author.

We can see increases in greatness and spirits, whereas the coverage of commemoration and history glowing going down in 2020 Chinese elite speech.

<b>subtheme</b>	<b>Percentage in 2015</b>	<b>Percentage in 2020</b>
Commemoration	10.9%	1.7%
Greatness	12.9%	17.4%
History Glory	3.0	0.7%
Spirits	13.9%	17.4%

Source: made by the author.

#### *4.1.6. The Enemy*

The theme is dedicated to the discussion of the opponents. The most significant shift in 2020 Russia elite speech is the increase in nature, having more direct and negative descriptions of the opponents rather than the outcome caused by them.

<b>Subtheme</b>	<b>Percentage in 2015</b>	<b>Percentage in 2020</b>
Naming	18.8%	15.6%
Nature	3.5%	5.6%
Invasion	0.0%	1.1%
Suffering_domestic	3.5%	1.1%
Suffering_world	4.7%	0.0%

Source: made by the author.

China intended to emphasize the negative side of the opponents by raising the coverage of their past wrong doings and the suffering of the Chinese people, along with avoiding the suffering of foreign countries in the 2020 speech.

<b>Subtheme</b>	<b>Percentage in 2015</b>	<b>Percentage in 2020</b>
Naming	9.9%	13.2%
Nature	1.0%	4.5%
Invasion	4.0%	7.0%
Suffering_domestic	1.0%	2.8%
Suffering_world	2.0%	0.3%

Source: made by the author.

#### *4.1.7. Tribute*

This theme expects to code the paragraphs for attributions and gratitude. We can also spot a division of coverage: the increase for domestic and military but the decrease for foreign and sacrifice in 2020.

<b>Subtheme</b>	<b>Percentage in 2015</b>	<b>Percentage in 2020</b>
Domestic	3.5%	4.4%
Foreign	4.7%	2.2%
Military	3.5%	5.6%
Sacrifice	2.4%	1.1%

Source: made by the author.

For domestic, foreign, military, and sacrifice, there are increases in their coverage; however, it is the opposite for camarade and patriotic party in 2020 Chinese elite speech.

<b>Subtheme</b>	<b>Percentage in 2015</b>	<b>Percentage in 2020</b>
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Domestic	1.0%	3.1%
Foreign	4.0%	10.1%
Comarade	1.0%	0.3%
Military	3.0%	5.2%
Patriotic Party	1.0%	0.3%
Sacrifice	0.0%	1.4%

Source: made by the author.

The following table only shows the coverage data of Chinese elite speeches because they're the themes tailored for the Chinese political context.

#### 4.1.8. China's Path

The theme doesn't have sub-categories. But it is designed to recognize the paragraphs that Chinese political elites intend to use to emphasize the achievements led by the Chinese ways of governance and political institutions.

#### 4.1.9. Role of CCP

The theme expects to understand how the coverage of CCP changed between 2015 and 2020. In general, the importance of the theme increased, with a special focus on party contribution, which contributed to the overall surge.

Subtheme	Percentage in 2015	Percentage in 2020
Contribution of the party	1.0%	9.1%
Guideline of the party	4.0%	0.3%
Political Elite	1.0%	0.3%

Source: made by the author.

## 4.2. Hypotheses Testing

The thesis proposed three hypotheses aligning with three prepositions which expect the shifts on narrative framing approaches – the tune of openness or self-centric, the influence from political insitutions, and the image-shaping of self and others. Briefly put, the thesis expects to examine how autocratic regimes respond to external tensions in the national narrative dimension. In the section, the thesis used statistical tests to interpret the codes of the speech analysis to verify whether those data accept or deny the proposed hypothesis.

### 4.2.1. Hypothesis 1

The hypothesis expects a decline of the coverage of a decline of the coverage of actors-international actors, actors-international governance, and naming subject-international subject, enemy-suffering\_world and tribute-foreign from 2015 to 2020 on the condition that autocratic regimes tend to act against external crises through a more self-centric narrative framing approach. After the analysis, the thesis noticed different patterns for Russia and China. In the section, the thesis used t-test to reflect the outcome of the coding data.

#### (1) Russia

	Actors- international actors	Actors- international governance	Naming-subjects- international subjects	Enemy- suffering_wo rld	Tribute- foreign
Count in 2020	3	1	3	0	2
Count in 2015	3	5	1	4	4
Total Count in 2020	90	90	90	90	90
Total Count in 2015	85	85	85	85	85

Percentage in 2020	0.03333333333	0.01111111111	0.03333333333	0	0.02222222222 22
Percentage in 2015	0.03529411765	0.05882352941	0.01176470588	0.047058823 53	0.047058823 53
Difference of Percentage	-0.00196078431 4	-0.0477124183	0.02156862745	-0.04705882 353	-0.02483660 131
z statistic	-0.0712460167	-1.733653073	0.9542105197	-2.08191386 1	-0.90244954 48
z  > 1.96?	no	no	no	yes	no

Statistics: T-test for subtheme coverage. Source: made by the author.

On the one hand, for Russia, the thesis identified that the coverage for all subthemes declined, except for naming subject\_international subject. Therefore, the data proved the hypothesis on the Russian elite speech variation, with the exception of naming subject\_international subject. Nevertheless, despite the fact that most coverage variation of the subthemes changed as expected, the shift was not statistically significant because the database is too small. That said, it can be changed should there be more data to be included.

Regarding the passages that were coded into the theme of naming subject-international subjects, it can be noticed that the increasing coverage arises from the special focus on the discussion of their foreign alliance. There is a paragraph especially dedicated to expressing their gratitude and showing their friendliness to those countries, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Moldova, Mongolia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, who remain relatively stable and close relationship with Russia. To be more specific, the mentioned international subjects were either the countries which were part of the Soviet Union or the countries that worked closely with the Soviet

Union or Russia. This characteristic contradicted H1 hypothesis, where the thesis expects the official stance to show less interest in international involvement. The purpose of engaging less in international affairs is to offset the effects of international conflicts by lowering the visibility of foreign actors and external perspectives. In the meantime, self-centric content should be addressed more to consolidate the popularity and confidence in autocratic regimes. However, the Russia case indicates that it is not at all times the case. The intentional act of avoiding involvement in international affairs to prevent negative influence domestically can also be manifested in a way of engaging the same or more of the coverage of foreign actors but targeting the subjects that can show the greatness of Russia or the Soviet Union to bring back public historical memory and connect to the national pride.

(2) China

	Actors- international actors	Actors- international governance	Naming-subject s- international subjects	Enemy- suffering_ world	Tribute- foreign
Count in 2020	5	0	0	1	29
Count in 2015	3	1	2	2	4
Total Count in 2020	287	287	287	287	287
Total Count in 2015	101	101	101	101	101
Percentage in 2020	0.0174216027 9	0	0	0.0034843 20557	0.1010452 962
Percentage in 2015	0.0297029703	0.009900990099	0.0198019802	0.0198019 802	0.0396039 604
Difference of Percentage	-0.012281367 51	-0.009900990099	-0.0198019802	-0.0163176 5964	0.0614413 3577
z statistic	-0.747011751 2	-1.687876403	-2.390107693	-1.6102168 84	1.9037372 18
z  > 1.96?	no	no	yes	no	no

Statistics: T-test for subtheme coverage. Source: made by the author.

On the other hand, for China, the variation of the coverage related to international-affair-related contents shifted as hypothesized except for tribute-foreign. Similar to Russian data, only one subtheme saw a statistically significant variation of its coverage, the situation that resulted from a small dataset.

In 2015, China still dedicated a paragraph to express its willingness to contribute to international governance by mentioning international institutions and paradigms, but no such comments remained in 2020. Complementing the most commonly seen approaches by autocratic governments, China's narrative shifts displayed its special concerns. In 2015, the speech included sufferings worldwide, with a specific elaboration on the loss of the Soviet Union in World War Two, when the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War happened. Furthermore, in actors-international governance, China spent a paragraph depicting an alternative for international governance. Such attempts indicate that China expects to construct an open and welcoming image domestically and internationally in order to engage more in international governance. Even bringing a China-led alternative to compete with existing narratives. It not only can benefit its domestic governance but can also contribute to international interactions. However, coverage of actors-international governance decreased at 0%, while enemy-suffering\_world still mentioned the Asian region as a reference. The thesis suggests that China's response is in line with the prediction of autocratic regimes when facing external threats. Chinese political elites wish to engage fewer international actors in their narratives so as to distract their people from external opinions. However, as an existing order challenger, China also wishes to step away from the international stage against the dominant camp in the international society after the conflicts.

Instead, it avoided relating itself and its policies with international society and only bonded with Asian region countries to amplify the opposition attitudes toward the West alliance. Regarding tribute\_foreign, the thesis observed that the increase appeared because of their specific naming of subjects that contributed to the Chinese society rather than dedicating the paragraph to the opposition, the West alliance. Therefore, the paper suggests that when reading autocratic attempts to reshape public opinions about its external opposition, it is also common to see that they redirect their attention to external “friendly parties.”

#### 4.2.2. Hypothesis 2

Supplementing hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2 anticipates an increase in the coverage of the achievements-spirits, the enemy-naming, the enemy-nature, and enemy-invasion, tribute-domestic, but a reduction of tribute-foreign for the purpose of image-shaping between self and others. In this section, the thesis also applied t-test to reflect the data.

##### (1) Russia

	The achievement-spirits	The enemy-naming	The enemy-nature	The enemy-invasion	Tribute-domestic	Tribute-foreign
Count in 2020	14	14	5	1	4	2
Count in 2015	6	16	3	0	3	4
Total Count in 2020	90	90	90	90	90	90
Total Count in 2015	85	85	85	85	85	85
Percentage in 2020	0.15555555556	0.15555555555	0.05555555555	0.01111111111	0.04444444444	0.02222222222
Percentage in	0.070588235	0.188235294	0.035294117	0	0.035294117	0.047058823

2015	29	1	65		65	53
Difference of Percentage	0.114285714 3	0.171428571 4	0.045714285 71	0.005714285 714	0.04	0.034285714 29
z statistic	1.765715854	-0.57330230 38	0.641382012 3	0.974613916 4	0.308732739	-0.90244954 48
z  > 1.96?	no	no	no	no	no	no

Statistics: T-test for subtheme coverage. Source: made by the author.

Observing Russia's elite speeches on the Great Patriotic War between 2015 and 2020, the expected coverage variation was confirmed according to the statistics of the analysis, with the exception of the tribute-foreign. Similarly, due to a limited dataset, the variations were not statistically significant. But overall, the variation of subthemes does show an attempt to draw a line between self and others' image shaping. Following the explanations of hypothesis 1, the thesis expects to collect more evidence regarding self-narrating patterns by evaluating how autocratic regimes differentiate self and others. Facing external conflicts, autocratic regimes tend to resort to addressing more positive self-images and weaken or negate images of others.

Talking about the case of Russia, after the Ukrainian Crisis in 2014, the most direct opponents or enemies were the Western countries who proposed different opinions from the Russian authority. In order to create an environment where people believed what the Russian government stated was more logical than the West, the need to distinguish between self and others emerged. A more detailed classification of self and others allows the government to identify the subjects that benefit self-image strengthening and the ones that are not beneficial. For Russia to maintain a superior position in the conflicts, the narrative should find a way to recognize Russia and the subjects that were categorized as self and, at the same time, use

relatively negative words when describing subjects that were classified as others. Given the condition that the commemoration event was the Great Patriotic War, Nazi Germany was the enemy. However, listing the unpleasant deeds of the enemy isn't enough to justify the Russian stance in contemporary conflicts. Therefore, the speeches demonstrated official attitude shifts by changing the coverage rate of their tribute to foreign actors. In turn, applauding the contribution of the domestic force and subjects. This way, even though the Russian elites don't bluntly point out the subjects classified as self or others, they clearly conveyed the messages of how a subject of others should look like by describing the behaviors, and virtues of the enemy in the Great Patriotic War, Nazi Germany when leaving room for people to fill with their own ideas. Combined with the official efforts to patronize the public with other approaches to the commemorative speech, the public can easily relate the sentiments toward the enemy to the foreign subjects who are in conflicts with Russia.

Furthermore, the thesis identifies another method that was applied by the Russian government and also can contribute to the success of relating contemporary events to the past – judging Western countries' behaviors and praising the wisdom or the deeds of the Soviet Union during the time of the Great Patriotic War. For example, there's a paragraph in the 70th-anniversary speech,

.....Hitler's reckless adventure became a tough lesson for the entire world community. At that time, in the 1930s, the enlightened Europe failed to see the deadly threat in the Nazi ideology.....

The speech dedicates several paragraphs to judge international actors in order to acknowledge the Soviet Union. The cited paragraph is one of them. Among all of those paragraphs, the goal is to amplify the positive images of the Soviet Union and the self when degrading others at the same time. In the first sentence, “Hitler’s reckless adventure became a tough lesson for the entire world community,” meant to remind people of the disaster caused by Nazi Germany by using “reckless adventure” and “tough lesson.” The use of emotional terms is one of the methods that can be weaponized when the speech giver wishes to influence audiences’ emotions and sentiments. After defining the virtue of the enemy and the outcome of the historical event, the speech proceeded, “At that time, in the 1930s, the enlightened Europe failed to see the deadly threat in the Nazi ideology.....” The Enlightenment has been acknowledged as one of the most influential eras in world history because it initiated the development and the exchange of knowledge, including politics, philosophy, science, medicine, etc. Nowadays, many believe and recognize the contribution of the era to the speed and the complexity of the development of all aspects. Therefore, it is without a doubt that a huge population considers it to be a pride and a success of all humankind. By stating the historical incident in such a way, “failed to see the deadly threat in the Nazi ideology,” the commemorative speech wanted to convey a message that even the widely praised Europe can also make mistakes. Also, the level of mistakes can possibly endanger a large community. Such wording was repeatedly seen in elite speeches. Combined with the identified approach to narrating history and the current situation, it is rather easy to lead the public to follow the logic induced by the officials. The boundary between self and others is set through those repetitive narratives and reshaped or strengthened based on the need for authority when facing different situations of external conflicts when dealing with a foreign affair.

(2) China

	The achievement - spirits	The enemy-naming	The enemy-nature	The enemy-invasion	Tribute-domestic	Tribute-foreign
Count in 2020	50	38	13	20	9	29
Count in 2015	14	10	1	4	1	4
Total Count in 2020	287	287	287	287	287	287
Total Count in 2015	101	101	101	101	101	101
Percentage in 2020	0.1742160279	0.1324041812	0.04529616725	0.06968641115	0.03135888502	0.1010452962
Percentage in 2015	0.1386138614	0.09900990099	0.009900990099	0.0396039604	0.009900990099	0.0396039604
Difference of Percentage	0.1649484536	0.1237113402	0.03608247423	0.0618556701	0.02577319588	0.08505154639
z statistic	0.8291468072	0.8766566017	1.64044536	1.079380082	1.170465756	1.903737218
z  > 1.96?	no	no	no	no	no	no

Statistics: T-test for subtheme coverage. Source: made by the author.

When it comes to China, the coverage variation mostly varied as the thesis's expectations – the increase in the achievements-spirits, the enemy-naming, the enemy-invasion, the enemy suffering\_domestic, tribute-domestic. However, despite the prediction for the reduction of tribute-foreign, the paper still noticed an increase, contradicting the hypothesis. That being said, due to the limited dataset, it is shown that those variations were not statistically significant, which can be bettered with a larger database. One thing to be noticed is that among all subthemes, enemy-nature varied the most and it is the most solid evidence to support the hypothesis. Contrary to Russia, China had a larger proportion of the descriptions of the nature of its opponents. However, mentioning the subtheme that contradicted the

hypothesis, tribute-foreign, the thesis noticed the fact that China didn't use more paragraphs to talk about their opponents but listed those foreign actors who helped them in the past. Therefore, the thesis suggests that though the Chinese elite had the intention to draw a line to define self and others through the speech when it comes to the commemoration of the Sino-Japanese War, the strategy was somehow different. Though also dedicated paragraphs to shape the image of opponents, the others, they didn't reduce much content for crediting foreign contributions. Such difference can be coming from China's ambition to become a regional, even a global power instead of maintaining or regaining its status like Russia.

Facing diplomatic conflicts, China displayed the general reactions of autocratic regimes – a more self-centric narrative framing approach dictated by the institutional design. In the commemoration of the Sino-Japanese War between 2015 and 2020, the speeches showed the exact shift, manifested as a statement that included fewer foreign actors with a specific focus on the contribution of the political party, CCP, and provide a track for the public to relate the historical shame to the current situation. The way that the Chinese authority strengthens its ruling power is through addressing its contribution to the thrives and advanced development of China and justifying its stances on the matters that caused conflicts in the international realm. Apart from that, as mentioned, China wishes to provide alternatives to international society. Even though it is easy for the government to shut down the closeness and friendliness with other countries or opponents, it is not the best option to take in the long run if the authority still holds the ambition to expand its global power and influence. Therefore, they still spend many paragraphs stating the misconduct and ill-morality of the opponents; nevertheless, the Chinese authority didn't create many bridges for people to directly relate past rivalry to the present. The competing relationship can still be brought up by the

patronized public, but the government stated in the speech that people should learn from historical lessons and expect a better future. In short, they still address the contrast between self and others, but they create a condition that past misdeeds should be left in history; instead, what people should do is to look forward to improving from the mistakes and embrace a better future.

#### 4.2.3. Hypothesis 3

After reasoning the outcome for H1 and H2 of both Russia and China, the thesis expects to examine the data through a more systematic scheme – analyzing the differences in institutional designs for Russia and China. To be easier to operationalize, hypothesis 3 is divided into H3-1 and H3-2 so as to explain the variation from two angles under the same scheme. Therefore, H3-1 expects to see an increase in the coverage of the role of CCP and China’s path for China and actors-soviet union for Russia. Whereas H3-2 expects to see an increase in the coverage of the achievements-commemoration, the achievements-greatness, and achievements-history glory for both countries with Russia varying more. To reflect the data, the thesis used t-test for H3-1 and chi-square test of homogeneity for H3-2

##### (1) Russia

	Soviet Union
Count in 2020	5
Count in 2015	2
Total Count in 2020	90
Total Count in 2015	85
Percentage in	0.0555555556

2020	
Percentage in 2015	0.02352941176
Difference of Percentage	0.04
z statistic	1.080564587
z  > 1.96?	no

Statistics: T-test for subtheme coverage. Source: made by the author.

Observed				
	China	Russia	Total	Expecter Propotion
2015	27	14	41	0.366071 4286
2020	57	14	71	0.633928 5714
Total	84	28	112	
Expected - based on homogeneity assumption				
	China	Russia		
2015	30.75	10.25		
2020	53.25	17.75		
(Observed - Expected)^2/Expected				
	China	Russia		
2015	0.457317 0732	1.371951 22		
2020	0.264084 507	0.792253 5211		
Chi-square statistic	2.885606 321			
Critical Value	3.841458 821			

P-Value	0.128452 2001			
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Statistics: chi-square test of homogeneity for subtheme coverage. Source: made by the author.

Russia's mentioning of the Soviet Union during the commemoration of the Great Patriotic War varied as expected by the thesis – seeing an increase. Furthermore, because in chi-square test, chi-square statistics is less than the critical value and the p-value is larger than 0.05, implying that the statistics accepted the H3-2 that Russia varied more than China but in the same direction. However, due to the size of the database, the variation was not statistically significant, but it can also be improved with a larger database.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia succeeded in its status. Instead of holding on to former political designs, contemporary Russia reorganized the institutional structures. Rather than depending on political parties, nowadays Russian Federation relies more on charismatic leaders instead of being commanded by political institutions or political parties compared to the Soviet times. Without the strength of the communist party, Russian political elites should look for an alternative source to justify their governance and run the country in a different way. One of the most obvious patterns is that the country is led by a charismatic leader, so it is easier to gain public support. Another attempt is to absorb people who are nostalgic and proud of the Soviet Union to maximize public popularity. Because of the political patterns, the national narratives should surround describing the positive relationship between the leader of the country, contemporary Russia, and the Soviet Union. On top of that, Russian narratives usually blend patriotic sentiments toward historical events in both the Soviet times and contemporary Russian times together to shrink the distance between older

public perceptions to those nowadays. In this way, the history of the Great Patriotic War can penetrate not only the territory of the Russian Federation but also the historical border of the Soviet Union. It allows Russia to unite people to the most possible amount both internally and externally and creates a sense that the success of the Soviet Union and Russia is mutually dependent and affected. Therefore, Russian elites are able to take advantage of patriotic sentiments to gain political support, especially the leader. This approach is able to have people believe that prosperity and glory are interrelated to the leader, the Russian president – in fact, we can see the change following the presumption that the elite speeches refer to more past achievements and success of the Soviet Union and link that to contemporary pride and sentiments. Tough without direct relation to the Great Patriotic War, Russia is able to intervene in public opinion with the assistance of its narrative approach of relating current international affairs to the sentiments toward the Great Patriotic War to consolidate the rule of the leader.

(2) *China*

	China's Path	Contribution of the party	Guideline of the party	Political Elite
Count in 2020	14	26	1	1
Count in 2015	5	1	4	1
Total Count in 2020	287	287	287	287
Total Count in 2015	101	101	101	101
Percentage in 2020	0.0487804878	0.09059233449	0.003484320557	0.003484320557
Percentage in 2015	0.0495049505	0.009900990099	0.0396039604	0.009900990099
Difference of Percentage	0.04896907216	0.06958762887	0.01288659794	0.005154639175
z statistic	-0.02901640062	2.740999563	-2.768066504	-0.77449482

				74
$ z  > 1.96?$	no	yes	yes	no

Statistics: T-test for subtheme coverage. Source: made by the author.

Observed				
	China	Russia	Total	Expecter Propotion
2015	27	14	41	0.366071 4286
2020	57	14	71	0.633928 5714
Total	84	28	112	
Expected - based on homogeneity assumption				
	China	Russia		
2015	30.75	10.25		
2020	53.25	17.75		
$(\text{Observed} - \text{Expected})^2 / \text{Expected}$				
	China	Russia		
2015	0.457317 0732	1.371951 22		
2020	0.264084 507	0.792253 5211		
Chi-square statistic	2.885606 321			

Statistics: chi-square test of homogeneity for subtheme coverage. Source: made by the author.

The statistics show that H3-1 is accepted – China increased the coverage of China’s path and role of CCP. On top of it, the chi-square test also confirmed H3-2 that the variation of the coverage of operationalized subthemes in Russia and China are in the same direction, but

it's more significant in Russia. However, the limited dataset also rendered the outcome to be less statistically significant.

The current Chinese government mainly follows or improves from the initial CCP institutional design. Unlike Russia, which faced an institutional rearrangement, the CCP has been staying at the center of political power since the foundation of the People's Republic of China. Until nowadays, the political party, the CCP, remains the most important factor in Chinese politics. The functions of all departments are associated with the CCP, communications, and interactions are inevitable. In other words, official political affairs rely on the functions of the CCP, and any major policies or decisions are proposed or authorized by the leaders of the CCP. Within an environment that heavily emphasizes the role of the party and its contribution, they certainly become the fundamental benefits to consolidate. The mindset is manifested into two patterns of narrative shaping approach. The first narrative-shaping pattern is the link between events and the CCP. As discussed, the political party is the foundation of Chinese politics, it is hardly possible to see Chinese political life functioning without the existence of a political party. In order to maintain such strong ruling power, the authority needs to create a convincing and positive image for its people. The Chinese political elites frequently address national sentiments toward different historical events and link the feelings to the CCP. No matter whether it's the description of their dedication or their contribution to governing the country. The other shaping pattern is the extensive use of historical events. Observing the new media in China, it is common to see the government taking advantage of current events or the situation to relate to the public sentiments toward history and past events. Be it a friendly or rival relationship, the Chinese administration can sort out a way to bridge history and the incident at present. Furthermore,

instead of merely addressing the relationship between the new and the old incidents, Chinese political elites also attempt to transfer national sentiments from the past event to the thing in progress. This way, the Chinese government is able to obscure public attention from its weakness and accentuate the bright side of a given event. The approach is usually rather feasible because the strength of historical memory can provide support to the shifts of the national narrative shaping aspects. The CCP was developed during wartime with a dominant ruling party competing with it. Because of that, the way they justify their stance and legitimate their authority since the early stage of the foundation of the party is through creating persuasive narratives among the public. Since earlier, they might focus on how they dedicated efforts to working together with citizens and fighting against enemies who caused misfortune to China. Now, they also emphasized that it was the CCP who rebuilt the country from a poor country to a modern and developed regional power after the war. The Sino-Japanese War stands as one of the most shameful and painful memories in Chinese history, it can provoke patriotic sentiments without force and benefit official rules and maintain their influence and dominance over the ordinary.

#### *4.2.4. Discussion*

The presumption of the way autocratic regimes respond to external threats by becoming more self-focused despite the fact that the thesis expects to see a decline in the frequency of mentioning international actors and related affairs in official events. In short, the presumption believes that autocratic countries tend to be more self-centric in order to shape a positive self-image when facing external conflicts. Despite mostly changed as hypothesized, the paper noticed an exception — naming subject\_international subject for Russia and tribute-foriegn for China. The coverage not only didn't drop but increased. The increase

doesn't seem logical without reading the actual texts, but it becomes clearer when we read through the paragraphs. The thesis suggests that it is because Russia wishes to legitimate its stance and governance on the matters that they have quarrels with other international actors through camping up the actors who work closely with Russia or the Soviet Union. The same technique was also used by the Chinese government, but manifesting in tribute-foreign instead. In the meantime, we can observe that China's narrative shifting patterns changed as expected.

The thesis suggests that the difference stemmed from the way the Russian and Chinese government wishes to unite their people. Based on the analysis, Russia relies more on historical greatness or glory to justify its ruling power and have it as the foundation to participate in international affairs. Firstly, returning to the historical event they referred to. Russia kept the commemoration tradition, the Victory Day on the Great Patriotic War, from the Soviet era. It showcases an ambition of the unwillingness to cut itself off from the Soviet era and maintain its influence from the period. Secondly, the outcome of the upgrading international conflicts. Complementing the fact that the tension between Russia and Western countries upgraded after the Ukrainian Crisis, Russia became more restrained in participating in international governance. Concluding the two conditions, Russia intends to consolidate its authority by mobilizing the patriotic passions of its people with the experiences of Russia as well as the Soviet Union. By doing that, Russian political elites are able to unite the most people possible domestically or internationally because public sentiments towards Russia and the Soviet Union can be made overlapped through the manipulations of the speeches they present in national commemoration events. The approach considers that Russia wishes to shape its dominant role through the historical memory of the Soviet and the Western camp

rather than providing a new alternative to the international society because it can stand as the ground to nurture the legitimacy of contemporary Russia.

However, talking about China, it follows a different pattern – expressing its proactive enthusiasm for international affairs and providing alternatives to international society. On the one hand, the historical event they commemorate, the Sino-Japanese War, is a war that most Chinese people regard as a shame or humiliation. This demonstrates the official will to utilize public sentiments and embody individual memory into political memory to form a unity among all of the people who share the same thoughts and passion over the period in history. On the other hand, heating competition in the international society. China has been acting rather proactively in participating in international affairs and providing alternatives for different countries that are not completely satisfied with the existing international regime. However, after more international conflict emerged, China changed its strategy to stressing more on itself and the neighboring countries than including all foreign countries. To conclude, in Chian's case, historical memory is used as a tool to remind people of past shame and provoke the spirits to engage more aggressively. Therefore, CCP's profound leadership is connected with the emphasis on their contribution to the development of the country, justifying their governing power. Through that, they have the foundation to enter the international field and compete with other narratives.

In summary, the thesis suggests that autocratic regimes do shift their narratives when facing external conflicts. They tend to become more restrained in describing foreign actors but focusing on maintaining a positive self-image. Nevertheless, completely eradicating the existence of external actors doesn't seem practical anymore. Rather, they identify

themselves and others to set a boundary – the actors that are within the boundaries might not only be eliminated from the national narratives but, rather, increased in order to support the image that the authority wishes to maintain.

Regarding H2, It is rather crucial for autocratic regimes to draw a clear line to define the images of self and others so that it creates a space for national narrative use. P3-H1 starts the discussion on the way autocratic governments narrate and shape the differentiation of self and others. On a general level, the most common mean is to include more content for mentioning the contributions and achievements of the current administration to consolidate a positive image; at the same time, weakening public memory of foreign assistance or friendliness when stressing their misconducts and ill virtues. This way, the ruling power is able to maintain its superior status on conflicted matters by leading public opinions to act against foreign actors. But there remain some details to discuss between selected cases, Russia and China. Seen from Hypothesis P1-H1 and P2-H1, we can expect the variances caused by the systematic differences between the two countries, which only share the common traits of being autocratic regimes but under two distinct political institutions and systems. In P3-H1, the thesis wishes to further expand the variations by analyzing the ways of defining self and others. The thesis believes that foreign tensions can lead to the varying of describing actors. Under the precondition, the situation of confronting a diplomatic problem stands as the independent variable for both Russia and China; therefore, the thesis wishes to explain why we observe a similar pattern of coverage shifts with nuances to be noticed adapted to the special factors for Russia and China.

In the case of Russia, on the one hand, they had an intensive emphasis on its spirits and accreditations to groups classified as “self.” But on the other hand, they pointed out their opponents a lot with some descriptions of their images. However, the coverage didn’t increase drastically. Based on the analysis of the speech, the thesis suggests that Russia created an image of “self” through repeatedly mentioning the Soviet Union and its past achievements. This approach maximizes the public they are able to reach with their narratives because the “self” includes the people of the Russian Federation as well as people who lived under the rule of the Soviet Union. When it comes to shaping the images of “others,” they did bring up the opponents in the speech a lot, but instead of directly describing the behaviors and their virtue, they applied contrast to set off the wisdom and greatness of the Soviet Union and relate it to the current rule of the Russian Federation. The thesis suggests that the Russian elites chose such a strategy because instead of confronting Western values bluntly in a national commemorative speech, they preferred taking advantage of the patriotic sentiments of the memory against the enemy during the Great Patriotic War by directing public minds into explaining diplomatic conflicts in the route of antagonist angle. After the Ukrainian Crisis, the tensions between Russia and other Western countries arose. Therefore, it is the best option at hand that can not only satisfy official attempts without triggering potential pro-western values supporters by attacking opponents they face right now. The variations of the coverage of different themes along with the wordings can reach those intentions through the patronized connections between the resentments against past enemies, the Nazi Germany, and the current opponents, the Western countries.

Similarly, China also dedicated sections to describe their enemy in the speech for the purpose of defining self and others. However, there are two methodological differences.

Firstly, on top of mentioning their enemy during the Sino-Japanese War in the speeches on the commemoration day, China showed the tendency to negate the enemies directly without being subtle as in Russian speeches. Therefore, we can observe many contrasting words to describe the different values of “self” and “the others,” the enemies. For example, “the evil Japanese ideology of militarism(窮凶惡極的軍國主義),” “... the Japanese invaders ... (日本侵略者),” and “the outrageous crimes of slaughter(令人髮指的侵略行為),” etc. Such straightforward negative terms were used in the speeches to describe the enemy. Unlike Russia, China left no room for ambiguity when describing the enemies during the Sino-Japanese War. However, another approach that China applied prevents the antagonism from developing out of government control, which is also the second methodological difference between Russia and China. That is placing a clear line between historical events and the present. Recalling the framing approach of Russia, they strongly emphasized the link between historical memory and the present moment. But China applied a different method. Instead, they drew a line between the past and the current moment. This strategy created a buffer zone for the Chinese authority to exercise their national narrative framing approach. As discussed, there exist intense and blunt terms to describe the enemy during the Sino-Japanese War, Japan, without any adjustments to soften the tune of commenting on their past misdeeds. Nevertheless, the thesis observes that after commenting on the shared memory of past shame, they turn their tune into calling for understanding and learning from the historical lessons. The thesis suggests that such arrangements allow China to be flexible when explaining the way they frame their national narrative of the Sino-Japanese War. Also, it demonstrates a rhetorical attitude of the authority not to put the blame on current generations when subtly broadcasting the idea that the enemy is evil, which can be related to potential current incidents and redirect the resentments toward the rivals. Given the

evidence, the thesis had a conclusion out of the analysis of the speeches that China has such ways of framing mainly because the Chinese political elites still hold on to the possibilities of providing alternatives for the international society.

Concluding from the framing variation patterns between Russia and China, the thesis confirmed H2 that when facing external conflicts, autocratic regimes would spend more effort on defining themselves and others. However, the positions of Russia and China in international society are slightly different, which creates distinct motivations for Russia and China to choose the strategies they wish to frame their national narratives on the enemies of the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War. For Russia, because the Ukrainian War upgraded the tension among Russia and the Western countries, to maintain its original status domestically and in the post-soviet regions, Russia chose not to bluntly challenge the values of its current opponents by harshly negating the enemy during the Great Patriotic War. Instead, they merely described them subtly but emphasized the greatness and the achievements of the Soviet Union, as well as its relation with the Russian Federation. On the contrary, China wishes to provide an alternative for international society. However, for them to express their discontent toward current international conflicts without directly challenging them, they chose to deny the historical enemy harshly as the symbols of their opponents nowadays. What they do to prevent extra conflicts is to not emphasize the connections between past events and current incidents. In short, the thesis suggests that, in general, the narrative framing approaches of Russia and China follow H2. However, the distinct international status of Russia and China leads to different final selections of narrating strategies to describe their enemies and how they want to shape the relationship between the historical memory and the current conflicts.

Supplementing with H3, the thesis noticed that with different practical political cultures and functioning patterns, governments can develop distinct approaches to tackle external conflicts even though they share the identity of being autocratic governments. H3-1 believes that different characteristics of political regimes can contribute to different policy-making processes and decisions, given the fact that targeted governments are autocratic-disciplinary. Expanding from the presumption, the thesis expected an overall increase in the coverage of the themes that are about past achievements. Furthermore, on the one hand, specifically for Russia, the increase in the themes that help them relate Russia to the Soviet Union. On the other hand, for China, the increase in the coverage of themes related to political party, the CCP. Generally, the percentage shifts support the hypothesis that autocratic regimes modify their narratives to cope with external conflicts in different manners in order to keep in line with their institutional design and functioning.

H3-2 hypothesis overall centers around the themes of the achievement-commemoration, the achievements-greatness, and the achievements-history. Tailored for the discrete situation in Russia and China, the themes of actors-Soviet Union, the role of CCP-contribution of the party, the role of CCP-guideline of the party, the role of CCP-political elite, and China's Path and focus on their variations with an attempt to test and explain the behavioral patterns of autocratic regime's responses to foreign conflicts under distinct domestic institutional constraints. Both Russia and China shifted their narrative tune in accordance with the thesis's expectations. Even though we saw a decrease in some subthemes for China, the reduced coverage didn't affect the coverage of the main theme. Instead, the coverage of the main theme, the achievement, increased. The shift from one subtheme to another can be

understood as reframing the same sentiments under the same disciplines but displaying the information in another format. Therefore, the minor shift of the subthemes is neglected because the final result serves the same purpose for the Chinese government, emphasizing the role of the political party, CCP.

Concluding from the analysis, the reason Russia and China have distinct patterns of narrative framing variations lies in the differences in the institutional design in the political field. Though Russia and China shared a similar historical experience of the rule of the communist party; besides, China had received assistance and support from the Soviet Union in between, the development process was different. Before Russia succeeded the Soviet Union, the Communist Party was the one that dominated the governance of the states. Back at that time, similar to the situation in China, the political party was the most crucial element in institutional functioning and political culture. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia inherited its legal status and faced waves of reforms. Decades later, the ecosystem of Russian politics demonstrates the characteristic of centering around a strong man, who can qualify a leader of personal charisma. In the meanwhile, though facing a series of political turmoil and economic reforms known as Reform and Opening-up, the Chinese Communist Party made it to survive and embed its powers in the newly-formed structure. As long as the existing institutions remain in use, the CCP will enjoy the party-centric reality in the Chinese political ecosystem. Looking into the differentiation, it becomes logical to see the narrative framing approach shifts between 2015 to 2020 in distinct manifestations. Russian elite speeches show no trace of political parties. Instead, they focus on addressing the Soviet Union and the achievements in the Soviet era. Also, efforts to bridge public support to the Soviet Union and Russia can be identified. The thesis suggests that the

addressed observations of the Russian narrative shift patterns originate from the contemporary political, and institutional structure. Only when the national narrative connects two eras together can the Russian leader build a strong image to create personal charisma and provoke public sentiments to consolidate the leader's power and governance. In the meantime, a more party-emphasizing narrative approach is noticed in Chinese elite speeches. Similarly, it was a result of the political structure of the nowadays Chinese authority. The prioritized status of political party ruling creates an atmosphere to call for emphasis on elements that benefit the consolidation of the strength of the political party, in our case, the CCP. It can't be possible for the CCP's status to be so impregnable without the help of national narratives. The reality does reflect the hypothesis of the thesis. Overlooking the speeches, the coverage shifts reveal the variation of praising the dedication of the CCP, be it the contribution or the characteristics, and so on. In short, the efforts of narrative framing approach variation fix the eye on the final goal of consolidation of the rule of the political party.

In brief, the thesis suggests that the national narratives of autocratic regimes do vary based on their political, and institutional design – leader-centric or party-centric – when facing external conflicts. Under the same condition, where autocratic governments need to address and justify their governance and power, the way that the authority narrates history in support of itself differs under different institutional designs. They might project history to contemporary situations in order to earn public recognition, or they might also address the consistency and the perseverance of the current ruling government to legitimate their policy and political decisions. However, that said, the thesis must acknowledge the small number of cases as a flaw. Though most of the hypotheses were confirmed by the coding data, a

deviation might exist because of the small number of cases. This implies that the result doesn't guarantee the observation fits the theoretical hypothesis within a long-term time frame. Another shortcoming is that the coverage shift can't guarantee the actual trend to be aligned with the hypothesis because despite sharing similar attitudes, there might be variables that were not included in the research to affect coverage data in the years that were not studied.

## ***5. Conclusion***

This thesis expects to understand the relationship between the mnemonic narrative framing approach and external crises in autocratic regimes, in which the thesis, Russia and China, are selected as the case to study. The thesis chose the commemoration events for the Great Patriotic War and the Sino-Japanese War to explore the variations from their 2015 and 2020 elite speeches. The thesis includes two main parts. The first part is the discussion on the relationship between history and memory and how it can be mediated and operationalized in different aspects for government use. The second part is the elite speech analysis. It includes explanations of the percentage shifts of themes and subthemes. The differences in variation patterns between Russia and China were also addressed through three theoretical contexts and operationalized into three hypotheses.

The first hypothesis focuses on the level of openness in an official speech when an autocratic regime is facing foreign tensions – I expect foreign tensions can lead to a more self-enclosed national narrative framing approach about historical memory. To assess that, the thesis has a hypothesis to operationalize the themes in my code book – Russia and China reduce the coverage of actors-international actors, actors-international governance, and naming subject-international subject, enemy-suffering\_world, and tribute-foreign from 2015 to 2020. The thesis identified that despite the fact that it is logical to think that autocratic regimes would turn more self-centric to consolidate their stance, it is not negligible that the address on its alliance can also be taken advantage of when shifting the narrative focus. The data to test the hypothesis showed that China indeed followed the hypothesis to reframe its national narrative by focusing more on itself and neighboring regions to show its passion for

providing for some communities; Russia, instead, spent more paragraphs talking about its alliance or countries that have closer relationships with Russia or the Soviet Union to demonstrate its influence in a global society. The thesis proposed that the reason that leads to such differences is because of the ways Russia and China want to unite their people based on their political characteristics – Russia is more historical-centric, for both Russia and the Soviet Union related, to regain its status among those population and exercise its historical value; while China is more on addressing its devotion to the development of China and how it can become an alternative in the international society.

The second hypothesis is that Russia and China increase the coverage of the achievements-spirits, tribute-domestic, the enemy-suffering\_domestic, the enemy-invasion, the enemy-naming, the enemy-nature and reduce tribute-foreign in the speeches of 2015 and 2020. The thesis spotted that both Russia and China would spend more effort on defining self and others. Despite that, there exist different patterns. Russia does pay more attention to addressing the differences between self and others. They focus on the enemy in the Great Patriotic War without relating too much to current foreign opponents. However, they emphasized the relationship between the Russian Federation and the Soviet Union. This helps connect public resentment to the past enemy towards current opponents. One thing to be noted is that despite increasing the times to mention the enemies, they didn't use too many negative wordings. When it comes to China, they dedicated many more paragraphs to describing the characteristics of self and others. Unlike Russia, China bluntly used negative terms to describe its enemy during the Sino-Japanese War. Nevertheless, in the meantime, they weakened the connections between the China nowadays and the China during the Sino-Japanese War. The thesis suggests the difference lies in the international status and the

ambitions they have toward engaging in the international realm. For Russia, it is more important to regain support and trust from the post soviet community in order to strengthen the leader's charisma. Rather than providing resources or ruling alternatives to the international society, the more urgent issues are the consolidation and the reassurance of the ruling power of the leader. Engaging in a more intense conflict with the West by openly denying the values proposed by the Western countries can cause damage to the leader's public support. Therefore, instead of addressing more current situations, they, in turn, strengthen the ties between Russia and the Soviet Union – it can not only gain support with Soviet heritage but also direct the hate from the past to current opponents. In China's case, the superior status of the CCP in China is not deniable. They have been exercising resources to work on the consolidation of the party's ruling. Rather than domestic rule, they intended to expand their influence globally after they accomplished some reforms and saw success. The repetitive emphasis on the CCP's contribution creates an idea that the party's rule has been consistent since they came to power. Combining the two conditions, it is rather logical for China to take a different approach. They negated the enemy in the Sino-Japanese War directly. Even, they increased the coverage of those comments. However, they blocked the connection between the past and the current situation. This method allows them to frame themselves into a wise role that is willing to learn from the past but at the same time trigger the patriotic population to act against their current opponents.

The last hypothesis centers around the influences of political institution structure on the framing approach under the pressure of foreign tensions. The themes were operationalized as – China largely increased the coverage of the role of CCP and China's Path, whereas Russia also increased Actors-Soveit Union. Apart from that, both Russia and China increased the

coverage of the achievements-commemoration, the achievements-greatness, and achievements-history glory, but Russia did more than China from 2015 to 2020. The thesis saw an exact expected pattern of reframing narrative in Russian speeches – increasing the themes that are beneficial to construct their positive image and connect to the past. On the other hand, the coverage shift of some subthemes about political parties in China worked out slightly differently from the hypothesis. However, looking into the actual content, it can be noticed that the general themes followed the expected variation. It was the subthemes related to the praise of the CCP that changed unexpectedly. Therefore, the thesis suggests that even though some subthemes that were related to the CCP saw a decline in their coverage rate, the overall themes still increased, which means that the authority still considers the party to be the dominant factor in Chinese politics but the framing focus shifts to the different aspects of CCP. The thesis proposes an explanation that the difference comes from the institutional structure difference. After the Russian Federation succeeded the Soviet Union after its collapse, the political ecosystem changed with the development. The political functioning logic transformed from being party-centric to political elite-centric, which creates the need for charisma and a dominant leader image. Also, the need for the leader to unite support from all domains emerged. Therefore, Russian elites tend to address the greatness and achievements of the Soviet Union and try to connect the Russia nowadays to the Soviet Union. However, when it comes to China, the political functioning pattern didn't change much after the CCP took over the ruling power of China. Since the beginning of the rule, they applied a highly centralized system. Any political decisions have to be assessed or authorized by the CCP in order to be put into practice. Even though we saw reforms and development of the Chinese government, the core value of having the CCP as the center of Chinese politics stayed the same. Therefore, the narrative certainly would address the role of the CCP. The

last proposition is about whether foreign policy tensions can lead to a more significant official image-shaping of the internal and external interest groups. To be more specific, whether the government will be more keen to draw the differences between the groups that are classified as self and the groups classified as others.

To put it more simply, the thesis confirmed the following shifts in autocratic regimes based on the observations on the selected cases – Russia and China. When facing foreign tensions, autocratic regimes need to look for ways so as to justify their stance and legitimacy. Mostly seen, they would start addressing the lines between self and other, at the same time, narrowing down the coverage of foreign elements in their narratives. In this way, they can subtly guide the public in their official intentions and preferences. Despite having the same goal, there exist different institutional designs in their domestic politics, and that can lead to different ways of framing. Russia as a more leader-centric political agent, the way the frame narratives focus on the elements that can contribute to the creation or consolidation of personal charisma for their leaders. Either it is related to recent achievements or to relate to past success. As long as the factors are able to strengthen the rule of the charismatic leader, the narrative will address the situation. China as a party-centric political agent, frames narratives in the principle of paying more attention to addressing the contribution of the political party. This method can not only strengthen the political party's rule but also justify the stances and the decisions for any policies.

Nevertheless, despite the code data support that the proposed hypotheses work for the explanation of national narrative framing technique shifts in authoritarian regimes, the thesis expected to address some limitations and potential directions for future analysis from the

aspects of operationalization level and theoretical level. On the one hand, from the operationalization level, the thesis contributed to the observations of the variations in the national narrative when autocratic regimes are in the face of an external crisis, but some limitations that the thesis failed to address need to be brought up. Even though I had the outcome supporting the proposed hypotheses, the coverage data were from only four samples. This implies that the detected shifts in the main themes or subthemes can turn out to not be statistically significant. Also, the data cannot authentically display the variations in five years but merely the differences between the speeches in two separate years. Therefore, one potential direction for further studies should be increasing the sample numbers for more significant proof to generalize the situation. It can be augmenting the number of targeted countries or the number of speeches. Also, if one wishes to speak for a trend, future studies should also take into consideration collecting successive speeches in order to reflect the actual trends and display any possible variations in between. Whereas from the theoretical level, the thesis made a contribution by generalizing the relationship between national narratives and external crises in authoritarian regimes, some precondition was placed to conduct the analysis. The thesis explored the interactions among national narratives and external crises in the authoritarian regime under the condition that both countries are facing latent domestic political and economic unrest as well as elites' preference of being relatively conservative. That being said, there are two dimensions of limitations within this context. Firstly, the thesis can't confirm whether such correlations between national narratives and external crises can reflect the situation in democratic countries because of the case selection. Secondly, within authoritarian regimes, the thesis can reflect the relationship between national narratives and external crises but not with domestic crises or elite preference despite their potential influence in narrative framing technique shifts. The result can't confirm

whether the impact of external crises will remain if there is a change in the country's domestic crises, for example, seeing an economic boom in an autocratic country, or if the elite preferences differ, like being inclined to be tolerant to information flows because such variables were not included in the hypotheses. Therefore, although the coding data supports and is reflective of the thesis's hypotheses, I expect further studies on the two dimensions, operationalization, and theoretical aspects, to adapt the hypotheses to different conditions for a more systematic and generalized pattern in the field.

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