

The Change of Diplomatic Ideas in the Late Qing Dynasty (1840-1914): A Literature Review

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Abstract

This study delves into the evolution of diplomatic ideas during the late Qing dynasty (1840-1914), offering a comprehensive review of existing literature on this transformative period. It critically examines the established timeline, justifying the selection of 1840 as the starting point and 1914 as the endpoint for this research. The review further investigates the changing landscape of ancient Chinese diplomatic concepts, tracing their evolution during the late Qing Dynasty and their interactions with the emerging notions of sovereignty and national consciousness within modern China. Additionally, it constructs a chronological narrative from the extensive body of Chinese studies on the metamorphosis of diplomatic ideas in modern Chinese history. This literature review concludes by identifying crucial research lacunae and formulating three pertinent research questions, paving the way for a more nuanced understanding of this significant historical transformation.

Keywords: Qing China, diplomatic factors, Chinese history.

1. Introduction

This study investigates the shift in diplomatic ideas during the late Qing dynasty (1840-1914). This literature review examines the existing literature on the transformation of diplomatic ideas, including the transformation of China's view of the international system and the establishment and evolution of China's diplomatic bureaucracy. The aims of this literature study are divided into six primary objectives, listed below. Succinctly, the objectives seek to justify the selection of the study period from 1840 to 1914 and identify what is already known in the current literature about the idea of diplomacy in the late Qing dynasty from 1840 to 1914. From this the other objectives seek to discover an appropriate research lens for the study and to explore recent debates on the topic:

(1) To articulate why 1840 was chosen as the starting year for this study and why 1914 is used as the cut-off year.

(2) To analyse the changes in ancient Chinese diplomatic ideas and the diplomatic ideas of the late Qing Dynasty and the influence of the concept of sovereignty and the national consciousness of Chinese people on diplomatic ideas in modern times.

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(3) To create a chronology from existing literature in Chinese studies of the transformation of China's diplomatic ideas in modern Chinese history.

The review concludes by identifying research gaps and developing three research questions.

2. Defining the period under study

The commonly accepted starting point for modern Chinese history is the first opium war from 1839 to 1842. The Opium War ended in China's defeat and reparations because of the Qing state's opium-banning policy; China and Britain signed the first unequal treaty in Chinese history, the Treaty of Nanking.² After the first opium war in 1842, the Qing government had to conclude and sign a series of unequal treaties with Western imperialist countries. Marxism described these unequal treaties as coercive treaties. After the signing of the Nanjing treaty in 1842, the Qing empire's national sovereignty and territorial integrity were seriously undermined, China's economic independence was lost, and China was gradually reduced from a sovereign state to a semi-colony.³ Many studies hold that this contact in the First Opium War was also the beginning of a change in the Qing state's foreign policy.⁴ Before 1840, Qing China regarded European countries as foreigners and upheld a policy of strictly restricting foreign trade from the outside world.⁵ For example, the Qing state designated the Thirteen Hongs of Canton as a monopoly organisation that specialised in foreign trade.⁶ However, since the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing, the Qing empire's foreign policy converted from self-seclusion to a gradual-opening policy.⁷

Nevertheless, many scholars claim that the signing of the Beijing treaty in 1860, after the Second Opium War, is actually the turning point in the transformation of China's foreign policy because thereafter the Qing government began to develop a foreign policy theory based on the principle of Xin Shou Wai Jiao [diplomacy abiding by treaties] within the administration.⁸ At this point the Qing dynasty began to accept international law and embarked on a programme of

² Kitson, P. J., The Last War of the Romantics: De Quincey, Macaulay, the First Chinese Opium War. *The Wordsworth Circle*, 49, no. 3 (2018): 148-158.

³ Wang, H. tan xi ya pian zhan zheng dui zhong guo she hui fa zhan de ying xiang 探析鸦片战争对中国社会发展的影响 [Explored the influence of opium War on China's social development]. *Modern Educational Science: Middle school Teachers*. (6), 144-144. (2012).

⁴ Keller, Wolfgang, Ben. Li, and Carol H. Shiue. *China's Foreign Trade Perspectives from the Past 150 Years*. Cambridge, Mass: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2010.

⁵ Zhao, P. fen xi qing chao de bi guan suo guo zheng ce de bu li ying xiang 分析清朝的闭关锁国政策的不利影响 [Analysis of the adverse effects of the closed policy of the Qing Dynasty]. *Journal of Nanchang Institute of Education*, No. 6 (2013): 58-59.

⁶ Beauclair, I. Liang Chia-pin, Kuangtung Shihsan Hang K'ao (The Thirteen Hongs of Canton) (Book Review). *Pacific Affairs*, 13(1), p. 102 (1940).

⁷ Motegi, Toshio., Yan, Li, Foreign Policy in Regard to Japan and Consciousness of the Japanese Language in the Late-Qing: Caught between Tribute and Treaty. *Study of Economic History (Keizaishi Kenkyu)* 14(2011): 233-243.

⁸ “信守外交”. Li Yumin 李育民. *Zhong Guo Fei Yue Shi 中国废约史 [The History of Treaty Abolition in China]*. Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 2005.

fulfilling treaty obligations.⁹ However, during the First Opium War, many Qing officials' perceptions and their diplomatic ideas changed when negotiating with the British envoys.¹⁰ Therefore, the First Opium War might be the moment when attitudes towards diplomacy in the Qing Dynasty began to change, a time also seen as the start of modern Chinese history by many Chinese scholars.

The year 1914 was chosen as the endpoint of this study because the newest existing literature suggests that 1914 was the point by which China's new-style diplomacy reached its maturity. In his book, Xu explains that 1914 was a turning point when China actively wanted to join and engage with the international system, highlighting that a new generation of Chinese diplomats (Wang Chonghui and Lu Zhengxiang) started to proactively participate in international affairs.¹¹ This transformation has been attributed to the emergence of the Chinese adoption of the concept of the nation-state. Xu defined this process as China's internationalisation, the positive response of the Chinese people and their active participation in the international system and their acceptance of the influence of various new ideas, social forces and the trends of the times.¹² This internationalisation process can be traced to the first Sino-Japanese war in 1895. It is often assumed that modern national consciousness had not yet been formed and established before the First Sino-Japanese War, the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. After this war, Japan replaced Qing China as the dominant power in Korea.¹³ After this war, the emerging Chinese intelligentsia deemed it one of their primary tasks to redefine China's role in the modern world; the concept of the nation-state became popular among Chinese social elites.¹⁴ The failures of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and the Boxer Protocol in 1901 convinced many Chinese that only by becoming a nation-state could China successfully catch up with the tide of world development.¹⁵ Under this backcloth, the Revolution of 1911 erupted, and the Republic of China was established while the Qing state collapsed. The 1911 Revolution was a revolutionary movement that ended feudal monarchy in China and established the concept of sovereignty to underpin the Chinese state. Xu claims that the government of the Republic of China began to strive for independent diplomacy in its foreign policy in 1914 to defend its national interest when confronting the conflicts among the European powers before the First World War.¹⁶ Meanwhile, Xu summarises features of China's new-style diplomacy in 1914 by stating that public opinion influenced China's foreign policy when China negotiated with Japan about the Twenty-

⁹ Esherick, Joseph, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young. *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*. Lanham, Maryland; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006.

¹⁰ Mao H. J. (Translated by Lawson J, ed). *Tian Chao De Ben Kui 天朝的崩溃 [The Qing Empire and the Opium War: Collapse of the Heavenly Dynasty]*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

¹¹ “王宠惠 陆徵祥”. Xu, Guoqi. *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Yi, S. Y. *zhong ri zai chao xian de jing zheng yu jin dai dong ya chao gong ti xi de bian qian 中日在朝鲜的竞争与近代东亚朝贡体系的变迁 (1876-1910) [Competition between China and Japan in Korea and the Evolution of tributary System in Modern East Asia (1876-1910)]*. Xiangtan University, (2018).

¹⁴ Michael, G. *Chinese Intellectuals and the Revolution of 1911: The Birth of Modern Chinese Radicalism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 248.

¹⁵ Xu, Guoqi. *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

¹⁶ Ibid.

one Demands.¹⁷ When the First World War broke out in Europe in 1914, these demands aimed to arbitrarily expand Japan's privilege in China, even seeking to conquer China.¹⁸ The period from 1840 to 1914 thus marked the transition from pre-modern to modern Chinese diplomacy; 1914 thus was selected as the end date of this topic.

3. The transformation of diplomatic idea factors

Traditional Chinese diplomatic ideas might have been subject to the Ancient Chinese Tian Xia Guan [view of under heaven].¹⁹ For traditional Confucian intellectuals in ancient China, China lay at the very heart of the world. Many scholars conclude that conventional ancient China's diplomatic ideas are isolationist and ideologically closed. Xu even defines the character of ancient China's diplomatic ideas as a Middle Kingdom syndrome where the Qing government's view of the world was based on a hierarchy centred on Chinese supremacy, rather than on the notion of mutual equality among nation-states.²⁰ This China-centred hierarchical order was termed the Tian Xia Guan [view of under heaven]. The Confucian scholars' Tian Xia Guan [view of under heaven] was regarded as a unique ancient Chinese ideological system that integrates cosmology, politics, and culture, recognises self-living space and deals with national and foreign relations.²¹ These encompassing connotations seem to be based on traditional Confucianism because traditional Confucianism set the standard for distinguishing between ancient China and foreign countries. In Chinese history, there were roughly three criteria to measure the difference between Chinese and Foreigners: blood relationship, geography and clothing, etiquette and other cultural criteria.²² Confucius also highlighted that those cultural criteria played a decisive role in differentiating China from foreign countries.²³ From the geographic dimension, Confucian intellectuals argued that ancient China was the centre of the world while the area surrounding ancient China was foreign. Ancient Chinese intellectuals described this spatial difference as the Hua Yi Zhi Bian [distinctions of Chinese and the foreigners].²⁴ In the meantime, these geographical differences, which led to the partition between the Central Plains dynasty and the Foreigners, were heightened by Confucian culture. The central kingdom was governed by the emperor and its Confucian

¹⁷ Xu, Guoqi. *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

¹⁸ Naraoka, S. Chapter 3 Japan's Twenty-One Demands and Anglo-Japanese relations. Taylor & Francis (2017).

¹⁹ “天下观”. Yan Tang 汤岩, *gu dai zhong guo zhu dao de guo ji fa: li nian yu zhi du 古代中国主导的国际法：理念与制度 [International Law dominated by Ancient China: Ideas and Institutions]*. *Journal of Central South University (Social Science)* 21, No. 5 (2015): 99-104.

²⁰ Xu, Guoqi. *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

²¹ Zhang, S. M. A Historical and Jurisprudential Analysis of Suzerain–Vassal State Relationships in the Qing Dynasty. *Frontiers of History in China* [Online], 1(1), 124-157 (2006).

²² Han, D. Y. The Rise and Fall of the Hua-Yi System in East Asia. *Journal of Chinese Humanities* (Leiden) 2019, no. 2 (2020): 200-214.

²³ Yue Huankuan. Qian tan kong zi de min zu guan 浅谈孔子的民族观 [A Brief discussion on Confucius' national view]. *Heilongjiang shi zhi*, no. 23 (2010).

²⁴ “华夷之辨”. Chen Yibao 陈义报. cong ‘man han ’dao ‘zhong xi’:min chu qing yi min shi ye zhong de hua yi zhi bian 从‘满汉’到‘中西’:民初清遗民视野中的‘华夷之辨 [From 'Manchu and Han' to 'Chinese and Western': The Differentiation of 'Chinese and Foreigners' in the Vision of the Remnant of qing Dynasty in the Early Republic of China] Ningbo da Xue Xue Bao. *Ren Wen Ke Xue Ban* 32, No. 4 (2019): 87-94.

officials, ritualising the Confucian culture and considering ancient China to be the centre of the world.²⁵ Xu claims that the Chinese government primarily maintained cultural centrism and a sense of political and moral superiority when solving foreign affairs.²⁶ Thus, in the conventional Chinese diplomatic opinion, the Qing state and its officials still viewed China as the Middle Kingdom and the centre of the world order.

However, this chronic sense of superiority which once appeared to be dominant in ancient China cumulatively shifted during the late Qing dynasty. After the First Opium War, the Qing state had to sign the Nanjing Treaty with Britain in 1842. Nevertheless, recent literature proves that even the most damaging diplomatic consequences of the opium war could not thoroughly shake the Chinese isolationist worldview.²⁷ In his book *The History of Treaty Abolition in China*, Li explains that Confucian Chinese officials knew nothing about the conception of state sovereignty, international law, and the principles and methods of modern state relations.²⁸ They still understood and dealt with foreign relations with the concept of central empire in feudal times when ancient China located them as the centre of the world.²⁹ These diplomatic behaviours concretely reflected that the Qing government superficially obeyed the treaties with European powers while being reluctant to implement them until the end of the Second Opium War in 1860 when the Qing government seemed to change its attitude toward these unequal treaties and European power.³⁰ Although most of the existing literature neglects this fact, Li's book records this change as Xin Shou Wai Jiao [diplomacy abiding by treaties].³¹ He explains these diplomatic principles as the Qing government putting forward a foreign policy theory based on good faith (ibid.). During this period, many Qing government officials upheld this foreign policy, such as Li Hongzhang, Zeng Guofan, Ding Richang at the local governor level and Prince Gong at the central government level.³² Many diplomats were implementers of Xin Shou Wai Jiao [diplomacy abiding by treaties], for instance, Guo Songtao and Zeng Jize. In contrast to Li, literature of the period only

²⁵ Wang Rixuan. Gu yanwu de tian xia guan ji qi xian dai xing zhuan hua 顾炎武的‘天下观’及其现代性转化 [Gu Yanwu's view of the world and its transformation of modernity]. *Journal of Chaohu University* 22, No. 1 (2020): 17-24.

²⁶ Xu, Guoqi. *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

²⁷ William C. K. Traditions of Centrality, Authority, and Management in Modern China's Foreign Relations, in Thomas W. Robinson and David L. Shambaugh. eds. *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 17.

²⁸ Li Yumin 李育民. *Zhong Guo Fei Yue Shi 中国废约史* [The History of Treaty Abolition in China]. Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 2005.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Li Yumin 李育民. Dui Wai Chuan Tong Guan Nian Dui Wan Qing Wai Jiao De Ying Xiang 传统对外观念对晚清外交的影响 [The influence of traditional foreign ideas on late Qing Diplomacy]. *Chinese Cultural Studies*, No. 1 (2020): 166-180.

³¹ “信守外交”. Li Yumin 李育民. Dui Wai Chuan Tong Guan Nian Dui Wan Qing Wai Jiao De Ying Xiang 传统对外观念对晚清外交的影响 [The influence of traditional foreign ideas on late Qing Diplomacy]. *Chinese Cultural Studies*, No. 1 (2020): 166-180.

³² “李鸿章 曾国藩 丁日昌”. Li, Yumin. 李育民. Lun qing zheng fu de xin shou tiao yue fang sheng ji qi bian hua 论清政府的信守条约方针及其变化 [On the policy of honoring treaties of Qing Government and its changes]. *Jin Dai Shi Yan Jiu*, No. 2 (2004): 45-90.

solely highlights the Qing government's behaviour per se.³³ After suffering a series of rebellions (Taiping and Nien rebellion) and the Second Opium War from 1856 to 1860, the Qing government made efforts with a Self-Strengthening Campaign aimed at encouraging Western methods and technology and reforming the Qing state's military, diplomatic, fiscal, and educational policies.³⁴ Yu and Xia claim that the Qing government's diplomatic thought started to become much more rational at this stage compared to their previous diplomatic policy of blind exclusion.³⁵ Other Chinese scholars endorsed this idea. They defined China's foreign policy as the thought of He Rong [cementing relations with western countries] and Zi Qiang [self-strengthening].³⁶ These two terms derive from the Qing government's Self-strengthening Campaign. Current literature seems to simplistically describe the Qing government's foreign policy and neglect the transformation of their diplomatic idea and the reason behind it. Therefore, the transformation of diplomatic ideas from an isolationist worldview to the diplomatic principle of good faith and its reason seems deserving of discussion.

The emergence of modern sovereignty and national state consciousness enabled the Qing state and, following the Chinese government [Republic of China], to gradually join in foreign affairs and abandon traditional diplomatic thinking. Recent literature ascribes this transformation to the Qing state's failure in the first Sino-Japanese war. During the first Sino-Japanese war, the Qing suffered a crushing defeat, but it also changed the European perception of the East, in that the Qing state was much weaker than they had previously thought.³⁷ This failure dramatically stimulated the need to raise the national self-respect of the Chinese at that time. The failure of the first Sino-Japanese war in 1895 was widely recognised as the fuse of the Hundred Days' Reform in 1898. Li claimed that the failure of the first Sino-Japanese war forced the Qing's officials and their Confucian scholars to lose their cultural superiority towards China's neighbours completely.³⁸ Some scholars even believed that the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 convinced many Chinese that only by becoming a nation-state could China successfully catch up with the tide of world development.³⁹ After the nationalistic debate between 1905 and 1907, the connotation of the nation of China gradually converged and became the regular discourse basis of different factions, and the Chinese nation thus became the primary expression of constructing China.⁴⁰ The

³³ “郭嵩焘 曾纪泽”. Li, Yumin. 李育民. Lun qing zheng fu de xin shou tiao yue fang sheng ji qi bian hua 论清政府的信守条约方针及其变化 [On the policy of honoring treaties of Qing Government and its changes]. *Jin Dai Shi Yan Jiu*, No. 2 (2004): 45-90.

³⁴ Smith, R. J. Foreign-Training and China's Self-Strengthening: The Case of Feng-huang-shan, 1864-1873. *Modern Asian Studies* [Online] 10(2), (1976). 195-223.

³⁵ Yu, L & Xia, Y. yang wu yun dong zhong li hong zhang dui wai zhu zhang zhi de shi yan jiu 洋务运动中李鸿章对外主张之得失研究 [Study on the gain and loss of Li Hongzhang's foreign propositions in the Westernization Movement]. *Liaoning Shi da Xue Bao. Liaoning Shida Xuebao. She Hui Ke Xue Ban* 34, No. 6 (2011): 134-137.

³⁶ “和戎，自强”. Wu Tong. Li hong zhang wai jiao si xiang tan xi 李鸿章外交思想探析 Analysis of Li Hongzhang's diplomatic thought. *Time Report*, no. 16 (2017, 96).

³⁷ Paine, S. C. M. *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

³⁸ Li Yumin 李育民. *Zhong Guo Fei Yue Shi 中国废约史* [The History of Treaty Abolition in China]. Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 2005.

³⁹ Ma, Y. jia wu zhan zheng yu min zu guo jia gou jian 甲午战争与民族国家构建 [The Sino-Japanese War and nation-state Construction]. *National Human History*, No. 14 (2014): 78-82.

⁴⁰ Li, J. From 'Yi Xia' to 'Zhonghua': cong yi xia 'dao' zhong hua'; 'zhong hua min zu' guan nian xing cheng shi qi de si xiang zhuan hua 从‘夷夏’到‘中华’: ‘中华民族’观念形成时期的思想转化 [From 'Yi Xia' to

emergence of a different notion of the Chinese nation gave rise to the collapse of the Qing dynasty in the Revolution of 1911. Michael explains that the Chinese intelligentsia deemed their primary task to be that of redefining China's role in the modern world by reinventing its ideological, political, social, and economic structures to suit this role.⁴¹ This ideological transformation in the Chinese intelligentsia gave legitimacy to the new regime of the Republic of China while divesting the Qing government of its legitimacy, just as China as a national state appeared on the international stage.⁴² Xu suggests that the revolution of 1911 was perceived as the signal that the Chinese had completely abandoned the traditional worldview.⁴³ However, this viewpoint seems to overlook the concrete process from the gradual awakening of the Chinese national consciousness to the complete abandonment of the traditional worldview. Many still claimed that the Qing government proactively sought to revise the unequal treaties and gradually abolish the European power's privilege after the First Sino-Japanese war in 1895.⁴⁴ During this period, Chinese people also launched a series of campaigns to safeguard China's sovereignty, such as the Boxer rebellion in 1900 and the Bao Lu Yun Dong [Railway Protection Movement] in 1911, wherein the Railway Protection Movement was one of the crucial factors that led to the Qing government's collapse.⁴⁵ Existing literature seldom explores Chinese intellectuals' and people's transmutation of thought from 1895 to 1911. Therefore, the ideological evolution of Chinese intellectuals and people during 1895-1911, which influenced the foreign policy of the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, is worth studying.

4. Recent discussion

A wide range of literature has discussed the changes in China's foreign relations (1840 to 1914). Wherein, the most cross-sectional points are three theories. Fairbank broaches the model of "impact-response", that modern Chinese history is better perceived as a series of responses to Western impact, claiming that modern China's modernisation could not have been internally engendered per se and needed to be influenced by the outside shock from the West.⁴⁶ Fairbank also argues the reason why ancient China kept an unchanged status was that the Western world was the cradle and inventor of the world-shaking technological and other advances since the first industrial revolution started in the 1760s, so it was able to modernise from its civilisation while China could only achieve modernisation with the help of external forces.⁴⁷ According to Fairbank's description, he thought that ancient China's cultural factors were one of the primary factors that hindered China's modernisation. Furthermore, the Fairbank's viewpoint overly attached

'Zhonghua': The Ideological transformation during the Formation of the Concept of 'Chinese nation]". Xi Nan Min zu Da Xue Xue Bao. *Ren Wen She Ke Ban* 39, No. 1 (2018): 22-27.

⁴¹ Michael, G. *Chinese Intellectuals and the Revolution of 1911: The Birth of Modern Chinese Radicalism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 248.

⁴² Levenson, J. R. *Confucian China and its modern fate: A trilogy*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. (1958).

⁴³ Xu, Guoqi. *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁴⁴ Li Yumin 李育民. *Zhong Guo Fei Yue Shi 中国废约史 [The History of Treaty Abolition in China]*. Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 2005.

⁴⁵ “保路运动”. Charles H. Hedtke. *The Szechwanese Railroad Protection Movement: Themes of Change and Conflict*. 近代史研究所集刊, no. 6 (1977).

⁴⁶ Teng, Ssü-yü, and John King Fairbank. *Research Guide for China's Response to the West: a Documentary Survey 1839-1923*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

importance on the western impact on ancient China's change. The theory of the impact-response claims that emerging European countries challenged China's established order in any area, including political and economic and ideological processes; thus, China's progress in these areas was driven by the invasion of the more robust foreign countries.⁴⁸ Put differently, Fairbank attributes ancient China's changes to western influence, one-sidedly stereotyping Chinese culture as the hurdle of China's modernisation process.

However, Fairbank's viewpoint is challenged by some scholars. Hevia tries to situate Fairbank's points in the context of the times. The international relations based on international law that exist today are a product of Europe's global expansion since the 16th century, and naturalized hegemonic discourse was forged during this process.⁴⁹ Hevia explains this naturalized hegemonic discourse as the accepted common sense driven by emerging European countries that nations should interact with each other, and these countries have the right to decide whether to associate with other countries or not since the signing of the Westphalia Treaty in 1648.⁵⁰ The establishment of the modern diplomatic office stretches back to the Westphalia Treaty in 1648. This treaty set a precedent of diplomatic peace and a nascent system of political order in Europe based on the notion of coexisting independent states.⁵¹ After the signing of the Westphalia treaty, the system of permanent diplomatic representative offices began to be established in Europe, and diplomatic envoys were generally established to carry out foreign affairs.⁵² Based on the historical background, Hevia claims that Fairbank's model of impact-response seems to entail the preconceived notion that the western world was advanced while Qing China was backward.⁵³ Unlike Fairbank's viewpoint, Hevia's seeks to construe the factor informing the transformation of diplomatic ideas in the late Qing dynasty as the collision of entirely different systems of thought. He further explains that this collision was made between the Britain government's foreign idea of sovereign equality and the Qing government's world view of hierarchical inclusion.⁵⁴ Hevia proposes two perspectives to interpret Qing governments' world view of hierarchical inclusion; on the one hand, he highlights the multitude of lords in the Qing government who might have influenced the existence of the imagining of the Qing empire in the Qing rulers' perception rather than the tributary system, on the other hand, he took a stab at understanding the transformation of diplomatic factors from the Qing government's foreign etiquette [Bing Li], that is, the shift of the Qing government's foreign etiquette [Bing Li] not only reflected principles and ways of dealing with foreign relations of the Qing Court but also embodied a corollary of the Qing China's worldview.⁵⁵ He used the visit of George Macartney Diplomatic Corps to the Qing state as the typical example that the Qing China's court and the English envoys collided over the traditional way of paying tribute to the three kneels and nine knocks when having an audience with the Qian

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Hevia, James Louis. *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*. Durham, N.C.; Duke University Press, 1995.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Patton, S. The Peace of Westphalia and its Effects on International Relations, Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, *The Histories*: Vol. 10: Is. 1, Article 5 (2019).

⁵² Anne, K. & Edmund, W. Westphalia, Treaty of (1648). *A Dictionary of World History*. Oxford University Press, (2015).

⁵³ Hevia, James Louis. *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*. Durham, N.C.; Duke University Press, 1995.

⁵⁴ “宾礼” Ibid.

⁵⁵ Hevia, James Louis. *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*. Durham, N.C.; Duke University Press, 1995.

Long emperor in 1793.⁵⁶ Therefore, Hevia thinks that Qing China's foreign etiquette [Bing Li] could be a microcosmic perspective regarding the diplomatic factors' transformation in the late Qing dynasty.

Actually, Hevia's viewpoints seem to have their limitations. Initially, Hevia neglects the importance of the tributary system in the late Qing dynasty. Existing literature suggests that ancient China utilised the Confucianism of hierarchical order to run its tributary system. Specifically, ancient China established the Hua-Yi order in East Asia. In ancient China's writings, the Hua-Yi hierarchy was established, with ancient China being referred to as Hua, which means ancient China, and the vassal nations being referred to as Yi, which signified marginal foreign states administered by Central ancient China.⁵⁷ Ancient China centred around itself and built the tributary system to maintain this Hua-Yi order. One of the contributing factors that led to the emergence of this system was its distinctive geographical factors. East Asia has become a relatively independent and closed region because of its unique geographical environment.⁵⁸ Chinese historians described this partial international system as the tributary system [Chao Gong Ti Xi], this tributary system was generally counted as starting in the third century BC until the end of the 19th century, based on the "tributary relationship" formed in ancient East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia.⁵⁹ Fairbank also describes this view of the world system as the Chinese world order.⁶⁰ Moreover, this Chinese world order was interpreted as a particular form of ethnocentrism, as centripetal hegemony.⁶¹ This tributary system was a hierarchical network political order system with the Central Plains Empire as the primary core, which initially connected the nations of East and Southeast Asia.⁶² Fairbank claims that the tributary system created the sense of superiority in central kingdom from a cultural perspective, and this superiority, rooted in its Confucianism, led to the emergence of Sino-centrism, and could explain why Qing officials had an arrogant and stubborn attitude when solving foreign relations.⁶³ Nevertheless, Hevia articulates that the Qing conception of the empire was based on the idea that the Qing's world was made up of lords over whom Manchu emperors strove to place themselves as overlords.⁶⁴ His viewpoint does not seem to recognise that the tributary system also existed for more than one thousand years, trying to explain Qing rulers' worldview from its Manchu tribal customs. Ancient China's dominant position in this regional international system also hinged upon China's massive influence on Confucian culture. Through the tributary system, Chinese Confucian culture gradually spread to China's neighbours and neighbouring countries; these neighbouring countries thus have established official apparatus and dress style as well as a cultural custom which were analogous to those of

⁵⁶ Hevia, James Louis. *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*. Durham, N.C.; Duke University Press, 1995.

⁵⁷ Han, D. Y. (2020) The Rise and Fall of the Hua-Yi System in East Asia. *Journal of Chinese Humanities* (Leiden). [Online] 2019 (2), 200–214.

⁵⁸ Cui, S. P. Supranational and Vassal Systems: The functioning and characteristics of the International Order in Ancient East Asia. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 37(2), (2017). 35-42.

⁵⁹ “朝贡体系”. Jian, J. X. Qian tan chao gong ti xi 浅谈朝贡体系 [On tribute system]. (24), 41-42. (2016).

⁶⁰ Fairbank, J. K. *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

⁶¹ Andornino, G. *The Nature and Linkages of China's Tributary System Under the Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Department of Economic History, London School of Economics and Political Science, (2006).

⁶² Eszterhai, V. Searching for an Alternative Global Order: The Qing Tributary System and the Mechanism of Guanxi. *Fudan Journal of The Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online] 11(4), (2017). 499-513.

⁶³ Fairbank, John King. *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

⁶⁴ Hevia, James Louis. *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*. Durham, N.C.; Duke University Press, 1995.

Ancient China such as Korea, Japan and Vietnam.⁶⁵ Therefore, Hevia's point appears not to realise that this tributary system was embedded in ancient China's Confucianism and was not a Qing dynastical product.

Furthermore, Hevia's microcosmic perspective of the Qing government's foreign etiquette [Bing Li] might plausibly have used a fragmented detail to regard the change of the whole of the Qing's diplomatic factors in the late Qing dynasty. Although Hevia ex post facto researches Bing Li [Qing China's foreign etiquette] from George Macartney Diplomatic Corps' visit to China in 1793, he attaches too much importance to the collision of Qing China and European countries' customs and etiquette and extends the Qing government's foreign etiquette to a whole worldview concept of Qing China. Hevia's points about Qing China's diplomatic factors may have lapses of orientation. Existing literature proves that Qing China had five etiquettes with the importance of the foreign etiquettes [Bing Li] ranked the fourth among these five etiquettes.⁶⁶ Qing government documents explains of the foreign etiquette that "whether it was a vassal state of the Qing dynasty or a state dealing with ancient China, they were all guests of the Qing dynasty whenever they came to the Qing Dynasty. As the host of the reception, the Qing government did everything it could, which was called foreign etiquette [Bing Li]."⁶⁷ Ancient China and Qing China seemed to utilise a series of Confucian etiquettes to reinforce its divine right of emperors and increase its legitimacy.⁶⁸ It can be seen that the ancient China subordinated foreign etiquette [Bing Li] to their feudal etiquette, even the Qing government's diplomatic organs also playing only a minor role in its domestic official apparatus. Current literature suggests that the Ministry of Rites in feudal China [Li Bu] and the Board of vassal states' affairs [Li Fan Yuan] were the primary governmental apparatus that was responsible for solving foreign issues.⁶⁹ The Ministry of Rites in feudal China [Li Bu] was responsible for internal affairs such as external etiquette, tribute and imperial school examinations, and played a role in foreign receptions.⁷⁰ The board of vassal states' affairs [Li Fan Yuan], which was built in 1639, became the organ in charge of the affairs of ethnic minorities in and out of Mongolia, Qinghai, Tibet, Xinjiang, Korea, Ryukyu and southwest China, and also handled part of the foreign trade and foreign affairs.⁷¹ Both in the importance ranking of Qing

⁶⁵ Jian, J. B. zhong hua chao gong ti xi: guan nian jie gou yu gong neng 中华朝贡体系: 观念结构与功能 [Chinese Tributary System: Conceptual Structure and Function]. *International Political Studies*, (1), 132-143. (2009).

⁶⁶ “吉、嘉、军、宾、凶”. Wang Xiuling 王秀玲. qing dai guo jia ji si ji qi zheng zhi yu yi 清代国家祭祀及其政治寓意 [State sacrifice in qing Dynasty and its political implication]. *Frontiers*, No. 6 (2016): 103-107.

⁶⁷ “无论属国、与国，要之，来者皆宾也。我为主人，凡所以将事，皆宾礼也”。Zhao, E. X. 赵尔巽. Qing Shi Gao, Juan Jiu Shi Yi 清史稿 卷九十一 [Manuscript of the Qing Dynasty: The 91th Chronicle]. China: Historical Museum of the Republic of China. 1914.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Wang Xiuling 王秀玲. Qing dai guo jia ji si ji qi zheng zhi yu yi 清代国家祭祀及其政治寓意 [State sacrifice in qing Dynasty and its political implication]. *Frontiers*, No. 6 (2016): 103-107.

⁶⁹ “理藩院，礼部”. Zhang, J. 张季. cong zong li ya men dao wai wu bu ——Qing ji bu yuan yong ren ti zhi gai ge chu tan 从总理衙门到外务部——清季部院用人体制改革初探 [From the Prime Minister's Yamen to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: A preliminary study on the Reform of the Staffing system in the Qing Dynasty]. *Li Shi Dang An*, No. 2 (2014): 91-96.

⁷⁰ Zhou, X 周翔. cong Qing chao wai jiao ji gou de bian hua tan zhong guo wai jiao jin dai hua 从清朝外交机构的变化谈中国外交近代化 [On the modernization of Chinese diplomacy from the Change of Diplomatic Institutions in Qing Dynasty]. *Frontiers*, No. 1 (2014): 215-216.

⁷¹ Zhao, Y. T. 赵云田. Qing chao de li fan yuan 清朝的理藩院 [The Board of Vassal states in Qing Dynasty]. *Beijing Observation*, No. 5 (2013): 72-75.

China's national etiquette and the importance of diplomatic organs in its official apparatus, Hevia adopts the microcosmic perspective to observe Qing China's worldview from its foreign etiquette [Bing Li] and extends this lens to observe the transformation of diplomatic factors during the whole of Qing China, seeming to disregard a holistic picture and the cultural background in examining this shift and seeming to be unaware of the importance of Qing China's home politics and Confucian tradition.

In a similar vein, Levenson advances the notion of the tradition-modernity model that only western countries can achieve modernity while China merely followed western countries' route from the traditional world to the modern world, that China had to fall into the dynastic cycle in China's history before western countries' invasion.⁷² Levenson placed Chinese tradition and Western modernity in binary opposition, one-sidedly emphasising the influence of European countries' modernisation on Qing China. Compared to Fairbank's viewpoint about the transformation of diplomatic idea impacting on the modern Chinese history (1840 to 1914), Levenson argues that the Qing government's Self-strengthening Campaign and the establishment and evolution of the Qing's diplomatic organs would be doomed, because western science and modernisation were incompatible with ancient China's political system.⁷³ Compared to Fairbank's emphasis on China's cultural factors, Levenson regards Confucianism as the ideological basis of ancient China's imperial system and one-sidedly regards the European developmental route as the only way to modernise ancient China. Actually, after the First Opium War, advanced European weapons and unequal treaties led Qing Confucian intellectuals to consider why China had been left far 'behind' the European powers. Many advanced Confucian intellectuals opened their eyes to observe the world.⁷⁴ Compared to two previous scholars' points, Peck raises the theory of imperialism conceiving imperialism as the leading cause of the changes in modern Chinese history and attributing the main reason for China's backwardness in modern times to the West.⁷⁵ Peck's point neglects how so-called imperialism impacted the transformation of diplomatic idea factors, and how imperialism brought change to the Qing government and their diplomatic institutions. These three main theories once dominated the primary interpretation of modern China studies.

However, these three theoretical perspectives seem to be typically Eurocentrist. Rinke defines eurocentrism as the paradigm of viewing the whole world in the context of a European perspective (and also America and later Japan), subconsciously bearing the European sense of superiority toward the rest of the world.⁷⁶ Eurocentrists claim that European civilization has always represented the most progressive civilization globally, while those countries outside Europe can only learn from Europe and develop along its path.⁷⁷ Eurocentrism appeared in the mid- to late eighteenth century and developed in the nineteenth century after the first industrial revolution when emerging European countries were forging a capitalist world system and putting themselves at the centre of this world system.⁷⁸ Thus, Eurocentrist thinking sought to explain the

⁷² Levenson, J. R. *Confucian China and its modern fate: a trilogy*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. (1958).

⁷³ Levenson, Joseph Richmond. *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate a Trilogy*. 1st combined ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

⁷⁴ Zhao, N. 赵宁. Qian xi jin dai kai yan kan shi jie de bi ran xing 浅析近代开眼看世界的必然性 [On the necessity of seeing the world in modern times]. *Education*, No. 1 (2016): 133-133.

⁷⁵ Peck, J. The roots of rhetoric: the professional ideology of America's China watchers. *Bull. of Concerned Asian Scholars* (October). (1969).

⁷⁶ Rinke, S. Eurocentrism. *Encyclopaedia of Early Modern History Online*. Leiden, Koninklijke Brill NV, (2015).

⁷⁷ Wijesinghe, Sarah N. R., Paolo Mura, and Harold John Culala. Eurocentrism, Capitalism and Tourism Knowledge. *Tourism Management* (1982) 70 (2019): 178-187.

⁷⁸ Mazower, M. The End of Eurocentrism. *Critical Inquiry*, 40, no. 4 (2014): 298-313.

outside European world by basing their case studies on the supposed superiority of its religion, race, and culture.⁷⁹ From this perspective, it is clear that Fairbank's model of impact-response and Levinson's traditional-modernity approach are also influenced by Eurocentrism as they attribute China's reform and modernisation to exogenous shocks from European countries and the US. These two models follow Eurocentrist thinking and regard ancient China as a stubborn and stationary political entity. These theories do not probe into the change of Qing officials' diplomatic philosophy and its reasons but consider that the motivating force of modern China's reform came from the West. Although Peck's imperialism model recognises the negative influence that imperialism brought to China, he also implies that China was unable to effect any fundamental change on its own. His thought also neglects the transformation of Chinese diplomatic ideas and institutional reform.

It can be seen that many contemporary international historians continue to espouse eurocentrist views. Hevia's book puts Britain at its core of the thesis, seeking to put modern China's historical events in the context that global power relations were in flux where the deleveraging triggered by technological and industrial development ushered in a new era of European and American imperial expansion.⁸⁰ He primarily puts forward the idea that European countries provided a process of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation to Qing China. That is, Britain government forced the Qing government to trade in Opium and easily destroyed the Qing government's defence system, then brought Qing China into the global communicational circle and instilled the idea of European sovereignty in the Qing regime.⁸¹ He suggests that European countries influenced the Qing government to reform itself in accordance with the European and American nation-state model. During this process, the foreign treaties and missionary organizations, commercial enterprises, and diplomatic groups are reputed to have progressively transformed the Qing government's political system.⁸² Hence the aim of the British government diplomatic treaties was to educate the Qing court in proper diplomatic methods, these British lessons even stimulated the self-strengthening campaign.⁸³ Hevia's viewpoint even claims that the British influence spurred the shift of diplomatic factors in the late Qing dynasty. The British 'pedagogy' enabled Qing Confucian officials to think about the weapons gap between the Qing government and European countries and officials, like Li Hongzhang and Zeng Guofan, gradually started to learn from the European countries.⁸⁴ On the one hand, they studied the intricacies of international law and diplomacy at the provincial officials' level while the central government also allocated resources for advanced weapons from Europe.⁸⁵ Compared to previous European scholars, Hevia seems to notice the link between the transformation of diplomatic factors and the Self-strengthening Campaign in the late dynasty and concretely analyses Qing Dynasty officials' change of diplomatic ideas. Nevertheless, Hevia's points appear to only summarise this shift as anchored in the short period of the two opium wars, mostly ignoring how this shift influenced the Qing government's foreign practice and institutional changes. Above all, the whole book stands on the British government's position and speaks for European countries' expansion, highlighting that British pedagogy brought order and maintained justice in Qing China.

⁷⁹ Kayaoglu, T. Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory. *International Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (2010): 193-217.

⁸⁰ Hevia, James Louis. *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Hevia, James Louis. *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ “李鸿章 曾国藩”. Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

It is observed that this book ignores Qing China's subjectivity and unilaterally underlines the British government's political clout in connection with Qing China's modernisation campaign. Hevia's book is still stuck in the narrative of Eurocentrism.

This Eurocentrist thinking is also embodied in contemporary international historians' translations and wordings of China's diplomatic history in modern times. International historians use colonial thinking to understand China's diplomatic history from their own perspective. Initially, this cognitive bias is apparent in translations of the Qing government's diplomatic institutions. Li Fan Yuan [the board of vassal states' affairs] was translated into 'the court of colonial affairs'.⁸⁶ It can be observed that Fairbank regards the Qing state's suzerain-vassal relationship as a type of colonial relationship. This translation actually misreads the China's tributary system from an Eurocentrist angle neglecting ancient China's cultural background. And Fairbank seeks to explain the tributary system as China's hegemonic system saying that this system was based on retaining Chinese dominance in the region while their tributaries accepted the relationships for trade considerations.⁸⁷ However, his analysis solely highlights the commercial relations and lacks the Confucian cultural background. The tributary system was founded on the prevailing morality in Chinese society, which was to maintain peace and order, interacting based on the preservation of stability and peace in East Asia.⁸⁸ Another translated misconception influenced by Eurocentrism regards the Yi. Liu's book recalls the dispute between Qing officials and British envoys on the translation of Yi, because in the British's eyes, 'the Yi' was translated as 'the barbarians'.⁸⁹ Thus, in the 1858 Sino-British Treaty of Tianjin, the British coerced the Qing Dynasty to permanently ban the Chinese character Yi from any official documents.⁹⁰ Actually, translating 'the Yi' as 'the barbarians' misinterprets China's cultural background. This translation wrongly enabled China's Confucian order to appear tantamount to the western world system.⁹¹ Although Liu's book realises that Yi was wrongly translated into barbarians from the racial perspective, Liu does not extrapolate on the change of diplomatic factors in the late Qing dynasty based on these translated distinctions but concentrates solely on how the collision of imperial will and competing interests led to the emergence of eastern and western conceptions.⁹²

Under the influence of Eurocentrism, racial historical thinking has affected the European's perception of the late Qing dynasty. One of the most striking examples is the idea of the 'yellow peril'. Lovell researches the transformation of diplomatic factors in late Qing dynasty through disproving the yellow peril. In the 19th century, because Asia and African countries failed to resist European countries' invasion when confronting advanced science and technology,

⁸⁶ Fairbank, J. K, and S. Y. Teng. On The Ch'ing Tributary System. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 6, no. 2 (1941): 135-246.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Jeyakumar, Uthra. Chinese Tributary System- the Way of Maintaining Order and Stability. *Academia Letters*, n.d. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL2886>

⁸⁹ “夷”. Liu, Lydia He. *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making*. Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press, 2004.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Fang Weigui 方维规. “yi” “yang” “xi” “wai” ji qi xiang guan gai nian -lun 19shi ji han yu she wai ci hui he gai nian de yan bian “夷”“洋”“西”“外”及其相关概念-论19世纪汉语涉外词汇和概念的演变 ["Yi", "Foreign", "Western", "Foreign" and their Related Concepts -- On the evolution of Chinese foreign-related Vocabulary and Concepts in the 19th Century], *Journal of Beijing Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, no. 4, 2013, pp. 60-61.

⁹² Liu, Lydia He. *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making*. Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press, 2004.

European theorists sought to find a pervasive theory to prove its supremacy.⁹³ They framed the world as a racial typology formed by immutable features with the white race apparently at the top, and the yellow people and black people at the bottom, because the popularity of opium among the Chinese became a testament to the moral inferiority and insensitivity of this alien, inexplicable race.⁹⁴ Under this background, the narrative of the yellow peril was created, and the yellow peril theorists believed that the yellow people would be a threat to the white race and would engulf western civilized society.⁹⁵ Lovell's book repudiates this point, claiming that the biggest problem with the yellow peril theory is its credibility, historically, as this "problem" was formed in isolation from China's own ideas and historical reality.⁹⁶ However, Lovell only sporadically mentions the shift of diplomatic factors from 1840 to 1914. For example, she mentions the change of Guo Songtao's diplomatic idea and his suffering in the Qing state.⁹⁷ And Yan Fu was another typical example where Lovell identifies Yan as a major representative of the first generation of Chinese who have undergone profound reflection after the opium war.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Lovell does not thoroughly investigate the process how Yan Fu and Guo Songtao's diplomatic thinking transformed. She also mentions that the failure of the Sino-Japanese war enabled the concept of the Chinese nation coming into being. In the similar vein, these narratives are devoid of the support of primary sources and only scratch the surface of the transformation of diplomatic factors from 1840 to 1914.

Furthermore, during the era of republic of China, Eurocentrist thinking even affected several Chinese scholars' viewpoints of China's transition in the late Qing era. One of the most representative interpretations was Te-Kong Tong's *The Historical Three Gorges of China's History* [Li Shi San Xia Lun].⁹⁹ *The Historical Three Gorges of China's History* vividly takes China's Three Gorges Dam in the Yangtze River to illustrate the transformation of China's social and political system in China's history.¹⁰⁰ Tong divides the changes of China's political and social institutions since the pre-Qin period (221 BC) into three major stages: feudalism, monarchy, and government by the people.¹⁰¹ According to Tong, the second great transformation, initiated after the Opium War in 1840, will take at least 200 years and, if it goes well, will be completed by the middle of the twenty-first century.¹⁰² It is evident that Tong summarises the secondary transformation as starting from the First Opium War in 1840 as the process from monarchy to the government by the people. Compared to Fairbank and Levinson, Tong notices that China's reform and historical development are dynamic; ancient China had been reforming and transforming rather than being in a state of rigid stillness. Furthermore, Tong even delves into the transformation of China's political system, highlighting that ancient China's political system might

⁹³ Cheuk, Ka-Kin. "Yellow Perils: China Narratives in the Contemporary World. Edited by Franck Billé and Sören Urbansky." *Pacific Affairs*, 93, no. 2 (2020): 415-417.

⁹⁴ Lovell, Julia. *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China*. London: Picador, 2012.

⁹⁵ Schuyler, George Samuel. *The Yellow Peril*. [First electronic edition]. Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street Press, 2004.

⁹⁶ Lovell, Julia. *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China*. London: Picador, 2012.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ '历史三峡论'. Tong, T. K. 唐德刚, *Wan Qing Qi Shi Nian 晚清七十年* [70 years of late Qing Dynasty]. Yuelu Bookstore, (1998).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Tong, T. K. 唐德刚. *Yuan Shi Dang Guo 袁氏当国* [When Yuan Shikai controls China]. Guangxi Normal University Press. (2004).

have been a complicated historical process and even suffering a series of backlashes.¹⁰³ However, Tong attributes the shift of China's political system and bureaucracy as a prompted and forced course of history by western powers after the first opium war in 1840.¹⁰⁴ Although Tong indeed explores the root reason why ancient China's experienced the reform of the diplomatic bureaucracy, it becomes clear that his theory also ascribes the impetus of the reform as the result of oppression by Western powers. He also does not connect the transformation of diplomatic idea factors with the change of the diplomatic apparatus during the modern Chinese history but solely attributes these changes to external stimuli. Therefore, Tong's theory of the historical three gorges of China's history appears to be syill located within the scope of a Eurocentric mentality.

Tsiang Tingfu is another Chinese historian susceptible to Eurocentrist thinking. As a politician and high-level diplomat in Chiang Kai-shek's government, Tsiang proposed the modernization narrative to shed light on the factors involved in the transformation of diplomatic ideas in the late Qing dynasty.¹⁰⁵ Tsiang claimed that ancient China could still exist in the dynastic repetition and autocratic monarchy, but that nevertheless, Britain and the European countries were capable of promoting its capitalist expansion before and after two industrial revolutions, and Qing China thus was drawn in the international system driven by European countries.¹⁰⁶ It was worth noting that ancient China should proactively blend in the trend of internationalisation and guide its citizens to embrace global integration as quickly as possible, then ancient China could achieve its industrialisation. It could be observed that Tsiang's viewpoint was deeply influenced by modernisation theory. This theory argued that western imperialism offered modernization to China, and that China's Confucian culture and political system prevented its answer to the world.¹⁰⁷ Like the Fairbank, Tsiang claimed that ancient China's patriarchal clan idea and family values influenced whether Qing China could get out of the backward mediaeval state and a become modern national state to some extent.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, Tsiang sought to illuminate the transformation of diplomatic factors from the domestic perspective of Qing China. He argued that the Qing government wasted 20 years in vain after the failure of the First Opium War in 1840, until the Second Opium War, when Qing China's intellectuals and officials' diplomatic idea factors altered.¹⁰⁹ However, since the First Opium War in 1840, Qing officials' and intellectuals' foreign idea factors seemed to have altered. For example, Wei Yuan proposed the view of beating foreigners by learning from their advantages in 1852.¹¹⁰ Tsiang one-sidedly thought that as long as

¹⁰³ Tong, T. K. 唐德刚, *Wan Qing Qi Shi Nian 晚清七十年* [70 years of late Qing Dynasty]. Yuelu Bookstore, (1998).

¹⁰⁴ Tong, T. K. 唐德刚. *Yuan Shi Dang Guo 袁氏当国* [When Yuan Shikai controls China]. Guangxi Normal University Press. (2004).

¹⁰⁵ Tsiang Tingfu 蒋廷黻. *Zhong Guo Jin Dai Shi Da Gang 中国近代史* [The Outline of Modern Chinese History]. Taiwan Qiming Book Company, 1949.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Teng, Ssü-yü, and John King Fairbank. *Research Guide for China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey 1839-1923*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954.

¹⁰⁸ Tsiang Tingfu 蒋廷黻. *Jin dai zhong guo wai jiao shi zi liao ji yao 近代中国外交史资料辑要* [A summary of modern Chinese diplomatic history] Tai bei; Shang wu yin shu guan Taipei 台北: 商务印书馆 The Commercial Press, 1958.

¹⁰⁹ Tsiang Tingfu 蒋廷黻. *Jin dai zhong guo wai jiao shi zi liao ji yao 近代中国外交史资料辑要* [A summary of modern Chinese diplomatic history] Tai bei; Shang wu yin shu guan Taipei 台北: 商务印书馆 The Commercial Press, 1958.

¹¹⁰ “师夷长技以制夷”. Wei, Yuan 魏源 (1852): *Hai Guo Tu Zhi 海国图志* [Atlas of the Sea and the Kingdom], vol. 19. Chen Hua et al. Annotation, Yuelu Publishing house, 1998.

Qing China was incorporated into the international system, China could synchronously follow the western countries' developmental pace.¹¹¹ From his viewpoint, it can be found that Tsiang's view seemed to continue the world system theory and seek to put Qing China in the world system, attributing Qing China's internal change to the idea that it was being driven by the world system. A conception of the capitalist world system was proposed by Wallerstein. In it he suggests that this has a massive structure with many political centres and a complicated division of labour along an axis between the core, semi-periphery, and periphery, as well as commercial interchange (to benefit the core at the expense of periphery).¹¹² According to his theory, the clash between China and European countries eventually resulted in China's forced inclusion as a periphery nation in the capitalist world economy, and China's tributary system was bankrupted as the Qing state was integrated into the global economy during this process.¹¹³ Obviously, Tsiang's viewpoint was seemingly inherited from Wallerstein's theory of world system, blindly regarding the participation in the western world system as the impetus which influenced China's internal change, pinning China's industrialisation onto the capitalist world system's gift, even if he more or less mentioned China's domestic situation and development. Therefore, Tsiang did not elucidate the change of diplomatic ideas in the late Qing dynasty from a macro standpoint.

After the 1970s, Eurocentric thinking was called into question, while the China-centred approach sparked discussion. Cohen approached this China-centred approach in 1984, and this approach openly articulated that researching ancient China's history and its reform should not have interpreted China from Eurocentrism thinking because the model of impact-response, the notion of the tradition-modernity and imperialism model may have a pervasive and robust ethnocentric bias towards modern China history and its institutional reform.¹¹⁴ As the alternative research method, Cohen was inclined to adopt the China-centric approach, in which historians understand Chinese history on their terms, paying close attention to the trajectory of Chinese history and how Chinese people view their problems per se.¹¹⁵ Cohen and Swisher describe the encounter between ancient China and western powers as an interactive process, arguing that ancient China's development and political reform and European countries' external impact mutually influenced each other in contrast with to Fairbank's impact-response model.¹¹⁶ This China-centred approach and reflections on Eurocentrism actually were echoed by other contemporary scholars. Saïd proposed that the Orient might be not real, but created by Western imagination and writing. Given the impact of *Orientalism*, many European sinologists began to reflect on Eurocentrism and emphasise the importance of internal factors in non-western countries.¹¹⁷ Kuhn sought to discuss the formation and development of local armed activities under the influence of the First Opium War in 1840, starting with analysing the internal structure and

¹¹¹ Tsiang Tingfu 蔣廷黻. *Jin dai zhong guo wai jiao shi zi liao ji yao* 近代中国外交史资料辑要 [A summary of modern Chinese diplomatic history] Tai bei; Shang wu yin shu guan Taipei 台北: 商务印书馆 The Commercial Press, 1958.

¹¹² Wallerstein, I. M. *The Modern World System*. New York; Academic Press, (1974).

¹¹³ Wallerstein, I. M. *Historical Capitalism: with Capitalist Civilization. Eleventh impression*. London: Verso, (2003).

¹¹⁴ Cohen, P. A. *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*. New York: Columbia University Press, (1984).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Cohen, P. A. and Swisher, E. *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism, 1860-1870. The American Historical Review*. The Macmillan Company, (1964).

¹¹⁷ Saïd, E. W. (Edward William), and Eric Mottram. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, (1979).

system of Chinese society.¹¹⁸ Based on the China-centred approach, he also argued that the start of modern Chinese history began with the Taiping rebellion (1851-1864), which led to more than 20 million deaths in Qing China, rather than the First Opium War in 1840. Indeed, a series of China-centred approaches heed China's in-house factors during modern Chinese history and the interactive relations between ancient China and the western world. However, Cohen does not profoundly probe into ancient China's interaction with diplomatic ideas from China's internal perspective when encountering the Europeans. Kuhn also does not research the evolution and change of ancient China's diplomatic institutions, even if he notices changes in Qing institutions and structures from China's perspective since the First Opium War in 1840. It is worth mentioning that the large issue of Sino-centred approach might have been to instrumentalise the western countries. The most representative view might be Hevia's. Hevia suggests that a Sino-centred approach tends to situate the mutual relations between Qing China and European countries as the background even if a Sino-centred approach highlights China's view.¹¹⁹ In Cohen's discourse, the European world was conceived as an ever-objectified tool to analyse modern Chinese history.¹²⁰ The Sino-centred approach does not seem to delve into European countries' features and development.

From China's home perspective, the nascent People's Republic of China's government adopted a kind of revolutionary narrative to interpret the shift of diplomatic idea factors in the late Qing dynasty since 1949. China's mainstream narrative about the shift of diplomatic idea factors in the late Qing dynasty was occupied by Marxism which highlights western countries' oppression of and exploitation of ancient China. Marxist ideas suggest that foreign invasion entrenched existing feudalism and destroyed China's indigenous handicraft industry.¹²¹ For example, The European countries took advantage of the provisions of the Treaty of Shimonoseki on Japan's opening of factories in China and began to invest and build factories and banks in China on a large scale.¹²² Foreign factories had a large production scale and output and low cost, and their products were in a dominant position in the Chinese market, and a large number of farmers, small and medium-sized business people, transport and handicraft workers went bankrupt and lost their jobs.¹²³ This seriously affected the development of China's national capitalism. China has upheld historical materialism as a Marxist-Leninist country when explaining the Qing China's suffering in its historical textbooks. Historical materialism is a doctrine of determinism, which explains all historical events according to the material and economic living conditions in a particular historical period.¹²⁴ Therefore, China's official historical narratives emphasize the "fight against imperialism and feudalism" and the transition to socialism as the only answer to China's issues in the modern age, assuming foreign capitalist powers, Manchu emperors, and later Chinese

¹¹⁸ Kuhn, Philip A. *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, (1980).

¹¹⁹ Hevia, James Louis. *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Marx, K. & Engels, F. *The communist manifesto*. Auckland, New Zealand: The Floating Press. 1888.

¹²² Kerr, A. & Wright, E. (2015) Shimonoseki, Treaty of (17 April 1895). *A Dictionary of World History*.

¹²³ Cai, W. Z. lun ma guan tiao yue 、 xin chou tiao yue dui hai guan zhi du de ying xiang 论马关条约和辛丑条约对海关制度的影响 [on the influence of Shimonoseki treaty and Xinchou Treaty on customs system]. *International Business: Journal of the University of International Business and Economics*. (3), 1989. 45-49.

¹²⁴ Rupert, M. & Hazelle, A. (2016) *Historical materialism and globalization*. London, [England]; Routledge.

warlords as the key hurdles to China's growth.¹²⁵ Mao also utilized the image of the “three great mountains” to describe these three obstacles in modern Chinese history.¹²⁶ With the modernization in modern Chinese history, the late Qing state took a stab at promoting the process of China's modernization. After suffering a series of rebellions (Taiping and Nien rebellion) and the Second Opium War from 1856 to 1860, the Qing government made efforts in the Self-Strengthening Campaign which aimed to bring in Western methods and technology, reforming Qing state's military, diplomatic, fiscal, and educational policies.¹²⁷ From this dimension, Chinese government's traditional revolutionary history adopted a class analysis method to evaluate historical figures and the Qing government. The Qing government was described as a Manchu, feudal, autocratic government in China's official narrative.¹²⁸ The ministers of the Qing dynasty were described as feudal officials or landlord class.¹²⁹ China's scholars adopted a thinking mode of binary oppositions to look at the change of diplomatic factors in the Qing dynasty. On the one hand, China's scholars regarded Qing officials as tools of the feudal Qing government. Many scholars argued that the class nature of the landlord class in feudal society was to exploit the peasants to the utmost and feudal state's officials were the political representatives of the landlord class and the tools of the feudal state to suppress and exploit the working people.¹³⁰ They even categorised the Qing government and foreign invasion in one bracket, that is, Qing government colluded with the western imperial countries and suppressed the people's uprising. For example, official narratives often used this rhetoric that Qing feudal and comprador forces colluded with foreign invaders to strangle the Taiping revolution when analysing the failed reason of Taiping rebellion.¹³¹ The Qing government and its officials were regarded as the western imperialists' dependencies in this context. Ergo, the shift of diplomatic factors in the late Qing dynasty were blurred by this rhetoric. On the other hand, the Chinese government and the dominant discourse of the historical academia always distinguished several Qing officials and Confucian intellectuals from the feudal Qing government. Although Chinese historians also claimed that Qing officials belonged to the realm of landlord which suppressed the peasant class, they differentially treated these officials, who resisted foreign invasion and promoted the self-strengthening campaign, as

¹²⁵ Li, H. (2010) from revolution to modernization: the paradigmatic transition in Chinese historiography in the reform era. *History and Theory*. [Online] 49 (3), 336-360.

¹²⁶ “三座大山”. Mao, Ze. Dong. 毛泽东 (1949). Zai Jin Sui Jie Fang Qu Gan Bu Hui Yi Shang De Jiang Hua在晋绥解放区干部会议上的讲话 [Speech at a conference of cadres in Shansi-Suiyuan liberated area], https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_35.html (1 April 1948).

¹²⁷ Smith, R. J. Foreign-Training and China's Self-Strengthening: The Case of Feng-huang-shan, 1864-1873. *Modern Asian Studies*. [Online] 10 (2), 1976. 195-223.

¹²⁸ “满清封建专制政府” Zhang Hua 张桦. chuan tong wen hua yu jing xia de wan qing xian zheng yu fu qiang zhi lu 传统文化语境下的晚清宪政与富强之路 [Constitutionalism and prosperity in the Late Qing Dynasty in the Context of Traditional Culture]. Southwest University of Political Science and Law, 2012.

¹²⁹ “封建官员 地主阶级” Su Shuangbi 苏双碧. bi guan zi shou he di zhu jie ji di kang pai de jue qi 闭关自守和地主阶级抵抗派的崛起 [Isolation and the rise of resistance of the landlord class]. Tianjin Shehui Kexue, No. 3 (1986): 57-62.

¹³⁰ Zhao Keyao 赵克尧, Liu Jingcheng 刘精诚. Lun qing guande ben zhi he zuo yong 论清官的本质与作用 [On the essence and function of honest and upright officials]. Xueshu Yuekan, No. 12 (1965): 24-30.

¹³¹ He Guichun 何桂春. shang hai zhong wai hui fang ju ji qi fan ge ming huo dong 上海中外会防局及其反革命活动 [The Defense Bureau of the Chinese and foreign Association in Shanghai and its counter-revolutionary activities]. Fujian Shi Fan da Xue Bao. *Zhe Xue she Hui Ke Xue Ban*, No. 3 (1978): 76-82.

the patriotic officials and enlightened members of the landlord class.¹³² For example, Lin Zexu was portrayed as the patriotic official and national hero who stood up to the foreign invasion in the First Opium War in 1840.¹³³ Mao even claimed that “new-born China’s democratic revolution started from Lin Zexu’s opium suppression movement in 1840.”¹³⁴ Under this revolutionary narrative, the shift in Qing official’s foreign idea factors were always overlooked and a few Qing official’s enlightened actions were viewed as the patriotic officials’ individual behaviours. For example, the Self-strengthening Campaign was presented in the governmental textbook as the movement of landlord intellectuals in the feudal ruling class to save the Qing government from the ruling.¹³⁵ Therefore, before the 1980s, Chinese government and its mainstream discourse overly used the class analysis method to research modern Chinese history and did not dig deep into the how internal factors influenced the shift of diplomatic ideas in the late Qing dynasty.

After the 1980s, traditional Chinese government’s revolutionary discourse about the modern Chinese history and the opium wars have been re-assessed by Chinese historians. Mao Haijian is representative of the famous historians who studied modern Chinese history at this time. With the end of the cultural revolution, conventional revolutionary historiography based on Marxist methodology and adopting rebellion and revolution as the topic of modern Chinese history experienced a paradigm shift in the 1980s and 1990s, with the new paradigm of modernization seemingly influencing the conventional revolutionary historiography.¹³⁶ In the past, the previous Chinese historians often labelled historical figures as patriots or traitors when evaluating historical figures’ historical responsibilities. Mao objectively looked at historical figures, even paying attention to the shift of diplomatic factors in the late Qing dynasty from primary sources and archives. From a micro point of view, Mao realised that the Qing officials’ diplomatic idea factors changed and this change was demonstrated throughout the First Opium War. For example, during the First Opium War, many Qing officials, like Qi Shan and Yi Libu, once harboured the hawkish attitude and advocated the war before confronting the British armies, then becoming the peace group and even proactively seeking to sign peaceful treaties after experiencing the war with British armies.¹³⁷ And Mao started with the historical archives and did not align with the Chinese government’s tone on these reasons for the defeat of the Qing Army. Mao did not attribute Qing troops’ failure to the treachery of a few officials in the Qing government but realised that Qing troops were corrupted and that the Qing officials’ idea of celestial empire

¹³² “地主阶级的爱国和开明人士” Su Shuangbi 苏双碧. bi guan zi shou he di zhu jie ji di kang pai de jue qi 闭关自守和地主阶级抵抗派的崛起 [Isolation and the rise of resistance of the landlord class]. *Tianjin Shehui Kexue*, No. 3 (1986): 57-62.

¹³³ Wang Zhixian王之宪. jie chu de min zu ying xiong lin ze xu ——ji nian ya pian zhan zheng 150 zhou nian 杰出的民族英雄林则徐——纪念鸦片战争150周年 Lin Zexu, an outstanding national hero -- commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Opium War. *Dongbei Lin Ye Da Xue Xue Bao*, No. S1 (1990): 48-50.

¹³⁴ “我们的民主革命从林则徐算起，一直革了一百多年”。Mao, Zedong 毛泽东. Mao Ze Dong Xuan Ji Di Wu Juan 毛泽东选集第五卷 [Selected Works of Mao Zedong volume 5]. People’s Publishing House. 1977, 490.

¹³⁵ Deng Zihan 邓梓晗. Qian tan yang wu yun dong de xing zhi 浅谈洋务运动的性质 [On the nature of westernization Movement]. *Youth*, No. 31 (2017): 9-16.

¹³⁶ Li, H. (2010) from revolution to modernization: the paradigmatic transition in Chinese historiography in the reform era. *History and Theory*. [Online] 49 (3), 336-360.

¹³⁷ “琦善，伊里布”。Mao H. J. 茅海建 (Translated by Lawson J, ed). Tian Chao De Ben Kui 天朝的崩溃 [The Qing Empire and the Opium War: Collapse of the Heavenly Dynasty]. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

exacerbated the vigilance of Qing officials against the British.¹³⁸ Mao also explained this shift as the forced compromise when these Manchu officials faced British armies' ships and armaments, because they realised the generation gap in the weapons.¹³⁹ In addition, Mao claimed that the Chinese nation did not have the problem of national consciousness awakening because Chinese (mainly Han Chinese) had long already recognized themselves as a separate nation. The question was how modern nationalism with an international conception was generated after the First Opium war in 1840.¹⁴⁰ However, Mao's research sphere was restricted to around the time period of the First Opium War, did not take the change of diplomatic concept in the late Qing Dynasty from 1840 to 1914 as a whole. Besides, though Mao recognised the emergence of Chinese international conception, he also did not systematically analyse the emergence and transformation of Chinese international conception after the First Opium War.

In the 1990s, Leung, in his book, *the significant changes of Modern Chinese diplomacy: a study of the diplomatic system and the change of Sino-foreign relations*, assigned China's domestic factors at least as much importance as the external impact. Leung not only claims that western imperialism's invasion seemed to change China's modern diplomacy to some extent because western imperialisms' invasion had become the driving force and catalyst for changes in China's modern diplomacy, but he also highlights that ancient China had its initiatives to fit into the international order actively and modify its diplomatic ideas and behaviours because ancient China was positively resistant to imperialist aggression.¹⁴¹ Leung thus concretely analyses how the Qing state suffered from the Western powers' influence.¹⁴² On the one hand, Western powers indeed brought disasters to ancient China after the First Opium War in 1840; on the other hand, these Western powers' negative influence also enabled ancient Chinese to learn from Western powers and proactively trigger ancient Chinese patriotism.¹⁴³ In contrast to previous scholars, Leung noticed ancient China's internal factors and how China positively reformed its diplomatic organs when the Qing state entered the late Qing dynasty. However, Leung's thought might be deeply influenced by Marx and Chinese governmental narratives that regarded emerging European countries' influences as the imperialists' invasion, because in China's official traditional narratives, foreign imperialist and invading countries pushed ancient China to sign many unequal treaties in which China gave up many of its sovereign rights in terms of territory and commerce.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, this thought was refuted by the modernisation theory that imperialism objectively offered modernisation to China.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, Leung's points also do not analyse the link between the shift of ancient Chinese diplomatic idea factors and the Qing government's diplomatic reform.

¹³⁸ Mao H. J. 茅海建 (Translated by Lawson J, ed). *Tian Chao De Ben Kui 天朝的崩溃 [The Qing Empire and the Opium War: Collapse of the Heavenly Dynasty]*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

¹³⁹ Mao H. J. 茅海建 (Translated by Lawson J, ed). *Tian Chao De Ben Kui 天朝的崩溃 [The Qing Empire and the Opium War: Collapse of the Heavenly Dynasty]*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Leung, E. 梁伯華. *jin dai zhong guo wai jiao de ju bian wai jiao zhi du yu zhong wai guan xi bian hua de yan jiu 近代中国外交的巨变外交制度与中外关系变化的研究 [The great changes of Modern Chinese diplomacy: a study of diplomatic system and the change of Sino-foreign relations]*, Hong Kong Commercial Press, (1990).

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Wang, J. *Unequal treaties and China* (2-volume set). Vol. 1. Honolulu, HI: Enrich Professional Publishing. (2015).

¹⁴⁵ Shepherd, R. Human Rights, Modernization Theory, and China. *Critical Asian Studies*, 50, no. 3 (2018): 484-492.

During the same period, Chen proposed the model of challenge-response [Tiaozhan Huiying Moshi] seeking to answer the transformation of China's diplomatic factors from 1840 to 1914. Chen identifies the challenge-response model as the conception that Qing China confronted dual challenges from European countries, those are invasive Europe and advanced Europe.¹⁴⁶ On the one hand, he agrees with Leung that European invasion negatively affected Qing China after 1840.¹⁴⁷ Unlike Leung's viewpoint that one-sidedly highlighted the European countries adverse influence on Qing China, such as ceding territory, paying indemnities and the unequal treaties, Chen also emphasizes the modernization that European countries brought to Qing China.¹⁴⁸ When Qing China was grappling with these dual challenges, Qing China provided three responses: isolationism, dependency, and the patriotism of both resistance toward European countries and learning from European countries.¹⁴⁹ Chen specifically explains Qing China's backwardness in modern Chinese history through these three responses: the Qing's foreign policy of isolationism, the Qing government's collaborationist behaviour and willingness to be European countries dependency after suffering a sequence of military defeats. Qing Confucian and scholars' patriotic response was to learn from European countries science and technology and synchronously oppose the European countries invasion.¹⁵⁰ In his book, he claims that these responses were demonstrated throughout modern Chinese history and even that they gave rise to the emergence of China's national consciousness.¹⁵¹ Although Chen's challenge-response model seems to divide the Qing's response into three perspectives, he still does not break away from the spectrum of Fairbank's impact-response model that European countries' influence resulted in Qing China's response. Furthermore, Chen's viewpoint falls under the dichotomy, mechanically categorizing the European influence into negative and positive kinds and following the Chinese government's narrative that was attributes treachery to the Qing government's compromise and the signing of unequal treaties. Chen also neglects the transformation of diplomatic idea factors in the Late Qing Dynasty and does not detail Qing officials and Confucian scholars' change of the diplomatic ideas, solely regarding Qing China's response as the state action.

The overriding problem might be that these previous scholars formalistically demarcate Qing China. They adopt the conventional period from the First Opium War in 1840 to research China's transformation of diplomatic concept factors, viewing 1949 as the end of the modern Chinese history. This time compartmentalisation fails to spot the importance of the year 1914. According to Xu's book in 2005, *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization*, the period from 1840 to 1914 is suggested as the transition period from ancient diplomacy to modern Chinese diplomacy, and the year of 1914 as a turning point for China's desire to join and change the international system.¹⁵² Xu expresses specific concern about China's internationalisation after the First Sino-Japanese war in 1895,

¹⁴⁶ “挑战回应模式”. Chen, Shengli. 陈胜旻. *Dui Xi Fang Tiao Zhan De Shou Ci Hui Ying: Ya Pian Zhan Zheng* 对西方挑战的首次回应：鸦片战争 [The first response to the Western challenge: the Opium Wars]. Heritage Publishing House, 1990.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Chen, Shengli. 陈胜旻. *Ya Pian Zhan Zheng Qian Hou Zhong Guo Ren Mian Dui Fang Shuang Chong Tiao Zhan De Hui Ying* 鸦片战争前后中国人面对西方双重挑战的回应 [The Chinese response to the Twin Challenges of the West before and after the Opium War]. "Journal of Sun Yat-sen University. *Philosophy and Social Sciences*, no. 1 (1991): 8-21.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Xu, Guoqi. *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

emphasising that the formation of Chinese national identity would link China's domestic order and international order.¹⁵³ Xu explains that the failure of the First Opium War in 1895 resulted in the crisis of Chinese national identity; the Chinese overturned the Qing state and built the Republic of China in 1911 out of this crisis.¹⁵⁴ The government of the Republic of China began to propose independent diplomacy in 1914 when confronting the pressure of being coercively forced to sign twenty-one demands by the Japanese government in 1914. However, Xu's book may overlook the specific process of the gradual awakening of Chinese national consciousness to the complete abandonment of the traditional world outlook from 1895 to 1914. Furthermore, Xu's book places particular research on China's national identity and the demand for internationalisation in the first world war in 1918. Thus, his book does not systematically delve into the evolution of diplomatic idea factors and diplomatic organs influenced by modern Chinese history in the late Qing dynasty since the First Opium War in 1840, giving little retrospective analysis of modern Chinese history.

5. Conclusion and emerging research gap

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the shift of diplomatic idea factors influenced by modern Chinese history in the late Qing dynasty (1840-1914). Existing literature defines modern Chinese history as the period from 1840 to 1949. Admittedly, the eruption of the First Opium War was perceived as the start of modern Chinese history because the British government used the gun-boat policy to open ancient China's gate. It is noteworthy that the year 1914 was chosen as the end of the study period because the most recent literature suggests that 1914 was the origin of the new Chinese diplomacy because the Chinese took the initiative to join the international system and improve China's international status in 1914. Thus, this research selected the year 1914 as the endpoint.

Evidence from existing literature proves that traditional Chinese diplomatic ideas might have been influenced by the Ancient Chinese "under heaven view" (Tian Xia Guan). For traditional Chinese Confucian intellectuals and officials, China was at the centre of the world. However, this long-standing sense of superiority, once dominant in ancient China, had cumulatively changed during the late Qing dynasty. Qing governmental foreign policy experienced the evolution from an isolationist worldview to diplomatic compliance with treaties, even launching the Self-strengthening Campaign to learn from the emerging European countries. After the failure of the first Sino-Japanese war in 1895, with the emergence of modern sovereignty and nation-state consciousness, the Qing government and the Chinese government (the Republic of China) gradually set foot in diplomacy and abandoned traditional diplomatic thinking and had a new Chinese diplomacy by 1914. The centre of the tributary system turned to the periphery of the capitalist world system. Furthermore, numerous current studies discuss the transformation of diplomatic factors in the late Qing dynasty from 1840 to 1914. Fairbank proposes the model of impact-response, understanding the change in modern Chinese history as the negative response towards western impact because ancient Chinese Confucian culture hampered China's modernisation. Hevia questions Fairbank's viewpoint because Hevia thinks Fairbank's idea may have acquiesced to the idea that those European countries were advanced while ancient China was backward. Hevia, though, seeks to interpret this shift of diplomatic factors as the collision of the ideological system between ancient China and European countries. And Hevia tries to understand this shift of diplomatic factors from the change of the Qing government's foreign etiquette [Bing

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Xu, Guoqi. *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Li]; Hevia also attempts to explain Qing rulers' worldview through Manchu tribal customs rather than the tributary system. Hevia's research perspective has its limitations because he ignores the importance of the tributary system in the late Qing Dynasty, and this tributary system existed for about one thousand years. Moreover, the Qing government's foreign etiquette [Bing Li] might have played a subordinate role in the Qing government's court etiquette. After Fairbank, Levinson broaches the traditional-modernity approach that only European countries could realise modernity, while China just moved from the traditional world to the modern world according to western countries' routes. Levinson places Chinese tradition and Western modernity in binary opposition and unilaterally emphasises the influence of the modernisation of European countries on Qing China. Unlike Levison and Fairbank, Peck proposes the theory of imperialism model that imperialism was the main reason for China's modern historical change, and the main reason for China's modern backwardness is attributed to the West. His point neglects how imperialism affected the transformation of diplomatic concepts and the changes imperialism brought to the Qing government and its diplomatic institutions.

Above all, Fairbank, Levison, and Peck's ideas are Eurocentrist. Fairbank and Levison attribute China's reform and modernisation to exogenous shocks from European and American countries. Peck's model of imperialism also neglects China's internal reasons for the transformation of diplomatic ideas and apparatus. This Eurocentrist thinking still influences contemporary historians. Hevia emphasises that the lessons of Britain brought order and justice to the Qing Dynasty. Hevia's book neglects the subjectivity of Qing China and unilaterally emphasises the political influence of the British government on the modernisation movement of Qing China. In addition, many historians, like Liu and Fairbank, try to understand China's diplomatic history from its perspective with colonial thinking. These are manifest in the translation of Li Fanyuan [The board of vassal states] and Yi [foreigners]. Racial thinking also once dominated the European perception of the late Qing Dynasty, such as in the idea of the "yellow peril". Lovell refutes the credibility of "yellow peril" and mentions the shift in diplomatic elements between 1840 and 1914. However, her analysis only sporadically focuses on Confucian scholars in the Qing dynasty.

Numerous Chinese historians of the Republic period from 1911 to 1949 also accommodate Eurocentric thinking. Te-Kong Tong's created *The Historical Three Gorges of China's History* [Li Shi San Xia Lun] to attribute the transformation of China's political system and bureaucracy to a historical process pushed and forced by Western powers after the First Opium War in 1840. Tsiang Tingfu was another Chinese historian who succumbed to Eurocentrism. He blindly took participation in the western world system as the driving force influencing China's internal reform, and China's industrialisation was entrusted to the gift of the capitalist world system. These two-mainstream discourses during the Republic of China from 1911 to 1949, are still working withing Eurocentrist ideas.

After the 1970s, eurocentric thinking was questioned, while the China-centric approach sparked discussion. Cohen prefers using a China-centric approach, in which historians understand Chinese history from their point of view, paying close attention to the trajectory of Chinese history and how Chinese people conceive the issue itself. Cohen and Swisher describe the encounter between ancient China and western powers as an interactive process and believe that ancient China's development and political reform interacted with the external influence of European countries. And this China-centric approach maybe resonated with many European scholars, such as Kuhn. Cohen does not delve into the interaction of ancient Chinese diplomatic thought when Qing Chinese encountered Europeans from an internal Chinese perspective, nor does Kuhn study the evolution and changes of ancient Chinese diplomatic institutions, and the China-centric approach may have been an attempt to instrumentalise the European countries. Ergo, the China-centred approach does not seem to answer this research question.

After establishing the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese government and its narrative discourse adopted a revolutionary narrative to interpret the transformation of diplomatic ideas in the late Qing Dynasty since 1949. Chinese scholars used the thinking mode of binary opposition to view the changes in diplomatic factors in the Qing Dynasty. On the one hand, Chinese scholars regard Qing officials as tools of the feudal Qing government. On the other hand, the dominant discourse of the Chinese government and historians always has distinguished Qing officials and Confucian intellectuals from the Qing government, describing those officials who rebelled against the European countries' invasion and promoted the Self-strengthening Campaign as patriotic and enlightened officials. Under this revolutionary narrative, the transformation of the external concept factors of the Qing officials appears to be consistently ignored, and the enlightened behaviours of some Qing officials were regarded as the personal behaviours of patriotic officials. Therefore, before 1980, the Chinese government and its mainstream discourse overused class analysis in the study of modern Chinese history instead of deeply exploring how internal subjects affected the change of diplomatic concept factors in the late Qing Dynasty.

After the 1980s, Chinese historians' views about how diplomatic factors transformed in the late Qing dynasty from 1840 to 1914 change again. The scope of Mao's research is limited to the period before and after the First Opium War, and he does not consider the changes of diplomatic concepts in the late Qing Dynasty from 1840 to 1914 as a whole. Leung claims that the invasion of western imperialism seems to have changed China's modern diplomacy to some extent because the invasion of western imperialism had become the driving force and catalyst of China's modern diplomacy reform and emphasises that ancient China had the initiative to adapt. In ancient times, China actively resisted imperialist aggression, actively integrated itself into the international order, and changed its diplomatic philosophy and behaviours. However, Leung also perceives the influence of the new European states as an imperialist invasion. Chen creates the challenge-response model [Tiaozhan Huiying Moshi] to explain how China's diplomatic factors changed from 1840 to 1914. Chen describes the challenge-response paradigm as the belief that Qing China faced twin challenges from European countries, invading Europe and advanced Europe. Chen's argument seems to fall into a dichotomy, dividing European influence mechanically into negative and positive aspects. Notably, previous scholars used the conventional period of the First Opium War in 1840 to study the transformation of China's diplomatic concept factors and regarded 1949 as the end of China's modern history, and this division fails to recognise the significance of 1914. According to Xu Guoqi's book, 1914 was a turning point for China's entry into and transformation of the international system. Nevertheless, Xu also did not systematically attach importance to diplomatic thought factors and diplomatic organs that have influenced China's modern history since the Opium War in 1840. As a result, the study's analytical questions may be summarised as follows:

- (1) From 1840 to 1916, How did the concept of diplomacy change?
- (2) During the period from 1840 to 1914, how has the Chinese concept of the international system changed? Moreover, how did this change affect China's diplomatic institutions?
- (3) From 1840 to 1914, how did external shocks and their factors influence the transformation of diplomatic ideas in modern Chinese history?

The next portion of this dissertation will outline the research methodologies to analyse the archival sources to have a thorough grasp of this subject.

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