Tourism and Chinese Popular Nationalism

Abstract

As a complex and emerging phenomenon, nationalism presents a serious challenge to international marketers, with no exception to the field of tourism. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence in understanding the role of nationalism in tourist travel intention. A qualitative research approach with in-depth interview and on-site observation was adopted to bridge this gap during the Diaoyu/Senkaku Island Incident between China and Japan since late 2012. In particular, this study seeks to shed light on the influence of nationalism on Chinese tourists. A nationalism dynamics model has been established to explore and explain different segments of tourists based on their self-perceived level of nationalism. The findings of this paper offer important implications for both scholars and practitioners in their strategic responses to this challenging nationalism phenomenon.

Keywords: Popular nationalism, Chinese tourists, Japan, Historical Memory

Introduction

The relationship between nationalism and consumer behavior has been investigated by researchers in a variety of disciplines (Baillargeon & Gélinas, 2011). Other work
has also been undertaken to understand concepts related to nationalism, such as animosity (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) and consumer ethnocentrism (Pecotich & Rosenthal, 2001). Following this trend, the existing literature has also expanded to investigate nationalism in relation to tourism, and has identified that nationality has different impacts on tourist behavior (Pizam & Reichel, 1996). However, most discussions on nationalism pertain to the context of heritage sites. Thus, the tourism literature remains in its infancy in understanding the role of nationalism in tourist behaviors; thereby leaving many questions unanswered.

The recent island dispute between Japan and China offers a timely case study on how surging nationalism exercises an influence on Chinese tourists. Historically, Japan had been an enemy of China, and most recently, China fought Japan’s invasion for eight years in World War II (Klein, Etenson, & Morrisand, 1998). Along with this “historical memory”, recent incidents including Japan’s approval of history textbooks that were said to whitewash Japanese wartime atrocities and Japanese prime minister’s contentious visits to war-tainted Yasukuni Shrine, has an ever imaging powerful effect in heightening public awareness of Japanese aggressions in China.

Given the lack of empirical evidence in understanding the role of nationalism in tourist travel intention, this study aims to bridge the gap through a qualitative research approach after the island dispute between Japan and China in late 2012. This study seeks to shed light on the influence that nationalism has on Chinese tourists and the reasons behind this influence. Therefore, the research was framed in a qualitative interpretative paradigm. Based on theoretical sampling method, interviews were conducted with three categories of tourists in Shanghai during and after this incident in October and November 2012. The results of the interview were analyzed with field notes from on-site observation in Shanghai. Different impact of nationalism on Chinese tourists became apparent in this analysis. It also became clear that the impact of nationalism on Chinese tourists is far more wide reaching than anticipated. The paper proposes a nationalism dynamics model to segment different types of
nationalists and identify the relationship among them. The next section offers an overview of nationalism, especially popular nationalism pertaining to Chinese tourists, and the background of this island dispute incident between Japan and China. A discussion of the research approaches employed in this study follows. Findings of this study are then presented and discussed, and the paper concludes with both theoretical and practical implications.

**Literature Review**

**Nationalism**

The standard discourse on nationalism describes it as a set of beliefs towards the nation, and a large part of this has focused on nationalism as a political ideology (Wang, 2005). However, the concept of nationalism is subject to various interpretations and potential negative connotations (Griffiths & Sharpley, 2012). As a topic, there are generally three influential theories of nationalism in the literature – functional, cultural and constructivist theory of nationalism. The functionalist theory of nationalism posits that nationalism and the nation are functional necessities that drive economic development (Gellner, 1983). According to culturist theory of nationalism, Smith (2001) suggests that nationalism is “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population, which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential nation” (p. 9). A nation is built up and maintained through an “imagined community” that members share a sense of common identity and bond of solidarity (Anderson, 1983). Constructivist view of nationalism proposes that nationalism is a product or a result of elite manipulation of mass publics (Deutsch, 1953). In respect to the significant role of nationalism on consumer behavior, two streams of research have emerged – the concept of “consumer ethnocentrism” and the animosity model of foreign product purchase. Consumer ethnocentrism describes the views held by consumers towards
“the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign products” (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). On the other hand, the animosity model is country specific and stresses that consumer behavior will be negatively affected by strong antipathy feelings on certain countries, such as Chinese consumers’ negative attitudes towards Japanese products in places that were hit hard by Japanese invasion (Klein et al., 1998). In tourism, Palmer (1999)’s discussion on heritage tourism reveals that “heritage tourism is a powerful force in the construction and maintenance of a national identity because it relies upon the historic symbols of the nation as a means of attracting tourists” (p. 313). Pretes (2003) concurs that the new creation of heritages could provide a foundational history that a national identity could build upon. By investigating the development of Dracula Park in Romania, Tănășescu (2006) argues that locality is not wholly determined by a national ideology but rather based on a dichotomy between the oppressors and the oppressed. Recent work of Griffiths and Sharpley (2012) suggests that the dynamic outcomes of tourist-host encounters are heavily dependent on the differing types and intensities of nationalism held by both tourists and the host community. This research stream broadens our understanding of nationalism in a tourism setting; however, there lack of empirical evidence examining nationalism in relation to tourist travel intention between past hostile countries.

The literature on Chinese nationalism has collectively showed that Chinese nationalism is rooted in its collective memories of past national experiences, through its “collection of the past greatness of successive Chinese empires” (p.22), and China’s responses to a series of humiliations at the hands of foreign powers in the late nineteenth century (Carlson, 2009). Over the years, Chinese nationalism has been strongly linked with politics (Gao, 2012) and somehow equated with patriotism (aiguo zhuyi) (Cui, 2012). The literature also showed that Chinese nationalism has been almost exclusively manipulated by the state as an ideological instrument for political mobilization (Tang & Darr, 2012). Currently, two types of nationalism exist in contemporary China - “Chinese State Nationalism” and “Popular Nationalism”. They
are driven from two different forces; while the former is top down, the latter is the bottom up (Zhao, 2013). Thus, it concentrates mostly on state-led nationalism than popular nationalism.

From the 1990s, popular nationalism has gradually developed in China and shown to be a strong force due to the increasing knowledge of Chinese consumers about the West and their perceptions of unfair treatment by western countries towards China (Wu, 2006; Zhao, 2013). The concept of “popular nationalism” is usually interchangeable with those of “consumer nationalism” and “grassroots nationalism”. Popular nationalism (a patriotic reaction) is self-initiated from grassroots (the Chinese people) rather than being organized and induced by the government (Lu, 2012). Further probing into the impact of popular nationalism, Gao (2012) has identified four fronts, i.e. the political, cultural, economic, and consumer rights regarding the impact of Chinese grassroots nationalism on foreign products. Gao suggests that these four fronts are interlinked and involve the participation of not only the consumer but also the government, the media, and local companies. As there is a strong anti-foreign sentiment and a victim complex embedded in Chinese nationalism (Wu, 2006), Chinese nationalists often tend to frame current events in the context of history, especially past humiliations (Gao, 2012). Thus, a strong surge of popular nationalism is easily fueled by international events that seemingly subdue China, especially between past hostile states. In respect to the political relationship between China and Japan, it has suffered in the past century due to the Japanese invasion in China during World War II and on-going disputes between these two countries. Hence, anti-Japan sentiment is especially strong among Chinese consumers. Such sentiment is often manifested through massive anti-Japan demonstrations across China. Although there is no definitive and precise description of popular Chinese nationalism, anecdotal evidence suggests that popular Chinese nationalism is a formidable force that shapes Chinese consumers’ attitudes towards and further behavioral responses to Japanese products. Accordingly, we argue that this situation is likely to apply to Chinese tourists’ attitudes and travel intention towards Japan.
The Research Context

As discussed above, Japan and China have a prolonged record of political conflicts and unease in modern history. Recently, an outbreak occurred when Tokyo Governor Shintarou Ishihara expressed intention to buy the Diaoyu/Senkaku Island from Japanese private owners in April, 2012. Since both countries claimed sovereignty rights of the island, a number of incidents occurred on the disputed island, including both Chinese and Japanese nationalist activists’ visits and regular military inspections. These activities brought territorial dispute to light between the two nations, and this dispute reached a climax in September 2012 after a direct confrontation between both countries’ military vessels. The move triggered a large number of violent anti-Japan protests in many Chinese cities. As a direct consequence of the tension between the two countries, many potential Chinese tourists abandoned their plans to visit Japan. According to CNN (2012), over 50,000 tickets were cancelled by Japanese and Chinese who originally planned to travel to China and Japan respectively in November 2012. In response to the increasing tension and the decreasing demand, major airlines cut their flights, and many travel agencies in China suspended or cancelled tours to Japan.

Japan was a longtime favorite holiday destination for Chinese tourists. Chinese outbound tourists account for nearly 20 percent of all international visitors to Japan (CNN, 2012). Because of the island dispute, in November and December 2012, Chinese tourist arrivals to Japan plummeted to about 70% in comparison to the arrivals in July, 2012 (Japanese Times, 2013). Chinese tourists' demand for Japan travel continued to fall in 2013. Many travel service providers in Japan are also feeling the brunt of the travel downturn caused by decreasing demand from Chinese visitors (Chiu, 2013).
Methodology

Considering the fact that little is known about the role of nationalism in a tourism setting, especially between past hostile countries, this study is framed in a qualitative interpretative paradigm with in-depth interviews and on-site observation, as the aim of qualitative research is to explore areas that are understudied and to search for emergent theory (Creswell, 2003). The use of multiple data collection methods could test one source of information against another and dissect alternative explanations by introducing evidence from different perspectives (Mehmetoglu & Altinay, 2006).

The final interview and field guidelines employed in this study were based on a literature review and discussion with several tourism academics. First, the researcher conducted three in-depth interviews to enhance his theoretical sensitivity and to test the interview and field guide to increase the dependability of the study. After several iterations, the interview and the field guide were finalized with minor changes. They were not deductively derived from previous research, although the researcher’s prior theoretical understanding of the investigated phenomenon of nationalism may have an influence on the questions chosen (Holliday, 2007). The subject of the research revolved around one main concern, Chinese tourists’ attitudes and travel intention towards Japan since island dispute.

To increase representation and to yield rich and varied information, theoretical sampling was used (A. Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in that informants were chosen from the target population from three different social groups. These groups were chosen based on both the researchers’ theoretical understanding of this particular phenomenon as well as the recommendations from several travel agency managers in Shanghai, as each category represents a distinct feature from their travel behavior, and offer a potential base for further exploration. Shanghai is one of the largest metropolises in China, with its urban residents earning higher per capita income that the rest of the country (ShanghaiDaily, 2013). Shanghai was invaded by Japan in
World War II. Still, Japan has long been ranked as the second most popular travel destinations for Shanghai residents; and tourists from Shanghai account for a large proportion of Chinese visitors to Japan (Yu, 2010). The first group of respondents represents those who never travel to Japan; the second group represents those traveled to Japan on a limited basis; and the third group represents those who were frequent travelers to Japan. Because of the researcher's relationship with a manager of a travel agency in Shanghai, the researcher was able to select an equal number of voluntary informants for the three groups. Approximately an equal numbers of males and females in two age categories – 12 young tourists and 13 old tourists - were chosen. Overall, there were 11 male informants and 14 female informants. Their age ranged from 22 to 53 years old. In order to make the informants conformable and avoid the complexity of this sensitive issue, all the interviews were conducted in comfortable and natural settings such as coffee shops and restaurants. Also, the researcher showed genuine respect and appeared to represent no threat to the informants, which helped in gaining their trust. On average, the interviews lasted for 45 minutes and were individually conducted and audio-recorded. Pseudonym names were used throughout the research.

Additional, on-site observation took place in two travel agencies in Shanghai, during October and November 2012. A total of 43 other informants were observed during two weekends. The researcher sat in the back of the travel agency and discreetly wrote down the field notes while observing the interactions among the staff and tourists in respect to their trips to Japan.

One of the researchers in this study is a native mainland Chinese, whose ethnicity and experience qualified him to act as an “insider” with a deep familiarity with the scene and the people in it. This aids deeper and richer insights into the respondents’ views (A. Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To unfold the social phenomenon of interest, the researcher sought to understand the stories of the informants by embedding himself within their socio-cultural context. By interacting with the informants through field
observations and interviews, the researcher was able to bridge differences between himself and the informants (Heyl, 2007). The process of data collection lasted for two months while series of interactions between the researcher and the informants took place in natural settings.

Furthermore, the researcher was fully aware of his role as a researcher during the data collection process in detecting issues pertaining to the phenomenon of interest. From a reflective perspective, the researcher’s inside and outside role as an investigator was noted from time to time to reduce the bias. The researcher was fully aware about the ongoing relationship between him and the respondents, and put efforts in recognizing his influences on coding process and development of the proposed framework. Although there remains a degree of bias, the subjectivity allows for richness and depth of this study that a non-native mainland Chinese researcher may not be able to reach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). In addition, the authors of this study work together throughout the data collection process to constantly compare informant-to-informant to ensure that the emergent framework captures the informant’s description of why they choose or refrain traveling to Japan after the island dispute. In addition, the authors have taken an analytical stance on the interview results rather than take the words of informants at face value and have the results triangulated through field observation, member checking and peer debriefing to reveal the embedded values of Chinese tourists in explaining this phenomenon.

The researchers continued conducting interviews over two months until theoretical saturation was reached: that is, the data no longer supported the existence of new conceptual categories or category properties. A total of 25 interviews were completed. Because the first three interviews were used for the pilot test, only 22 interviews were used for further qualitative data analysis. A thematic analysis was employed. The researchers read and reread the transcript line-by-line until categories of meaning emerged, and constant comparison was utilized to code the incidents and categories
within and across the informants (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). Then, a process of “winnowing themes to a manageable few” (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) was followed; that is, the researchers identified the themes that are considered most relevant and important to the research questions. The researcher also constantly and critically compared the codes with the extant literature and data generated from on-site observation as Straus and Crobin (1998) suggest. In particular, we began the coding process by developing in-vivo codes, while similar codes were then organized into higher level themes. The interpretations of the findings were then expanded and refined. After several iterations, the outcomes were finalized. This process helped to reduce the researchers’ bias and to ensure that the interpretations were the results of Chinese tourists and the investigated phenomena. In this case, the researcher found that themes emerging from the dataset speak to theories or concepts of, for example, the social identity theory and imagined communities. This thematic approach builds on the epistemological foundations of social constructionism (Hollinshead, 2004) and helps empower qualitative inquiry (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001). In particular, because meanings are socially constructed while knowledge is negotiated within the cultural setting and relationship with people, this study utilized both in-depth interviews and field observations to assist the authors to better interpret and elude the underlying social phenomenon of interest. As discussed above, one of the researchers sought active dialogues from the informants while he immersed himself in the social setting to "delve into the depths of human consciousness and subjectivity in their question of the fundamental meaning which underlies social life" as Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 31) put. That is, the researchers build knowledge to explain the underlying social phenomenon and the associated themes as an insider.

Findings

Data analysis from the 22 informants’ discerns several patterns. First, it becomes clear that there are two factors influencing Chinese tourist travel intention to Japan: self-interest and nationalism. Second, four types of nationalists are identified – core
nationalist, social nationalist, easy nationalist and rational nationalist. Each nationalist group presents different characteristics, and they move along nationalism dynamics continuum depending on the severity of focusing events.

Core nationalist refers to tourists who avoid or try to convince others to avoid visiting historically hostile nations, such as Japan, in that they would like to express their patriotism. These travel avoidance attitudes and behaviors can be attributed to their negative attitudes toward Japan in response to Japan' hostile attitudes toward China. In this sense, their avoidance behaviors also signify a means of revenge to Japan and an avenue to support China. For example, an informant said:

This is a historical problem, and now the fact that the Japanese government didn’t acknowledge their wrong doing in World War II made me feel unwilling to travel to Japan. For us, we don’t really support the relationship between China and Japan. Nationalism (Patriotic Sentiment) is for everyone, but the recent demonstration is not that rational. Anyway, their behavior in destroying Japanese cars somehow showed nationalism, which should be supported. For me, I will never travel to Japan, and in addition, I will talk with others (colleagues and friends) to express understanding of nationalism so that they will also not travel to Japan. I think in this way, we could create social pressure as people around will talk about it. (Andrew, M, 23)

Social Nationalists represent tourists who showed concerns about the social pressure of anti-Japan sentiment. This group of informants displayed grievances on the dispute island. On one hand, they are eager to visit Japan during holidays but on the other hand, they wanted to display their patriotic sentiments by not traveling to Japan. Their hesitant attitudes towards their outbound travel to Japan were explicitly noted by one of the researchers during his observation. In addition, some informants from this group hinted that their companies, such as state owned enterprises, were trying to avoid their staff associated with anything related to Japan including travelling to
Japan.

However, the informants added that if the tense relationship between Japan and China was lowered down, they were willing to visit Japan.

I don’t have any travel plan to Japan recently. Well, I am not concerned with Fukushima incident and safety as Japanese people are rational. Actually, I am afraid if I go there (Japan), then someone takes a picture of me and states that I don’t like my country. I think it is social and media pressure. I think the World War II affects Chinese very deeply. Hence, when this (disputed island instance) happened, everyone will bring up this topic (history). As it accumulates, they will make our anti-Japan feeling stronger. I think nationalism is important, but personally, it affects my life, such as my plan to Japan. (He expressed in a very unhappy tone) (Bruce, M, 35)

Easy Nationalists refers to informants who put much emphasis on their self-interest and cared less about the social pressure and patriotic behaviors of others. These informants often expressed indifference about the politic conflict between Japan and China. This was explicitly reflected by one of the informants: “It is really not my business to consider nationalism. Why should I care about the disputed island incident? If you love your country and then you don’t travel to Japan, this will not have any benefits for me” (Orlando, M, 27). We believe that their apathetic attitudes may be attributed to the fact that many Chinese would attribute either positive or negative outcomes to the results of their own actions.

*I don’t think* I will not go to Japan, and I will travel to Japan as I planned as I feel there is nothing to do with me regarding the disputed island incident. Even though you show nationalism or whatsoever, it has nothing to do with me. I don’t think disputed island is a social issue. Also, I think Japanese are nice, and it is also safe to travel there. I am a frequent traveler to Japan (for leisure). (Juliea, F, 27)
One of the informants from the “easy nationalist” group explicitly expressed his experience and understanding of the other two groups in a rather incomprehensible and judgmental way, which coincidentally reflects the reasons behind those two groups.

I do not like people who show their nationalism so publicly (Core nationalist). You can see they are "Fen Qing". I agree that some of them really love our nation, but perhaps most of them are rather cynical about their current life in China, and thus through this incident, they aim to show their dissatisfaction. Regarding the people (social nationalist), they are influenced by those people (core nationalist), I think they do not have their own stand. In Chinese, we say “Feng Chui Lian Bian Dao”[ You do not have any stands for a particular issue]. But I understand their position that they do not want to be associated with Japan and thus, to avoid any bad impacts on them. I understand them as they are under pressure from social force. (Fraser, M, 28)

However, several easy nationalists mentioned cautiously that despite the fact they claimed not to be in favor of nationalism, they probably will not travel to Japan, if Japan and China open fire. They added that it was probably because of safety is a big concern, but more importantly as one informant implicitly expressed: “Well, I am still Chinese. I understand what is more important in that situation” (Vanessa, F, 32).

Rational Nationalists refer to those who view travel should be treated different from politics. They consistently expressed that they regarded themselves as hardcore nationalists, but they were still willing to visit Japan. They generally perceived Japan is an appealing destination with genius culture and traditions. They believe that politic conflicts between countries should not affect their travel plan, as one should treat traveling and political ideology as independent entities.
In summary, national history has been claimed by the informants across these four groups as one crucial factor influencing the level of their patriotic sentiments although the degree varies significantly. This is in line with the literature that the special features of nationalism targeted at Japanese products, such as tourism, could only be understood through an examination of the unsettled history between China and Japan (Li, 2009). In this case, nationalism is framed and interpreted in Chinese historical memory.

Interestingly, from the researcher’s fieldwork, a number of travel agencies have explicitly taken initiatives to demonstrate their patriotic sentiments. For example, some travel agencies displayed posters mentioning that China has sovereignty right on the disputed island and recommended patriotic tourists should travel inside China (See Figure 1), while others explicitly encouraged Chinese to visit places where they could enjoy seafood from the disputed island (see Figure 2).

**Insert Figures 1 and 2 here**

Chinese tourists reacted to travel agencies' patriotic marketing efforts very differently. For easy nationalists, their attitudes towards Japan and intention to visit Japan remain unchanged. However, they added that they perceived these travel agencies were very commercial and hence, their favorable attitudes towards those travel agencies decreased. They might not choose these travel agencies for future trips. On the contrary, the social and core nationalists explicitly commented that they were influenced by the marketing campaigns from these agencies, especially during the periods where disputes of the island was intense. As a result, they would tend to favor those travel agencies that showed support of China, for various different reasons. In addition social nationalists preferred travel agencies that are not closely associated with Japan because it lowered their concerns from social pressure. Core nationalists further perceived anti-Japan travel agencies are congruent with their patriotic ideology; thus, they prefer to do business with such agencies more in the future.
The results further show that the informants were not influenced by state nationalism, in that informants consistently commented that they were open now, and their actions were derived from their own understanding of any political incident. These responses suggest that Chinese are shifting from a state led nationalism to popular nationalism, while the role of popular nationalism is salient in current incident.

Reconciling Nationalism and Self interest

Based on the findings above, Figure 3 presents a framework to classify the four different types of nationalists and their roles in outbound travel to another country that are in political conflicts with the country of origin along the nationalism dynamics continuum. The figure illustrates that tourist travel intention to such a country (e.g., Japan) moves from one end (self-interest) to another end (nationalism) depending on the severity of the conflict between two countries. The outer circle along the continuum represents a prolonged effect from historically rivalry nations (e.g., Japan vs. China, Argentina vs. Great Britain). The inner circle represents a specific instance which triggers spontaneous negative sentiments towards another country.

However, as mentioned earlier, such taxonomy between these four groups should not be taken in a rigid manner, in that most of these groups follow the nationalism dynamic continuum and their travel intention may change at any time. Therefore, the dotted lines were used to represent the boundary between each group in order to exhibit the lack of a clear delineation. It is worth noting that this shift is mainly triggered by a focusing event, which doesn’t come from the “accretion of evidence” but rather from its “symbolic value” (Birkland, 1997). In this case, the island dispute serves as the catalyst for the breakout of popular nationalism influencing Chinese tourist travel intention towards Japan.
Discussion and Conclusion

The proliferation of international tourism business by an increasing number of international tourist flows suggests that intense competition continues to grow among different tourism destinations. Although prior research has studied tourist travel behaviors in relation to socio-economical, geo-cultural, and tourist personal factors, the roles of political conflict and nationalism in tourist behaviors receive far less attention. This paper offers an initial understanding of an emerging yet under-studied phenomenon: popular nationalism on tourist travel intentions and avoidance behaviors. Therefore, the findings of this study would assist scholars and practitioners alike to formulate mitigating marketing strategies, and future policy.

From a theoretical perspective, this study purports a framework that examines the role of nationalism in tourist travel intention between historically hostile countries. Exploring the nationalism dynamic continuum, the paper offers insight into different tourist segments based on their perceived level of nationalism. The proposed framework also shows the relationships among the nationalist segments in respect to their travel intention. That is, findings from this study provide theoretical insights into why tourists engage in or avoid traveling to places where there is political conflict between the origin and the destination. The findings go beyond the push and pull motivational factors to suggest that there are political and social considerations for tourists. The findings also enhance the understanding of another type of travel constraint that has not been previously suggested; that is, political constraint. Yet, this constraint affects the four types of nationalists differently as previously discussed.

From a practical perspective, this study shows that the attitudes and behaviors of rational nationalists and easy nationalists could explain why despite the fact there are prevalent anti-Japanese feelings in China; Japanese products are still popular in
Chinese market, such as some Chinese tourists still traveled to Japan during island dispute. Core nationalists might experience a sense of powerlessness, and as such, they would exercise more influence on the social nationalist. It offers insights for Japanese tourism business operators to differentiate their Chinese tourism market and to exercise different marketing strategies to continue attracting rational and easy nationalists while trying to lower the influence of core nationalists on social nationalists. More specifically, any strategy that aims to lower the reaction of the core nationalist would help to ease the tension on the social nationalist at a grassroots level and further lower the negative impact on tourist travel intention.

Secondly, the findings of this research also complement the existing argument that tourism could serve as a soft power in exercising both positive and negative sanctions on other nations, in that popular nationalism and state nationalism complement each other. Because of the pressure of popular nationalism, it pushes the government to take more active reactions towards the antipathy nations. Although refunding cancelation of tours to a destination (Japan) is usually a commercial decision at the discretion of travel agencies, it is difficult not to associate the widespread practice of the Chinese government (Tse, 2013). As noted by previous researchers in a general consumer behavior setting (Gao, 2012), it is likely that strong forces from popular nationalism may manifest in the arena of government policy, in that the Chinese government might be pushed to accommodate the demands of popular nationalism, such as tighten their visa application towards Japan. Therefore, policy makers and tourism practitioners should be fully aware of the potential impact of popular nationalism on their business in the long run.

Thirdly, despite the fact that tourists are moving along the nationalism dynamic continuum, the reactions of tourists during this disputed period towards the marketing campaigns show great variations. Therefore, it is recommended that the related business owners should have tailor-made marketing campaigns to different groups. For example, in respect to whether they should have signs showing support of China,
the business owners should be aware of the types of nationalists they are serving so that they could determine whether it is worthwhile to endeavor marketing efforts that arouse patriotism. In respect of Japanese tourism product providers to Chinese tourists, any improper marketing campaign would potentially trigger popular nationalism reactions against their tourism products (Li, 2009). Therefore, they have to be cautious. For example, it might not be a good idea to advertise Japanese tourism products on September 18, as the Manchurian Incident occurred on that day. This event marks the invasion by Japan of the northern part of China and is constantly quoted by the Chinese government as national humiliation (Xinhua News, 2012).

**Limitation**

This research emerged from interviews with Chinese residing in Shanghai; however, the impact of nationalism does occur in other regions in China as well. Thus, further research is encouraged to expand the proposed theoretical framework by exploring other cities in China in order to reflect the emergent regional identities and fluidities in and of nationalism in the process of transition happening in China today. In particular, an empirical study in the city Nanjing could potentially offer more insights into the proposed model, because of the tragic Nanjing Massacre during Second World War. Hence, residents from Nanjing might express the strongest animosity attitude towards Japan. Despite these limitations, this article achieves a primary goal of shedding light on a previously under-researched and unknown phenomenon—the Chinese popular nationalism on tourist travel intention.
References:


