**HEC MONTRÉAL**
École affiliée à l'Université de Montréal

# The Use of Consumer Goods in Politics: A Study of the Chairman Mao Badges

**par**
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# Résumé

Cette thèse examine l'intersection des biens de consommation et de la politique du point de vue d'un gouvernement, qui n'a pas été traitée de manière adéquate dans la littérature de Consumer Research. Ancrée dans le contexte historique de la révolution culturelle prolétarienne, un mouvement politique qui s'est produit en Chine entre 1966 et 1976, cette thèse explore comment le Parti communiste chinois a utilisé stratégiquement les badges du président Mao pour mener à bien ses programmes politiques centrés sur l'établissement et la consolidation de la figure de culte de Mao. . En recherchant le mot-clé «Badges du président Mao [毛主席像章]» dans la base de données du Quotidien du Peuple, le média officiel du Parti communiste chinois, l'auteur recueille un total de 591 articles (soit 1 344 pages) contenant le mot-clé dans le titre et / ou texte. En se concentrant sur l'examen des articles liés aux badges Mao publiés dans le People's Daily, l'auteur adopte une approche interprétative et code qualitativement tous les articles selon la procédure typique en trois phases de codage ouvert, sélectif et théorique, une méthode de codage utile pour les études exploratoires recherchant développer une compréhension théorique et systématique d'un sujet de recherche à partir de données empiriques. Un nombre total de 200 codes sont générés et intégrés dans 18 catégories de codage reflétant les perspectives que le Parti communiste chinois a prises pour créer des histoires convaincantes et convaincantes sur les badges Mao. En invoquant la gouvernementalité, l'appareil et la vérité de Foucault comme lentille théorique, les 18 catégories de codage sont ensuite analysées par l'auteur pour résumer et présenter la manœuvre du Parti communiste chinois sur des articles liés aux badges autour de trois thèmes centraux visant à utiliser la fabrication de mythes pour transformer les badges en des appareils bio-électriques pour mettre en œuvre et impulser les agendas de la révolution culturelle.

L’accent particulier mis sur le mouvement politique durable contribue à élargir notre compréhension de l’utilisation des biens de consommation par les gouvernements au-delà des contextes électoraux, qui ont été au centre des études en marketing politique. L’attention particulière accordée au Quotidien du Peuple permet à cette thèse de dévoiler le mécanisme de transformation qui sous-tend l’utilisation stratégique des biens de

consommation par les États à des fins politiques, qui a été sous-étudié dans les recherches précédentes. Cette thèse soutient que l'utilisation des biens de consommation en politique est une pratique de gouvernementalité centrée sur l'utilisation de l'appareil de biopouvoir pour mythifier les agendas politiques et intégrer les agendas mythifiés dans les biens de consommation pour faire de ces biens un appareil de biopouvoir.

**Mots clés :** Biens de consommation; Politique; Théorie de la culture du consommateur; L'histoire chinoise; Gouvernementalité; Biopouvoir; Appareil; Vérité.

**Méthodes de recherche :** Méthode historique;  Recherche qualitative

# Abstract

This thesis investigates the intersection of consumer goods and politics from a government's perspective, which has not been adequately treated in prior the Consumer Research literature. Anchored in the historical context of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a political movement that happened in China between 1966 and 1976, this thesis explores how the Chinese Communist Party strategically used Chairman Mao badges to carry out its political agendas centring on establishing and consolidating Mao's cult figure. By searching the keyword "Chairman Mao Badges [毛主席像章]" in the database of the People's Daily, the official media outlet of the Chinese Communist Party, the author collects a total of 591 articles (or 1,344 pages) containing the keyword in the title and/or text. Focusing on scrutinising Mao badges-related articles published in the People's Daily, the author adopts an interpretive approach and qualitatively codes all articles according to the typical three-phase procedure of open, selective, and theoretical coding, a useful coding method for exploratory studies seeking to develop a theoretical and systematic understanding of a research topic from empirical data. A total number of 200 codes are generated and fitted into 18 coding categories reflecting perspectives that the Chinese Communist Party took to craft convincing and compelling stories about Mao badges. By invoking Foucault's governmentality, apparatus and truth as the theoretical lens, the 18 coding categories are further analysed by the author to abstract and present the Chinese Communist Party's manoeuvre on badge-related articles around three central themes aiming at using mythmaking to transform the badges into biopower apparatuses to implement and impel the Cultural Revolution agendas.

The specific focus on the enduring political movement helps extend our understanding of governments' use of consumer goods beyond the election-related contexts, which have been the main focus of studies in political marketing. The special attention paid to the People's Daily allows this thesis to unveil the transformation mechanism underlying states' strategic use of consumer goods for politics, which have been understudied in previous research. This thesis argues that using consumer goods in politics is a governmentality practice centring on using biopower apparatus to mythify political

agendas and embedding the mythified agendas in consumer goods to make these goods biopower apparatus.

**Keywords :** Consumer Goods; Politics; Consumer Culture Theory; Chinese History; Governmentality; Biopower; Apparatus; Truth.

**Research methods :** Historical method; Qualitative Research.

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# List of acronyms

BLW – Bad Language Word

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

CCRSG – The Central Cultural Revolution Small Group

CCT – Consumer Culture Theory

CFAT – Chinese Foreign Aid Teams

CI – The Communist International

CMT – Chinese Medical Team

CR – The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

CSR – The Chines Soviet Republic

EFO Campaign – The Elimination of the Four Olds Campaign

KMT – The Kuomingtang

MFI – The Soviet Union Ministry of Food Industry

MUL – McGill University Library

OIS – The Oriprobe Information Service

PD – People's Daily

PLA – People's Liberal Army

RG – The Red Guards

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# Introduction

In 1966, the *Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (hereafter "the CR") erupted in China, the country ruled by Chairman Mao Zedong-centred Chinese Communist Party (hereafter "the CCP"). The CR, lasting for a decade (Wang, 2008), aimed to replace the old Chinese social order constructed upon capitalism and imperialism with a new system based on Mao Zedong's Thought (hereafter "Mao's Thought") through mobilising the Chinese masses (Ye, 2004). In the CR, while market activities and free movement of goods were strictly banned by the regime, some consumer goods were still widely distributed and celebrated by millions of Chinese consumers. Among such goods, the Mao badges (hereafter "the badges") were used by almost every single Chinese consumer. They were cherished, worshiped (Zuo, 1991), and even pinned into the flesh and dyed with fresh blood (Niuniu, 1995; Schrift, 2001).

Unlike naturally rare items that are widely valued by consumers and traditionally studied by marketing scholars, the badges were rather ordinary goods. They were typically made in the golden and red colours with a variety of readily accessible materials such as plastic, clay, wood, and aluminium recycled from household products (Wang, 2008). They varied in size and design, but generally came in a round shape, having the left side of Mao's face (Figure 1) embossed on the front and brooches attached to the back (Leese, 2013). An estimated three to five billion badges were produced and distributed to over 90% of the Chinese population for free by the CCP between 1966 and 1976 (Hubber, 2006; Schrift, 2001). However, the mundanity of the badges did not affect consumers' enthusiasm about sustaining the badges heat (Schrift, 2001), even four decades after the end of the CR.

Today's Chinese consumers are still fascinated by the badges, viewing them as invaluable treasures of which the value cannot be monetarily calculated and as inalienable heirlooms that are worthy of being passed down from generation to generation (Hubbert, 2006). Thus an intriguing enigma arises: why and how did these ordinary badges become so widely celebrated goods?

Unfolding the enigma requires knowledge about the CCP's role in producing and promoting these badges to ignite and fuel the badges heat. However, our understanding of the badges is limited to either the historical and symbolic meanings of the badges exhibited in a collection at the British Museum (Wang, 2008), or consumers' appropriation and collection of the badges during and after the CR period (Coderre, 2016; Hubbert, 2006; Schrift, 2001). Although historical and political scholars generally agree on the association of the massive badge consumption with the regime's cultivation of the Mao cult (e.g., Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001), little is known about the delicate mechanism that the state engineered in a bid to peddle these ordinary goods nationwide for its political purpose of carrying out the CR.

Since the 1990s, marketing scholars have studied the role of consumer goods in politics beyond the Chinese and the badges contexts. Specifically, a number of consumer researchers have examined consumers' use of marketplaces and consumer goods for having their voice heard in societies or for speaking up against sociocultural, economic and political values or ideologies that they are confronted with (Bristor and Fischer, 1993; Cayla and Eckhardt, 2008; Cluley, 2020; Crockett and Wallendorf, 2004; Daunton and Hilton, 2001; Izberk-Bilgin, 2012; Kates, 2004; Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006; Koster, 2014; Kozinet and Handelmann, 2004; McNay, 2010; Murry, 1997; Sandikci and Ger,

2010; Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013; Ordabayeva and Fernandes, 2018; Peñaloza, 1994; Reich et al., 2018; Üstüner and Holt, 2007; Varman and Belk, 2009). These fruitful studies thus have contributed to establishing the research domain of the politics of consumer identity. As Thompson (2014) has remarked: "*consumers deploy a gamut of marketplace resources to construct personal and collective identities that…challenge social stigmas and limitations that emanate from ascribed categories of gender, class, ethnicity, religiosity, and nationality…consumer identity work becomes a mode of identity politics*" (p.iii). Notably, in this domain, while consumers are shown to play a rather proactive role in their identity projects through consumption, governments seem to play either a passive or ignorable role in consumers' negotiation of their identities. However, governments can actually generate significant influence on molding sociocultural and socioeconomic values into certain shapes (Cohen, 2003; Coskuner-Balli, 2020) and on guiding a population to have their life towards a certain end (Buchli, 1999; Gronow, 2003). Therefore, the role of governments in meddling with consumer goods in order to shape consumers' conduct is underestimated in consumer-centric studies looking at the politics of consumer identity.

In recent years, some consumer researchers have paid more attention to studying the intersection between consumption of consumer goods and politics in electoral contexts. Drawing on consumer psychology, these scholars have explored the relationships between consumers' consumption behaviours (e.g., their preferences for brands, products and lifestyles) and their political ideologies, beliefs, views, values and voting patterns (Jost, 2017a, b; Jost et al., 2017; Jung et al., 2017a, b; Kim et al., 2018; Oyserman and Schwarz, 2017; Rao, 2017; Septianto et al., 2019). In line with consumer psychologists, scholars

from political marketing have also studied the intersection of consumer goods and politics in the electoral context. The concept of political marketing was coined by Kelley (1956). She observed that the marketing strategy of offering and promoting consumer goods aiming at stimulating consumption was adopted by politicians in the United States in a bid to shape people's voting behaviours (Moufahim and Lim, 2009; Wring, 1997). Since then, political marketing researchers have started adopting marketing theories, concepts, and techniques to develop strategies assisting activities associated with election (Moufahim and Lim, 2009; Ormrod et al., 2013), such as voter targeting, and political parties fundraising, branding, and leadership management (Cohen, 2003; Lees-Marshment et al., 2015). Although studies in political marketing have contributed to bridging marketing with politics, they have oversimplified the role of consumer goods in politics, namely, either considering goods as an instrumental tool that parties can offer to voters to win votes (Cohen, 2003) or reducing the connotation of "product(s)/brand(s)" to political policies, parties and politicians (Ahmad, 2017). Meanwhile, political marketing research has paid much attention to the electoral context, making the role of marketing in helping carry out political agendas other than election and voting stay unclear. Topics of governments' manoeuvre of the promotion of consumer goods and manipulation of their meanings to gain political leverage remain underexplored.

Taking these limitations into account, this thesis investigates the intersection of consumer goods and politics from the government's perspective through drawing on the case analysis of the badges in the Chinese context. Situated squarely in the historical background of the CR and drawing on narratives about the badges published on the CCP's official propagandic outlet, the People's Daily (hereafter "the PD"), this thesis invokes

Foucault's governmentality as a theoretical lens to understand the government' use of consumer goods for politics as a governmentality practice centring on mythifying political agendas and embedding the mythified agendas in consumer goods. Rooted in Consumer Culture Theory (hereafter "the CCT"), this study is able to "*tell cultural history through the commodity form*" (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, p.876). That is, guided by the CCT, this thesis synchronises marketing to political and historical studies to unveil political regimes' strategic usage of presumably ordinary consumer goods as powerful political tools. Specifically, this thesis seeks to understand: 1) how the CCP symbolically and politically supercharged the rather ordinary badges to make them extraordinary goods; and 2) how the extraordinary badges contributed to the CR.

The thesis is structured as follows. The first chapter reviews literature concerning the intersection of consumer goods, politics and marketing from two perspectives: the politics of consumer goods, and consumer goods and mythmaking. The second chapter reviews key constructs of Foucault's governmentality to reconfigure the role that consumer goods serve in fuelling political activities. The third chapter presents the background of the CR and the badges as the research context and details the research methodology. The fourth chapter elucidates the findings deriving from the analysis of narratives about the badges published on the PD and provides answers to the research questions. The fifth chapter discusses the importance of this research.

# Chapter 1
# Consumer Goods, Politics and Marketing

Studies that have looked at the intersection of consumer goods, politics and marketing, including but not limited to consumer research, often invoke the phrase "the politics of consumption" to reveal the effects of consumption-related activities, which are carried out by social actors such as individuals, groups of people, and organisations, on the development of social, cultural, economic and political agendas (e.g., Anderson, 2000; Balnave and Patmore, 2006, 2011; Cohen, 2004; Coskuner-Balli, 2020; Crockett and Wallendorf, 2004; Daunton and Hilton, 2001; Hardeck and Hertl, 2014; Jost et al., 2017; Jung et al., 2017a, b; Kravets and Sandikci, 2013; Thompson, 2014; Varman and Belk, 2009; Wang, 2006). For instance, anchored in symbolic consumption, Murry (1997) has studied the politics of consumption from both consumers' and marketers' perspectives. He has investigated how consumers forge their desired individual or collective identities by consuming certain branded goods, and how marketers engineer a wide range of symbols, signs, codes and meanings in fashion goods to induce consumers to use consumer goods to manage their body shapes and personal styles. Meanwhile, anchored in mythmaking and grounded in the Chinese context, Zhao and Belk (2008) have studied how ads published in newspapers have reflected the Chinese government's changing attitudes from communism toward consumerism since the late 1970s. In these studies, although the term "the politics of consumption" has often been left undefined, it generally refers to negotiations of certain sociocultural, socioeconomic and sociopolitical values, ideologies and norms carried out by individual, organisational and governmental social actors in the marketplace through consumption. By taking actions of consuming,

appropriating and supporting or boycotting, stigmatising and resisting certain goods, brands or companies as their language of negotiation, social actors, either intentionally, directly, publicly or unintentionally, indirectly, privately turn the marketplace into a discursive field that enables them to project their opinions on values, ideologies and norms to goods, brands, or companies in order to voice and promote these opinions in a community or society at large.

Since this research centres on governments and their use of consumer goods, it defines politics as socioeconomic, sociocultural and sociopolitical agendas that governments seek to negotiate with or convey to individuals in societies. Meanwhile, the term "consumer goods" refers to either tangible objects or intangible products (e.g., services) 1) that are designed and manufactured by organisations and/or individuals intended to deliver to consumers with or without monetary values (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010), 2) that are transformable into vessels carrying sociocultural meanings and ideological values found in societies to consumers (McCracken, 1986; Holt, 2004), and 3) that are possessed, used, and/or appropriated by consumers to "*express cultural categories and principles, cultivate ideals, create and sustain lifestyles, construct notion of the self, and create (and survive) social change*" (McCracken, 1990, p. XI). Based on this, this thesis defines the term "politics of consumer goods" as a practice of using consumer goods to communicate political agendas that are advocated by states or reflect zeitgeist to consumers. This definition is used to organise the presentation of this chapter as follows. The first section will present the politics of consumer goods deriving from studies revealing governments' efforts in mobilising marketing or state apparatuses (e.g., advertisers, marketers, propagandic outlets, and legislatures) in order to impel state-advocated agendas. The

second section will present studies unveiling the importance of mythmaking in infusing prevailing zeitgeist into consumer goods.

### 1.1 The Politics of Consumer Goods—From a Government's Perspective

Scholarly discussions about the politics of consumer goods from a government's perspective are forged around issues concerning how political regimes strategically manoeuvre consumer goods to promote specific socioeconomic, sociocultural and sociopolitical agendas. These discussions are found across different academic disciplines such as political studies (Anderson, 2000; Arnould, 2007; Daunton and Hilton, 2001; Gitelman, 1981; Kim, 2004; Lee, 2003), business ethics (Pharr, 2001), history (Balnave and Patmore, 2006; Cohen, 2003; Kravets and Sandikçi, 2013), communication and journalism (Wang, 2006) and material cultural studies (Buchli, 1999; Gronow, 2001). Among these studies, Cohen's (2003) work of "A Consumer Republic" merits special attention.

In her study, Cohen (2003) has unveiled the emergence and development of consumerism as a historical process led by the US government which relied on its legislative and administrative power to facilitate the manufacturing and consumption of consumer goods. As Cohen (2003) has explained, after WWII, the US government put forth a logic of "mass consumption-driven economy" (Cohen, 2003, p.118), seeking to use consumers' power to heal the wounded national economy and bring the country prosperity. To implement the logic, the government urged different companies across the nation to increase the production of consumer goods, hire more employees, and increase labour wages. Meanwhile, to unleash consumers' consumption power, especially to encourage them to

spend on expensive items that would benefit the market the most (e.g., cars and houses), the government also endeavoured to tailor and pass the bills aiming at providing low-interest loans to the general public. The government's efforts in intervening in and stimulating production and consumption paid off. Consumers quickly began applying for the loans to not only purchase automobiles and real estates but also upgrade a variety of equipment and appliances used in their new cars and houses. On Cohen's (2003) account, it was the government's intervention on both sides of consumers and marketers that seeded and fuelled consumerism in the American society. However, a government can actually play more direct roles than merely being an agentic policy maker in shaping consumption and production (Josephson et al., 2019).

The direct role of governments in using consumer goods to carry out political agendas become clearer in Buchli's (1999) study, "*An Archaeology of Socialism*". Specifically, Buchli (1999) has focused on the Narkofim Communal House (hereafter "the House") in Moscow to understand the interplay between the Russian regimes' changing sociopolitical schemes and the House residents' domestic lives between the late 1920s and the early 1990s. Centring his analysis on the blueprint of the House, interior designs and renovations of apartments, and different household and décor objects (e.g., curtain, bed, sofa and table), Buchli (1999) has revealed the state's use of the House and different objects for continuously aligning residents' life to changing political agendas. This is best exemplified by his analysis on the kitchens. The House was designed by a state-appointed architectural designer in the late 1920s and built in 1930 as a part of the state's "socialist byt (lifestyle) reform" aiming at cultivating people's collectivist lifestyles. As a result, private kitchens were excluded from the original design and construction of the House, as

they were considered as symbols of individualist lifestyles. Instead, shared kitchens were built close to nearly every apartment and equipped well with all cooking essentials, inducing residents to cook and eat collectively. The collective cooking and eating was enforced by a state-appointed House management team (HMT), who were empowered to monitor and evaluate residents' daily conduct against state-planned political agendas. In the 1930s, especially when Stalin came into power, the state began advocating petit-bourgeois values encouraging personal hedonism. Accordingly, private kitchens were improvised in all apartments by the HMT in order to help residents pursue domestic comfort. Later, in the Khrushchev period, the regime shifted back to advocating collectivism. While the HMT was dismissed and private kitchens were not removed from apartments, residents were required to frequently meet with and talk to state inspectors in order to rhetorically prove and justify that private kitchens were used in collectivist ways (e.g., hosting friends' visits for solidarity purposes). The state's lasting and constant manoeuvres of spaces and objects such as private kitchens, as Buchli (1999) has concluded, allowed the Soviet regime to effectively align the conduct of the House residents to the state's changing sociopolitical schemes for seven decades.

Although Buchli's (1999) work has casted some insightful light on unveiling how governments affect people's lifestyles by regulating what and how people could possess and use, his analysis has been narrowly limited to a small group of individuals and a single building. This makes his findings difficult to have implications in broader contexts. To some extent, this limitation has been addressed by Gronow's (2003) study conducted also in the Soviet context. Centring on the period 1933—1939 in the Soviet Union, Gronow (2003) has studied the government's invention, production and promotion of what he calls

"common luxuries". In his research, "luxury" refers to the typical luxury goods category consisting of products that were rare, expensive and only affordable to the elite-class in capitalist countries (e.g., France, United Kingdom and United States) at that time, or that have been historically exclusive to former Russian nobles (e.g., caviar, champagne, finely boxed chocolates, perfume, bicycles, watches, jewellery, fine ice cream, and fashionable clothing). Meanwhile, "common" refers to the government's idea of producing these luxuries on a massive scale and displaying them extensively in order to paint an illusion of a good socialist life centring on material well being.

The case of caviar was a good example of painting a good socialist life. Due to its natural rarity, caviar, especially black caviar, was undoubtedly a luxury delicacy symbolising elite class lifestyle. In order to make most soviet citizens elite class, in the mid-1935, the Ministry of Food Industry (hereafter "the MFI") demanded for high quality caviar production and extensive caviar distribution to stores built for selling luxuries across the country. To comply with the MFI's order, while soviet citizens were still short in food supplies, the government invested millions of rubles on caviar manufacturing equipment, factories and luxury goods stores. Soon after, hundred tons of canned and well packed caviar flew out from factories to shop windows of luxury food stores nationwide, so that the population could see caviar on a daily basis whenever they passed by. However, the price of caviar was affordable by the general public from neither capitalist countries nor the Soviet Union. As a result, although caviar cans were continuously produced and distributed, they stacked in large quantities in every food store and shop window, making the good socialist life always visible to the public.

While caviar was too expensive for the general public to consume, champagne was a

rather different type of common luxury in Gronow (2003) study. In 1936, Stalin argued that "*champagne is an important sign of material well-being, of the good life*" (ibid., p.17). In response to Stalin's argument, despite the lasting shortage of necessities supply, the MFI quickly prioritised all perspectives of the production of champagne, from grape planting and growing to new champagne factories building. However, the Soviet Union's weather condition made the growing of high-quality grapes for wine impossible, resulting in the subpar Soviet champagne. In order to use the subpar Soviet champagne to promote the Stalin-advocated good socialist life, the MFI ordered champagne factories to focus on quantity over quality to ensure sufficient supplies of these luxury symbols to ordinary citizens. Along with nationwide massive productions and distribution in the late 1930s, nearly the entire working masses in Soviet had immediate access to the Soviet champagne that was thought to be exclusive to elite bourgeoisies in capitalist countries. Accordingly, the state then declared that led by Stalin, Soviet citizens were all living a superior socialist life than their counterparts from capitalist countries.

Although Gronow's (2003) work has deepened our understanding about the government's use of consumer goods for politics, it has paid excessive attention to scrutinising the production and distribution of these goods. This oversimplifies the governments' role in the politics of consumption as goods producers and distributors, namely, reducing the complexity of governments' use of consumer goods for carrying out political agendas as a matter of goods manufacturing and distribution.

To better understand the intersection of consumer goods, politics, and marketing, it is necessary to pay extra attention to the literature on consumer research. However, the politics of consumer goods from a government's perspective has received scant attention

from consumer researchers, who follow a tradition of adopting a consumer-centric view in their studies (Giesler and Fischer, 2017). Nevertheless, Zhao and Belk's (2008) work is worth special attention as an effort in synthesising marketing and the politics of consumer goods. Drawing on a modified version of Barthes' (1977) mythology, Zhao and Belk (2008) have investigated the CCP's use of advertisements of consumer goods for conveying its changing political agenda from Maoist-centric communism to consumerism between 1979 and 2003. They have disclosed a semiotic mechanism wherein a variety of political symbols originating from the old Maoist/communist era (e.g., Tian'anmen Square, the Memorial Hall of Chairman Mao, red flags, and the red sun) were used and reconfigured to promote the goods that were considered as the representation of the bourgeoisie in Mao's era (e.g., television, watch and washing machine). For example, in an advertisement of Chang Hong, a Chinese television brand, a stone lion and a red flag were included to symbolise the party's Maoist authority and legacy. Coupled with this, a slogan reading "*Chang Hong uses high technology to support our national industry*" (Zhao and Belk, 2008, p.238) was included to represent the state's post-Maoist agenda of economic construction. Conjointly, the slogan representing the state's updated political agenda and the symbols standing for the Maoist root of the party functioned to forge a myth in the ad to stress the party's changing attitude towards the recognition of the commercial production and consumption. Hence, the authors have concluded that consumer goods are useful for the state to convey changing socioeconomic and sociopolitical agendas to societies.

Zhao and Belk's (2008) work is particularly insightful, because it illuminates that, in pursuit of using consumer goods for politics, with assistance from marketers,

governments can politicise consumer goods through mythmaking to shape consumers' understanding of consumption and their ways of viewing a society at large. Nevertheless, the literature on the politics of consumer goods from a government's perspective is rather limited. As this research focuses on the intersection of consumer goods, governments and marketing, it necessitates bringing more insights from marketing literature on mythmaking so as to better understand how mythmaking helps with the use of consumer goods to convey sociocultural and political agendas to societies.

### 1.2 Consumer Goods and Mythmaking

In consumer research, scholars have been passionate about studying myth. A simple keyword search of "myth" in the *Journal of Consumer Research* database came back with 317 articles published between 1974 and 2020. As early as the 1980s, Levy (1981, p.51), the pioneer of the CCT, has defined a myth as "a tale commonly told within a social group", and unveiled the substantial influence of myths crafted about food and food brands on consumers' consumption. Since then, myth has been involved in a wide range of topics such as luxury and status consumption (Goor et al., 2020; Üstüner and Holt, 2007), branding and brand management (Brown et al., 2013; Levy and Luedicke, 2013; Thompson, 2004), place branding (Thompson and Tian, 2008), consumer identity projects (Arsel and Thompson, 2011; Izberk-Bilgin, 2012), gift giving (Sherry, 1983), consumer behaviour (Henry, 2010; Levy, 1981; Rook, 1985; Stern, 1995), and consumers' voting behaviours (Nakanish et al., 1974).

Too often, while consumer researchers are passionate about bringing myth into scholarly discussions, they have not always defined the term in their studies. To some extent, this

could be attributed to the fact that myth is a rather contextual and fluid concept. As Barthes (2006, p.262) has denoted amid his mythologies model consisting of a signifier, a signified and a sign, myth is *"…a system of communication…[and]…a message…it is a mode of signification, [and] a form…everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse. Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message…everything…can be a myth…for the universe is infinitely fertile in suggestions. Every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society, for there is no law, whether natural or not, which forbids talking about things*". As a fluid concept, myth has also been conceptualised differently in other social science and humanities disciplines. For instance, in drama studies, Lule (1988, p.12) considers myth as "*a symbolic narrative that attempts to explain and give meaning to practices and beliefs*". In religious studies, Watts (1953, p.7) views myth as "*a complex of stories—some no doubt fact, and some fantasy—which, for various reasons, human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life*". In history studies[1] , Heehs (1994) reads myth as "*any set of unexamined assumptions*" (p.1) and "*an interpretation that is considered blatantly false*" (p.2). In language studies, Itu (2010, p.1) thinks of myth as a "*fantastic story, which includes the belief of ancient people in the origin of the universe, natural phenomena about gods and legendary heroes*". In historical anthropology, Vernant (1980, p.186) argues that "*the concept of myth that we have inherited from the Greeks belongs…to a traditional of thought peculiar to Western civilisation in which myth is defined in terms of what is not*

[1] Note that historians also have ongoing debates on what is myth and on the relationship between myth and history, see, for example, Lorenz, C. (2008). Drawing the line: 'scientific' history between myth-making and myth-breaking. *Narrating the nation: Representations in history, media and the arts*, *11*, 35-55.

*myth, being opposed to reality (myth is fiction) and, secondly, to what is rational (myth is absurd)*". Taking into account the contextual and fluid nature of myth, for the purpose of this research, myth is defined as the knowledge guiding consumers to understand certain consumer goods and their consumption of these goods in the ways aligned to prevailing sociocultural, socioeconomic and sociopolitical agendas. Myth as the knowledge is constructed either by the state or by marketers through mythmaking efforts centring on using consumer goods to carry out these agendas.

To better explore the role of mythmaking in the intersection of marketing, politics and consumer goods, three insightful studies are selected to articulate how myths shape consumers' ways of thinking, consuming and living in their lives. First, Thompson and Tian's (2008) work has showcased the use of mythmaking in shaping public opinions on the image of the Southern United States. Next, Thompson's (2004) study has elucidated the effectiveness of mythmaking in helping the development of the health product industry in the early 2000s. Finally, Holt's (2004) research on cultural branding has highlighted the importance of blending prevailing sociocultural ideologies advocated by states into brand myths for successful branding.

In their study of the reconstruction of the image of the Southern United States, Thompson and Tian (2008) have disclosed mythmaking as a useful approach to shape public opinions on sociocultural, economic and political discourses. Specifically, due to its historical roots in slavery, racial segregation, and the upheaval that occurred in the 1960s Civil Rights movement, the south had a tainted image. Deeply embedded in American people's memory, such an unwelcoming image of the South hindered the region from further developing its tourism industries and attracting business investments. To reconfigure the

South image, since the early 2000s, Southerners, especially marketers in the mass media industry, have sought to use the marketplace to remove the stained past of the region. Throughout interviewing major influencers and producers of modern Southern culture and analysing articles published in popular magazines circulating in the South, Thompson and Tian (2008) have revealed that the historically and politically problematic regional identity of the South has been reconstructed by mythmaking in the sphere of modern popular culture. The reconstruction of a new South began with mythmakers' efforts in adopting a variety of rhetorical strategies to guide the public to develop counter-memories about the past South by masking and effacing the historical stains of the region. For instance, in popular magazines published by Southerner marketers, the modern South has been emphasised as a forward-looking and cosmopolitan region that welcomes all people to visit and set up businesses. The slavery and racist histories of the South have been either downplayed or completely omitted. This is totally different from its historical image of being underdeveloped, redneck and masculine due to the male-dominated agrarian and plantation. In magazines, a counterhistory about the South has been created by reconfiguring its historical roots in agricultural productivities as its regional heritage that has freed local females from labour intensive works and enabled females to focus on families and develop the traditional Southern womanhood centring on domestic productions, such as decorating family houses, cooking family meals, and sewing. In Thompson and Tian's (2008) study, myth resembles the knowledge that marketers have constructed to build counterhisotry of the South in order to update its regional image according to Southerners' economic development agenda. Mythmaking thus has become an approach for marketers to shape public views and opinions.

Besides contributing to creating counterhistories and countermemories, mythmaking is also regarded as a useful approach to convince consumers to have their meaningful lives through consuming certain products. Thompson's (2004) study anchoring in the then-emerging market of natural health products is such an exemple. Thompson (2004) has investigated how marketers built convincing mythical claims about these products to shape consumers' dealings with their health-related issues. He has found that prevailing mythos were well blended into myths of health products, making these products the material manifestations of these mythos. For instance, while the Gnostic mythos emphasised using natural power to transcend the force of aging and illness, health products were mythologised as magical remedies for achieving such transcendence. In illustrative ads of a product claiming to use natural ways to help consumers manage their body shapes, symbols signifying the state of natural balance and natural lifestyle (e.g., blooming flowers in backyard gardens) were coupled with an image of a professional-looking female ballet dancer symbolising a well-maintained human body. Taking these symbols together, the ads forged "*a sense of physical rebirth from the womb of nature*" (Thompson, 2004, p.166), mythologising the product as the representation of such rebirth power of nature. These Gnostic-oriented product myths effectively convinced Gnostic mythos followers, who believed in the health benefit claims of the product and considered the product as the materialised representations of the Gnostic mythos in the marketplace. Accordingly, believers of the Gnostic mythos turned themselves into loyal customers of the mythologised health product, viewing it as the natural and healthy alternative to self-treat mild medical conditions (e.g., gum issues). Building on this observation, Thompson (2004) has indicated that the sociocultural and sociopolitical function of product myths

circulating in the marketplace is not restricted to promoting products and brands. Instead, these myths serve to portray alleged ideal healthy lifestyles in the marketplace, inducing consumers to use consumption as the resolution to live in the ideal healthy lifestyles. Accordingly, Thompsons' (2004) study has suggested myths and mythmaking in the marketplace as strategic tools for marketers to shape not only consumers' consumption behaviours but also their view and conduct of lives.

In addition, in branding context, Holt (2004) has uncovered the effectiveness of using mythmaking to help brands convince consumers to believe the consumption of the brands as ways of living in an ideal life model. By studying different cases of successful brands, Holt (2004) has conceptualised branding as a process of crafting brand myths to turn a brand into an icon of a society, that is, an iconic brand. An iconic brand is characterised by its role of a "*symbolic resolution" in solving cultural contradictions* (ibid., p.57), namely, the tensions between consumers' actual way of everyday living and ideal model of conduct advocated by a state's changing sociocultural, economic and political agendas. To construct iconic brands, marketers are suggested to focus on crafting brand myths aiming at smoothing over cultural contradictions for consumers and making consumers perceive that their consumption of the brands leads to the idealised living model. One of such successful iconic brands that Holt (2004) has exemplified is Coca-Cola which has made lasting endeavours to craft brand myths to address different cultural contradictions over time. For instance, when the US government called for nationwide solidarity and urged Americans to support troops in the frontline during the Second World War, Coca-Cola shipped its products to frontline troops and published advertisements showcasing its supplies to the military across mass media platforms. Accordingly, Coca-Cola portrayed

itself as a symbol of the state-advocated national solidarity, thus leading consumers to consume Coca-Cola as a resolution for showing solidarity. In the 1960s, when Americans benefited from the fast-growing national economy and started moving to big cities to enjoy urbanised lifestyles, people's needs of expressing national pride surged. Responding to this new social trend, Coca-Cola updated its ads by demonstrating "*smiley all-American cola-quaffing girls exuded equal dashes of modesty and sex appeal, filling the drink's 'pause that refreshes' with unquestioned patriotic good cheer about the new American way of life*" (Holt, 2004, p.23). These ads mythologised the consumption of Coca-Cola as the resolution for consumers to demonstrate their national pride. In the past few decades, Coca-Cola has been an iconic brand primarily because of its enduring efforts in aligning its brand myths to the changing zeitgeist, which has made the brand a symbolic resolution for catching up with different sociocultural socioeconomic and political trends.

To better convince consumers that a brand is a representation of the zeitgeist, Holt (2004) has stressed the use of populist world for crafting compelling brand myths. Specifically, populist world is defined as "*folk cultures*" (Holt, 2004, p.58) commonly found on the fringes of society "far removed from centres of commerce and politics" (Holt, 2004, p.59), such as the worlds of artists, competitive athletes and feminism activists. As Holt (2004) has pinpointed, the public generally perceive people's actions deriving from populist worlds as being driven by these people's "*own beliefs rather than...by society's institutions*" (Holt, 2004, p.59). By "*take[ing] populist worlds as raw ingredients*" (Holt, 2004, p.59) to frame brand myths, the brand would appear as an insider of the populist world, who does business not primarily for pursuing commercial or political goals but essentially for updating consumers on the zeitgeist. In this way, brand myths appear

persuasive and compelling enough to effectively induce consumers to believe in consuming the brand as a means of achieving a socially desired ideal life defined by the zeitgeist.

### 1.3 Summary

This chapter seeks to establish an understanding of the politics of consumer goods. Inspired by studies in the politics of consumption, this research defines the "*politics of consumer goods*" as a practice of using consumer goods to communicate agendas that are advocated by states or that reflect the zeitgeist to consumers.

From a government's perspective, the politics of consumer goods concerns a state' use of its political and administrative power to mobilise a number of apparatuses in order to generate impacts on consumer goods. The mobilisation of state apparatuses allows a state to control the design, production and distribution of a wide range of objects so as to align people's understanding and conduct of their lives to specific socioeconomic and political agendas (Buchli, 1999; Gronow, 2003; Kravets and Sandikçi, 2013). The mobilisation of juridical apparatuses allows a state to serve as a policy maker using its legislative power to guide consumers to consider consuming certain goods as a means of having certain lifestyles that the state advocates (Cohen, 2003; Coskuner-Balli, 2020). The mobilisation of marketers and propagandic apparatuses allows a state to politicise advertisements of consumer goods and turn them into vessels conveying socioeconomic and political agendas to societies (Zhao and Belk, 2008)

From a mytmaking perspective, the politics of consumer goods centres on marketers' efforts in drawing on the zeitgeist to craft myths. With appropriate rhetorical techniques,

myths are powerful enough to create counterhistories and countermemories so as to align public opinions on past sociocultural and political events to the up-to-date zeitgeist (Thompson and Tian, 2008). With appropriate semantic and semiotic skills, myths are powerful enough to allow marketers to blend prevailing discourses circulating in the marketplace into brands so as to gain consumers' preference for the brands in their pursuit of certain lifestyles (Thompson, 2004). With appropriate tactics identifying the zeitgeist and populist worlds, myths are powerful enough to bridge consumers with ideal lives that are defined by prevailing sociocultural and political ideologies and values (Holt, 2004).

While these studies in the politics of consumer goods are fruitful, they come with two limitations. First, these studies have generally considered governments as regulators, producers and distributors of consumer goods who can use consumer goods to carry out political agendas only if marketers and other state-controlled institutions are mobilised. The role of governments in directly engineering political agendas in consumer goods is overlooked. Second, these studies have focused on goods that are designed either for distributing to small groups of individuals (e.g., the Narkofim Communal House, and weight loss products), or not affordable to the majority of the population (e.g., real estates, automobiles, expensive caviars, TV and watches[2]), or not meant to be used on a daily basis (e.g., magazines). The intersection of politics and other ordinary goods that are extensively distributed to and owned by the vast majority of a population and blended into daily lives of the population remains understudied.

[2] Note that in Zhao and Belk's (2008) original research context, watches and TV promoted in the 1990s were not affordable but luxury objects for the general public in China.

To advance the investigation of a government' use of ordinary consumer goods in politics, a theoretical lens is needed to synchronise and refilter the literature on the politics of consumer goods. This constitutes the goal of the next chapter.

# Chapter 2
# Theoretical Cues and Theoretical Lens

Inspired by a number of consumer research studies that have looked at interactions between consumers, marketers and governments, this research selects Foucault's conceptualisation of governmentality as the theoretical lens to examine the use of consumer goods in politics from a government's perspective. This chapter presents the theoretical cues from these studies first, followed by a presentation of governmentality as the theoretical lens.

## 2.1 Governmentality from Consumer Research Studies

A number of consumer research studies have paved the way for invoking governmentality to interpret marketing activities as governmental practices or a governmentality process. In these studies, Foucault's insights into governmentality have been applied as interpretive lenses to understand consumer-centric and/or marketer-oriented topics. In consumer-centric studies, researchers have employed governmentality to conceptualise the evolution of consumers' self-governance. For instance, in the fluid consumption context, consumers' voluntary sharing of their personal data with marketers is considered as their spontaneous engagement in developing and sustaining self-surveillance in exchange for marketers' personalised products and services (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2017). Consumers' self-controlled consumption, use and appropriation of personal effects,

fashion goods and food in their identity projects are viewed as their submission to western moral codes of self-discipline and self-control (Belk et al., 2003; Sandikci and Ger, 2010; Thompson and Hirschman, 1995). In marketer-oriented studies, scholars have also applied Foucault's theories to understand how consumers' values and consumption patterns are shaped by marketing efforts. For instance, in their study on green consumption, Giesler and Veresiu (2014) have theorised consumers' responsible consumption behaviour as a result of self-governance cultivated by both non-profit organisations and for-profit marketers through a series of rhetorical and material strategies, which make consumers consider green consumption as their personal moral responsibility. More recently, Veresiu and Giesler (2018) have conceptualised immigrant consumers' acquisition of social recognitions and inclusions in their new countries as a market-mediated governmentality process. In this process, different traditional market actors (e.g., brands, advertisers, mass media, and marketers) work conjointly to forge institutional power, convincing immigrants that the ideal way to obtain the legitimacy of ethnic identity in a new country is to consume selective goods and brands originating from that country.

Though these seminal works are inspiring in theorising marketing activities between consumers and marketers as a governmentality process, the use of governmentality in studies taking a government's perspective is rather limited. Yet, a notable exception is Coskuner-Balli's (2020) study. Taking the lens of governmentality, her research has investigated the efforts of the US government in linking the myth of American Dream with consumerism. Drawing on different US presidential speeches (between 1981 and 2012) and archival data reflecting on the state of the US market and consumers' attitudes

toward the market, Coskuner-Balli (2020) has analysed and identified different rhetorical strategies functioning to supplement the American Dream myth with the consumerism-centred lifestyle. Coskuner-Balli's (2020) study is particularly thought-provoking in that it offers a Foucauldian account on understanding the predominant ideology of consumerism as a result of a governmentality process, which makes consumption a moral responsibility for American citizens. This process centres on the government's direct efforts in appropriating the existing myth of American Dream to stimulate consumers' passion about consumption, and on its mobilisation of state apparatuses in transforming different presidents' advocates of consumerism into legal bills or policies. As her study shows, it is governments' direct and enduring involvement in constantly blending consumerism ideologies into the prevailing myth of American Dream that has eventually convinced the Americans to consume in their pursuit of the good American life. Yet, her study has not directly addressed the role of specific consumer goods and that of the government's direct dealings with these goods in contributing to filling the myth of American Dream with consumerism.

To address these gaps, this thesis invokes governmentality as the theoretical lens and seeks to understand the use of consumer goods in politics as a governmental practice centring on states' direct involvement in engineering consumer goods.

## 2.2 Governmentality

Governmentality is a concept concerning states' development and use of power to establish a better control over a population (Collier, 2009). It is defined as "the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and tactics

that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security" (Foucault, 1991a, p.102). One of the key constructs in the conceptualisation of governmentality is "dispositif" (Agamben, 2009; Coskuner-Balli, 2020).

### 2.2.1 Apparatus and Governmentality

Before 1980, though using it frequently, Foucault left "dispositif" undefined, resulting in different translations in English, including "deployment", "mechanism", "machinery", "device", "construction", and "apparatus" (Agamben 2009; Behrent 2013; Callewaert 2017). Among them, "apparatus" was heavily applied to his seminal work published in 1975, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Since then, "apparatus" has become the most commonly used translation of "dispositif" (Agamben 2009; Frost 2019).

In the *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1975 [1979]) has investigated states' exercise of power aiming at constructing and maintaining ideal models as general disciplines in societies. In this research context, apparatus refers to institutions (e.g., prisons, police stations, hospitals, schools/universities, workshops and factories) that are empowered and deployed by states to use punitive approaches to train docile and obedient bodies and make a population conform to the disciplines. Therefore, these state-mobilised institutions constitute disciplinary apparatuses. Relying on the state-endorsed power, these apparatuses develop the knowledge about the conduct of people by casting a gaze on a population, punish and correct deviants accordingly.

In one of the interviews conducted in 1980, when asked to specify his frequently used

"apparatus", Foucault (1980) defined the term for the first time as *"a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid*" (p.194). In this definition, the connotation of apparatus is broadened to include not only disciplinary institutions but also other non-institutional entities and objects. The broadened definition of apparatus needs to be understood in the context of Foucault's shift of research focus to biopower since the mid-1970s.

In the first volume of History of Sexuality, Foucault (1976 [1978]) mentioned "biopower" for the first time as "*an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations*" (p.140). Later, Foucault further developed biopower in his lecture series titled "*Society Must be Defended*" at Collège de France between 1975 and 1976, and discussed it in his subsequent lectures until his death in 1984. In the context of biopower, apparatus no longer serves to surveil a population to develop the knowledge about deviants and to punish them to maintain disciplines. Instead, it functions to produce knowledge for the population. Apparatus emerging from the biopower context is termed biopower apparatus to make a distinction from the disciplinary apparatus referring to disciplinary institutions.

Biopower apparatus functions to help states embed social disciplines in societies and make them resemble guidance for a population to foster lives, namely, *"overall characteristics specific to life, like birth, death, production, illness, and so on*" (Foucault, 2003, p.243). Accordingly, biopower apparatus emerges as a concept referring to all individuals, materials and symbolic resources that serve to produce the knowledge that

shapes people's conduct. As Agamben (2009, p.14) has explained: "*apparatus is literally anything that has the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings. Not only, therefore, prisons, madhouses, the panopticon, schools, confession, factories, disciplines, juridical measures...but also the pen, writing, literature, philosophy, agriculture, cigarettes, navigation, computers, cellular telephones ...*".

In governmentality, government is no longer a political entity using disciplinary power to depressively make people docile and obedient (Foucault, 1993). Instead, it becomes states' practice aiming at developing "*the conduct of conduct*" (Foucault, 1982, p.220), that is, "*a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons*" (Gordon, 1991, p.2). Therefore, the focus of states' governance is not merely on deploying disciplinary apparatuses to use legalistic, centralised, repressive and hierarchical approaches to enforce disciplines (Giesler and Veresiu, 2014). Instead, states' governance becomes what Foucault (1991a) has called, "*the art of government*" (p.87) that primarily centres on mobilising biopower apparatuses to construct and diffuse the knowledge of the conduct of conduct to societies to intervene in a wide range of people's daily activities (Lemke, 2002). Remarkably, although the success of governmentality largely hinges on the use of biopower apparatuses, it does not exclude the use of disciplinary ones, since biopower itself "*does not exclude disciplinary technology, but it does dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques*" (Foucault, 2003, p.242). Accordingly, disciplinary apparatuses also play a supplementary role in governmentality, which serve to enforce the effective deployment of the conduct of

conduct to ultimately make states' intervention a part of people's lives (Collier, 2009; Gordon, 1991).

### 2.2.2 Government in the Name of Truth

One way to make governmentality effective is to have "*government in the name of truth*" (Gordon, 1991, p.8). Foucault (1980, p.132) has defined truth as *"the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true*". The "*effects of power attached to the true*" refers to the formation of "*a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements*" (Foucault, 1980, p.133). Truth matters to governmentality, because it helps states justify the conduct of conduct that is diffused by biopower apparatuses to societies. Accordingly, creating truth helps states better induce the population to follow (Gordon, 1991). As Lorenzini (2016, p.4) has denoted:

*"…for Foucault, under every argument, every reasoning and every 'evidence', there is always a certain assertion that does not belong to the logical realm, but is rather a sort of commitment, a profession, and which has the following form: 'if it is true, then I will submit; it is true, therefore I submit'. This 'therefore' that links the 'it is true' to the 'I submit' and gives the truth the right to say 'you are forced to accept me because I am the truth'".*

Given the important role of truth in convincing a population to follow, one critical aspect of studying governmentality is to investigate the states' efforts in mobilising biopower apparatuses to produce and rationalise these conduct of conduct as truth. As Foucault (1991b) has explained based on his reflection on his career:

"*If I have studied 'practices' like those of the sequestration of the insane, or clinical medicine, or the organization of the empirical sciences, or legal punishment, it was in order to study this interplay between a 'code' which rules ways of doing things...and a production of true discourses which serve to found, justify and provide reasons and principles for these ways of doing things. To put the matter clearly: my problem is to see how men govern (themselves and others) by the production of truth*" (p.79).

To study the rationalisation, Foucault (1991b) has proposed a two-dimension construct, the formation and the justification of the conduct of conduct:

"*I would prefer to analyse it according to two axes: on the one hand, that of codification/prescription (how it forms an ensemble of rules, procedures, means to an end, etc.), and on the other, that of true or false formulation (how it determines a domain of objects about which it is possible to articulate true or false propositions)*" (p.79).

Foucault's notions of governmentality, biopower apparatus and truth offer a useful theoretical lens to investigate the use of consumer goods in politics from a government's perspective. Taking this theoretical lens, this thesis seeks to examine governments' direct dealings with consumer goods as a governmentality practice of using goods to establish state-advocated conduct of conduct and rationalise it as "truth" to a population.

# Chapter 3
# Research Context and Methodology

Aiming at understanding political regimes' strategic use of ordinary consumer goods as powerful political tools, this research anchors in the intersection of consumer goods and politics from the government's perspective. This chapter elucidates the empirical research carried out to pursue the investigation in this regard. The context of this research, namely the historical and political background prior to the CR (1930s-1960s), that of the CR movement (1966-1976) and that of the badges, is first presented. Then followed is the research method, including a detailed presentation of the procedures applied to data collection and data analysis.

## 3.1 Research Context: The Cultural Revolution and the Mao Badges

Guided by the CCT approach, this research has adopted a historical perspective to explore "*in consumption contexts to generate new constructs and theoretical insights*" (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, p.869). The historical perspective enables the development of a path-dependent understanding of and the reflection on the evolution of marketing activities, helping researchers set a benchmark to better understand and evaluate the "*current canon of marketing thought*" in a bid to further theoretical contributions to the field (Witkowski, 2010, p.382). The Chinese CR has been selected as the research context for this study because it carries two essential characteristics needed to meet the research objectives. First, the CR is the most influential, long-lasting and continuous movement in modern Chinese history. Initiated and tightly controlled by Mao's CCP regime, the CR shaped millions of Chinese people's conduct of their lives for a decade, thus constituting

an ideal field to scrutinise governments' efforts in installing and sustaining sociocultural and political agendas on a large scale. Second, although the CR period is characterised by the illegalisation of the free movement of goods, it is known as an era of the Red Ocean (红色海洋, Cao, 2013) as a result of nationwide allocation and circulation of billions of ordinary consumer goods. These goods were mostly designed and manufactured by the CCP to represent Mao and be promoted to almost every Chinese citizen, thus opening up opportunities for examining the intersection of consumer goods and politics from the government's perspective.

During the 10-year CR, dozens of political, sociocultural and socioeconomic campaigns were launched by the Mao-guided CCP and carried out by Chinese people. Given the complicated nature of the CR, it is barely possible to present a comprehensive review of the entire period in the length of a chapter. Since the CR is treated as the historical context in this thesis to explore the Mao-guided CCP's strategic use of consumer goods in politics, a selective review of the literature on the CR has been structured and presented revolving around Mao in this section as follows. First, in order to explain the historical and political background of the Mao-initiated CR, Mao's rising power and his troubles within the CCP prior to the CR is presented. Next, the historical context of the Mao-initiated CR is followed, with a special attention paid to highlighting the peak of the movement (1966-1969), the period that is the most relevant to the accomplishment of the research objective. Last but not least, the historical evolution of the Mao badges, including badges design, production and consumption, is presented, with a special focus on the period (1966-1969) when the badges reached its zenith of influence on Chinese people's lives. All sections concerning the research context are structured in chronological order.

### 3.1.1 The Historical and Political Background Prior to the Cultural Revolution (1930s-1960s)

The legacy of Mao and his leadership in the CCP originated three decades before the CR. In the early 1930s, under the support of the Communist International (hereafter "the CI") headquartered in Moscow, the CCP and its Red Army, the forerunner of the PLA, founded the Chinese Soviet Republic (hereafter "the CSR"), a self-proclaimed independent communist territory in Ruijin (瑞金), Jiangxi province (Hu, 1970). Although Mao chaired the Council of People's Commissars, top officials directly dispatched by the CI (e.g., Bo Gu [博古] and Otto Braun [a German communist, also known as "Li De 李德"]) had most control over the CCP, the CSR and the Red Army. In 1932, despite Mao's strong opposition, the CI-dispatched top officials ordered the Red Army to attack cities controlled by the Kuomintang (国民党, hereafter "the KMT") near Ruijin to wishfully enlarge the CSR territory. The CSR's ambition alarmed the KMT, resulting in the KMT's launch of the Fifth Encirclement Campaign between 1933 and 1934, which sought to reduce the CSR territory and weaken the military power of the PLA (Hu, 1980). Due to lack of sufficient knowledge of the KMT's military power and that of experience in strategising military actions, these officials led the Red Army to be repetitively defeated by the KMT (Hu, 1980). By the end of 1934, the size of the CSR territory and the Red Army dramatically shrunk (Hu, 1970). In January 1935, on its way to escape the KMT's pursuit, the Red Army seized Zunyi, Guizhou province. In Zunyi, the CCP held a Politburo meeting known as Zunyi Conference (遵义会议) (ibid.). In this conference, in the name of reflecting on the party's years of defeats and making strategic plans for its

future movement, Mao and his allies heavily criticised Bo and Braun's misleadership of the CCP and the Red Army (Leese, 2013). Soon after, Mao rose as a member of the Politburo and the Military Council, gradually gaining control over the Red Army (Leese, 2013). Since then, Mao decided to direct the badly wounded Red Army towards the Long March (长征), a strategic military action aiming at retreating different Red Army troops from southern China to northern and western China (Hu, 1970; Nolan, 1966). In November 1935, under Mao's leadership, different Red Army troops reached Shanxi province and began developing Shanxi into the new base of the CSR and the Red Army, marking the end of the Long March (Nolan, 1966). Since the Long March prevented the demise of the Red Army and the CCP, in the late 1930s, Mao's major contribution to the Long March was widely recognised and applauded by the party members (Leese, 2013; Nolan, 1966). Accordingly, Mao's popularity grew within the party and the Red Army, as well as in the new CSR territory in Shanxi, providing the ground for seeding the Mao cult (White, 1994).

***The Born of The Mao Cult.*** The Mao cult was not entirely a product produced under Mao's instructions, but the outcome manufactured by both Mao and different party members according to their political interests and needs. In Leese's (2013) account, the first evidence of Mao as an emerging cult can be traced back to 1937 when a woodcut of Mao's portrait was published in the Liberation Weekly (解放周刊), the then-official newspaper. This portrait, with the "*already embodied motifs of the later cult: moving masses, flags, and sunrays*" (Leese, 2013, p.8) glorifying his leadership in the Long March, was readily different from those portraits of his rivals, which largely consisted of static depictions of their faces. Despite the recognition and compliment he received from

the party, Mao did not have total control over the party until 1942 when he defeated several of his Soviet trained rivals. Between 1942 and 1944, aiming at further minimising the influence of the CI on the CCP and the Red Army, Mao and his supporters in the party initiated the "Rectification Campaign" (整风运动) in Yan'an, Shanxi. The campaign was carried out by introducing "*a series of consecutive study and (self)-criticism sessions during which the participants were supplied with a common perception of the present development and revolutionary goals, as well as with the suitable terminology to describe it*" (Leese, 2013, p.8). In this campaign, Mao's writings, imbued with his critical evaluation and reflection on the evolution of the CCP and the Red Army through the lens of Marxism-Leninism, were used as learning materials and reference books of the study and (self)-criticism sessions. The campaign resulted in the localisation of Marxism-Leninism in the Chinese context, namely Mao Zedong's Thought (毛泽东思想). Since then, Mao's Thought became the official ideology of the party and the Red Army, divorcing the party and its armed forces from the Marxism-Leninism centred CI. As the campaign essentially functioned to establish and promote Mao and Mao's Thought for two years, it was commonly considered as the benchmark of the emergence of the Mao cult (Barmé, 1996; Leese, 2007, 2013; Schram, 1967; White, 1994; Zuo, 1991).

Along with the progress of defeating the Japanese invasion in 1943, each of the two major parties in China, the KMT and the CCP, was in urgent need to sketch an image showing itself as the capable and legit regime of prospering the nation. Both parties opted to glorify their leaders. Driven by this political need, Mao cult was under production within the CCP. All top-ranked members in the CCP publicly supported and endorsed Mao in the party's official media outlet, promoting him as the "*supreme party leader and eminent*

*Marxist-Leninist theoretician*" (Leese, 2013, p.11). In 1949, the Red Army led by Mao defeated the KMT and the PRC China was founded. As a result, Mao became a national hero and his image of a supreme leader surged within the party and in public. To consolidate the foundation of the newly-born regime, the CCP selected the popularly-favoured Mao image as a conspicuous symbol to cultivate Chinese people's emotional bonds with the party and attract their support for it (Leese, 2013). In the 1950s, while Mao's supreme image helped the party consolidate the legitimacy of ruling, it also empowered Mao with the almost absolute authority to direct all sociocultural, socioeconomic, and political events.

***The Mao Cult on the Edge.*** Mao's talent in strategising military actions and initiating political activities (Zhai, 1993) did not make him a gifted engineer of the nation's socioeconomic construction (Schrift, 2001). Since the 1950s, empowered by his image of a supreme leader, Mao initiated several socioeconomic campaigns. Yet, instead of helping sustain his supreme image, these campaigns swamped him with deep troubles. In early 1956, Mao confidently encouraged the "blooming of a hundred flowers (百花齐放)", that is, inviting the public, especially intellectuals consisting of university students and faculties, to openly discuss and criticise the CCP and its policies, a movement known as the Hundred Flowers campaign (Lekner, 2019). However, Mao was soon caught by surprise with the results. Government offices were flooded with millions of letters and walls on streets were covered by posters criticising everything of the CCP and Mao, generating threats to the legitimacy of the party and Mao himself. To address the threats, in 1957, Mao called a halt to the campaign and started the Anti-Rightists movement. Active intellectuals in the Hundred Flowers campaign were soon labelled as "rightists"

(i.e., enemies of the people) and then purged (Tsang, 2000). The Anti-Rightists movement especially angered some students and faculties in Peking University, who suspected that "*the invitation to 'Bloom and Content [i.e., the Hundred Flowers campaign] might be a trap planned…to uncover disaffected elements*" (Goldman, 1962, p.141). On May 19th, 1957, these students and faculties expressed their anger publicly by handwriting big-size Chinese characters on posters and mounting those posters on walls across the campus. The "Dazibao (大字报)" or Big Character Poster was born (Goldman, 1962). The Anti-Rightists movement led the intellectual community in China to lose confidence in Mao (Goldman, 1962; Leese, 2013), decreasing Mao's popularity and harming his cult figure in the society.

Initiated by Mao, the Great Leap Forward movement (大跃进) happened between 1958 and 1962, and it aimed at making China surpass the industrial production of the Great Britain in 15 years and that of the United States in 20 or 30 years (Li and Yang, 2005). To achieve this goal, the state decided to speed up the progress of industrialisation that was thought to be marked by the statistics of the national production of steel and iron (Riskin, 1987). The state mobilised over 100 million peasants to leave the fields in order to build and operate "backyard iron furnaces (小高炉)" through melting and reforging scrap metal and household cookware[3]. Although "backyard iron furnaces" helped boost up the

[3] Li and Yang's (2005, p.845) study provides the best description of the "backyard iron furnaces": "Constructed using mud and brick, the furnaces burned wood and coal as fuel and used scrub metal as raw materials. They produced iron blocks, which, by the government's own admission, could meet only "rural requirements." Yet these iron outputs were proudly included in national statistics. National iron and steel production more than tripled between 1957 and 1960 and then collapsed to its pre-GLF level in 1962".

statistics of steel and iron production, it led to a massive waste of raw materials, as most "backyard iron furnaces" failed to produce any usable metal for the heavy industry. Meanwhile, the state's call for millions of peasants' involvement also caused shortage of farm workers, resulting in significant decrease of agricultural production. During the Great Leap Forward period, several severe natural disasters such as floods and drought hit China between 1959 and 1961, further worsening the agricultural production and causing the shortage of food supply. Eventually, a nationwide famine erupted and claimed more than 45 million lives (O'Neill, 2010). In the beginning of the 1960s, Mao's flawed socioeconomic campaigns put the entire country in deep trouble, thus significantly compromising his supreme and heroic image in the Chinese society and his authority within the CCP.

To fix these fatally failed socioeconomic and sociocultural campaigns that crumbled Mao's ruling, party members had different plans. Lin Biao, the supporter of Mao, the then Defense Minister and the second most powerful person next to Mao in controlling the PLA, chose to restore Mao's supreme image within the CCP and the PLA. In different party meetings, Lin repetitively defended Mao's flawed campaigns by emphasising his absolute authority of initiating them. In the PLA, since the early 1960s, Lin started to promote Mao's Thought as the guidance of the army, helping Mao tighten his grip on the army. In April 1961, Lin ordered the PLA's official media outlet, the PLA Daily (解放军日报), to frequently feature quotations from Mao's speeches and works. Since May 1st 1961, the quotations from Mao started appearing on the top of the front-page in the PLA Daily. In January 1964, under the instruction of the PLA General Political Department (中国人民解放军总政治部), the PLA Daily selected 200 quotations covering 23 topics

and made the initial edition of the Quotations titled "*The 200 Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong* (毛主席语录 200 条)". Between May 1964 and the mid-1965, the PLA General Political Department revised the quotations, expanding them to 427 quotes distributed in 33 topics. The revised edition was titled "The Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong" (hereafter "the Quotations"), published and distributed to PLA members with the remark of "For Internal Use (内部发行)" on the bottom of the final page. At the end of 1965, along with its call for continuously "Study and Practice Mao's Thought (活学活用毛泽东思想)", the Central Committee of the CCP approved the nationwide publication of the Quotations originally designed for PLA's internal use, and authorised state-owned publishing organisations, the People's Publishing House (人民出版社) and the Xinhua Bookstore (新华书店), to do the printing and distribution. Since then, the Quotations was made into a pocket-size book that became one of the most popular goods in China for a decade.

Different from Lin, Liu Shaoqi (i.e., the First Vice Chairman of the CCP from 1956 to 1966 and Chairman of China from 1959 to 1968) and Deng Xiaoping (the major policy maker in both diplomatic and domestic affairs between the mid-1950s and mid 1960s) focused on saving the country from the edge of financial and social collapse. Since 1962, Liu and Deng began to advocate the importance of consumer goods and agricultural production and supply in order to address the famine. They promoted a series of policies to ensure sufficient production and supply of fertilizer, electric pumps and other types of farm equipment (Riskin, 1987). Eyeing towards economic recovery and consumer goods supply, in 1964, Liu and Deng introduced the ration coupon-based commodities

distribution system[4], while mobilising 20 million urban factory workers to farm in rural areas in order to simultaneously reduce the demand of commodities from urban areas and increase agricultural production (Riskin, 1987). By 1965, the food shortage issue was almost addressed, whilst the production of consumer goods also improved especially since the nation achieved self-sufficiency in petroleum (Riskin, 1987). Liu and Deng's approach of handling the national crisis caused by Mao's flawed campaigns won them recognition, popularity and support from Chinese citizens and some CCP members. However, Liu and Deng's rising reputation within the party and the Chinese society undermined Mao's authority and his heroic image of the Chinese people's saviour (Leese, 2013), accelerating "*a loss of credibility compounded by his [Mao's] advancing age*" (Schrift, 2001, p.33). Mao was in trouble.

### 3.1.2 Mao and The Cultural Revolution

In May 1966, to rescue his fading cult image and regain power in the party, Mao, the sitting Chairman of the CCP, ordered the Politburo (政治局), the party's top political apparatus in charge of personnel appointments, to host an "expanded session of Politburo" (政治局扩大会议). In the meeting, Mao introduced the May 16th Notification (五一六通知) to top-ranked party members. The Notification outlined Mao's political agenda centring on class struggle (阶级斗争), whilst it denounced party members who embraced the idea of market-driven economic development as class enemies. The Notification signalled Mao's strong intention of initiating a new movement, as it introduced a new

[4] This commodities distribution system was implemented throughout the entire CR and was finally faded away in 1993 (Wang, 2003).

committee in charge of directing class struggle, namely, the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group (中央文革小组, hereafter "the CCRSG"), which consisted of "*Mao's coterie of sympathisers, including Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing [Mao's fourth wife], Wang Renzhong, Liu Zhijian, Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Li, Guan Feng, Qi Benyu, and Yao Wenyuan*" (Schrift, 2001, p.34).

To implement his political agenda, Mao had to have support from the masses in order to compete with his rivals in the party (Leese, 2013). Accordingly, Mao and his allies had an eye to educational apparatus (i.e., universities), primarily to Dazibao.As mentioned earlier, Dazibao was originally created by students and faculties at Peking University to express their dissatisfaction with Mao's purge of intellectuals in 1957. In the intervention from the CCRSG and Mao, Dazibao was politicised and turned into a novel propagandic medium. On May 25th, 1966, Nie Yuanzi (聂元梓), a professor in philosophy at Peking University, made a Dazibao accusing bourgeois anti-revolutionaries of controlling the university and advocating to fight against them. On June 1st, 1966, Mao authorised the Central People's Broadcasting Station (中央人民广播电台) to broadcast Nie's Dazibao nationwide. On the same day, the PD published an editorial titled "Sweep Away All Monsters and Demons (横扫一切牛鬼蛇神)", authored by a key member of the CCRSG - Chen Boda. Chen highly complimented Mao's class struggle agenda, and loosely defined "monsters and demons" as the "Four Olds (四旧)"— "*old ideas, culture, customs and habits*" (Wang, 2003, p.81) that were supposed to be eliminated. Chen's call for eliminating the Four Olds, compounded by the official endorsement of Nie's Dazibao, drew public attention, especially from those who resided in Beijing. On the next day, June

2nd, 1966, the PD published Nie's Daizibao along with an editorial titled "*Cheer Up for a Dazibao made by Peking University* (欢呼北京大学的一张大字报)", sending another strong signal specifically to university students. Originally in Beijing, university students well interpreted the signal as Mao's call for conducting a revolution to "*form completely new proletarian ideas, culture, customs and habits*" (Ye, 2004, p.36). In response, these students began initiating strikes to protest courses imbued with the Four Olds and weaponising Dazibao on campuses to identify those who designed, delivered or approved these courses and publicly accuse them of being counter-revolutionaries. These students labelled themselves the "Red Guards (红卫兵)" (hereafter "the RG"), namely, the revolutionary supporters and defenders of Mao and his revolutionary path against counter-revolutionaries (Rosen, 2019).

As the RG caused growing chaos in universities, Liu and Deng expressed their concern to Mao and proposed to intervene. However, they misinterpreted Mao's reaction and attitude to their proposal and had "*the illusion of Mao's support*" of the intervention (Schrift, 2001, p.37), thus sending work teams (工作组) to universities to appease and dismiss the RG. On August 5th, 1966, Mao himself wrote a Dazibao and published "*My Dazibao: Bombard the Headquarters* (我的一张大字报—炮打司令部)" in the PD. In his Dazibao, while explicitly praising Nie's Dazibao and the two aforementioned editorials, Mao covertly attacked Liu and Deng by politicising their dispatchment of work teams as a political stain:

"*China's first Marxist-Leninist big-character poster and Commentator's article on it in the PD are indeed superbly written! Comrades, please read them again! But in the last*

*fifty days or so some leading comrades from the central down to the local levels have acted in a diametrically opposite way. Adopting the reactionary stand of the bourgeoisie, they have enforced a bourgeois dictatorship and struck down the surging movement of the Great Cultural revolution of the Proletariat…They have puffed up the arrogance of the bourgeoisie and deflated the morale of the proletariat…*"

The publication of Mao's Dazibao legitimised Chen's call for eliminating the Four Olds and students' then protests and strikes, signaling his intention to marginalise Liu and Deng from the CCP's power centre (Dietrich, 1998). On August 8th, Mao directed the Central Committee of the CCP to pass the bill of "*The Central Committee of the CCP's Decision Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (中共中央关于无产阶级文化大革命的决定)", calling for "an attack on political enemies believed to be undermining the revolution" (Ho, 2011, p.690). The CR formally erupted (Schrift, 2001).

The original call for attacking political enemies came with muddled details, thus making both ordinary Chinese people and the CCP officials unclear about how to carry out the CR (Leese, 2013). Mao's next move provided the public with important hints. On August 18th, 1966, Mao, for the first time, reviewed (接见) thousands of the RG that rallied and paraded at Tiananmen Square[5]. His review signalised his personal endorsement with the legitimacy of the RG, making the RG the task force of the CR (Ye, 2004; Zheng, 2006). On August 20th, 1966, the Mao-supercharged RG in Beijing started to proactively shift their attention from crafting Dazibao to criticise the Four Olds on university campuses to

[5] Mao reviewed the RG troops for a total of eight times until the end of November in 1966 (Leese, 2013).

conducting destructive activities on streets (Ho, 2011), known as the Elimination of the Four Olds Campaign (破四旧运动, hereafter "the EFO campaign").

As neither Mao nor the CCRSG provided specific guidelines helping define the "Four Olds", from late August 1966, the Beijing RG started to aggressively destroy a wide range of objects that they thought of as the Four Olds. In the same period, fanned by the CCRSG's idea of revolutionary networking (大串联), the RG began to march to different cities across the country (Esherick et al., 2006; Ho, 2006), spreading destructive activities all over the country. As Ye (2004, p.39) has explained:

"*Any objects, as long as they were classified as 'monsters and demons' and 'capitalists' tumors', could be subject to destruction [e.g., being smashed or burned] by the Red Guards travelling from different places in the country. These objects include, for instance, Buddhism statues and temples, Christian crosses, Bibles and other religious items/sites; a large number of precious ancient artworks, such as the Dunhuang Cave Murals, ancient books and paintings/calligraphies, even rare species of animals living in forests… under Mao's and local governments' acquiescence, the Red Guards also forced their way into residents' homes to search houses and confiscate residents' properties, such as bicycles, watches, radios, gold. These [confiscated] objects were either flamed or taken by the Red Guards themselves*".

While the CCRSG put the Four Olds in flames nationwide, it also attempted to restore Mao's faded image to make it shine again. Directed by Jiang Qing, the Mao-appointed Deputy Director of the CCRSG, a variety of state apparatuses were mobilised to construct rhetorical flatteries around Mao (Leese, 2013). In journals, newspapers, magazines and

books, the propagandic and political apparatuses closely worked together to publish articles authored by journalists and all ranks of party members in the theme of glorifying Mao and Mao's Thought. In these publications, Mao was constructed as a living god (Schell, 1977) and repetitiously addressed as the Great Saviour of People (人民的大救星), the Red Sun (红太阳), the Greatest and Talented Marxism-Leninism Theoretician (最伟大的最天才的马克思列宁主义理论家), the Great Helmsman, Commander, and Teacher (伟大的舵手,统领和导师). Accordingly, Mao's Thought was considered as invincible (战无不胜的), and his directives as the lighthouse (灯塔), and the absolutely correct supreme directives (绝对正确的最高指示). At the same time, intellectual apparatuses consisting of all levels of schools made Mao's Thought a mandatory course across the nation. Scholars, writers, dramatists, poets, musicians and painters frequently produced essays, books, plays, poems, songs and paintings to laud Mao's extraordinary legacy of having led the party and the Red Army to defeat both Japanese invaders and the well-equipped KMT troops in the Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War (Barmé, 1996). With multiple state apparatuses' endeavours, the Mao cult (Barmé, 1996) was born.

To help strengthen Mao's cult figure, the CCRSG mobilised artefact factories to produce different objects (hereafter "Mao products") bearing Mao's image and writings (e.g., the Mao badges, the Quotations, the statues of Mao, the ceramic tea ware with and large-size poster of Mao's portrait, see Barmé, 1996, Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001). These Mao products were carried and used by the RG in different activities nationwide, thus helping spread the Mao cult on a large scale. One of the most well-known occasions wherein Mao

products were extensively used was the Struggle Session (批斗会). In the CR, the struggle session was a collective gathering aiming at publicly "down(ing) with" (打倒) specific individuals who were considered as class enemies (Ho, 2006; Zheng, 2006), "*the binary opposites of those who were Red*" (Chan et al., 2015, p.69). Specifically, it involved publicly humiliating and torturing people who were classified into the "Five Black Categories" (黑五类), including landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad-influencers and rightists (地富反坏右) (Dietrich, 1998). The struggle session was covertly prompted by Jiang Qing since the mid 1966 when she delivered a public speech to the RG in Beijing:

"*You cannot beat someone's mistaken thoughts out of them, but for beating to occur during a revolutionary outburst is not a bad thing. Chairman Mao has said, 'if good people beat bad people, it serves them right; if bad people beat good people, the good people achieve glory; if good people beat good people, it is a misunderstanding; without beating you do not get acquainted and then no longer need to beat them'*" (Walder, 2012, p.149).

With Jiang Qing's endorsement imbued with quotes from Mao, attending "down with"-themed struggle sessions that were usually organised and carried out by the RG became mandatory for all Chinese people on a daily basis (Ho, 2006; Zuo, 1991). According to Leese, (2013), with the RG's efforts, the use of Mao products became a ritual in struggle sessions. In terms of space arrangement, large-size Mao portraits were either mounted in wood frames and carried by the RG, or hung on the wall located in the centre of the scene. In terms of personal dress code, pinning the badges on chests and carrying the Quotations

in hands were required for all participants to comply with. Prior to and during struggle sessions, some quotations from Mao were read aloud by the RG to verbally justify different crimes assigned to the Black Fives Categories. To showcase their loyalty towards Mao in front of the Black Fives Categories, some RG even removed their tops and pinned the badges in the flesh (Schrift, 2001). At the end of the struggle sessions, the RG cheered the Quotations again and declared the victory of Mao and Mao's Thought over the Black Fives Categories. In addition to the struggle sessions, Mao products were also extensively used in other activities, such as the EFO campaign, wherein the RG pinned the badges on their chests and cheered the Quotations while conducting destructive missions (Ho, 2006; Zheng, 2006).

Between February 1967 and September 1968, under Mao's acquiescence, the RG carried out the "power-seizure (夺权运动)" movement and formed the "Revolutionary Committees (革命委员会)", on which Mao served as Chairman (Leese, 2013). In this movement, the Revolutionary Committees replaced all local CCP branches and authorities, as well as the CCP committees (党委会) and Trade Unions (工会) within factories, schools and other institutions, with the RG members (ibid.). Motivated by Jiang Qing's encouragement of the revolutionary networking, the RG quickly gained control over cities and organisations across the country and started to cast a gaze on Chinese people's ways of living (Schrift, 2001). What people could see and how they should behave were subject to discipline and regulation. As Wang (2003, p.81) has presented:

"*Signboards of shops, factories, streets that contained Chinese characters with the names of former celebrities, traditional values, and historical significance were smashed*

*because they carried bourgeois, feudal, and colonial connotations. Any form of religious practice was forbidden except for the worship of Mao Zedong. People who kept a stylist hairstyle and garment fashion were physically attacked on the street. Any pleasure entertainment and artistic endeavo[u]r was condemned and criticised publicly as petty bourgeois tastes. Traditional literature, plays, films and art works, including those produced after 1949, were under general attack and criticism and proletariat model works were selected, made, and recommended to the general public".*

While the RG seized power in different cities and institutions, their passion for Mao products was also diffused to wherever they showed up, helping distribute Mao products to every corner of the country (Schrift, 2001). As a result, the worship of Mao was spread countrywide, turning the CCP into a political religion (Zuo, 1991). In this period, the Mao cult reached its zenith of influence on Chinese people's life. Chinese people followed the RG and perceived the use of Mao products as the way to express their love for and loyalty to Mao. They pinned Mao badges on their chests and fixed Mao portraits on the central wall in their living rooms. In family, school and at workplace, people developed a worship-based daily ritual towards Mao's portraits called "*asking for instructions in the morning and reporting back in the evening towards Chairman Mao* (早请示晚汇报)" (Barmé, 1996). As Leese (2013, p.195) has explained in the example of students:

"*In the morning, they [students] take the problems accruing from the [class] struggle…and consult Chairman Mao's works for instructions. In the evening, they compare the thoughts and problems encountered during the day with the teachings of Chairman Mao and carry out a self-criticism*".

During 1967 and 1968, the demonstration of loyalty to Mao soared, igniting the passion of the grassroots for inventing different collective activities that further consolidated the Mao cult. For instance, the "Loyalty Dance (忠字舞)" was invented and performed by the public. The "Chairman Mao Quotation Gymnastics (毛主席语录体操)" and the "Wishing Chairman Mao Eternal Live Taijiquan (敬祝毛主席安寿无疆太极拳)" were invented in Shanghai, published in local newspapers in 1967 and frequently performed by the public until the early 1970s.

Along with the growing agitation of the RG and the success of restoring Mao's image and authority, on October 13th, 1968, Liu and Deng, having been marginalised in the party since 1966, were officially removed from all of their positions (Dietrich, 1998). Though Deng's CCP membership was retained under Mao's intervention, Liu was expelled from the party and arrested, disappearing from the public view. However, according to Leese (2013), since late 1968, Mao became uncomfortable with being worshiped by all Chinese people on a daily basis, as he was under the impression that the manufacturing of the Mao cult was advocated and handled by some party members for their personal political gains. Accordingly, Mao, on both public and private occasions, repeatedly expressed in verbal or written form his intention of stopping worshiping him. Meanwhile, Mao was concerned about the chaos caused by the RG, who continuously flared and even caused clashes with the PLA in conducting destructive activities amid the EFO campaign and the "power-seizure" movement (Esherick et al., 2006; Zheng, 2006). In a bid to avoid being used by some party members and stop the RG's chaos, in December 1968, Mao and his cabinet initiated the "Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside (上山下乡, hereafter 'the Sending Down')" movement, labelling China's youths, mostly the RG, as "young

intellectuals" (知识青年) and urging them to "*develop their talents to the full*" (Dietrich, 1998, p.199) in rural areas. Implemented in the beginning of 1969, the "Sending Down" movement sent the RG as "young intellectuals" to rural areas and cooled down the Mao cult, remarking the end of the heyday of the CR and the demise of the RG. Most of the "young intellectuals" were not able to go back to their urban homes until the late 1970s (Dietrich, 1998).

On April 1st, 1969, in the 9th Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Lin, the instigator of producing the Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong since 1964 and the proactivist of the CR since 1966, was officially recognised as the "*closet comrade-in-arms and successor of Chairman Mao* (毛主席最亲密的战友和接班人)" (Uhalley and Qiu, 1993, p.388). Seven months later, on November 12th, 1969, Liu Shaoqi, the former Chairman of China and the former Vice Chairman of the CCP, was found dead in Kaifeng, Henan province, and cremated the next day under the name of Liu Weihuang (刘卫黄) (Voice of America, 2016). Two years later, in September, 1971, according to the CCP official narrative published on the News of the Communist Party of China (http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/33837/2534894.html), Lin attempted to assassinate Mao but failed. On September 13th, 1971, Lin sought to defect to the Soviet Union flying with his family but the plane crashed in Mongolia. Lin's death provided Jiang Qing with the opportunity of having increasing trust from Mao, allowing her to forge a four-member alliance with Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Hongwen and Yao Wenyuan (Uhalley and Qiu, 1993). The four-member alliance replaced the CCRSG and empowered Jiang to take actual control over the party and the CR afterwards (Dietrich, 1998).

Regarding the Chinese market amid the CR, only a small number of state-owned light industry factories manufacturing necessities (e.g., food, sugar, oil, textile, shoes, medical supplies, matches) were permitted to remain open (Riskin, 1987). Necessities went through the commodities distribution system that Liu and Deng had introduced in 1964. Under this system, ration coupons for necessities[6] (e.g., grains, oil, meat, fish, egg, textile) were allocated to Chinese people according to the number of family members and their ages (Wang, 2003). With ration coupons and money, Chinese people could purchase necessities from state-owned Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (供销社) nationwide (Riskin, 1987). However, although the commodities distribution system helped many families' calorie intake stay above the starvation threshold and prevented another massive scale of famine from happening, it did not make the Chinese consumer goods market prosper for three reasons. First, due to interruptions by routine struggle sessions that were mandatory to factory workers, the production capacity of factories was dramatically compromised and an extreme shortage of necessity supplies was caused (Riskin, 1987). Second, since Mao directed the CCP to define the marketplace and the free movement of goods as manifestations of "*capitalist tendencies*" (Riskin, 1987, p.192), all private and commercial trades were strictly banned and subject to being eliminated by the RG. Advertisements of consumer goods were almost absent for a decade (Tse et al., 1989). Compounded by the low production capacity of consumer goods, the absence of free markets resulted in insufficient motivations for manufacturers to increase production (Riskin, 1987). Third, due to Mao's call for having a larger population to implement

[6] Since 1976, the ration coupons started to cover wider ranges of consumer goods, such as cake, cigarette, cotton, soap, bicycle, television, washing machine, watch, and radio (Wang, 2003).

"*people's war—uniting the majority and crowding out the minority*" (Howden and Zhou, 2015, p.229), the Chinese population had a two billion increase in the CR (Riskin, 1987). The surge of population worsened the shortage in necessities supply, sinking millions of Chinese people into another famine right after the one that had occurred during the Great Leap Forward period between 1958 and 1962 (Riskin, 1987). By 1976, Chinese people's "*living standard was even worse than in 1957 and public disillusionment grew*" (Wang, 2003, p.89).

After many political campaigns, on September 9th, 1976, Mao died, marking the termination of the CR. Jiang's four-member alliance was labelled as the Gang of Four (四人帮), denounced and dismissed in 1977 (Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001). Since 1978, Deng Xiaoping gradually went back to power in the CCP and worked on restoring the reputation and party ranks of most purged officials (Riskin, 1987). These efforts won popularity and respect from the CCP members and the public for Deng, providing solid grounds for him to completely dismiss Mao's emphasis on class struggles (Leese, 2013). In late 1978, Deng steered the country towards economic reformation as a remedy for healing the national economy and coined the Open Door Policy (改革开放政策) amid welcoming foreign investments and encouraging the development of consumerism and market-driven economy (Zhao and Belk, 2008). Two years later, in 1980, all members of the Gang of Four were accused of having cheated and taken advantage of Mao driven by their power hunger in the CR, and eventually imprisoned. Under Deng's leadership, on June 27, 1981, in the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the CCP issued a historic document, the "*Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic*

*of China*" (关于建国以来党的若干历史问题的决议). The document officially and entirely denounced the CR, symbolising the CCP's determination of abandoning Mao's idea of prioritising class struggles and its assurance of the continuous implementation of the Open Door Policy. Four decades later, the adoption of the policy has brought China prosperity, making the country the second largest economy in the world, and Chinese people the most powerful buyers of consumer goods across the globe.

### 3.1.3 Mao Badges

In the CR, although necessities were undersupplied, the goods bearing Mao's image and quotations produced for the cultivation of the Mao cult, namely, the aforesaid Mao products were dramatically oversupplied across the country. Among different Mao products (e.g., the Quotations, the statues of Mao, the ceramic tea ware with and large-size poster of Mao's portrait), this study focuses on the Mao badges for several reasons. First and foremost, Mao badges were the most plenteous products that were massively produced and extensively promoted by the CCP in a bid to help Mao restore his image and power (Barmé, 1996; Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008). Despite that the production of necessities for Chinese people was in trouble, the manufacturing of Mao badges was carried out in full thrusts nationwide (Barmé, 1996). An estimated three to five billion badges were officially produced and distributed to over 90% of the Chinese population for free by the CCP between 1966 and 1976 (Hubber, 2006; Schrift, 2001). Second, in the CR, Mao badges were the most easy-to-use (e.g., pinned on chests) and conspicuous (e.g., consisting of visually attractive colours such as red, golden and silver) symbols of Mao that were blended into individual Chinese people's daily lives on all occasions (Schrift,

2001). Other Mao products required people to either have some specific abilities in order to use, or share with others due to the design. For instance, Mao statues and posters were designed as large objects that were meant to be placed on desks or mounted on walls centring in living rooms and shared with family members. The Quotations, though commonly carried by individual Chinese people, required literacy and comprehension skills that at least 50% of the entire population did not have in the CR[7]. Finally, there is scant research attention paid to studying the CCP's weaponisation of the badges as a powerful political tool to cultivate the Mao cult and help the CCP align Chinese people's lives with the CR agenda. Scholars in economic, sociological, anthropological, historical and political studies have looked at or mentioned Mao badges and acknowledged the importance of these badges as the medium of studying the CCP-guided ideological transitions from communism to consumerism and the changing consumption patterns of Chinese consumers since 1949 (Barmé, 1996; Benewick, 1995; Bergstrom, 2012; Clark, 2008; Esherick et al., 2006; Gitting, 2006; Hooper, 1994; Hubbert, 2006; Landsberger, 2002; Leese, 2013; Qian, 2020; Riskin, 1987; Schrift and Pilkey, 1996; Wardęga, 2012). However, their focus was either on examining the supplementary role of Mao cult in sparking Chinese historical, sociocultural, socioeconomic and even religious ritual changes in the past, or on studying the surgent market value of the badges as collectible relics in modern days. Therefore, an investigation concentrating on the badges per se contributes to unveiling the uncompromised power of the badges in helping the CCP regime control the conduct of the massive Chinese population in the CR.

[7] According to the website of the Central People's Government of China (http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2009-09/06/content_1410369.htm, in the CR, at least 50% of the entire Chinese population were illiterate.

Although scholarly inquiries centring on the badges are minimal, studies conducted by Schrift (2001) and Wang (2008) are two noticeable exceptions. Both books have contextualised the badges in modern Chinese history, providing an uncut view of the badges' origin dating back to the 1930s, their evolutions prior to and during the CR, and most importantly, their heyday in production and consumption between 1966 and 1969. Despite the shared research focus, their works are different in three ways: data sources, research objectives and research scopes. Schrift's (2001) work, *Biography of a Chairman Mao Badges: The Creation and Mass Consumption of a Personality Cult,* draws on archival data from magazines, memoirs, academic books and ethnographic field works (e.g., interviews and personal observations). Schrift's (2001) goal is to examine the CCP's effort in using the design and distribution of badges to establish the Mao cult, and to investigate the consumption of the badges during and after the CR until the 1990s. Wang's (2008) work, *Chairman Mao Badges: Symbols and Slogans of the Cultural Revolution*, rests on academic publications in Chinese modern history and 348 Mao badges collections from the British Museum. She aims to "*offer a reference guide for navigating through the symbols and slogans of the Cultural Revolution in different media*" (Wang, 2008, p.v.). Notably, Wang (2008, p.19) acknowledges her use of Schrift's (2001) work, as well as studies that Schrift (2001) has referred to, as key resources to construct her account of the badge history. Both Schrift (2001) and Wang's (2008) works and studies they have used are extensively cited in subsequent studies in the CR and modern Chinese history (e.g., Clark, 2008; Ho, 2016; Kendall, 2019; Leese, 2013; Li, 2014; Lu, 2017; Tu, 2011). In this thesis, the presentation of the history of the badges mainly draws upon Schrift (2001) and Wang's (2008) works, and other up-to-date publications are referred to only if they

contain sources that neither Schrift (2001) nor Wang (2008) have used.

***The Early Days of the Mao Badges.*** The first Mao badge was produced in the 1930s[8] in Yan'an, Shanxi province (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008), where the CCP established its new territory under Mao's leadership in the aforesaid Long March. Students from the Ani-Japanese University in Yan'an (延安抗大) used empty toothpaste tubes to handcraft badges featuring not only Mao but also other communists, such as Lenin, Stalin, Marx and Engels (Schrift, 2001). The first finely-crafted Mao badge was made in the same period by a teacher at the Lvshun Art Academy, who craved a wood mold and filled it with liquified tin (Schrift, 2001). Until 1949, most badges were designed and handcrafted by Mao's grassroot supporters who "*used photographs of Mao and commemorative slogans, unlike the later trend of using political proclamations*" (Schrift, 2001, p.62). In this period, to mark important party conferences (e.g., the Yan'an Meeting), the CCP was also involved in crafting a small number of badges bearing images of Mao with other top-ranked party leaders (e.g., Zhu De), and of Mao's frontal profile (Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001).

In 1949, to commemorate the establishment of the new China, the CCP issued the "establishment badges" (Schrift, 2001). Establishment badges did not come with Mao's portrait but carried symbols representing the new country, the party, and communism, such as "*A five-star red flag and the Central Communist Party flag depicting a sickle and ax(e) waving over Tian'Anmen…[and] pictures of wheat and ribbons*" (Schrift, 2001,

[8] Note that the dispute of when the first Mao badge was produced still remains in the literature. In Barmé's (1996, p.40) study, for example, the first badge was produced "in late 1948".

p.62). Since 1949, the CCP centralised and increased the production of badges without Mao's image for commemorative purposes. In 1951, to commemorate the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea (抗美援朝), the CCP brought Mao's portrait back, designed and produced some badges as military insignias to award to soldiers returning home from Korea[9]. These badges were made of yellow copper in the shape of five-tar with "*Mao's portrait in the middle and a peace dove on the back*" (Schrift, 2001, p.62), and with a slogan reading "*in memory of the anti-American Korean War* (纪念抗美援朝)" inscribed on the back (Schrift, 2001, p.63). Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the CCP produced similar commemorative badges bearing Mao's portrait and distributed them to people such as students, soldiers, and model workers (劳模) who were involved in or had contribution to different sociocultural, socioeconomic and military events (e.g., the commemorative badges of the Sino-Soviet Friendship, Tibetan Liberation, the construction of Xi'an hydraulic power station) (Schrift, 2001). These badges were typically in the shape of rectangular, round or five-star, and painted in two colours selected from red, yellow/golden and silver, featuring "*Mao's portrait skirted by a sunrise*" (Schrift, 2001, p.65) on the centre. Notably, between 1950s and early 1960s, although the state controlled most of badges design, production and distribution (Wang, 2008), it acquiesced in private manufacturers' involvement. For instance, the Shanghai Gold-Work Manufacturers produced and advertised a number of badges made of gold and silver with price tags at around $700 dollars in 1950 (Schrift, 2001).

[9] Note that Schrift (2001) also mentions that, during the Korean war, these badges were packed as gifts (a long with other objects such as "military postcards, cigarettes, teacups and towels" [p.63]) and distributed to Korean soldiers by Chinese delegation who visited Korea.

***The Heyday of Mao Badges in the Cultural Revolution: 1966-1969.*** Mao badges were best known for the close association with the CR (Barmé, 1996; Esherick et al., 2006; Gitting, 2006; Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001; Schrift and Pilkey, 1996; Wang, 2008; Wardęga, 2012; White, 1994). In early 1966, prior to the official declaration of the CR movement, wearing Mao badges was not a visible phenomenon (Wang, 2008). On August 10th, 1966, some badges were worn by a small number of people who were honoured as the party members' representatives (党代表) to meet Mao in person and attend the 9th Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008[10]). These badges were among some 32,000 pieces made in July of that year by state-owned badge factories, such as the Shanghai United Badge Factory (上海联合徽章厂) and Beijing Red Flag Badge Factory (北京红旗证章厂) (Wang, 2008).

The rise of the badges began with the heated atmosphere of the CR and the rise of the RG, the earlier mentioned nationwide organisation that was the backbone of the CR between 1966 and 1969. The trend of wearing the badges was initiated on August 18th, 1966, the first time Mao personally reviewed the parade of thousands of RG who pinned the badges on their chests (Wang, 2008). In this event, top-ranked CCP members standing around

[10] Note that Wang's (2008) expression on the Chinese National Congress in the CR may be incorrect. According to the official website of the Central People's Government of China (http://www.gov.cn/2011lh/content_1796060.htm), the Congress was suspended since January 1965 (the 3rd Congress) and not resumed until January 1975 (the 4th Congress). However, Wang (2008) repetitively mentioned different Congresses in her work covering the period between 1966 and 1976 (e.g., p.19, 21).

In Schrift's (2001) work, the Congress meant to be the Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (中国共产党全国代表大会) instead of the National Congress (人民代表大会). Given that Wang (2008, p.19) clearly specified that Schrift's (2001) was one of major sources that she referred to, Wang's (2008) incorrect address of the title and the nature of the Congress may be caused by her misreading of Schrift's (2001) work.

Mao were already seen to have Mao badges pinned on their chests (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008). Days after the parade, since late August, 1966, the RG began to travel across the country as a response to the aforesaid revolutionary networking called upon by the CCRSG, thus quickly spreading the badges trend outside Beijing and arousing a significant increase of the badges demand nationwide (Schrift, 2001). The surgent demand was met by state-owned badge factories wherein workers extended their working hours and shifts to produce Mao badges day and night (Schrift, 2001). In less than two months, by the end of September 1966, state-owned factories managed to make their production capacity a remarkable 3,000% increase and produced an estimated 1 to 1.3 million badges (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008). However, the production increase was soon left behind Chinese people's new demand that continuously soared as a result of Mao's subsequent seven times reviewing of the badge-pinned RG throughout 1966. Accordingly, the production of the badges was prioritised over that of other necessities (e.g., rice) ever since (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2003; Wang, 2008).

In the CR, the badges production was not centrally controlled by the state (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008). While the state had its own badge factories running, it adopted the what Schrift (2001, p.691) called the "*decentralisation*" approach that permitted organisations and nearly all individuals to design and make the badges (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008). For individuals, except those who belonged to the aforesaid "Five Black Categories", all were allowed to produce the badges using their homemade molds or molds circulated among friends (Wang, 2008). For organisations, they had the option to either set up their own badge factories or commission other manufacturers to customise different types of badges (Wang, 2008) (e.g., with the organisation's name or different Quotations

embossed/engraved on the badges). As Schrift (2001, p.69) has explained:

*"[During the CR], the badges production did not require official permits. Individuals borrowed and traded molds of Mao's profile, creating their own homemade versions. Designers and manufacturers included the PLA, Red Guard units and rebel organisations, arts and crafts factories, government offices, schools, mines, businesses, blacksmiths, hardware operations, work units [单位] and individuals…[As a result,] at least twenty thousand different organisations produced badges".*

Between February 1967 and September 1968, organisational badges manufacturers also get support from the "*Respectfully Manufacture Mao Zedong Badges Office*" (Wang, 2008, p.20), which was established nationwide by the earlier mentioned Revolutionary Committees in the "power-seizure" movement. Instead of overseeing the production, the office functioned to facilitate the production by "*helping with designs, equipment, raw materials and advice*" (Wang, 2008, p.23). With the office's support, some factories were built from scratch specifically for making the badges, and others were converted from those originally producing arts and crafts prior to the CR (Wang, 2008). Throughout the country, so many new badge factories quickly mushroomed that it was even "*impossible to compile a definitive and comprehensive list*" (Wang, 2008). As all badge factories enjoyed the priority of getting industrial supplies (e.g., financial investment, allocation of production facilities, labour recruitment, and electricity supply), their production capacity was significantly cranked up, allowing the badges to be readily available in China (Schrift, 2001).

The decentralisation approach was effective in two ways. First, it diversified materials

used in the badges production. Unlike the badges made with copper before the CR, most badges in the CR were made of readily accessible and easy-to-manipulate materials (Schrift, 2001). While aluminium was used in large quantities by state-owned factories, at least 26 different materials were adopted by non-state-owned factories and individuals. Producers selected materials according to their material accessibility or their material handling specialisations. New factories in southern China, the area where the bamboo was native to, were set up to craft bamboo badges. New factories in industrial hubs (e.g., Jiangsu and Zhejiang) wherein plastic was easily accessible were built to make plastic badges, which could even glow in the dark. In addition, ceramic specialised factories produced porcelain badges, former chemistry glassware producers made glass badges, and previous enamelware manufacturers of cooking, drinking, dining and personal hygiene and healthcare products produced enamel badges. Though in small quantities, some special badges were still found to have been made of exotic materials such as gold, silver, tin, Plexiglas, stone and bone (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008). Second, by permitting all individuals and organisations to produce the badges, the decentralisation approach ignited people's passion for the badges, motivating them to contribute to not only the massive production of the badges but also the diversification of badges design. It was not uncommon for individuals and factories to joyfully compete with each other for the badges design in terms of appearance, material, size and craftsmanship (Schrift, 2001). By the end of 1969, the highly mobilised individuals and institutions, along with state-owned factories, produced a remarkable three to five billion badges in over one hundred thousand different themes (Schrift, 2001).

Although produced in tremendous numbers, the badges have some common features in

design. First, most badges are in the circular shape, though others are "*oval-shaped, flag-shaped, rectangular, and heart-shaped*" (Schrift, 2001, p.70), as well as five-star-shaped, flame fire torch-shaped, and diamond-shaped (Wang, 2008). Second, most aluminium badges have red as the background, and porcelain ones have white (Schrift, 2001) or light yellow (Wang, 2008). Most badges, regardless of materials, are typically of two colours selected from red, blue, yellow/gold, green, white (Schrift, 2001) and silver (Wang, 2008). Third, almost every badge has Mao's portrait in the design. As Schrift (2001, p.71) has explained: "*In the Cultural Revolution badges, Mao's bright portrait covered the centre of the badge, raised above the background…Manufacturers embellished their wares with carved or painted characters and designs surrounding Mao's image…Portraits of Mao reflected a variety of poses in his youth, middle years, and older ages*". Notably, Mao's portrait on most badges shows his left face to symbolise his attitude of "Anti-Rightist" (Schrift, 2001), which persisted since the 1950s and caused his launch of the previously mentioned "Anti-Rightist" in 1957. Fourth, on the front of most badges, Chinese characters typically appear under Mao's portrait. These Chinese characters either express admiration of Mao and good wishes for Mao (Schrift, 2001), or show some slogans from the Quotations or Mao's poems (Wang, 2008). Instead of having Chinese characters in the design, some badges, like those in the British Museum collection in Wang's (2008) work, include objects that symbolise achievements of Mao's leadership and his revolution (e.g., warships, Tian'anmen, red flags, rockets, and the Dong Feng train [东风火车]), or that signal people's loyalty towards Mao. For instance, with the Red Sun symbolising Mao and sunflowers embodying the Chinese people, some badges show sunflowers bloom towards Mao's portrait; since the Chinese character "Zhong" [loyalty, 忠] consists of two

characters "middle (中)" and "heart (心)", some badges show the "Zhong" centred in a red heart under Mao's portrait[11]. Fifth, except some large badges designed to be placed on a table, almost every badge has a brooch attached to its back, which allows each user to securely pin it on fabrics, and information about the year of production, the name of the badge manufacturer or the organisation that commissioned the production (e.g., names of an RG faction, a work unit) embossed on under the brooch.

***The Heyday of the Mao Badges Consumption in the Cultural Revolution: 1966-1969.***

In the CR, consumption of the badges on a massive scale happened soon after Mao's first review of the RG's parade at Tian'anmen Square in August 1966. State-owned badge factories quickly manufactured over one million badges in Beijing and distributed them to local Xinhua Bookstores. As some badges collectors recalled in Schrift's (2001, p.66) study:

*"…when the Beijing Red Flag Badge Factory distributed the fist badges at Xinhua Bookstore in 1966…lines of people formed on Wangfujing Street throughout the night in anticipation of getting a badge when the bookstore opened in the morning*".

While the RG initiated the trend of wearing the badges in Beijing and disseminated it all over China on their countrywide revolutionary networking trips, other institutions also contributed to fuelling the trend. In May 1967, the PLA General Political Department issued every PLA member with two badges (Wang, 2008). By August 1967, state-run stores selling books, and arts and crafts goods in urban areas made the badges readily

[11] Notably, in Wang's (2008) collection of the badges, some badges were embossed English characters on the back, such as "LONG LIVE CHAIRMAN MAO" (p.201)

accessible to local residents (Wang, 2008) at the cost of 20 to 40 cents each (Schrift, 2001). Work units and schools issued their members and students with the badges for free (Schrift, 2001). Allegedly, Chinese diplomatic delegations and medical teams also carried the badges on their trips to foreign countries and gifted the badges to local residents and officials[12].. The efforts of different institutional apparatuses in spreading the badges resulted in Chinese consumers' extensive badges ownership. By early 1968, it was not uncommon for a typical Chinese consumer to own as many as 12 badges (Wang, 2008). Except those who were in the "Five Black Categories", all Chinese people had the badges pinned on their chests (Wang, 2008), making these badges a part of their daily lives.

The phenomenal scale of badges consumption was generated not solely by institutional apparatuses' efforts of promotion, but also by both the RG and ordinary Chinese citizens' passion for consuming and appropriating the badges. The RG used the badges as a powerful symbol to show themselves as an exclusive group that was endorsed by Mao himself. Wherever the RG went, the Mao's portrait embossed on the badges they wore constantly reminded the public of Mao's endorsement of the RG, helping them rationalise and conduct improprieties without interruptions, criticisms, or legal consequences (Schrift, 2001). Consequently, it was not uncommon to witness the RG equipped with Mao badges loot residential apartments and historical sites in the name of eliminating the Four Olds (Ma, 1997), or send someone they resented to struggle sessions for public humiliation and torture by fabricating alleged counter-revolutionary evidence (Ma, 1997; Niu Niu, 1995). The small, portable and readily visible badges thus entitled the RG with

[12] Notably, this mention originates from propagandic sources (e.g., articles from the party-own journal "China Reconstructs") that Schrift (2001) and Wang (2008) cited in their works.

the privilege of conducting any activities in the name of Mao, or as if having been authorised by Mao himself. In addition, the badges provided those young people of less prestigious backgrounds with the opportunity to shuffle their political status, making the power of shaping others' lives not exclusive to "*an elite few*" (Schrift, 2001, p.110). Since Mao badges were readily available to nearly all Chinese youths, the extensive availability allowed almost any young person to claim his or her RG membership, have opportunities to participate in various movements and seek chances to rise. In this way, many individual youths of humble backgrounds gradually became leaders of different RG factions and gained power of ruling factories, schools, and even cities, especially in the aforementioned "power-seizure" movement.

Apart from the RG, ordinary Chinese consumers, clouded by the urgent need of demonstrating respect for and loyalty (忠) to Mao, also opted for appropriating the badges to help sustain their meaningful lives (Leese, 2013) from four perspectives. First, since the badges with Mao's portrait served as "immediate visual codes of loyalty" (Schrift, 2001, p.135) to Mao, wearing them enabled Chinese consumers to signal their compliance with the codes. Due to the Chinese character "忠" literally referring to "being loyal to someone at heart (忠心于)", pinning the badges on chests close to hearts allowed Chinese consumers to publicly visualise the character of "Zhong", namely, putting Mao in their hearts. This approach of visualising "Zhong" was reported to have shielded consumers from the RG's political improprieties (e.g., being classified into the "Black Five Categories" and sent to struggle sessions). On the contrary, mishandling the badges (e.g., accidently dropping a badge into the mud with Mao's portrait facing down) often led consumers to be accused as counter-revolutionaries (Schrift, 2001). Second, Chinese

consumers used the multi-colour design badges in pursuit of fashion. In the CR, most garments were designed in the unisex style of Mao suits or army uniforms and in one or two colours selected from white, dark green, dark blue, grey or black. Being fashionable by wearing or making exotic garments was officially considered as a petty bourgeoisie behaviour and thus banned (Ye, 2004). However, "*display(ing) a voluminous array of colours, materials, and designs that were not allowed*", Mao badges thus helped Chinese consumers escape from their dull-coloured lives (Schrift, 2001, p.137). Third, consumers proactively sought for the badges with the most up-to-date designs (e.g., the combinations of colours, themes and appearance) to construct their distinctive identities. Although seekers of rare badges often argued that novel badges enabled them to appear more loyal towards Mao than others, as Schrift (2001) has explained, they were largely motivated by their eagerness of being unique. Since a large number of people dressed alike and wore identical badges distributed by their work units, a few individuals wearing exotic badges thus could easily develop the sense of distinctiveness. Fourth, benefiting from the oversupply of Mao badges, Chinese consumers appropriated the badges to sustain their old lifestyles that would otherwise be classified as the "Four Olds". For instance, Chinese consumers used Mao badges to sustain their social networking ("Guanxi [关系]" in Chinese) that was typically forged and maintained by reciprocal gifting. In occasions such as family gathering, wedding, friends visiting and romantic encounter, consumers used the badges as gifts for maintaining their Guanxi with friends and/or family members, or for initiating a romantic Guanxi (Wang, 2008). In some cases, as Schrift (2001) has mentioned, ordinary citizens leveraged Mao badges by giving them to local governmental officials in order to initiate Guanxi to have an upgrade of a spacious apartment.

Meanwhile, although free movement of goods and services was strictly banned by the CCP, consumers discreetly utilised Mao badges as a nonofficial and non-monetary currency to exchange for services (e.g., a car ride), goods or ration coupons of necessities. They also often swapped and traded the badges between friends and in the black-market to increase the badges' value (e.g., a large badge was worth a few small badges; a small but finely crafted badge could exchange for a few large badges. See, Ma, 1995; Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008). To some extent, consumers' appropriation of the badges forged a striking badge economy that served as an alternative or a supplement to the state's planned economy (Schrift, 2001).

***The Decline of Badges Consumption in the Cultural Revolution: 1969-1976.*** On June 12th, 1969, the Central Committee of the CCP issued a decree prohibiting individuals or organisations from further producing Mao badges (Wang, 2008). This decree was an outcome produced by different concerns that Mao and the CCP had. First, in 1968, Mao repeatedly expressed his concern about many clashes that the RG had with the PLA in the "power-seizure" movement. Accordingly, he launched the aforementioned "Sending Down" movement in September to send the RG to rural areas so as to dismiss them. As the rise of the badges was largely attributed to the endorsement that Mao had repetitively given to the RG back to 1966, the ban on the badges production that was issued some six months after the initiation of the "Sending Down" signalled Mao's rather firm determination in depriving the power from the RG (Schrift, 2001). Second, Mao was also concerned that the massive-scale badges production took up vast quantities of raw materials, especially metals, that could have been used for producing military goods (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008). In April 1969, Mao explicitly stated his concern in a

discussion with RG leaders: "*Give me back my airplanes…It would be far more useful…to make airplanes to protect the nation out of the metal being expended in the production of Mao badges*" (Barmé, 1996, p.40). Third, "*the country was running out of aluminium, the primary material used to make badges*", as Schrift (2001, p.72) has explained, "*many aluminium factories went bankrupt, and a shortage of aluminium products ensued*". Along with the issue of the decree, most factories ceased production of the badges, cooling down the badges heat (Wang, 2008). According to Schrift (2001, p.73), "*only one percent of all available badges were made in 1970, and virtually no more badges were made again until Mao's death in 1976*".

In memorial of Mao, the CCP issued less than a dozen types of Mao badges soon after September 1976 (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008). At the end of 1976, the new CCP administration chaired by Mao's successor, Hua Guofeng, ordered recycling of all badges (Wang, 2008). That is, Chinese citizens were asked to turn all of their badges collections to local authorities which then sent the badges to recycle centres (Schrift, 2001). Notwithstanding this, some badges collections still have survived, either because of being kept privately as relics or because of being savaged by garbage workers from discarded garbage (Schrift, 2001).

In summary, drawing on studies that have looked at the historical evolution of the badges, this section unfolds that the badges were designed and produced by individuals and organisations that were tightly associated with the CCP in order to impel the party's CR agenda centred on the cultivation of Mao cult. When distributed to millions of Chinese consumers, the badges were appropriated by consumers striving to live in meaningful lives in the CR. Consumers not only used the badges in the state-advocated ways to show

their support to Mao, but also appropriated the badges to work on their personal identity projects, to cultivate and develop social relations based on Guanxi, and to trade for other goods and services.

Studies of the badges, especially Schrift (2001) and Wang's (2008) works, have proved the importance of the badges in the CR, and provided fruitful insights into the CCP's efforts in manufacturing and distributing the badges and Chinese consumers' practices in consuming and appropriating these badges. However, in spite of highlighting how Mao's reviews of the RG troops endorsed the badges and the RG's efforts in spreading the badges, these studies did not reveal much about how the CCP transformed the badges from rather ordinary and oversupplied objects into such powerful goods that fascinated the Chinese population for years. Aiming to scrutinise this transformation process, this thesis relies on the research methodology described in the next section, including the rationale for using articles published in the People's Daily as the data source for this thesis, and the methods of data collection and analysis.

### 3.2 Data Collection

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the CCP's direct efforts in promoting Mao badges to ignite and sustain the badges heat in the Chinese society and using the badges to serve its CR agenda. It requires unfolding the enigma of why and how billions of the rather ordinary and extensively distributed and owned Mao badges were blended into millions of Chinese people's lives and became widely embraced goods. Consistent with this objective, a qualitative approach has been adopted. More specifically, an archival-based interpretive approach has been conducted through drawing upon articles

published on the People's Daily.

### 3.2.1 The Rationale for Using the People's Daily as the Data Source

In this thesis, People's Daily (hereafter "the PD") has been selected as the data source because of its two distinctive characteristics: its propagandic nature and its special role in the CR. First, since its birth, the PD has been under the direct control of the Central Committee of the CCP. According to its official website (http://www.people.com.cn/GB/50142/104580/index.html), the PD was established on 15th June 1948 in Pingshan County, Hebei province, bearing Mao's handwriting Chinese characters reading "人民日报" as its logo. It was moved to Beijing on 15th March, 1949 and became the official newspaper (机关报) of the CCP in August 1949 and the largest newspaper outlet in China (Zhao and Belk, 2008). Since then the PD has served as the party's crucial propagandic apparatus broadcasting the party's decisions on crucial sociocultural, socioeconomic and political events. As the PD's official website explains:

"*In the past seventy years, the People's Daily proactively propagandises the Party's theories, directions, principles and policies (积极宣传党的路线方针政策) and the Central Committee's major decisions and plans (中央重大决策部署)…the Central Committee significantly values the People's Daily and provides it with strong support and close supervision in all periods of revolution, [economic] construction and [economic] reform. The Central Committee [also] provides the People's Daily with explicit directives in terms of ideologies, principles and contents that the newspaper should carry out [to the Chinese society], pointing out clear directions of propaganda, report and further development for the newspaper*" (http://www.people.com.cn/GB/50142/104580/index.html).

The propagandic nature makes the PD an effective device that records and promotes a variety of the party's political, sociocultural and socioeconomic policies established and implemented in China, and that also reflects policy changes that happen from time to time. Accordingly, the PD is subscribed by all levels and types of governmental departments and private organisations nationwide, keeping these institutions updated on policy changes on a daily basis (Xu, 1990). It is also extensively distributed to every street newspaper kiosk from urbanised cities to rural areas for the Chinese public to purchase (Zhao and Belk, 2008). Serving as the "*throat and tongue*" of the party (Hassid, 2011, p.823), the PD has been commonly considered as a vital source by scholars to understand the CCP's different moves that shape the development of the Chinese society. For instance, in consumer research, advertisements published in the PD have been used to understand how consumer goods have mirrored the party's changing attitudes towards modernisation and marketisation over time (Swanson, 1996; Tse et al., 1989). They have also been utilised to unfold the CCP's approach of politicising or depoliticising meanings embedded in certain consumer and industrial goods in a bid to encourage consumerism and private businesses that the party once strongly opposed (Czepiec, 1994; Zhao and Belk, 2008). Similarly, articles (e.g., editorials and commentaries) and images included in the PD have also been exploited in studies seeking to trace and better understand sociocultural, political and historical changes that have occurred in China since 1949 (Wang et al., 2018; Wu, 1994).

The second reason for selecting the PD as an appropriate data source for this study derives from its crucial twofold role in the CR. According to Leese (2013), from the beginning of the CR, neither the CCP nor Mao had clear, consistent or long-term oriented plans about

how to proceed with the CR. Often, policies and regulations of carrying out different events and movements changed on a daily basis. Since the PD carried the party's policies, its extensive daily distribution to all levels of governmental departments nationwide made the newspaper the major information source for local officials to interpret and implement the most up-to-date directions to conduct the CR. Meanwhile, unlike different sophisticated media sources where we can conveniently select to get news today, in the CR, newspapers[13] were the only media source that the public could access (Barmé, 1996; Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001). The PD had the privilege to be posted on the "newspaper boards [报刊栏]" located in public streets that people passed by every day. Accordingly, the PD also became the major source for Chinese citizens to develop their knowledge of the world outside their towns and outside China (Zhao and Belk, 2008).

### 3.2.2 Data Collection from the People's Daily

Data collection amid the PD was conducted between September 2017 and May 2018, from the most comprehensive database of all PD publications since 1949—Oriprobe Information Service (https://www.oriprobe.com/peoplesdaily.shtml, hereafter "the OIS"). In Quebec, the OIS was only subscribed by McGill University Library (hereafter "the MUL") and accessible on public desktop computers provided by the MUL. A BCI (i.e., Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire) library card that the author applied for and acquired from HEC Montreal granted him the access to the OIS database at the MUL,

[13] In the CR, there were three extensively circulated CCP official media outlets known as "Two newspapers and One Magazine [两报一刊]", namely, the People's Daily, the Red Flag magazine [红旗] (a party-controlled journal publishing Marxist- and Maoist-centred theoretical politic papers, Leung and Ruan, 2012), and the Guangming Daily (光明日报) (a party-controlled newspaper targeting educated elites in China, Zhao, 1998)

where he carried out all of his data collection. In the OIS database, all PD contents remained in their original typesetting and language (i.e., Chinese). Initially, the author had planned to collect both text- and image-based data from the PD. However, due to unknown technical issues of the OIS database, image contents were not displayed. Since the absence of image contents went beyond the MUL's ability to fix, the author directly contacted the OIS but received no replies. As a result, only text-based publications in the PD were available in the OIS database for the data collection.

In order to identify and glean the PD articles most relevant to the research objectives of the thesis, two criteria have been applied in the data collection. First, only PD articles published between January 1966 and December 1976 have been selected, since this thesis looks at the specific historical period of the CR. Second, since this thesis focuses on the CCP's use of Mao badges, a keyword search strategy has been applied. By searching the keyword "Chairman Mao Badges [毛主席像章]" in the OIS database, the author has collected a total of 591 articles[14] (or 1,344 pages) containing the keyword in the title and/or text. These articles vary in length, ranging from 253 to 11,000 words. Notably, among the 591 articles, 548 were published between 1966 and 1969, that is, during the heyday of the badges production, promotion and consumption (Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008), whilst the rest of 43 articles were issued between 1970 and 1976.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

[14] Although both images and texts themed in the badges were published in the PD, due to the lack of database access, the author had difficulties getting access to image-based data. As a result, in this study, text-based articles were collected as the primary data source, whilst image-based data deriving from search engines (e.g., Google) and other academic publications as the supplementary.

Focusing on scrutinising Mao badges-related articles (hereafter "badge articles") published in the PD, the data analysis of this thesis aims to understand how the CCP created the knowledge about Mao badges and how these articles contributed to helping it sustain the CR. To achieve this goal, the author has firstly reviewed all badge articles in order to develop a general sense of the construction of these articles. The 591 badge articles have been anchored in both domestic Chinese and international (across 110 countries, see Table 1) contexts in different sociocultural, socioeconomic and political scenarios, such as in daily-life scenarios (e.g., casual conversations on streets and at train stations, studying in schools), heroic scenarios (e.g., the revolutionary legends of soldiers, firefighters, workers, peasants, and students), diplomatic scenarios (e.g., international trade affairs, culture exchange events, and sports games) and political scenarios (e.g., protests against anti-Mao political campaigns organised by foreign regimes).

Among the 591 badge articles, 103 have been presented in the format of Mao badges "case study", namely, stories about people's usage and appreciation of the badges that happened in both China and foreign countries (e.g., Japan, Indonesia, the UK, and the Soviet Union). 488 articles have been presented in the format of news reporting on sociocultural, socioeconomic and political events that Mao badges and people's different uses of the badges were blended into. Besides the two presentation formats, three different writing styles authored by two alleged types of writers[15] have been found in badge articles: 1) 336 journalists' eye-witness accounts of how Mao badges enabled Chinese visitors in

[15] Note that all contents published in the PD are of propagandic nature (Edney, 2012; Edelstein and Liu, 1963; Wu, 1994). Therefore, this study does not consider or seek to assess the validity/authenticity/truthfulness of badges stories. Instead, it focuses on examining the mythmaking approach used in the construction of these stories in a bid to mythologise the badges.

foreign countries to come into contact with local residents; 2) 188 journalists' news reports on social/political movements wherein the badges were used by participants; and 3) 67 ordinary Chinese individuals' memoirs/letters elucidating their badges stories or expressing their personal passion for the badges.

An interpretive approach has been adopted for data analysis, inspired by several consumer research studies that have taken this approach to analyse texts deriving from newspapers (Humphreys, 2010), advertisements (Belk and Pollay, 1985; Thompson, 2004; Tse et al., 1989), magazines (Hirschman, 1990), television series (Hirschman, 1988), and lyrics (Schroeder and Borgerson, 1999). The usefulness of an interpretive approach has also been proved in other consumer research studies seeking to understand and reveal how discourses, myths and narratives constructed by marketers and governments in marketplaces can effectively shape public opinions on brands, companies, and industries (Calder, 1977; Cayla and Eckhardt, 2008; Holt, 2004; Humphreys, 2010; Thompson and Tian, 2008).

Following the interpretive approach, all badge articles have been qualitatively coded according to the typical three-phase procedure of open, selective [16], and theoretical coding (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990), a useful coding method for exploratory studies seeking to develop a theoretical and systematic understanding of a research topic from empirical data (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990;

[16] As Vollstedt and Rezat (2019, p.87) rightfully pointed out, "*Glaser (1978) calls this process theoretical coding; Strauss and Corbin (1990) differentiate between axial coding and selective coding, but themselves emphasize that there is not much of a difference, except at the level of abstraction*". Taking the coding methodological cue from Humphreys's (2010) study, this thesis used "selective coding" for the second phase coding, and "theoretical coding" for the third phase coding.

Vollstedt and Rezat, 2019). The same coding method has been used in consumer research works such as Humphreys's (2010) study, which is grounded in newspaper publications to explore the legitimisation of the gambling industry and the change of social discourse of gambling in the United States over time.

In the open-coding phase, the goal is to develop a wealth of codes and analyse all badge articles thoroughly. A total number of 200 codes have been generated, representing a wide range of meanings and symbols that the CCP blended into badge articles. In the selective-coding phase, the goal is to investigate the relationships between different codes that have been developed in the open coding process by relating all codes to each other according to their causal relationships (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). A total of 200 codes have been fitted into 18 coding categories reflecting perspectives that the CCP took to craft convincing and compelling stories about Mao badges. In the theoretical-coding phase, the goal is to synchronise the results from selective coding by further elaborating on and integrating different code categories into a core category described as "*the central phenomenon around which all the other categories are integrated*" (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p. 116). In the research context of this thesis, the core category emerges as the myth of Mao as a supreme leader consisting of a variety of the badge stories about people's dealings with the badges. The theoretical coding phase eventually enables the author to abstract and present the CCP's manoeuvre on badge articles around three central themes that are presented in the next chapter.

# Chapter 4
# Findings

As explained in Chapter 3.1.2, in order to compete with and regain power from his rising rivals (e.g., Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping) within the party, since the mid 1960s, Mao's allies had started seeking to establish Mao's absolute authority in the Chinese society, leading to the launch of the CR (Barmé, 1996; Zuo, 1991). Against this background, the establishment of Mao as a cult figure became one of the most important agendas of the CR (Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001; Zuo, 1991). Often, a cult figure is manufactured by political regimes making propagandic efforts in heroising and idealising political leaders to produce worshipable images of these leaders (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017). This is the case of the Chiang Kai-shek cult in the Kuomingtang's rule of Taiwan since the late 1940s (Taylor, 2006), the Kim-family cult in North Korea (Lim, 2015), and the Stalin cult in the Soviet Union (Pisch, 2016). With regard to the manufacture of Mao as a cult figure, scholars have revealed the CCP's efforts in mobilising every possible media outlet to praise, flatter, glorify and deify Mao (Leese, 2013; Wang, 2008; Zuo, 1991). In Leese's (2013) account, the Mao cult has been established through the party's promotion of "statements that are linguistically flawless but semantically empty" (Leese, 2013, p.185)[17], that is, repetitive proclaims of Mao's supremacy (e.g., the Greatest Leader, the Steersman, the Red Sun and the Savior of People).

[17] For instance, one of such examples that Leese (2013, p.185) provided to support this view is the following quote from an academic paper authored by Chinese scholars to glorify Mao's Thought: "*Mao Zedong Thought is rain and dew, is air and sunshine. Only with the moisture and nourishment of Mao Zedong Thought [can we] look upon thousands of doubling waves of rice and beans. Mao Zedong Thought is the soul, wisdom, and strength…*"

Echoing the literature, the analysis of badge articles has confirmed the state's efforts in building Mao's cult figure: the glorification of Mao can be found in all 591 badge articles. As Section 4.1 will present, crafting different stories about the badges deriving from individual people's lives helps build Mao as a supreme leader who is recognised, appreciated and embraced by global people. Accordingly, the myth of Mao as a people-endorsed supreme leader is established. Notably, consistent with the literature (Leese, 2013), at this stage, the establishment of the myth of Mao is more of an outcome of the state's mobilisation of its propaganda machine (e.g., the PD) as a biopower apparatus. Moving to Section 4.2, the badges are shown to play a crucial role in strengthening Mao's mythical supreme status. Specifically, in these badge articles, a number of rhetorical strategies are identified from stories presenting people's dealings with the badges in their daily lives. These rhetorical strategies function to convert the badges from rather ordinary goods that are extensively distributed and owned into sacred items. People's handling of the badges as sacred objects further consolidates the myth of Mao as a people-endorsed supreme leader. Taking the lens of governmentality, the conversion of the badges into sacred objects represents the state's efforts in translating the badges from ordinary consumer goods into biopower apparatuses. Finally, as Section 4.3 will elucidate, badge articles also constitute a world divided on people's use of the badges and composed of badge opponents as the minority and badge supporters as the majority. Within such a world, badge opponents are presented to live their hated, despised and miserable lives, whilst badge supporters are pictured to have respected, united and happy lives.

Before moving to the next section, it is important to denote that all relevant data quoted in the following presentation of findings originated from the data source, namely, the

People's Daily (see Chapter 3.2.2). The author makes neither effort nor attempt to verify, evaluate, or make any judgement on the authenticity or truthfulness of any contents/arguments/claims deriving from the data source. The author's focus is to interpret the data and present the nuanced mythmaking of Mao accordingly.

### 4.1 The Myth of Mao as People's Supreme Leader

The analysis of the 591 badge articles indicates that the cult figure Mao has been established not through publishing empty statements but through adopting a well-crafted mythmaking strategy, personalisation. The term "personalisation" derives from political studies exploring effective political communication strategies that political parties use to gain votes in elections. In its original context, personalisation refers to a political party's effort in mobilising mass media to promote party leaders over the party per se in electoral campaigns, making leaders' personas the representation of the party's identity (Adam and Maier, 2010; Garzia, 2011; Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014). In this research, personalisation is reconfigured as the mythmaking approach consisting of twofold meaning. First, personalisation refers to the use of different people's personal lives as backgrounds to articulate the superiority of Mao's leadership, presenting Mao's supremacy not as a semantically empty claim but as a fait accompli witnessed and experienced by people. Second, personalisation also refers to the mythmaking outcome of illustrating Mao's supremacy not as a claim made by the state but as a result of individual people's spontaneous appreciation, recognition and endorsement. Therefore, the mythmaking strategy of personalisation eventually presents Mao as the people's supreme leader.

The effectiveness of the personalisation strategy for crafting a convincing image of Mao

as the people's supreme leader hinges on the selection of social segments and the carefully calibrated use of first-person and third-person narratives. To be specific, in the mythmaking, three social groups including PLA soldiers, ordinary Chinese citizens and foreigners are selected. In telling stories of the individuals from these groups, the third-person narrative is mostly used to objectively present these individuals' life changing events brought by Mao as the de facto personal experiences, and the first-person narrative is largely applied to present their elaborations on attributing their transformative events to Mao's leadership and regarding Mao as a supreme and talented leader. The hybrid use of the first-person and third-person narratives contributes to making Mao's supremacy a fait accompli accredited by these individuals from different societies represented by the three selected groups. This can be better explained in different quotes below.

The accreditation of Mao's supremacy from the segment of PLA soldiers is best exemplified by an article titled *"Following Chairman Mao's Lead to Achieve More Victories*" (PD, 1969/04/16), in which Yan Changlin, a former PLA soldier and Mao's personal guard, shares his experience of having military victories under Mao's leadership.

"*Yan Changlin, a former Personal Guard of Chairman Mao…recalls his unforgettable memories of following the Great Leader Chairman in war times:*

*...In 1947, Yan'an, Chairman Mao was commanding [his troops] with no fear, even if sounds from enemies' machine guns could be clearly heard. Military officers back from the frontline were worried, because they noticed that Chairman Mao was still in Yan'an. At that time, a regimental commander who followed Chairman Mao since the Long March said [to these military officials], 'According to my experience [with Chairman Mao] in*

*the Long March, Chairman Mao always stayed with soldiers and officers in the most dangerous and most crucial time'. He [the regimental commander] was quite right. Using his Great courage and talent, Chairman Mao commanded a troop of 20,000 soldiers to fight against more than 200,000 enemies…and achieved victories over and over again.*

*Yan Changlin continues with tears: 'based on my experience of serving Chairman Mao in person for more than 17 years…in each and every critical moment of the history and of our revolution [in the past decades], Chairman Mao is the person who always points the right direction and paves ways for us to achieve victory! Dear Chairman Mao, following your lead means that we are taking the direction leading to victories, the bright future and ultimate happiness!*"

As shown in the quote above, the idea of Mao's superior qualities as a military leader (e.g., being extremely calm, brave and fearless in commanding troops greatly outnumbered by enemies, and being capable of frequently achieving victories) is constructed using the third-person narrative in Yan's storytelling. The use of third-person point of view helps make a story appear objective, thus better convincing readers to trust what the story tells as a truth (Van Lissa et al., 2016). Accordingly, Mao's superior military talent is presented as a fact that is objectively observed by Yan. Next, adopting the first-person narrative, the article presents Yan's overt recognition and declaration of Mao's supremacy by remarking Mao as the leader who is always capable of bringing to the PLA "*victories, the bright future and ultimate happiness*". In narrative writing, using the first-person point of view to craft the "*information about the protagonist's inner, mental life*" (Van Lissa et al., 2016, p.44) functions to facilitate readers to believe in the authenticity of the image of the protagonist and the opinions he/she conveys. Thus, Mao's

supreme leadership in the PLA is spontaneously and convincingly endorsed by the first-person narrator Yan. In this way, Mao as the Great Leader of the PLA is mythologised as a conclusion drawn by soldiers like Yan rather than a claim made by the state.

The purpose of endeavouring to craft stories to establish Mao's supreme status in the PLA context is to help Mao tighten his control over the PLA to carry out the CR. In the beginning of the CR, Mao's rivals in the party had more control over the national economy than Mao (see Section 3.1.2), forcing Mao to look for alternative sources to acquire support to sustain the movement (Leese, 2013). The PLA served as a suitable and powerful source because it was largely under the control of Lin Biao, one of Mao's closest long-term allies at that time and an advocate for the CR (see Section 3.1.2). Lin had rather strong ties to the PLA throughout his military career of serving as a top-ranked frontline general prior to 1949, a marshal in the 1950s, and the Minister of Defense in the 1960s (Leese, 2013). As a result, the PLA became the most accessible and readily available power source supporting Mao to carry out the CR (Jin, 1999; Leese, 2013). The mythologisation of Mao's supreme status recognised by military personnels thus contributes to rhetorically converting the military power of the PLA into political capital that enables Mao to have greater leverage to compete with his rivals in mass media.

The second social group accrediting Mao's supreme status is ordinary Chinese citizens, who appreciate Mao and his leadership because of their improved material well-being. This can be best presented by an article authored by Hong Wenlan, a "*learning Chairman Mao's work activist* (学习毛主席著作积极分子)" who presents a family conversation:

"*One day, I was talking to my father about Chairman Mao, the Great Supervisor, Great*

*Leader, and Great Commander of revolutionary people, and about our young generations' happy lives. My father suddenly started crying…My father said very sadly: 'When I am seeing the happy life you [i.e., young generations] have right now, I cannot help thinking about some tragic stories about my life when I was young'. Then my father started telling us his extremely harsh life in the past. He lost his father when he was two. He did not have enough food or cloth at all. He had to start working very hard for landlords, but still could not afford enough food. When my father got married at the age of 30, the only property he had was a threadbare duvet [When hearing about my father's harsh experiences], my mother…also started to cry and said: 'at that time, we [i.e., Hong's parents] had no food, no heating sources, and no cloth. Literally, we had nothing…' Knowing their harsh lives, I asked my mother: 'how come we have our happy life today?' My mother said: 'It's all because of Chairman Mao's leadership'. Meanwhile, my father also said: 'Chairman Mao is great [伟大], in that he always thinks of our poor and lower-middle peasants. We would have no such happy life without the [leadership of] Dear Chairman Mao'. [After the conversation], my entire family was too touched to sleep for the entire night.*" (PD, 1968/03/23)

Hong's story merits special attention firstly because of the rhetorical strategy, namely, the use of both first-person and third-person narratives to construct the family conversation. Specifically, in narrative studies, the combined use of the first-person and third-person narratives induces readers to perceive the story to be similar to everyday conversation in the real world (Kotovych et al., 2011). Reading the story, readers tend to have the illusion of engaging in a face-to-face conversation and thus perceive the story as more trustworthy and compelling (Van Lissa et al., 2016) than one crafted solely using either the first-

person narrative or the third-person narrative (Fludernik, 1996). Accordingly, using both the first-person and third-person narratives in Hong's story makes the presentation of Mao's supremacy as an authentic recognition that Hong and his/her parents spontaneously grant.

Hong's story deserves additional attention also because of the testimonies used to justify and glorify Mao's leadership, particularly the myth of the dramatic improvement in the material well-being of Hong's family. This myth is crafted not by showing what Hong's family possesses or enjoys in the CR but by detailing what they suffered before the CR, such as insufficient food and cloth supply, and harsh working conditions. This should be further interpreted in the specific historical context. As mentioned in Section 3.1.1, benefiting from Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping's advocacy of economic development, Chinese people's living standards were improved dramatically between the late 1950s and early 1960s. In the CR, because of Mao's reign of power, his emphasis on the class struggle and denouncement of economic development, Chinese citizens found themselves living in a much worse condition than years before (Riskin, 1987; Zuo, 1991). In order to prevent people from sensing lowered living standards in the CR under Mao's rule, the state launched the "Recalling Bitterness and Contrasting the Past with The Present [忆苦思甜]" campaign (Leese, 2013) to create the illusion of having a better life in the CR. That is, the campaign aimed to craft the counterhistory of the past through guiding people to fictionalise or deliberately uglify and publicly share stories about their pre-CR lives (Wang, 2008; Wu, 2014). Taking into account this historical background, the good material life that Hong's family have in the CR is a myth built upon the created counterhistory centring on presenting the potentially fabricated harsh life prior to the CR.

While the creation of pre-CR counterhistory and people's counter-memories is effective in shaping public opinions (Thompson and Tian, 2008), it is also important to eulogize Mao's leadership in a bid to justify his supremacy. At least in Hong's story, the illusions of a happy life building upon the counterhistory and counter-memory help justify young generations' appreciation for Mao and accreditation to Mao's leadership. Accordingly, Mao's supremacy is presented as a matter of fact recognised by ordinary Chinese citizens.

The third social group accrediting Mao's supreme status is foreigners. Such accreditation is carried out in articles crafted in the foreign contexts, namely in scenarios of either Chinese foreign aid or international exhibition. The Chinese foreign aid refers to the foreign aid that China has offered since the 1950s to other countries as gifts to help with their urgent needs in national projects, such as infrastructure construction, medical service, and disaster relief (Bräutigam, 2011). The state offers such aid by either dispatching Chinese Foreign Aid Teams (CFAT 中国对外援助队) consisting of experts from different scientific fields (e.g., engineering, medical studies) or providing zero-interest loans to various less developed countries (ibid.). The international exhibition refers to an exposition that China has organised or participated in in either its industrialised cities (e.g., Shanghai, Guangzhou) or foreign countries in order to showcase its sociocultural, economic, and political achievements. In both contexts, Mao's supreme status is mythologised by using the combination of the first-person and third-person narratives in similar ways mentioned earlier in the analysis above.

"*An Algerian painting worker says: 'In the past, Chairman Mao selflessly provided us with aids during the country's anti-France war. Today, Chairman Mao dispatches great*

*Chinese doctors to serve Algerians and fix my stomach issue…I really appreciate Chairman Mao and his leadership'.*

*…*

*Sdahal, a local Algerian peasant who just had his aphasia treated by Chinese doctors. When his mother is visiting him in the hospital, Sdahal…points an image of Chairman to his mother and says: 'Look, this is the Great Leader Chairman Mao! He does everything for workers and peasants. I do respect and love him'.*

*…*

*In the hospital, many Algerian patients firmly believes that…the Great Leader Chairman Mao deserves thousands of times of appreciation and worship [千恩万谢], since it is Chairman Mao who dispatches the great Chinese doctors to serve Algerian people*".

The quote above is retrieved from an article reporting on the Chinese Medical Team (CMT) dispatched to Algeria (PD, 1967/01/20). In this quote, the third-person narrative is firstly applied to form an objective description on the quality medical treatments that Algerians receive from the CMT. The first-person narrative is then followed to present Algerians' post-treatment reactions centring on attributing the CMT's service to Mao's supreme leadership, thus portraying Algerians to spontaneously appreciate Mao. The third-person narrative is then used to draw a conclusion, making Mao as a worshipable leader a fait accompli that is publicly believed in by Algerians.

In summary, by analysing the glorification of Mao as a cult figure that is included in all 591 badge articles, Mao's supreme status is revealed as a product of the mythmaking

efforts in personalisation. The mythmaking strategy of personalisation relies on the hybrid use of the first-person and third-person narratives to narrate Mao's supreme status into stories of people's personal lives. These personal stories help rationalise Mao's supreme status not as a semantically empty claim but as a fait accompli deriving from people's personal witnessed experiences. The use of the first-person and third-person narratives helps increase the trustworthiness of these personal stories, making Mao's image of supreme leader appear not as a claim made by the state but as a compelling conclusion drawn by people. Accordingly, Mao becomes a mythfied people-endorsed supreme leader. Mao's mythified image is extended to cover the entire society, as the selection of the three social groups, PLA soldiers, ordinary Chinese citizens, and foreigners makes Mao a supreme leader recognised and endorsed by the public around the globe.

### 4.2 Using Badges to Enrich the Myth of Mao as People's Supreme Leader

In their psychological study, Wiemer-Hastings and Xu (2005) have investigated how abstract concepts and concrete concepts affect people's perception of concreteness differently, and how these differences affect people's comprehension. They have defined abstract concepts as "*relational concepts that are characterised by their links to external concepts rather than by intrinsic properties*" (Wiemer-Hastings and Xu, 2005, p.721), and concrete concepts as those that are characterised by "*an object, along with its attributes, parts and functions, actions performed on or with the object, and relations to other objects*" (Wiemer-Hastings and Xu, 2005, p.732). Often, abstract concepts are less memorable and imaginable, thus lessening people's comprehension efficiency and reducing their interest in knowing more (Wiemer-Hastings and Xu, 2005).

In this research context, while the myth of Mao as a people-endorsed supreme leader is established by 591 badge articles, his mythical supreme status remains as an abstract concept that is associated only with semantically empty and abstract meanings (e.g., the Great Leader, the Savior, and the Steersman). As a mythical supreme leader who is far away from people's daily lives, Mao could hardly mobilise people to get him the much-needed support. Further data analysis reveals the emergence of a large number of stories theming in people's dealings with the badges. These stories aim at producing knowledge indicating that people treat the ordinary badges in sacred ways reflecting Mao's mythified supreme status. From this perspective, these stories convert Mao as a mythified people-endorsed supreme leader from an abstract concept into a concrete concept that is relevant to people's lives. The conversion is carried out by sacralising the badges through ritual, religion, personification and scepter.

### 4.2.1 Sacralising the Badges Through Ritual

In their study of contemporary consumers' efforts in sacralising profane goods through consumption, Belk et al. (1989) has mapped out 7 sacralisation strategies identified from consumers' dealings with their otherwise rather ordinary possessions. Among these strategies, they have emphasised the importance of sacralisation through ritual, arguing that ritualised behaviours can effectively remove the commodity nature of consumer goods symbolising profaneness. Drawing on their view, the data analysis suggests that the massively distributed and owned badges are sacralised in badge articles ritualising the process of requesting and receiving the badges.

Specifically, these articles are crafted in foreign contexts, possibly because foreigners

have much less access to the badges than their counterparts in China (Schrift, 2001). In these articles, foreigners are described to go through a two-step ritual in order to receive the badges. An article titled "*It is the ultimate glory to wear Mao badges: Cambodians ultimately love and admire the Great Leader Chairman Mao*" (PD, 1967/02/28) is a good example. This article is dedicated to presenting two types of individual cases about Cambodians' passion about the badges. The first type of case consists of Chinese journalists' eyewitness accounts in Cambodia wherein Cambodians are depicted as firstly demonstrating their "ultimate respect and love for Mao" and then requesting the badges:

"*In a China-aided construction site (中国援建工地), many Cambodian workers are motivated by their ultimate respect and love for Mao, thus asking Chinese engineers for the badges. [After having the badges from Chinese engineers], these Cambodian workers wear the badges on their chests everyday…[When they see Chinese engineers on the site], these Cambodian workers always point at Chairman Mao badges pinned on their chests and enthusiastically and happily say to Chinese engineers: 'Great! Mao Zedong is great! We Thank Chairman Mao for giving us the precious Chairman Mao badges. He is a talented leader, and the best comrade and friend of working-class people! We respect and love Chairman Mao"* (PD, 1967/02/28).

The quote above reveals a two-step ritual of receiving the badges resembling a causal relation: people receive badges only after they faithfully elaborate on their recognition of and love for Mao. With the establishment of this causation, the badges become rewards of people's recognition of Mao's supreme status. That is, people's recognition of Mao's supreme status qualifies them to deserve the badges. This is evidenced by additional

details showing that people not only wear the badges every day and consider the badges as "precious" good, but also verbally cheer with slogans addressing Mao's supremacy and thank Mao for giving them the badges. Thus, the badges are no longer ordinary goods that remain accessible for everyone.

The second type of case consists of Cambodians' efforts in mailing letters to the PD to ask for badges. In the letters presented below, Cambodians always wrote their requests for the badges only after their elaborations on the recognition of Mao as a supreme leader.

"*In a letter from an ordinary Cambodian woman, she writes: 'Chairman Mao is the Red Sun of all workers, peasants, students and oppressed people', and then she asks for the badges…in a letter from a Cambodian teacher, he writes '…Chairman Mao is the Great Communist Leader of the modern time. I respect, admire, trust and love Chairman Mao', and then he asks for the badges*" (PD, 1967/02/28).

In the quote above, a similar two-step ritual of requesting the badges is involved: people are shown to ask for badges only after they express their recognition of Mao's supremacy. This specific ritual forges a causal relation: people's requests for the badges are driven by and conditioned on their spontaneous acknowledgement of Mao as a great leader. In this way, Mao's supreme status is translated from people's verbal endorsement into their concrete and publicly visible conduct of requesting the badges, thus helping reinforce Mao's mythified status of the people-endorsed supreme leader. The extended translation is clearly seen in an article addressing African people's love for Mao (PD, 1966/12/27), in which an African student directly rationalises wearing the badges as his recognition of Mao's supreme status:

"*An African student loves the Great Leader Chairman Mao so much and always wants to have the precious Chairman Mao badges. When the African student finally received a badge, he was thrilled and immediately pinned it on his chest. A Soviet socialist imperialist class enemy [苏联修正主义分子] saw him wearing a Chairman Mao badge, and provocatively asked the African student: 'Why are you wearing a Chairman Mao badge?' The student replied with great confidence: 'Because Mao Zedong is the Greatest Marx-Leninist in the modern time, and the Greatest Leader of all revolutionary people in the world!'*" (PD, 1966/12/27)

Taking both rituals of requesting and receiving the badges, the badges are sacralised as special goods that are the rewards of people's materialised recognition of Mao's supreme status, thus forging a mythical illusion of badge wearers as Mao's endorsers and supporters. This illusion has important implications in the specific historical context of the CR. In the CR, Mao's main strategy of competing with his within-party rivals was to mobilise the masses to have their support in every possible way. Given that the state manufactured at least 3 billion badges and flooded the Chinese society with these badges, badge owners and wearers were omnipresent: more than 90% of the entire Chinese population routinely wore the badges (Hubbert, 2006). Compounded with the ubiquitous badge wearers, the mythical illusion of badge wearers as Mao's endorsers and supporters established in badge articles helps construct a visually striking image showing the omnipresent support that Mao gained across the country, namely, helping him with his Red Ocean (Cao, 2013) agenda through visualising his popularity over his rivals.

### 4.2.2 Sacralising the Badges Through Religion

In their study of contemporary consumers' efforts in sacralising profane possessions through consumption, Belk et al. (1989) have suggested that religious goods come with sacredness. Their focus on religion involves presenting how modern consumption and social discourses (e.g., science, arts, and music) contributes to secularising religion. In this thesis, the second dimension that the badges contribute to enriching the myth of Mao as a people-endorsed supreme leader is to sacralise the badges through religion. It refers to the state's efforts in using badge stories to covertly endow Mao with a god-like figure. These stories focally demonstrate people's religious-like dealings with the badges. The articles telling these stories are constructed in both Chinese and international contexts.

In the Chinese context, sacralising the badges through religion emerges through narrating stories about the process of obtaining the badges. This is typified by a story about Dang Ling, a Hani minority girl who is a "learning Chairman Mao's work activist" from a remote village in Xishuangbanna (PD, 1968/09/27):

"*Dang Ling is a Learning Chairman Mao's Work Activist in her county. With some help of local PLA comrades, she studies Chairman Mao's works very hard and enthusiastically impels Chairman Mao's Thoughts…A few days ago, Dang Ling heard that a new batch of painting themes in 'Chairman Mao visits Anyuan' and of Chairman Mao badges were about to be delivered to her county. She was thinking that it would be so great if she could invite [qing, 请] the Red Sun to her village, so that everyone in the village could see the glory of Chairman Mao! In order to invite [qing, 请] the Red Sun, she walked for five days and crossed twelve high mountains and five rivers to the downtown of her county. Eventually, Dang Ling brought a large quantity of the paintings, Chairman Mao's works*

*and Chairman Mao badges back to her village in the evening. Without taking a rest, as soon as she arrived, Dang Ling immediately organised a ceremony to distribute Chairman Mao's books and Chairman Mao badges.*

*People from the village were extremely thrilled when they knew that Dang Ling really invited the Red Sun to the village. As a result, all people rushed to come to attend the ceremony*".

The quote above shows a process of Dang's acquisition of the badges. Dang is presented as an enthusiast of Mao and Mao products (e.g., the badges and Mao-themed paintings), a persona that helps explain Dang's motivation for seeking ways to invite Mao to her village so that residents of her village can see "*the glorious Chairman Mao*". To Dang, inviting Mao to her village is bringing back some Mao products. Accordingly, a parallel is drawn between Mao as a real person and products bearing Mao's image, conveying the information that the badges, along with other Mao products, are the material representation of Mao. This information is further strengthened by the use of a specific Chinese term, qing (请, invite), which merits attention.

The use of "qing" is rooted in Chinese people's long religious tradition of hoping to establish connections with religious gods in order to be blessed with a good life (Yang, 1991). Since religious statues are widely perceived as the material representation of gods (Hansen, 2014), historically, to connect with gods, both ordinary individuals and royal families regularly prayed in front of usually gigantic statues of gods situated in religious temples (e.g., Buddhist and Taoist temples) (He, 1989; Lagerwey, 2010). For centuries, in order to receive continuous blessings from gods, Chinese people have performed a

common religious practice known as 请神 (qing shen, namely, inviting gods), that is, bringing small-sized statues of gods home as if inviting gods into home (He, 1989; Yang, 1991). Accordingly, when coupled with statues or objects bearing portraits, the term "qing" is an honorific expression describing the religious practice of qing shen (Lagerwey, 2010; Yang, 1991).

In Dang's story, her endeavour to bring back the badges is akin to the practice of qing shen. Since qing shen is conditioned on people's traditional view of statues of gods as the material extension of gods, Dang's qing shen-like practice thus suggests the badges as the material representation of Mao. Meanwhile, the presentation of Dang's qing shen-like dealings with the badges also draws a parallel between the badges and god statues, thus elevating Mao's supremacy to resemble a god. Finally, the story also presents village residents embracing Dang's qing shen-like dealings with the badges, evidenced by their passion about acquiring the badges and Mao portraits. Accordingly, taking the badges as the material representation of Mao and treating Mao as a god-like figure are generalised as a collective practice instead of Dang's personal action.

In the foreign context, sacralising the badges through religions arises from stories about foreigners' religious-like reactions to the badges they receive from Chinese people (e.g., Chinese travellers/visitors/journalists). Take an article crafted in Yemen context (PD, 1969/12/14), for example. This article is presented as Chinese water source engineers' [jd12] eyewitness accounts of Yemenis' "*ultimate love for the Great Leader of the Chinese People, Chairman Mao*". These engineers are members of the Chinese Foreign Aid Team dispatched to Yemen to help solve the problem of drinking and agriculture

water shortage.

"*Based on their interactions with local Yemenis, Chinese water source engineers believe that Yemenis ultimately love the Great Leader of the Chinese People, Chairman Mao.*

*When Chinese water source engineers worked in areas around Sanna, they were approached by many Yemenis, who faithfully asked for Chairman Mao badges, the Quotations from Chairman Mao, and other Chairman Mao's works. When these Yemenis received a golden shining Chairman Mao badge, or a red book of Quotations from Chairman Mao, they were always very happy with big smiles. Some of them said to [their] Chinese friends: 'Thank you, my friend! China is Great! Chairman Mao is Great!'*

*One day, a Chinese water source engineer was walking on a street in Sanna. He was approached by a local Yemeni and asked for Chairman Mao badges. The Chinese comrade removed his own Chairman Mao badge from his chest and gave it to the local Yemeni. When accepting this Chairman Mao badge from the Chinese comrade, the Yemeni took great care and paid much respect: he immediately saluted the Chairman Mao badge, and said towards the Chairman Mao badge with great respect: 'Long Live Chairman Mao!'*"

As the quote above shows, the theme of Yemenis' love for Mao is represented by Yemenis' requests for the badges. The narration of Yemenis' reactions to the badges they received from the Chinese engineers merits special notice.

As the narration pictures, at the moment when the Yemeni was receiving a badge, he took great care of it and paid great respect to it. This is the reaction that people normally have

when they are handling religious statues (Yang, 1991). Such a picture thus draws a parallel between the badges and religious goods. Meanwhile, the Yemeni is also presented to immediately salute the badge and verbally express the long life wishes (i.e., "Long Live Chairman Mao") toward Mao. These actions of saluting the badges and expressing wishes for Mao are identical to a practice, which Chinese people we reported to perform on a daily basis during the CR, called the "asking for instructions in the morning and reporting back in the evening towards Chairman Mao (早请示晚汇报, hereafter, '*asking for instruction and reporting back*')" (Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001. See also section 3.1.2). Specifically, in the CR, saluting and verbally expressing long life wishes to objects bearing Mao's image constituted the "*asking for instruction and reporting back*" as a classic worship practice that Chinese people regularly performed under the state's request (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 2009). This worship practice is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese religious practices dating back to the ancient China period (Hansen, 2014). Particularly between the 12th and 13th century, people began viewing statues of gods as the material extension of the real gods (Hansen, 2014), thus praying in front of statues to confess wrongdoings and ask for forgiveness, make wishes, and ask gods for opinions on and hints of how to get things done (Hansen, 2014; Lagerwey, 2010; Shahar, 1996). By narrating a worship-like practice in the story of Yemenis' dealing with the badges, Mao is presented as a god-like and worshiped figure that is aligned with his mythified image of a supreme leader. Meanwhile, situating these stories in international contexts contributes to creating an illusion of worshiping Mao as a global phenomenon, thus amplifying the recognition and support that Mao receives from the international community.

In the literature, religious activities were completely banned in the CR. In order to retain their traditional religious beliefs and practices as a part of their personal identities (Esherick et al., 2006; Ho, 2006; Schrift, 2001), Chinese people began worshiping Mao products as the alternative to traditional religious goods (Leese, 2013; MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 2009; Zuo, 1991). Adding to these studies, this thesis shows that the efforts of using religion to sacralise Mao and the badges is also a state's attempt to covertly propose the worship of Mao as the alternative to that of religious figures. From the state's perspective, taking the lead to make such a proposal contributes to the core CR agenda of reinforcing Mao's mythified supreme status. Accordingly, worship of the badges, or as Schrift (2001, p.120) called, establishment of the "*Aluminium God*", is not entirely a resolution that people choose to cope with the state's ban on religious activities. Instead, it is also a prescription from the state for better constructing Mao as a cult figure. Meanwhile, as shown in the quotes above, all religious-like dealings with badges are presented as spontaneous actions that people take, thus making Mao's worshiped figure a result of people's action, which is consistent with his mythified image of the people-endorsed leader.

### 4.2.3 Sacralising the Badges Through Personification

One distinctive trait that is exclusive to sacred goods is magic (Belk et al., 1989). The personification of the badges refers to a sacralising effort in establishing the badges as the special goods that come with the magical power of helping badge owners have physical connections with Mao. Personification emerges from badge articles seeking to establish the badges as the magic material representation of the real Mao in either explicit or implicit way. The explicit way, rather straightforward, emerges from the articles narrated

in both Chinese and international contexts. In these articles, people's interaction with the badges is directly shown as if they are interacting with Mao. In articles focusing on the Chinese context, personification of the badges is constructed by telling stories about certain groups of Chinese people who live in remote areas. These stories explicitly articulate that the badges allow people to have intimacy with Mao. This can be best represented by a short article (443 words) appearing as a letter from Wu Shaoxun, a Chinese border guard who describes his feeling of receiving the badges from his military supervisors (1966/12/23[c]). In Wu's story, the badges as magic goods are established by straightforwardly paralleling the badges with Mao as a real person, such as his elaboration on the feeling of Mao "standing beside" him as soon as he wears the badges, and on his insomnia caused by looking at (the magicalised) Mao.

"*When I pin this shining red Chairman Mao badge on my chest, I immediately feel that Chairman Mao is just standing beside me, making me feel ultimately happy and warm… Because I can see Chairman Mao, I am too excited to sleep, leading me to spend an entire night looking at 'Chairman Mao'*" (PD, 1966/12/23[c]).

In articles focusing on the international context, personification of the badges is accomplished by telling stories about foreigners' passion about Mao and Mao products (see Section 3.1.2 & 3.1.3 for Mao products). Similar to Chinese-context stories, these stories centre on articulating people's reactions when obtaining the badges, namely, how foreigners interact with the badges as if they are interacting with the real Mao. Different from Chinese-context stories, these international-context stories tend to bring in as many countries as possible, making the badges as the magic material representation of the real Mao a universal idea. For example, in an article titled "Thinking of and Looking at

Chairman Mao: Stories about International Revolutionary Individuals' Love of Chairman Mao" (PD, 1966/12/25), people from "all over the world" (including Japan, Laos, Iraq, Soviet Union, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Austria) are shown to be passionate about obtaining Mao objects in order to see "*the Great Leader*" and "*the Greatest and Smartest Marx-Leninist of the Modern Time*". In their dealings with the badges, individual enthusiasts are narrated to have the feeling of being accompanied by Mao, thus suggesting the magic of the badges:

"*As soon as receiving a Mao badge, a Congolese friend [of Chinese people] said: 'this Mao badge makes me think of Chairman Mao every day and makes me have Mao with me every day'. An Iraqi student tightly put a Chairman Mao badge against his chest and said: 'I shall attach the respectful Chairman Mao to my heart as closely as possible, so that he can guide me to advance!'*". (PD, 1966/12/25)

The similar way of explicitly and overtly showing the magic of the badges is also applied to other international-context stories presenting individual cases of people's love for Mao, Mao portraits and badges from Laos, Japan, Cambodia, Pakistan, Algeria, England, Italy, and France, just to name a few (e.g., PD, 1966/12/17; 1967/01/20; 1967/02/04; 1967/02/28; 1968/02/09).

In pursuit of establishing the badges as the magic material representation of the real Mao, the implicit approach emerges from stories constructed in the Chinese context and appears more covert and sophisticated than the explicit approach. Specifically, these stories focus on presenting the badges to serve Mao's roles in shaping people's conduct, best exemplified by a story about a PLA lieutenant Ku'er Ma Ni Ya (PD, 1969/04/02). In this

story, a Mao badge not only serves as a symbol of Mao, but also acts as the real Mao, the capable supreme leader motivating and encouraging Ku'er Ma Ni Ya to overcome obstacles, and eventually guiding him to find the "correct path" in his military mission of reconnaissance for summer pasture locations in Xinjiang:

"*They [lieutenant Ku'er Ma Ni Ya and his soldiers] walked for an entire day in order to cross a over 5,000-meter-high mountain covered by snow and ice. At one point, they were totally lost. At this very moment, Ku'er Ma Ni Ya saw the shining badge pinned on his chest and felt re-energised instantly…he stared at the Chairman Mao badge and was convinced that Mao was supervising him in person and urging him to overcome difficulties and strive for victory. This [the feeling of being supervised by Mao in person] made his blood boil. He became so determined [to complete the reconnaissance] that he even forgot that he was actually in some extremely difficult situations…after several attempts, he eventually overcame all difficulties, crossed the high mountain and found the correct path leading to summer pasture locations*".

In the context of the CR, the "correct path" came with a special meaning: the direction that people should take (Wang, 2008) and that would lead to revolutionary victories (Leese, 2013). More importantly, the "correct path" was thought to be pointed out exclusively by Mao, the supreme leader who was powerful and eligible enough to do so (Zuo, 1991). Typically, Mao pointed out the "right path" in special occasions when he made physical appearances and addressed the masses and military personnel, such as party meetings, public gatherings in the CR, and battlefields prior to the CR (Leese, 2013). Therefore, in the quote above, the badge's function of navigating Ku'er Ma Ni Ya to the correct path implies that the badge serves more than a simple symbolic device symbolising

its owner's loyalty to Mao. Rather, the badge is presented to have the same power and eligibility that Mao has, becoming the magic material representation of Mao.

In the CR, Chinese people were recorded to value, collect and cherish the badges even if they were flooded by the badges (see Section 3.1.3): at least 3 billion badges were made with cheap materials and distributed to 90% of the entire Chinese population for free. Typically, to make consumers value and cherish products produced on a massive scale, marketers, especially those who work in the luxury sector, tend to create myths about the perceived rarity, exclusivity and high price for their goods/brands (Fiona and Moore, 2009; Kapferer and Bastien, 2009a,b; Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2012; Quach and Thaichon, 2017; Seo and Buchanan-Oliver, 2017). Likewise, crafting the badges as the magic material extension of Mao provides an alternative approach of igniting people's passion about the rather ordinary badges. Originally designed as a symbolic device, the badges serve to publicly represent people's loyalty to Mao. When the badges are established as the material representation of Mao, people's dealings with the badges become their direct interactions with Mao, the supreme leader. Accordingly, such an establishment dramatically elevates the symbolic value of the badges despite the massive distribution and extensive ownership. Increased symbolic value of goods often motivates people to become more enthusiastic about goods ownership (Ekinci et al., 2013). Therefore, the elevated symbolic value contributes to inducing Chinese people to perceive the rather ordinary badges as valuable objects worth owning.

### 4.2.4 Sacralising the Badges Through Scepter

In ancient Greece, the scepter was a symbol of power (Foucault, 2011). In the CR, the

badges were not ordinary goods but just like scepters, symbolising Mao's personal endorsement to the RG. As data analysis suggests, the badges are narrated as special devices empowering the RG to carry out CR in the name of Mao.

As mentioned in Section 3.1.2, Mao's reviews of the RG parades for eight times in Tian'anmen Square between August and November of 1966 were considered as his personal endorsement to the RG, which led to the rise of the RG as the backbone of the CR (Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001). Sacralising the badges through scepter derives from badge articles themed in recalling the RG's experiences of being reviewed by Mao. The best example is an article showing an unnamed author's reflections on "*Chairman Mao's 5th and 6th Reviews of the Cultural Revolution Army*" (PD, 1967/05/04). In this article, the author first describes the experience of attending Mao's review of the RG at Tian'anmen Square, followed by his/her reflections on such experience:

"*We all kept our eyes on Chairman Mao until his car disappeared from our sight. We then shifted our focus to staring at the Chairman Mao badges pinned on our chests. How close we are to Chairman Mao! Chairman Mao is in our hearts! This is the happiest time of our life that we shall never forget! The Chairman Mao badges illuminate the correct path we should take for us*!

*Dear Chairman Mao, we swear: We will follow you forever, rebel forever, and revolutionise forever! Chairman Mao, you are our Red Commander in Chief. Under your command, we will attack the old world [i.e., symbolised and represented by the 'Four Olds']. We will make as many attacks as possible like storms. We will make these attacks as harsh and rapid as possible! You are the Great Steersman, steering the giant*

*revolutionary ship and navigating us. Because of you, people have lights, the world has hopes. You review us over and over again, increasing the revolutionary flame over and over again (您一次又一次的接见，把革命的烈火越烧越旺).*

*…*

*Dear Chairman Mao, please rest assured that we will take our responsibility to stand firmly and still in the storm of class struggles. We will make our spines and shoulders with steel and iron! Look, our invincible Red Guards are standing firmly and still in the world! We are revolutionising, rebelling, struggling, and turning the world upside down! We will step on and crush the Imperialist America and the Imperialist Socialist Soviet Union. We will sweep capitalism into rubbish bins. We will build the heaven of Communism right above the ruins of the old world!*" (PD, 1967/05/04).

The quote above reveals details on the state's efforts in covertly empowering the RG with the badges. Specifically, the quote firstly stresses the close relationship between the RG and Mao (e.g., "*How close we are to Chairman Mao*") by emphasising the close physical distance between the RG and Mao in the review scene (e.g., seeing Mao in person). This close relationship is then transferred to and represented by the physical distance between the badges pinned on the RG's chests and the RG's hearts, suggesting the badges as a symbolic device demonstrating the close tie between the RG and Mao. Following this, the badges are further elevated to function to illuminate the "correct path" for the RG, thus becoming the magic material extension of Mao (for more on this theme, see Chapter 4.2.3). From this point onward, the subsequent two paragraphs in the quote are efforts in defining the badges-illuminating "correct path" centring on destruction and violence.

The “correct path”, according to the RG’s vow, focuses on following Mao, “the Red Commander in Chief” to “rebel and revolutionise forever”. The meaning of “to rebel” is then presented as actions consisting of “harsh” and “rapid” “attacks” that are authorised by Mao through his review of the RG “over and over again”. The destructive and vicious nature of “to rebel” is further reinforced in the last paragraph. The RG are addressed as an “invincible” task force “turning the world upside down” and building the new Maoist social order “above the ruins of the old world” that they “crush”. The destructive and vicious nature of “rebel” is well aligned to its meaning explained in the literature. Specifically, “rebel(s)” is a literal translation of a Chinese term “闯将 (Chuang Jiang)”. This term is typically used by the state to address the RG as a group of young adults who are “determined to overthrow those in the Party taking the capitalist road” (Rosen, 2019, p.2) by forcefully carrying out destructive activities or organising violent struggle meetings in order to establish the new Maoist social order centring on class struggles (Heaslet, 1972; Huang, 1996; Wang, 2003; Wu, 2014; Yin, 1996). Since the “correct path” is illuminated by the badges, and Mao is materially represented by the badges (see Chapter 4.2.3), the badges thus become the materialised symbol of Mao’s command in taking destructive and violent actions. Accordingly, the badges serve to materialise Mao’s acquiescence and empowerment of the RG’s aggression and violence in their pursuit of the CR.

One year after Mao’s last (the 8th) review of the RG, the PD published an article telling stories about the Beijing Red Flag Badge Factory (PD, 1967/11/15). One story shows factory workers’ motivation of voluntarily working overtime to produce as many badges as possible: because the badges allow the RG to travel across the country to ignite the

revolutionary flame without fearing anything:

"*On the 18th August, 1966, Chairman Mao reviewed the Red Guards in Tian'anmen Square for the first time. [On this occasion], they gifted Chairman Mao a Red Guard Armband with seven Chairman Mao badges pinned on it. Some of these badges were manufactured by workers from the Red Flag Badge Factory. When workers knew that Chairman Mao received the badges produced by their Factory, they could not help cheering 'Long Live Chairman Mao! Long Live!' Ever since then, wearing Chairman Mao badges, the Red Guards have travelled everywhere across the country, ignited and increased the flame of the Proletariat Cultural Revolution (点燃无产阶级文化大革命的烈火). In a letter that the Red Guards sent to factory workers, they said: 'Chairman Mao is with us all the time! We are afraid of nothing.*'" (PD, 1967/11/15).

Similar to what the quote above describes, the RG took the advantage of the Revolutionary Networking movement since August 1966 (see Section 3.1.2) to carry out their unresting rebellions nationwide (Esherick et al., 2006; Ho, 2006; Leese, 2013; Ye, 2004; Zuo, 1991). Accordingly, disciplinary apparatuses also play a supplementary role in governmentality, serving to enforce the effective deployment of the conduct of conduct to ultimately make states' intervention a part of people's lives (Collier, 2009; Gordon, 1991).

In his study of governmentality, Foucault (2003) has denoted the supplementary yet important role of biopower apparatus in helping enforce the effective deployment of the conduct of conduct set by states (see Section 2.2.1). In the literature, the smooth launch and implementation of the CR was largely attributed to Mao's strategic use of the RG as

effective disciplinary apparatuses, which casted a gaze on the operations of schools, factories, street shops, and on individual Chinese people's lives to identify and criticise any misconduct and punish deviants (Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001; Zheng, 2006. See also Chapter 3.1.2). Accordingly, the RG were essentially the disciplinary apparatuses deployed by Mao.

Too often, the CR was known for destructive and violent actions that the RG took in the name of revolution, such as burning down historical sites and religious temples (Ho, 2006; Zheng, 2006), destroying signboards, attacking people with stylish hairstyles walking on streets (Wang, 2003), publicly humiliating people deemed class enemies (Chan et al., 2015; Walder, 2012), and forcing into people's homes to confiscate their valuables, which were either flamed or taken by themselves (Ye, 2004. See also Chapter 3.1.2). On most occasions, these destructive and violent actions did not lead the RG to have any legal or social consequences. The RG's privilege was partially a result of the violent and destructive nature that many campaigns in the CR originally came with (represented by the Elimination of Four Olds campaign, see Chapter 3.1.2), and of Mao's reviews (Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001). Adding to the literature, the analysis of badge articles suggests that the badges also play a significant role of using Mao's mythified supreme status (in this case, the Red Commander in Chief) to empower the RG and publicly demonstrate Mao's empowerment. As the symbol of pardon and legal immunity that Mao granted, the badges effectively helped shield the RG from being accused of "political impropriety" (Schrift, 2001, p.104) and violent crimes (Esherick et al., 2006; Ho, 2006; Zheng, 2006).

In summary, this section presents findings demonstrating how Mao's mythified supreme status is transformed from an abstract concept consisting of semantic statements into a

concrete concept mirroring people's handling of the badges. The myth of Mao as a people-endorsed supreme leader is enriched by translating the rather ordinary, massively distributed and extensive owned badges into sacred goods from four perspectives. The first perspective centres on ritualising the process of requesting and receiving badges. These rituals contribute to converting the badges as special goods that are the rewards of people's materialised recognition of Mao's supreme status, making the illusion of badges wearers as Mao's supporters. Since over 90% of the Chinese population owned badges in the CR, such an illusion helps reinforce Mao's image of a people-endorsed leader, and enables Mao to signal massive support he receives from the masses. The second perspective focuses on sacralising the badges through picturing people's dealings with badges as religious-like activities, thus drawing a parallel between Mao and religious figures. Accordingly, Mao is established as a god-like figure that fits well with his mythified supreme status. The third perspective articulates sacralising the badges through personification. On the one hand, it involves the PD's efforts in adding magical power to the badges by showing that wearing badges would lead people to have intimacy and personal contact with Mao. On the other hand, it establishes the badges as the material representation of Mao, thus significantly elevating the symbolic value of the otherwise rather ordinary goods. Finally, the fourth perspective elucidates sacralising the badges through scepter. It describes the state's efforts of using the badges to demonstrate Mao's personal empowerment of the RG, and his acquiescence of the RG's handlings of destructive and violent activities in the CR.

### 4.3 The Crafting of a World Divided on the Badges

Since the establishment of the PRC China, individual Chinese people have been given at

least 19 different class labels (Kraus, 1981) according to different factors such as their residence areas (e.g., urban or rural), professions and personal wealth (e.g., workers, landlords, petty bourgeoisie, and capitalists), and political stances (e.g., rightists, counterrevolutionaries, and revolutionaries) (for a detailed list of class labels, see Wu, 2014, p.40). Because the CR movement centred on class struggles (see Chapter 3.1.2), these class labels were used to divide Chinese people into two broad segments: the revolutionaries as the people/masses (人民/群众) and the counterrevolutionaries as the class enemies (阶级敌人) (Leese, 2013).

Throughout the data analysis, the two broad segments are found existing in a large part of badge articles. In these articles, besides the Chinese society, the entire world is also found divided on the use of the badges. Put differently, people's dealings with the badges enables a clear sociopolitical cleavage to emerge and separate the world population into two distinctive segments: the badge opponents, who are the "a few minority (一小撮)" and thus the counterrevolutionaries, and the badge supporters, who are the vast majorities and thus the revolutionaries. Using the badges to create a divided world resembles a populist approach of generating "*a Manichaean discourse that identifies Good with a unified will of the people and Evil with a conspiring elite*" (Hawkins, 2010, p.1042).

To avoid any confusion, it is important to point out that the terms "populism", "populist" and "populist world" used in this section are completely irrelevant to similar ones that Holt (2004) has established in the context of branding (see Section 1.2). Specifically, in his cultural branding theory, Holt (2004) has used the concept "*populist worlds*" to refer to "*folk cultures*" (Holt, 2004, p.58) that exist on the fringes of society "*far removed from*

*centres of commerce and politics*" (Holt, 2004, p.59). To Holt (2004), citing populist worlds to create myths contributes to generating compelling and convincing brand myths. In this section, populism is a concept deriving from political studies. It refers to a populist political style (Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013) that describes a regime's strategic attempts in creating cleavages in a society to set up clear discursive boundaries between 'us' and 'them' (Kazin, 1995), between 'the majorities' and 'the minorities' (Hawkins, 2010), and between "*the pure people*" and "*the corrupt elite*" (Mudde, 2004, p.543). The adoption of the populist approach usually helps a regime gain wide support from a society, as it makes the regime appear as the representation of the majority of people in a given society (Kazin, 1995).

As this section will show, a populist world centred on the use of the badges emerges. In this populist world, two clear pathways are presented to people: one leads to a miserable life in which people are harshly criticised, despised, and cursed, whereas the other leads to an ideal life in which people are globally welcomed, respected and praised. The former pathway is taken by the badge opponents who belong to the evil "a few minority" counterrevolutionaries, whilst the latter is taken by the badge supporters who belong to the good vast majority revolutionaries.

### 4.3.1 Portraying the Badge Opponents

> "*Dogs' ability of travelling thousands of miles cannot change their nature of being shiteaters. Wolves' ability of travelling thousands of miles cannot change their nature of being predators. [Similarly], the Soviet Socialist Imperialism, which is akin to the American Imperialism, will never be able to change its nature of being an invader*."

(狗走千里要吃屎狼行千里要吃羊.苏修社会帝国主义和美帝国主义一样,它的侵略本性是永远不会改变的)”.

—The Soviet Socialist Imperialist Traitor Group is a Paper Tiger (苏修叛徒集团也是纸老虎). People’s Daily, 1969/06/17.

The quote above is a snapshot example of the portrait of the Soviet Union, which is accused of initiating anti-Chinese campaigns (PD, 1967/07/10; 1967/07/15). Apart from “shiteaters” and “predators”, there are many other offensive terms addressing the individuals, institutions, political regimes and hostile countries (e.g., Myanmar, the Soviet Union and its then-leader Khrushchev and the US) that mistreated, disrespected, or opposed the badges, Mao and China. These terms include bastards (王八蛋), clowns (小丑), cowards (懦夫), crazy dogs (疯狗), evil wolves (恶狼), evils (魔鬼/恶魔), idiots (蠢人), jackals (豺狼), lackeys (奴才), maniacs (疯子), Nazi members (纳粹党徒), people with black hearts (黑心人), poisonous snakes (毒蛇), poisonous tumours (毒瘤), poisonous weeds (毒草), rubbishes (垃圾), ruffians (流氓), running dogs (走狗), cow demons and snake spirits (牛鬼蛇神), thugs (暴徒), traitors (叛徒), and vampires (吸血鬼). Although the badge articles constructed in contexts of various non-socialist countries and others hostile to China (e.g., the Soviet Union, Angola, and Japan) have portrayed the badge opponents, the best example is a series of 26 badge case-study like articles lashing out the Ne Win regime, the ruling party in Myanmar (see Table 2) which is accused in the PD of initiating anti-Chinese campaigns between June 1967 and the end of 1968. According to these articles, the initiation of anti-Chinese campaigns is marked by the Ne

Win regime's order of banning both local Burmese people and Chinese individuals who resided in Myanmar from wearing the badges. This ban on the badges in Myanmar is attributed to the Soviet Union regime that served as the "backstage boss (后台老板)" of the Ne Win regime (PD, 1967/07/10; 1967/07/15) to carry out the "Soviet Union imperialist socialists' anti-China agenda" specifically targeting overseas Chinese people (PD, 1967/07/10). These articles show that, Chinese people, especially students and teaching staff living in Myanmar, refused to comply with the ban, leading the Ne Win regime to mobilise law enforcement agencies (police and military police) to intervene.

The portrait of badge opponents is painted with three layers of images: the undesirable image, the unpopular minority image and the image of being defeated. Each layer is painted by applying the corresponding mythmaking strategy: stigmatisation, segregation and retaliation.

***The Painting of the Undesirable Image of Badge Opponents.*** These offensive terms shown above represent the primary and fundamental strategy of creating a highly undesirable image for badge opponents, stigmatisation. Stigmatisation refers to a rhetorical strategy applied to purposefully denounce a group of people, organisations or brands (Varman and Belk, 2009). The stigmatisation to the opponents primarily centres on using bad language words to paint them with rather negative, uncomfortable, disturbing, and undesirable images. Bad language word (BLW) is defined in linguistics as "*any word or phrase which, when used in what one might call polite conversation, is likely to cause offence*" (McEnery, 2004, p.1). In general, BLWs include nouns, adjectives

and adverbs[18], and can be used in either written (e.g., fictions) or verbal (e.g., day-to-day conversations and movies) form (McEnery, 2004). They help a writer/speaker better express his/her intensive feelings for or attitudes towards certain individuals, objects, organisations, and sociocultural and sociopolitical events (Allan and Burridge, 2006; McEnery, 2004) in order to evoke different emotional responses from audiences (Hughes, 1998). In a political context, BLWs are usually seen in hate speeches aiming at inciting the public to develop negative feelings (e.g., antipathy) that undermine the authority or legitimacy of a certain political institution, party, or government (Teh et al., 2018). In badge articles themed in stigmatising the badge opponents, BLWs are used to paint these opponents with negative images leading to other people's strong feelings of antipathy. This can be best exemplified by one of the 26 badge articles condemning the Burmese Ne Win regime:

"*On 27th June [1967], instigated by the Ne Win counterrevolutionary military regime, more than 300 thugs attacked the Overseas Chinese Teachers' Association. They ignited the building of the Association and waited at all stairs of exit points to ambush Chinese teachers and students. Armed with different weapons, these thugs acted like crazy, evil and mindless animals, brutally beating and hurting Chinese teachers and students…More than 20 teachers and students were killed, and a countless number of them were seriously injured. Teacher Zhou Suying had all of her teeth knocked off and one eyeball gouged out [by these thugs]*.

[18] For a categorisation of BLW, see McEnery, 2006, p.26.

…

*The Ne Win reactionary military regime is such a group consisting of brutal Nazi members and bloodthirsty executioners. When these Burmese thugs saw Chinese people wearing Chairman Mao badges on chests, they demanded these Chinese people to remove the badges. When their unreasonable demand was rejected, these thugs chose to forcefully remove Chairman Mao badges by directly cutting off the Chairman Mao badges together with the flesh from the chests of these Chinese people. Someone witnessed that a group of such thugs threw a Chinese mother and her two children (one was six years old and the other was eight years old) into a fireplace.*

…

*Under the leadership of the counterrevolutionary government of Ne Win…[for instance], in Kammayut, Yangon, these thugs even forced their way into the home of a Chinese family and gang-raped a Chinese woman. When the woman's father and brothers rushed in to rescue her, these thugs killed all of her five family members. In fact, a large number of Chinese families were all killed by these thugs in Kammayut*

…

*The Ne Win counterrevolutionary military regime made a countless number of such Fascist atrocities. The regime was dreaming of using slaughter and arrest on a large scale to stop Chinese people's ultimate love for our Great Country and our Great Leader Chairman Mao…*" (PD, 1967/07/20)

As the quote above shows, the Ne Win regime and its state forces are titled

“counterrevolutionaries" from the beginning. To make the image of counterrevolutionaries even more undesirable, BLWs are applied to address them, including “*thugs*”, “*crazy, evil and mindless animals*”, and “*Nazi members and bloodthirsty executioners*” who made “*Fascist atrocities*” towards vulnerable Chinese teachers and students. In particular, each of these BLW-based titles is compounded with descriptive details of the brutality of the Ne Win regime and the state forces. “*Thugs*” and “*crazy and mindless animals*” are rationalised by describing the armed violent actions of ambushing, beating, torturing (e.g., knocking off people’s teeth and gouging out their eyeballs) and killing weaponless Chinese individuals. “*Nazi members and bloodthirsty executioners*” are rationalised by depicting the Ne Win regime’s violent actions that are akin to Nazi’s infamous war crimes (i.e., massacre and genocide [Bloxham and Kushner, 2001]). For instance, the Ne Win regime not only used the badges to purposefully identify, racalise, and target Chinese people, and forcefully removed the badges from their chests, but also conducted a large scale of family exterminations regardless of age and gender. These details not only rationalise the BLW-based titles assigned to the Ne Win regime but also provide disturbing descriptions evoking the sense of antipathy. Accordingly, the Ne Win regime is painted as the representation of highly undesirable counterrevolutionaries.

***The Painting of the Unpopular Minority Image of Badge Opponents.*** In one badges article reporting on a public speech made by Guo Moruo, the then Vice Premier of China, a vivid snapshot of the second layer of the portrait of badges opponents, namely, the unpopular minority image, emerges: “the Ne Win regime is a counterrevolutionary regime consisting of the a few [一小撮] pathetic lackeys of the America” (PD, 1967/07/04[a]).

In badge articles, the painting of the unpopular minority image is carried out through segregation. It refers to a rhetorical strategy surrounding the badges to divide foreign citizens from their governments which committed wrongdoings. The aim of segregation is to create a distinctive division between foreign citizens as badge supporters and foreign governments as badge opponents. Take one of the 26 badge articles themed in criticising the Ne Win regime's ban on the badges below for example.

"*In order to ingratiate itself with the American imperialism and the Soviet Union Modern Socialist Imperialism [苏联现代修正主义], and to distract Burmese people's attention away from its counterrevolutionary ruling, the Ne Win regime launched a series of Anti-Chinese campaigns nationwide. [For instance,] the Ne Win regime issued the order of 'Nationalisation' to forcefully make all Chinese people's properties in Myanmar its own. [In addition], in the name of "nationalising education", the regime also ordered thugs under its control to remove Chinese teachers and students from 136 Chinese schools so as to unlawfully occupy these schools. Meanwhile, newspapers leaning to the Ne Win counterrevolutionary regime and the American imperialists also crazily stigmatised Chinese people living in Myanmar. Early this year [1967], local Burmese authorities dispatched a large number of military police to deport hundreds of Chinese people residing in the China-Myanmar border area without any apparent reasons.*

*…*

*This June [1967], the Bhamo local authority announced the ban on wearing Chairman Mao badges. The ban was resisted by not only many Chinese students and their parents but also a lot of local Burmese people. As a result, the counterrevolutionary authority*

*deployed a lot of military police to violently remove Chairman Mao badges from Chinese students' chests, and kill several innocent Chinese students and teachers because of their wearing of the badges. Soon after, the Ne Win regime launched a new regulation, inhibiting all students in the entire country from wearing any badges other than ones permitted by the regime. Clearly, this regulation did not represent the common will of the Burmese people*" (PD, 1967/07/24).

As the quote above exemplifies, segregation is carried out in two steps. First, all anti-Chinese campaigns happening in Myanmar are completely imputed to the Ne Win regime and its leadership. In the beginning of the quote, the anti-Chinese campaign is explicitly defined as a product solely produced by the Ne Win regime for its political needs of ingratiating itself with other capitalist(s) and/or imperialist countries. Such definition is justified by presenting the regime's use of its disciplinary power to issue orders and mobilise a number of disciplinary apparatuses to insult and bully Chinese people living in Myanmar. Particularly, in this first step of segregation, the descriptions of the Ne Win regime's wrongdoings are relevant to neither violence nor the badges.

The second step of segregation begins where the article shifts to specifically condemn the regime's ban on the badges and its violent conduct of assaulting and killing Chinese badge owners. This condemnation functions to disclose that the real ambition of the regime behind its ban on the badges is to escalate attacks on Chinese people. What is more, blending local Burmese people's resistance to and disapproval of the ban into the condemnation suggests that Burmese people are irrelevant to their own regime's wrongdoings. The subsequent description of *"a lot of local Burmese people*" implies the unpopular image of the Ne Win regime, making itself the government that its own citizens

want to distance or disassociate from. The regime's image of unpopularity among Burmese people is further strengthened in a subsequent article presenting a Chinese journalist's reflections on his observations in Myanmar (PD, 1967/07/29):

"*A lot of revolutionary Burmese people unlimitedly love and respect…the Great Chinese Leader Chairman Mao, because in the modern world, the real revolutionary people are those who support Chairman Mao and his Thought. Whoever opposes Chairman Mao badges and Mao's Thought are deemed the enemy of the revolutionary people…In Myanmar, a lot of Burmese people consider the acquisition of Chairman Mao badges as the ultimate happiness and the most meaningful event*".

In the quote above, local Burmese people are shown to be in the same line with Chinese people instead of their government. More importantly, in this quote, "a lot of" Burmese people are depicted as spontaneously enemising their government through supporting the spread of the badges. This forges a hostile relationship between Burmese people and their government, further decreasing the Ne Win regime's legitimacy and authority. In doing so, the cleavage between the Ne Win regime as the unpopular minority and the Burmese people as the revolutionary majority is presented as an outcome of people's spontaneous action of divorcing from their unpopular government.

The Painting of Badge Opponents' Image of the Defeated. The third layer on the portrait of badge opponents, the image of the defeated, is painted through retaliation. It refers to a rhetorical strategy of asserting and emphasising the defeated fate of the badge opponents. It emerges from badge articles showing the determination of the CCP, Chinese people and the RG to fight against badge opponents and retaliate against their

wrongdoings to the badges. In the 26 articles slamming the Ne Win regime, retaliation begins with the CCP's call for revenge published in articles documenting the official Diplomatic Notes and top-rank CCP officials' public speeches. In these articles, the state accuses of the anti-Chinese campaigns centring on the badges ban as "*unforgivable crimes*" and "*blood debts [血债] that the counterrevolutionary Burmese regime owes to all of Chinese people*" (PD, 1967/07/04[b]; 1967/08/13[b], 1967/09/24[b]; 1967/09/24[b]), vowing to "*revenge in the fashion of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth* [血债血偿]" (PD, 1967/07/04[a][b]; 1967/07/10[b]; 1967/08/22).

Simultaneously, badge articles show that responding to the state's call, Chinese people also become determined to make the Ne Win regime pay for their blood debts (PD, 1967/07/04[a][b]; 1967/07/29; 1967/07/20; 1968/02/25), thus providing the masses' support for the state's pledged retaliation against the badge opponents. This can be typified by an article demonstrating vows made by a Chinese journalist deported by the Ne Win regime: "*we [i.e., Chinese people] warn the Ne Win counterrevolutionary regime that the 700 million Chinese people are well armed with the Mao Zedong Thought. We shall not be insulted. Overseas Chinese people shall not be insulted. We will purge [清算] the [Ne Win] regime. We will make them pay for the blood debt. Any supporters of the Anti-China campaign will never have a good end*" (PD, 1967/07/29).

Among the 700 million Chinese people, the RG's reactions are specifically highlighted in articles illustrating their massive protests outside the Burmese Embassy in Beijing:

"*More than 100,000 Red Guards organised massive protests in front of the Burmese Embassy in Beijing. These Red Guards carried Chairman Mao's portraits on their*

*shoulders, upheld red flags in their hands, and loudly yelled [revolutionary] slogans...In front of the Burmese Embassy, Red Guards became extremely angry. Thousands of Red Guards brandished their tightly clenched fists and loudly yelled: 'Down with [打倒] the Ne Win Counterrevolutionary Regime!' 'Revenge for Chinese martyrs [who died from the Burmese Anti-China campaigns]!' 'The blood debts need to be paid back by blood!' Red Guards posted Dazibao everywhere on the wall of the Burmese Embassy to reveal the evil nature of the New Win regime. On these Dazibao, the RG wrote numerous slogans such as 'Down with Imperialist America!' 'Down with the Socialist Imperialist Soviet Union!' 'Down with the counterrevolutionary Ne Win regime!' 'Any anti-China people will not have a good end!'*" (PD, 1967/07/04).

The presentation of the RG's protests merits special attention, particularly because of the descriptions of "down with (打倒)". In the CR, mishandling of the badges could lead to accusations of being counterrevolutionaries. For instance, accidently dropping a badge to the mud with Mao's portrait facing downwards led a person to be denounced by the RG as a counterrevolutionary in Dazibao, and eventually led the person to struggle sessions consisting of "down with"-related actions (Niu Niu, 1995; Schrift, 2001). In RG-organised struggle sessions, verbally cursing the accused, spitting on his/her face, slapping, beating and kicking him/her were among a number of "down with" actions that the accused experienced and, sometimes, died from (Esherick, et al., 2006; Leese, 2013, Niu Niu, 1995; Schrift, 2001; Zuo, 1991). In the quote above, as the Ne Win regime's ban on the badges greatly resembles Chinese people's mishandling of the badges, the consequence caused by its issuing of the ban will certainly parallels the struggle session experiences associated with "down with" actions suffered by the Chinese people accused

in Dazibao. These resemblances thus sketch a rather compelling yet intimidating image that badge opponents are destined to face a miserable fate, posing a warning about the horrible fate that "counterrevolutionaries" and people mishandling badges will definitely end up with.

With the rhetorical efforts of stigmatisation, segregation and retaliation, the Ne Win regime is vividly established as a typical badge opponent: an undesirable and unpopular counterrevolutionary that is even resisted and detested by its own people, and destined to be defeated by its own people, the CCP, 700 million Chinese people, and the RG.

### 4.3.2 Portraying the Badge Supporters

Compared with badge opponents, badge supporters have a readily different impressive portrait consisting of three layers of images: the image of the vast majority, the image of the qualified badge owner, and the image of a pleasant life. Each layer is painted through applying the corresponding mythmaking strategy: encirclement, instrumentalisation, and fantasisation.

***The Painting of the Vast Majority Image of Badge Supporters.*** The image of the vast majority is created through encirclement. Encirclement derives from a military term addressing the situation when a target is isolated and surrounded by a group of armed forces seeking to suppress it (Hu, 1970; 1980). In its military history, especially under Mao's leadership in the mid 1930s, the CCP defeated several Encirclement Campaigns initiated by the KMT (see Section 3.1.1). In this research context, encirclement refers to the CCP's effort in rhetorically encircling the badge opponents in ways similar to what it experienced with the KMT: encircling these badge opponents and suppressing them with

badge supporters. This is carried out by crafting stories about badge supporters from three major social groups: Chinese people, overseas Chinese people, and individuals and organisations from the international community.

The use of Chinese people to encircle badge opponents is best reflected in an article reporting on a massive protest that the RG and ordinary Chinese people initiated in Beijing against the Ne Win regime's ban on the badges (PD, 1967/07/04[a])

"*This afternoon [on 4th July 1967], hundreds and thousands of revolutionary masses (革命群众) and more than 100,000 Red Guards from the capital city were angered by the counterrevolutionary Ne Win regime…and initiated the 'Capital City Red Guards Protests to Condemn the Counterrevolutionary Ne Win Regime's Anti-Chinese atrocity' in Beijing…Protestors seriously warned the New Win regime that the 700 million of Chinese people shall not be insulted! The 700 million of Chinese people are not a population to be trifled with! The 700 million of Chinese people's voices matter! Being enemies with the 700 million Chinese people would lead to no good end! The Burmese regime's decision on banning Chairman Mao Badges in a bid to ignite and promote the Anti-Chinese campaigns will eventually lead to the demise of the regime! Millions of Red Guards and millions of revolutionary masses from the capital city firmly serve as the strong backup for Chinese people residing in Myanmar!...*"

As the quote above shows, "*revolutionary masses*" composed by both ordinary citizens (e.g., the revolutionary masses) and the RG took the street to express their fury of the ban on the badges. Aside from people's anger, what the quote above also emphasises is the large number of the protesters and the enormous size of the 700 million Chinese

population represented by these protesters. This emphasis on the size of the "*revolutionary masses*" forges a striking contrast to the "*a few minority*" image painted on the Ne Win regime, thus showing that the badge opponents are immensely outnumbered by badge supporters.

Overseas Chinese people living in Myanmar are also narrated to be a part of badge supporters. These overseas Chinese people are said to join their fellow citizens in China to "*vow that wearing the badges bearing the Great Leader's portrait is the absolutely unalterable principle and right [天经地义], that the sanctity of such principle and right shall not be challenged [神圣不可侵犯], and that fighting against those few minorities from the Ne Win regime who ban us from wearing Chairman Mao badges is absolutely necessary and important*" (PD, 1967/08/04[b]).

Joining Chinese overseas people living in Myanmar, local Burmese people are also pictured encircling their own government. Local Burmese people not only criticise the Ne Win government, but also visualise their disapproval of the badges ban through publicly wearing the badges or even requesting the badges from Chinese people. As an article consisting of Chinese journalists' eyewitness account when travelling to Myanmar presents (PD, 1968/02/09):

"*In many streets of urban areas in Myanmar, many local revolutionary Burmese people ignore and discard the Ne Win counterrevolutionary regime's ban on Chairman Mao badges and proudly wear Chairman Mao badges on their chests. Some of them keep asking our Chinese comrade living in Myanmar for the Chairman Mao badges. A number of Burmese workers even decide to send letters to their Chinese friends to demonstrate*

*their support for badges wearing. In these letters, Burmese workers write: 'Each and every of us pins the golden shining Chairman Mao badge on our chest. This is the ultimate pride and glory!"*".

Finally, the "ring" of encircling badge opponents is completed upon the presentation of badge supporters from the international community that goes beyond the Burmese context. Instead of showing how people across the world criticise the Ne Win regime, badge articles focus on picturing people's increasing obsessions with the badges in other countries. For instance, Japanese peasants were so thrilled about having chances to receive some badges from Chinese travellers in Japan that they could not help cheering "*Long Live Chairman Mao*" (PD, 1967/07/27); An old Algerian fisherman warmly invited "*Chinese comrades to visit his boat and received a Chairman Mao badge in return…making him too excited and could not help crying*" (PD, 1967/07/29); Italian seamen passionately asked Chinese to give them badges for not only themselves but also their wives and children, because they firmly believed that "*every individual on the planet should and will wear a Chairman Mao badge in the near future*" (PD, 1967/10/24[b]); To express his ultimate love for the badges and Mao, an Angolan man wore a number of badges on his chest, arguing that "*wearing the golden shining badges is the happiest and greatest event for a lot of Angolan people*" (PD, 1967/10/31); A Pakistan student sent letters to the PD, expressing his vision of Mao as a world leader and his enthusiasm for the badges (PD, 1968/02/09). Meanwhile, joining these foreign individuals, institutions from international communities, such as the Palestine Labour Union and the Arabic Lawyer Association, are also shown to demonstrate their support for wearing the badges, arguing that "*the Ne Win regime' ban on the Chairman Mao badges and the promotion*

*of outrageous crimes against the socialist China reveal the regime's nature of being the lapdog of the imperialist America*" (PD, 1967/07/20[b]). Until this point, the rhetorical encirclement of badge opponents is completed: badge supporters are presented as the vast majority consisting of people and institutions from not only China but also the international community, laying siege to the badge opponents who belong to the "a few" minority. Historically, using many to defeat the few was the main military strategy that the KMT applied to a number of its Encirclement Campaigns against the PLA in the 1930s and 1940s (Hu, 1970; 1980). The KMT failed to encircle the PLA, because the PLA managed to unlock the KMT's siege by following Mao's retreat strategy of "Long March" (see Chapter 3.1.1). In pursuit of the CR, badge articles indicate that the similar strategy of encirclement is transplanted by the CCP to the mass media battleground, contributing to including the majority of international communities as the supporters of the badges and Mao.

***The Painting of the Qualified Badge Owner Image of Badge Supporters.*** The second layer painted on the portrait of badge supporters is the image of the qualified badge owner. It is painted through instrumentalisation, a rhetorical strategy aiming at suggesting that badge supporters have the automatic understanding about the appropriate use of the badges, namely, using the badges to align their conduct to Mao's advocates. This is concretely constructed in stories about how people understand and use the badges as regulatory and behaviour-changing devices.

Crafting the badges as regulatory devices is best exemplified in an article titled "*Every Red Heart Turns to Chairman Mao*", which focally tells stories of people's love for Mao across different countries such as Algeria, England, France, Italy, Japan, Laos, Myanmar

and Pakistan (PD, 1968/02/09). One of the stories specifically articulates a Burmese individual's personal understanding about the badges:

"*When a Burmese youth received a Chairman Mao badge from one of his friends, he was extremely excited. He said: 'every individual who wears a Chairman Mao badge should follow the Great Leader Chairman Mao. Therefore, every individual who wears a Chairman Mao badge should seriously think about [the following questions]: 'whether or not his/her ways of speaking and behaving in daily life are aligned to ways that Chairman Mao's points out, and whether or not he/she is qualified as a good student of Chairman Mao'*" (PD, 1968/02/09).

As the quote above shows, as soon as he received a badge, the Burmese youth immediately understood the meaning of wearing a badge, namely, symbolising people's loyalty to Mao and determination of following Mao. This understanding is then transformed as a call for every badge owner to use the badges to guide and adjust their "*ways of speaking and behaving*" according to what Mao advocates. As mentioned earlier, the badges are infused with the magic power of representing the real Mao to point out the "correct paths" for people (see Section 4.2.3). Taking this into account, the quote above can be seen as the state's attempt to suggest that the badges represent Mao to cast a gaze on every person in the society. Accordingly, the badges become regulatory devices supervising people to behave in designated ways.

Crafting of the badges as behaviour-changing devices can be best exemplified in an article presenting Mao's popularity gained from people across the world (i.e., Denmark, England, France, Greece, Iraq, and Vietnam) (PD, 1968/02/28). In this article, one of the

stories is dedicating to present a vivid example about two French young women's behavioural changes caused by their acquisition of badges (PD, 1968/02/28):

"*In a corridor of an international train [operated by China], two young French women met with a Chinese comrade on his patrol duty. The French women stopped at the Chinese comrade, because they saw him wearing some Chairman Mao badges with the image of Tian'anmen Square. The French women pointed at these Chairman Mao badges and said affectionately: 'Beijing, Mao Zedong', 'Beijing, Mao Zedong'. Witnessing their deep love for Chairman Mao, the Chinese comrade removed two Chairman Mao badges from his chest and offered one badge to each of the French women. The French women took the badges of the Red Sun Chairman Mao from the Chinese comrade and thanked him. They then ran back to their cabin.*

*Soon after, loud cheers of 'Long Live Chairman Mao!' 'Long Live Chairman Mao!' were heard from the cabin where the two French women had their seats, attracting all people on the train to look towards that cabin. There were more than 30 young people who wore red shining Chairman Mao badges on their chests. They cheered the slogan over and over again. The two French women were among this group of people. These young people told the Chinese comrade that they came from France, Denmark, Italy, Japan and Norway and studied in China, and that they were on the way back to their home countries…One of the French young women pointed at the Chairman Mao badge bearing the images of the Great Leader Chairman Man and the Tian'anmen Square [i.e., the one she received from the abovementioned Chinese comrade] on her chest and said: 'Look, we are Red Guards too, Chairman Mao is our Red Commander in Chief. We listen to Chairman Mao. We are loyal to Chairman Mao. We fight for Chairman Mao. We wear Chairman Mao*

*badges so that we can see Chairman Mao every single day when we get back home!...*'"

As this story shows, the two French women's behavioural changes occurred right after their acquisition of the badges. Before the acquisition, they were pictured as "two young French women", who, like many other foreigners presented earlier, stopped the Chinese train crew and asked for the badges. After the acquisition, the two French women's behaviours changed dramatically. They joined a group of foreigners who had badges pinned on chests, and started displaying behaviours that are akin to the conduct that the CCP advocates: wearing the badges to demonstrate loyalty to Mao, and cheering revolutionary slogans themed in glorifying Mao and his supremacy (Barmé, 1996; Zuo, 1991). Soon after, the two French women began claiming themselves as the RG, acknowledging Mao as their "Red Commander in Chief" and pleading to be loyal and listen to Mao. In this way, the badges are presented as effective behaviour-changing devices that stimulate badge owners to behave in designated ways aligned to the RG.

***The Painting of the Pleasant Life Image of Badge Supporters.*** The third layer applied to the portrait of badge supporters is fantasisation, that is, rhetorically constructing a pleasant life of badge supporters from two perspectives: the sense of happiness and the high-profile lifestyle. Primarily, this rhetorical strategy derives from articles constructed in contexts beyond Myanmar.

The first perspective of the pleasant life that badge supporters have is built upon a connection between the badges and happiness, that is, owning or wearing the badges leads to the sense of happiness. The creation of the badges-happiness link is well typified in an article published six months after the initiation of the CR with the title "*Look at Chairman*

*Mao every day and think of Chairman Mao every second: the stories of global revolutionaries' love for Chairman Mao*" (PD, 1966/12/25). In this article, the badges-happiness link is directly claimed by the state as a fait accompli in the very first sentence: "*Revolutionary people from different countries unlimitedly love the Great Leader of China, Chairman Mao. They consider owning a Chairman Mao badge as the happiest thing in their entire life*". The badges-happiness link becomes even more compelling in subsequent badge articles, as it is not presented as a claim made by the state but narrated to come from people's testimonies of their reflections on owning the badges. These articles usually include specific demographic information about the protagonists, such as their geographical locations (e.g., Nouakchott, the Capital of Mauritania, PD, 1967/02/14), ages and professions (e.g., young workers from the Soviet Union, PD, 1967/05/12), thus increasing the authenticity of stories (Lee and Jahng, 2020). Meanwhile, meticulous expressions such as people's body languages are also included, helping visualise the expressive badges-happiness link. As a story about local Chinese people's encounter with an Angolan visitor in China vividly demonstrates (PD, 1967/10/31):

"*One day, on our way to the classroom, we encountered an Angola friend who studied in Beijing. We noticed that he had a number of different Chairman Mao badges pinned on his chest. When he walked close to us, he suddenly stopped. He pointed one of his right hand fingers at the biggest Chairman Mao badge pinned on his cap and proudly said with a big smile [on his face]: 'I feel so happy to wear Chairman Mao badges, so happy! In my country, a lot of Angola people really want to wear the golden shining Chairman Mao badges, because they believe that wearing Chairman Mao badges brings the ultimate*

*happiness and the best blessing! I am so happy that I am in China, because I can wear more than one Chairman Mao badge here. I would love to wear one thousand or even ten thousands of Chairman Mao badges!*"

Indeed, instead of creating the rationale behind the badges-happiness link, the quote above presents the protagonist's repetitive emphasis on his sense of happiness triggered by badges wearing. Since repetition helps induce people to perceive trivial statements as truth (Dechêne et al., 2010), presenting the badges-happiness link in a repetitive fashion thus contributes to making it a de facto causal relation. For most Chinese citizens in reality, having a sense of happiness was not easy in the CR. They needed to cope with rather heavy cognitive loads originating from not only the constant shortage of necessities and food supply (Leese, 2013) but also the uncertainty of being accused as counterrevolutionaries and punished in struggle sessions (Leese, 2013; Schrift, 2001). Given that almost all Chinese citizens had access to the badges in the CR (Schrift, 2001; Wang, 2008), the de facto causal link between the badges and happiness thus helped the CCP create a fantasy that people were having a happy life in the CR because of owning and wearing the badges. To some extent, the CCP's approach parallels the Stalin regime's method of using the extensive distribution and public display of unaffordable luxury goods nationwide to weave the illusive or even deceptive so-called good Stalinist life for Soviet citizens in the 1930s (Gronow, 2003).

The second perspective of the pleasant life that badge supporters have is established by presenting their high-profile lifestyle. It emerges from badge articles writing about the Chinese people who have chances to move freely and travel across the world (e.g., seamen, members of the CFAT). These articles focus on displaying that, by wearing the

badges, Chinese people are globally welcomed and respected wherever they go. For instance, because of "*badges pinned on our Chinese comrades' chests in their trip in Volgograd, a local boiler operator immediately recognised our comrades' identity of the Great Chinese people, thus giving his regards to them*" (PD, 1966/12/26). Because of Chairman Mao badges, Chinese journalists travelling to Nicosia in Cyprus "*have received local Cyprians' cheers everywhere they have been, since Cyprians love the Great Chinese people from the Great Country led by the Great Leader*" (PD, 1967/02/28[b]). Because of wearing the badges, overseas Chinese people in Myanmar always receive "*special attention and ultimate respect*" from local Burmese people, who "*admire all Chinese people wearing the badges*" (PD, 1967/11/15). Because of "*wearing golden shining Chairman Mao badges on chests*", a RG delegation visiting Albania were "*warmly welcomed by the First Secretary of the Labour Youth Union of Albania and his wife in person, and warmly greeted by groups of Albania Young Pioneers at the Tiranë Airport*" (PD, 1967/06/23). Because of wearing the badges, a Chinese visitor in Moscow "*was stopped by a local young Soviet, who held and kissed the Chinese comrade's hands over and over again to express his admiration for Chinese people*" (PD, 1967/11/09), and a Chinese traveller called Zhao Yuemin not only had similar experiences with local Georgia people, but was also asked for the badges and invited for a drink (PD, 1967/01/30). Because all Chinese people travelling abroad are carrying or wearing the badges, "*they are always warmly welcomed and extremely well treated by locals everywhere they visit in Canada*" (PD, 1970/09/15).

Unlike badge supporters, badge opponents are the "a few" undesirable minority, running dogs, shiteaters, Fascist executors, and counterrevolutionaries, who are doomed to be

purged. The high-profile lifestyle portrayed on badge supporters sharply contrasts with what is portrayed on the badge opponents. Such sharp contrast functions to point two distinctive pathways: one leads people to be valued and admired, whereas the other leads them to be encircled and eliminated. In reality, the first type of life belonged to the supporters of Mao and the badges (e.g., the RG), whilst the second type to the opponents of Mao and the badges (e.g., the "black five categories", see Section 3.1.2).

In summary, this section presents findings demonstrating that a badge-centric populist world is constructed consisting of two contrasting groups of individuals: badge opponents and badge supporters. Each group is painted with a three-layered image through three rhetorical strategies. Regarding the badge opponents, firstly, the BLWs-centred rhetorical strategy of stigmatisation is applied to primarily painted them with rather negative, uncomfortable, disturbing, and undesirable images. Secondly, the segregation strategy, serving to create a distinctive division between foreign citizens as badge supporters and foreign governments as badge opponents, helps craft the opponents' unpopular minority image. Thirdly, the opponents' image of the defeated is painted through retaliation, a rhetorical strategy of asserting and emphasising the defeated fate of the badge opponents. With regard to the badge supporters, firstly, their image of the vast majority is painted through encirclement, namely, showing the omnipresence of badge supporters from countries across the world. Secondly, their image of qualified badge owners is painted through instrumentalisation, a rhetorical strategy aiming at suggesting badge supporters have the automatic understanding about using the badges to align their conduct to Mao's advocates. Finally, their image of pleasant life is painted through showing that owning or wearing the badges leads to the sense of happiness, and gains respect and admiration from

people across the world. The two sharply contrasting portraits for badge opponents and badge supporters suggest the state's intention of inducing the population to inscribe themselves into the group of the vast majority with a decent lifestyle.

# Chapter 5
# Discussion

This thesis investigates the intersection of consumer goods and politics from a government's perspective, which has not been adequately treated in prior the Consumer Research literature. Anchored in the historical context of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a political movement that happened in China between 1966 and 1976, this thesis explores how the Chinese Communist Party strategically used Chairman Mao badges to carry out its political agendas centring on establishing and consolidating Mao's cult figure. The specific focus on the enduring political movement helps extend our understanding of governments' use of consumer goods beyond the election-related contexts, which have been the main focus of studies in political marketing. By invoking Foucualt's (1991a) governmentality, apparatus and truth as the theoretical lens to analyse badge articles published in the People's Daily, this thesis probes the CCP's a series of mythmaking endeavours in transforming the badges into biopower apparatuses to implement and impel the CR agendas. The special attention paid to the PD allows this thesis to unveil the transformation mechanism underlying states' strategic use of consumer goods for politics, which have been understudied in previous research focusing on either the design, manufacturing, and distribution of these goods (e.g., Buchli, 1999; Gronow, 2003; Kravets and Sandikci, 2013), or national ideologies and the consumer-

citizen subject (e.g., Cohen, 2003; Coskuner-Balli, 2020). This allows the thesis to make three contributions to extending Schrift (2001) and Wang's (2008) works that have looked into the state's use of the badge for politics. First, both Schrift (2001) and Wang's (2008) studies have taken a historical approach and studied the design, production and distribution of the badges from a material culture perspective, they did not pay much attention to explore how various political and sociocultural meanings were infused in the badges, and how these meanings contributed to the CR. By focusing on the CCP's mythmaking efforts made through mobilising its propagandic apparatus, this thesis elucidates the party's skillful utilisation of constructing badge stories in order to embed its CR agenda centring on the cultivation of the Mao cult in the badge. Second, while Schrift (2001) has relied on data from badge owners and argued that Chinese consumers appropriated the badge in the CR in ways allegedly different from what the CCP advocated, she did not explain much about exactly what ways the party expected consumers to use the badge. Taking a government's perspective, this study draws on publications from the party's official media outlets to analyse and interpret the party's original intention of producing and impelling the badge on a massive scale. Throughout the analysis, this thesis unveils the party's efforts in establishing the badges as the extension of Mao. Accordingly, the nationwide promotion and distribution of the badge helped make Mao omnipresent in Chinese people's daily lives. Coupled with publications on the PD guiding people to ritualise the use of the badge as a religious-like conduct, the party thus sought to use the badges to enforce Mao's worshipable cult figure needed to fuel the CR. Finally, while Wang (2008) has contributed to detail different historical and symbolic meanings of hundreds of individual badges exhibited in a collection at the

British Museum, she did not demonstrate the intersection of the badge as a type of consumer goods and the party's control over the Chinese population. As will be presented later, this thesis argues that using consumer goods in politics is a governmentality practice centring on using biopower apparatus to mythify political agendas and embedding the mythified agendas in consumer goods to make these goods new biopower apparatus.

As mention in Chapter 2, a governmentality practice centers on "*government in the name of truth*" (Gordon, 1991, p.8). In governmentality, truth stands for "*a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements*" (Foucault, 1980, p.133). Truth is manufactured by states' exercise of biopower to make any individuals, institutions, materials and symbolic resources biopower apparatuses serving to convince people that state-advocated agendas are the conduct of conduct leading a population to live in an ideal life model (Gordon, 1991; Lorenzini, 2016). The manufacture of truth thus helps states to better induce a population to foster their lives in ways aligned to the agendas. Anchoring in the analysis of the CCP's use of the badges in impelling the CR agenda, this thesis theorises the state's use of consumer goods for politics as a mythmaking-centred governmentality practice of utilising biopower to make state-advocated agendas the conduct of conduct resembling truth.

Specifically, the state initially and primarily mobilises its mass media as a key biopower apparatus to construct a political agenda as a myth. Instead of making the myth a governmental claim, the state narrates the political agenda in stories about ordinary people's lives and makes the implementation of the agenda seemingly more like people's will rather than the state's intention (e.g., Mao as a mythified supreme leader of Chinese

people). Accordingly, the political agenda becomes the mythified agenda in the will of people. To strengthen the mythified agenda, the state constructs stories about people's dealings with specific consumer goods that are rather ordinary, extensively distributed and owned, and a part of people's daily life (e.g., the badges). These stories seek to produce knowledge indicating that people treat these ordinary consumer goods in sacred ways resembling how they do with the scheme of the mythified agenda. Accordingly, the mythified agenda is transformed from an abstract concept composed of semantic statements into a concrete concept mirroring people's handling of these consumer goods. Along with distribution efforts, these consumer goods help the state to diffuse its mythified political agenda to places wherever these goods are sent. The stories about people's dealings with these goods that resemble user manuals of the goods help the state to convey the mythified political agenda to goods owners. To implement the mythified agenda, the state focuses on inducing the population to use the consumer goods in certain ways specified in the "user manuals"-like stories. To achieve this, the state presents the population divided into two opposing groups with sharply contrasting images (e.g., the badge opponents vs. the badge supporters): one group consisting of the agenda opponents and having the image of suffering from the fatal consequences caused by their mishandlings of the consumer goods, and the other group consisting of the agenda supporters and having the image of living a pleasant or even ideal life due to their appropriate handlings of the goods. Therefore, these contrasting images with contrary lifestyles or endings serve to rationalise the designated ways of using the consumer goods as a truth that can lead people to ideal lives. The findings expand the boundaries of theorisation on using consumer goods in politics from two perspectives: governments'

use of consumer goods for the production of truth, and governments' use of consumer goods in consumer research.

### 5.1 Governments' Use of Consumer Goods for the Production of Truth

In governmentality, Foucault has emphasised the importance for government to mobilise apparatus to produce the conduct of conduct, and to rationalise it as truth that is seductive enough to convince a population to follow. From this perspective, Foucault has addressed the study of governmentality as the exploration of the production of truth. To exemplify the production of truth, Foucault (1980) has frequently invoked intellectuals and the intellectual community, addressing them as the "*apparatus of truth*" (p.132). To Foucault (1980), scientific works produced by the intellectual community can provide credibility to make certain knowledge have five distinctive traits qualifying it to be truth: truth is 1) produced by scientific institutions in the format of scientific discourses, 2) produced under the influence of "*constant economic and political incitement (the demand for truth, as much for economic production as for political power*)" (Foucault, 1980, p.131), 3) effectively diffused, embedded and circulated in institutions that have extensive reaches to populations (e.g., schools), 4) transmitted to societies by apparatuses *("university, army, writing, media*" [Foucault, 1980, p.132]) in controlled ways, and 5) "*the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation*" (ibid.).

The analysis of the use of consumer goods in politics as a governmentality practice centring on the mobilistion, use, and creation of biopower apparatus offers novel insights into the production of truth and the notion of the "apparatus of truth". With regard to the production of truth, this thesis reveals that the state constructed its political agenda

centring on establishing Mao's cult figure through mythmaking. Instead of relying on any scientific discourses, the state built the myth by using its propagandic apparatus to create the knowledge about the establishment of the Mao cult as the will of people. Such knowledge was consolidated by crafting stories manifesting people's dealing with the badges in sacred ways reflecting Mao as a worshipable cult figure. To make the knowledge the truth, the state invoked a populist approach to exemplify that the vast majority in the world were supporting the badges and thus living in ideal life models. Accordingly, the ideal life and the conduct of the vast majority became a convincing fait accompli that rationalised the knowledge about the established Mao cult as the truth. In this way, this thesis contributes to demonstrating the state's production of truth through maneuvering consumer goods without involving scientific communities.

In regard to the apparatus of truth, this thesis exposes that the state successfully converted the massively produced and extensively distributed badges into powerful biopower apparatus. With narrations of people's dealings with these readily accessible badges in a sacred fashion, the state translated its semantic statement of Mao's supremacy as a cult figure into a materialised form. Accordingly, dealing with the badges carefully and properly became a matter of supporting Mao, the political agenda that the state sought to impel in the CR. Coupled with intimidating yet compelling stories about the miserable life brought by opposing the badges, the state used the badges to rationalise the importance of supporting Mao by warning opponents of the consequence of opposing him. Therefore, the political agenda of the CR was infused in and carried out by the badges, making the badges biopower apparatuses explaining and rationalising the conduct of conduct amid the CR to the population. In this sense, this thesis contributes to illuminating the use of

ordinary consumer goods for a government as the apparatus of truth to promote and enforce a political agenda.

### 5.2 Governments' Use of Consumer Goods in Consumer Research

In Consumer Research, the notion of "the politics of consumption" has been largely applied to scholarly discussions about consumption-related activities carried out by traditional market players such as marketers, consumers, brands, and advertisements. The term "politics" has been used to refer to negotiations about consumer identity projects between consumers and marketers. By considering "politics" as political agendas, this thesis proposes a novel notion of the politics of consumer goods and defines it as a government-centric governmental practice of using consumer goods to communicate agendas that are advocated by states or that reflect zeitgeist to consumers. Specifically, the theoretical contributions of this thesis to the past consumer research are threefold.

First, this thesis extends the scholarship on the intersection of consumers, marketers, and governments. Generally speaking, consumer research studies have shown that governments can use administrative and political power to intervene in marketers' design, production, and distribution of consumer goods and advertisements (e.g., Buchli, 1999; Cohen, 2003; Gronow, 2003; Zhao and Belk, 2008). Remarkably, this thesis casts some novel light on the crucial role of governments in maneuvering consumer goods in order to establish and impel political agendas. Without having to rely on marketers, governments can not only directly manage consumer goods from design, production, to distribution, but can also directly maneuver meanings of these goods. Governments' direct maneuver of consumer goods contributes to converting ordinary goods into

important apparatuses of biopower and apparatuses of truth, thus diffusing political agendas to people's everyday life. This finding also adds support to Coskuner-Balli's (2020) argument that governments can use consumption to induce consumers to take specific pathways according to socioeconomic and political needs.

Second, the governmentality-enabled theorisation of the politics of consumer goods also advances similar consumer research studies that have adopted Foucault's theories. While these studies have used governmentality to investigate the formation of self-governed/disciplined consumers (e.g., Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2017; Belk et al., 2003; Giesler and Veresiu, 2014; Thompson and Hirschman, 1995; Sandikci and Ger, 2010) and ethnics (Veresiu and Giesler, 2018), governmentality has been used to interpret government-mediated interactions between consumers and marketers. Different from these works, this thesis has drawn on governmentality to examine governments' direct attempts to use consumer goods to carry out political agendas, thus directly responding to Coskuner-Balli's (2020, p.5) call for using governmentality to examine "*macro shaping of institutional/cultural contexts of consumers*". In addition, this thesis is also an advance relative to Coskuner-Balli's (2020) governmentality-enabled study, in which she has theorised the formation of the citizen-consumer subject as a governmentality process that combines the existing American myth with consumerism as a political ideology. Instead of looking at how an existing myth is used by governments for political purposes, this thesis theorises the formation and diffusion of a then-prevailing myth of Mao as a supreme leader as a governmentality practice centring on the state's strategic use of consumer goods. This theorisation also provides additional support for the conceptualisation of Zhao and Belk (2008) that consumer goods provide states with ideal vessels useful for carrying

out political ideologies and values to societies.

Finally, the state's use of the populist approach to configure the meaning of consumers' dealings with consumer goods also advances Holt's (2004) view of using populism in mythmaking. Specifically, in Holt's (2004) conceptualisation, populist worlds merely refer to folk culture and serve as appropriate raw ingredients for marketers to increase the authenticity of myths. The deep roots of populism in philosophy, sociology and political science (Bos et al., 2013; Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013; Hawkins, 2010; Knight, 1998; Laclau; 2005; Moffitt and Tormey, 2013; Pauwels, 2011; Roxborough, 1984) have been neglected in his work. In this thesis, the populist approach functions in the political context to generate a populist world consisting of the good and the evil, nothing in between (Hawkins, 2010; Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013). Since the populist world is divided on the use of consumer goods, it contributes to inducing consumers to use the goods in designated ways helping distance themselves from the undesirable evil. Developing the understanding of populism from the perspective of political studies in marketing is crucial, because this opens up an opportunity for marketers to strategically lead consumers to respond or behave in certain ways that are beneficial and favorable to brands and companies in a short run or even sustainably instrumental to the society as a whole in the long run. For instance, following the populism notion, marketers can induce, cultivate or win as many consumers as possible to become supporters of a certain product, brand, company, or even a social cause through constantly highlighting the benefits or advantages of supporting the product, brand, company, or cause of interest.

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# Appendix

**Figure 1. A Chairman Mao Badge**

**Source:** The author's personal collection. Picture taken in December, 2018, China. Left to right: the front of a badge; the back of a badge.

**Words embossed on the back:** "*Long Live the Ultimately Glorious Chairman Mao Zedong Thought! Yunnan 823 Red Guards-3*".

**Table 1 List of Countries that are found in the badges narratives**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Afghanistan | 23. Denmark | 45. Iraq | 67. Niger | 89. Spain |
| 2. Albania | 24. Ecuador | 46. Ireland | 68. Nepal | 90. Sudan |
| 3. Algeria | 25.El Salvador | 47. Israel | 69. Netherlands | 91. Sweden |
| 4. Argentine | 26. Equatorial Guinea | 48. Italy | 70. New Zealand | 92. Switzerland |
| 5. Austria | 27. Ethiopia | 49. Ivory Coast | 71. Nigeria | 93. Syria |
| 6. Belgium | 28. Egypt | 50. Jamaica | 72. Norway | 94. TaiWan |
| 7. Bolivia | 29. Finland | 51. Japan | 73. Pakistan | 95. Tanganyika |
| 8. Brazil | 30. France | 52. Jordan | 74. Panama | 96. Tanganyika and Zanzibar/Tanzania |
| 9. Bulgaria | 31. Germany (E) | 53. Kenya | 75. Peru | 97. Thailand |
| 10. Burma | 32. Germany (W) | 54.Korea, North | 76. Philippines | 98. Togo |
| 11. Cambodia | 33. Ghana | 55. Kuwait | 77. Poland | 99.Trinidad and Tobago |
| 12. Canada | 34. Greece | 56. Laos | 78. Portugal | 100. Tunisia |
| 13. Ceylon | 35. Guatemala | 57. Lebanon | 79. Qatar | 101. Ukraine |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. Chile | 36. Guinea | 58. Luxembourg | 80. Rhodesia | 102.United Kingdom |
| 15. Colombia | 37. Guyana | 59. Malaya | 81. Romania | 103.United States |
| 16. Congo (Brazzaville) | 38. Haiti | 60. Malaysia | 82.Saudi Arabia | 104. Uruguay |
| 17. Congo (Stanleyville) | 39. Honduras | 61.Mali Federation | 83. Senegal | 105. Venezuela |
| 18. Costa Rica | 40. Hong Kong | 62. Mauritania | 84. Singapore | 106. Vietnam |
| 19. Cuba | 41. Hungary | 63. Mauritius | 85. Somalia | 107. Yemen |
| 20. Cyprus | 42. India | 64. Monaco | 86. Somaliland | 108. Yugoslavia |
| 21. Czechoslovakia | 43. Indonesia | 65. Mongolia | 87.South Africa | 109. Zambia |
| 22. Dahomey | 44. Iran | 66. Morocco | 88.Soviet Union | 110. Zanzibar |

**Table 2 Articles about the Ne Win regime and the anti-Chinese Campaign**

| Date of Publication | Article Title in Chinese | Article title translated in English |
|---|---|---|
| 1967/07/04 [a] | 首都红卫兵愤怒声讨奈温反动政府 | Red Guards from the capital angrily denounce Ne Win reactionary regime |
| 1967/07/04 [b] | 首都群众迎接烈士骨灰欢迎负伤同志归来 | Capital people welcome the wounded comrades and ashes of martyrs back home |
| 1967/07/04 [c] | 首都红卫兵强烈抗议缅甸反动政府反华暴行大会抗议书 | Red Guards from the capital vehemently protest against the anti-China riots launched by the reactionary government of Myanmar |
| 1967/07/10 [a] | 后台老板出场了 | The backstage boss shows up! |
| 1967/07/10 [b] | 奈温反动政府疯狂反华只能自取灭亡 | Ne Win reactionary regime's collapse starts from its insane anti-China activities. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1967/07/15 | 开动全部宣传机器为奈温政府反华助威 苏修集团是缅甸反动派的后台老板 | The Soviet Union group of socialist imperialists operate all propaganda machines to cheer Ne Win regime for its the Anti-China activities. What a backstage boss of the Myanmar reactionaries! |
| 1967/07/20[a] | 用战无不胜的毛泽东思想武装起来什么都不怕 爱国华侨英勇反抗缅甸反动派残酷镇压 | Be armed with the invincible Mao Zedong's Thought and go fearless. The patriotic overseas Chinese fight bravely against the brutal suppression by the Myanmar reactionaries. |
| 1967/07/20[b] | 亚非进步组织强烈谴责缅甸印度和印尼等反动政府反华罪行 追随美帝反华决没有好下场 | The Asian-African Advanced Organisation strongly condemns the anti-China crimes of reactionary governments of countries such as Myanmar, India and Indonesia. Following the U.S. against China will come to no good end. |
| 1967/07/20[d] | 我红色新闻战士从缅甸胜利归来 陈毅副总理、缅共波丹瑞同志和中外人士一千多人到机场热烈欢迎于民生同志，最强烈谴责缅甸反动政府追随美帝苏修反华排华罪行 | Our Red News fighters returned from Myanmar with glorious victory. Vice Premier Chen Yi, Comrade Bodanri of the Communist Party of Myanmar, and more than 1,000 people from China and abroad came to the airport to warmly welcome Comrade Yu Minsheng and strongly condemned the Myanmar reactionary government for following the U.S. and the Soviet revisionist in anti-China crimes. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1967/07/24 | 迎合美苏需要　转移国内人民不满　加紧反华反共反人民 奈温反动政府疯狂反华罪恶滔天 | Ingratiating with the needs of the United States and the Soviet Union and transferring the dissatisfaction of the domestic people, Ne Win reactionary regime is stepping up its anti-China, Anti-Communist and Anti-People heinous crimes. |
| 1967/07/25 | 宁死不屈　大义凛然　忠于祖国　忠于毛主席 缅甸爱国华侨英勇抗暴气壮山河 奈温反动政府屠杀华侨的罪行表明它是一伙最野蛮的法西斯匪徒 | The patriotic overseas Chinese in Myanmar bravely resisted violence. They would rather die than surrender, and they are loyal to both their motherland and Chairman Mao. The crime of massacring the overseas Chinese by Ne Win reactionary regime shows that it is one of the most barbarous fascist bandits. |
| 1967/07/29 | 我驻缅记者于民生举行记者招待会欢呼缅共领导的武装斗争不断发展壮大 缅甸革命人民无限热爱毛主席 奈温反动政府对内反共反人民对外亲美联苏反华只能加速自己灭亡 | Chinese correspondent in Myanmar Yu Minsheng held a press conference to cheer the continuous development and growth of the armed struggle led by the Communist Party of Myanmar. The revolutionary people of Myanmar love Chairman Mao infinitely. The collapse of the Ne Win reactionary regime can only be accelerated along with its application of anti-Communist and anti-people approaches domestically and that of pro-the U.S. and pro-Soviet Union internationally. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1967/08/03[c] | 亚洲国家朋友在我驻各国使馆庆祝建军节招待会上说 毛主席给世界人民指明走向胜利的道路 | In the receptions organised by our embassies in Asian countries themed in celebrating the Founding of the Chinese Army, our Asian friends said that Chairman Mao points out the path to victory for the people of the world |
| 1967/08/04[b] | 头可断　血可流　毛泽东思想永不丢 缅甸爱国华侨青少年永远忠于毛主席 | Never live without the Mao Zedong's Thoughts, even at the cost of bleeding and being beheaded. The patriotic overseas Chinese youths in Myanmar will always be loyal to Chairman Mao |
| 1967/08/13[a] | 我外交部列举事实驳斥缅驻华使馆的无耻狡辩 奈温反动政府是反华排华的罪魁祸首 重申中国政府提出的五项严正要求，缅甸反动政府必须照办 | The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China cited facts to dismiss the shameless claims made by the Myanmar Embassy in China. Ne Win reactionary regime is the chief culprit in launching anti-China activities. We reiterated the five solemn demands of the Chinese government and the reactionary government of Myanmar must follow suit. |
| 1967/08/13[b] | 毛主席的红色援外战士——刘逸 | Chairman Mao's red fighter dispatched aboard-Liu Yi |
| 1967/08/19 | 永远不忘毛主席派来的好专家——缅甸人民赞誉全心全意为缅甸人民服务的中国专家 | Never forget the good experts sent by Chairman Mao——The people of Myanmar praise the Chinese experts serving the people of Myanmar wholeheartedly |

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| 1967/08/22 | 血债一定要用血来还！缅甸反动政府竟残杀我爱国华侨领袖刘应超 | The blood debt must be paid with blood! The reactionary government in Myanmar killed my patriotic overseas Chinese leader Liu Yingchao |
| 1967/08/28 | 我驻缅使馆和爱国华侨满怀激愤为刘应超烈士举行葬礼 奈温政府欠下血债必须偿还 | The Chinese Embassy in Myanmar and the patriotic overseas Chinese held a funeral for the martyr Liu Yingchao with fury. Ne Win regime owes blood debts that they must repay. |
| 1967/08/31[b] | 疯狂仇视和迫害我国专家 妄图贬低中国经援的巨大政治影响 奈温集团是破坏中缅经济合作协定的罪魁祸首 我国援缅工作光明磊落成绩显著，奈温之流永远抹杀不了 | Crazy hatred and persecution of Chinese experts, and vain attempts to devalue the huge political influence of China's economic aid are what Ne Win regime is doing as the chief culprit in undermining the China-Myanmar Economic Cooperation Agreement. The project of China aiding Myanmar has made outstanding achievements that can never be written off by the Ne Win regime and others alike. |
| 1967/09/24[b] | 我驻缅使馆最强烈抗议缅反动派杀害爱国华侨林鸿珠 中国人民绝不饶恕奈温反动政府的罪行 | The Chinese Embassy in Myanmar strongly remonstrates the murder of the patriotic overseas Chinese Lin Hongzhu by the Myanmar reactionaries. The Chinese people shall never forgive the crimes committed by Ne Win reactionary regime. |

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| 1967/11/03 | 在广大革命群众的热烈欢呼声中 我首批援缅专家乘专机回到昆明 离开仰光前我驻缅使馆举行欢送会　缅甸朋友和爱国华侨热情为专家送行 | Amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the revolutionary masses, the first group of Chinese experts who have been dispatched to aid Myanmar was just carried back by state-ordered planes to Kunming. Before these experts left Yangon, the Chinese embassy in Myanmar had held a farewell ceremony joint by our Myanmar friends and patriotic overseas Chinese. |
| 1967/11/05[c] | “奈温把你们赶走，但是缅甸人民同你们心连心” 缅甸工人冲破军警封锁热情送别中国专家 | “Ne Win deported you, but the Myanmar people are always with you heart to heart”, said the enthusiastic Burmese working people who broke through military police blockade to say farewell to Chinese experts. |
| 1968/01/05 | 心中升起红太阳　心红志坚骨头硬 爱国华侨在敌人法庭上横眉怒斥缅甸反动派 | The Red Sun rises in the heart. With red hearts and strong will, patriotic overseas Chinese scolded the Myanmar reactionary enemies in an court |
| 1968/02/09 | 颗颗红心向着毛主席 | Red hearts toward Chairman Mao |