Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies

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3 Missionizing, Civilizing, and Nationizing

Linked Concepts of Compelled Change

Julia C. Schneider

Abstract

This chapter tries to clarify two sets of conceptual connections. On the one hand, Chinese discourses of compelled change, i.e. civilizing, and practices of conquest and colonialism are compared to the European discourses on missionizing, and their conceptual similarities are demonstrated. On the other hand, connections between Chinese ideas of a ‘Confucian civilizing mission’ as change of moral, cultural, and ethnic identity from the Ming and Qing dynasties are linked to later Chinese ideas of ‘nationizing’, i.e. integration of non-Chinese people into the Chinese nation by assimilation of language, script, way of living, and other cultural and ethnic markers.

Keywords: Confucian civilizing mission, Christian missionizing, internal colonialism, southern and southwestern China, Ming and Qing Dynasties

Introduction

This chapter aims at drawing connections between the three sets of discourses on the colonial integration of others into the self and its legitimation: first, the Chinese nationalist discourse on ‘China’s assimilative power’, second, its pre-discursive root or dispositif, the ‘Confucian civilizing mission’, and, third, European Christian missionizing. The chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first part, I will go into detail about the post-1900 nationalist discourse and highlight how the idea of ‘China’s assimilative power’ was developed due to the demands of Chinese nation-building. In the second part, I will argue why I see a theoretical connection between the ideas of ‘Confucian civilizing’, assimilation or ‘sinicization’, and Christian missionizing, particularly in the context of colonialism and imperialism.

Chinese scholars and historians began to write ‘general histories’ (tongshi 通史) and ‘history textbooks’ (lishi jiaokeshu 歷史教科書), as well as essays
and articles, shedding light on certain aspects and eras of history and historiography in a nationalist style since the 1900s. At that time, nationalism, that is, the theory that nation and state should be congruent and that every nation should have a state, became known among Chinese reformist political thinkers and quickly gained popularity. Ernest Renan’s question ‘Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?’ (‘What is a nation’)¹ in its particular Chinese form – ‘What is the Chinese nation?’ – was indeed an urgent question at the beginning of the twentieth century. Nationalism had originated in Europe and, as stressed by Benedict Anderson, in Creole Middle America, and it became more and more popular all over the world in the course of the nineteenth century.² Since the 1890s, Chinese thinkers learned of its theories, mostly filtered through Japanese translations and adaptations of Western works on politics, history, and society.

The question of how to define one’s own nation was by no means limited to the Chinese experience, but was posed by political thinkers around the globe since they came to support nationalism. This is an expression of a paradox of nationalism detected by Anderson: nationalism is a universal concept, but at the same time it is irremediably particular in its concrete manifestations.³ Although many political and scholarly elites asked themselves what defined their nations, their answers to this question were necessarily different. Furthermore, differences not only existed between, for example, definitions of the French and the Chinese nations, but also within the discourse on the Chinese nation opinions differed on how to define this particular nation.

When I refer to Chinese scholars and thinkers in late imperial and early republican times, I refer to people who spoke one of the Chinese languages or dialects, who mostly grew up in traditional elite environments with regard to their education during childhood and adolescence, in families of some fortune, rich enough to allow their sons to learn and study for a rather long time. Until the abrogation of the imperial examinations in the course of New Policies (xinzheng 新政) in 1905, Chinese education had had the ultimate objective of participating in the examinations and of gaining access to a career as an official. However, also after 1905, it provided the opportunity to a career, for example in politics, academia, press, and media.

At the end of the nineteenth century, it was from the ranks of these scholars and thinkers that the bold political attempt was made to reform the

³ Anderson (2006, p. 5).
Qing Dynasty (1636/1644-1912) and change it into a constitutional monarchy. Reform-minded scholars like Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), his disciple Liang Qichao 梁啓超 (1873-1929), and several others persuaded the young Guangxu 光緒 Emperor Dezong 德宗 (1871-1908) to go against his aunt, Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧 (1835-1908). However, their Hundred Days’ Reform (wuxu bianfa 戊戌變法) failed due to the intervention of the conservative circles in the government backed up by the Empress Dowager. Kang, Liang, and others who had directly participated in the reformist attempt or had supported it publicly like Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 and Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1868-1936), had to emigrate. Those who wanted to or had to remain in the Qing Empire, i.e. Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865-1898), were put to death. Most of the escapees went to Japan where reformist Japanese politicians and political parties offered them shelter and the opportunity to continue their political work. From their Japanese exile, Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan continued their struggle for reform by publishing extensively. Their interest in nationalist theories grew due to the fact that they gained better access to Japanese translations, adaptations, and analyses of Western works on politics, history, and society on the one hand, and on the other hand, could study the outcome of the Japanese Meiji Reforms which had been implemented by the Meiji 明治 Emperor (1852-1912) since the beginning of his reign in 1868.

China’s assimilative power

Liang Qichao’s nationalism

In his Japanese exile, Liang Qichao published several famous essays, among them Teachings of the Great Political Scientist Bluntschli (Zhengzhixue Dajia Bolunzhili zhi Xueshuo 政治學大家伯倫知理之學說) on the Swiss political theorist Johann Caspar Bluntschli (1808-1881). Bluntschli was well known among Japanese scholars, because his works had been translated into Japanese by the political scientist Kato Hiroyuki 加藤弘之 (1836-1916) already in the 1870s. Liang, however, copied large parts from a more recent translation of Bluntschli’s German Political Science for the Educated Public (‘Deutsche Staatslehre für Gebildete’, 1874) by Azuma Heiji 吾妻兵治 (dates of life unknown), Science of the Nation (Kokkagaku 国家学 1899). Crucial

4 Liang (1903).
for my analysis here, however, are passages which Liang added to Azuma’s translation of Bluntschli’s text. They refer to the particular situation of the Qing Empire and question the validity of Bluntschli’s theories for the case of the Chinese nation.

Based on Bluntschli’s approach to the different ways in which states, nations, and ethnicities could be linked, Liang developed his well-known theory of ‘greater nationalism’ (da minzuzhuyi 大民族主義) opposed to ‘lesser nationalism’ (xiao minzuzhuyi 小民族主義).6 ‘Greater nationalism’ meant that what ‘all ethnicities, aboriginals and those originating from other places, who are united in the [Qing] Empire, [feel] regarding all ethnicities outside the empire’ 合國內本部屬部之諸族以對於國外之諸族? ‘Lesser nationalism’, on the other hand, was what ‘the Han [Chinese] ethnicity [feels] regarding other ethnicities within the [borders of the Qing] Empire’ 漢族對於國內他族.8 Geographically, ‘greater nationalism’ thus referred to the whole Qing Empire, ‘lesser nationalism’ only to the Chinese inhabited regions within the Qing Empire, also called ‘China proper’ (benbu 本部; guannei 關內). In confronting ‘greater’ with ‘lesser’ nationalisms and taking a stance against the latter, Liang gave his answer to the question, what the Chinese nation was. However, his comparison between ‘greater’ and ‘lesser’ nationalisms shows that the answer was a matter of debate and did not come naturally.

Accordingly, two different conclusions were drawn from the Qing situation. One conclusion was that the existing Qing state defined the nation. This was the basis of Liang’s ‘greater nationalism’. The ‘greater nation’ was based on political and territorial considerations, which meant that those living within certain (political) borders were part of the Chinese nation. One could say that this idea equated the Qing Empire with ‘China’ (zhongguo 中國) and that this was the basis for defining the Qing Empire as a ‘Zhonghua [Chinese] nation’ (zhonghua minzu 中華民族). The other conclusion was that the Chinese or Han ethnicity (Hanzu 漢族) defined the nation. The ‘lesser nation’ was based on a mixture of language, culture, tradition, place of residence, in short, ethnic markers, which meant that the Chinese nations were only those who were Han (漢) in the Qing Empires rendering. This clearly was a narrower understanding of the nation. Lesser nationalism diminished the territory of a future nation-state in comparison with the

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6 Liang (1903/1983, Wenji 13, p. 75)
7 Liang (1903/1983, pp. 75-76).
8 Liang (1903/1983, p. 75).
first option. For diverse reasons, most political thinkers and scholars opted for the first idea of the Qing Empire as the nation-state.

Liang Qichao’s definition of the Chinese term minzu 民族 in his essay on Bluntschli (or rather, that of Azuma Heiji) was a translation of Bluntschli’s German Nation. The German Nation, however, was defined by Bluntschli himself as the English ‘people’ and the French peuple. (The German Volk was defined as ‘nation’ in English and nation in French.) Based on Bluntschli, Liang also defined what conditions were needed in order to form one minzu. He gave the following list:

Same place, same blood relation, same physical appearance, same language, same script, same religion, same tradition, same way of living. Language, script, and tradition, however, are the most important [criteria] among them.9

How does Liang’s definition of minzu inform the term ‘nationalism’ (minzuzhuyi 民族主義), or, in other words, how do Liang’s two definitions of the nation come together: nation with regard to people (as underlying the term minzu) and nation in geographical terms (as underlying his idea of ‘greater nationalism’)? On the one hand, Liang assumed that a feeling of national unity within the borders of the Qing Empire (guonei 國內) was not only possible, but desirable. On the other hand, he defined minzu in a rather narrow way: ethnicities or identity groups which are genealogically linked and share a place of living, blood relation, physical appearance, language, script, religion, tradition, and way of living. Would not this latter definition of minzu as the basis of the nation-state exclude those ‘other ethnicities within the [borders of the Qing] Empire’ (guonei tazu 國內他族)10 from the minzu of a Chinese nation-state which according to the concept of ‘greater nationalism’ was supposed to include many non-Chinese peoples?

Liang justified his idea of a Chinese nation-state within the borders of the Qing Empire with the efficacy of an ‘assimilative power’ (tonghuali 同化力), which the Chinese possessed and which he called ‘China’s assimilative power’ (zhongguo tonghuali 中國同化力).11 With the unconscious efficacy or conscious application of this power, the ethnic definition of minzu could become congruent with the territorial definition of ‘greater nationalism’.

10 Liang (1903/1983, p. 75).
Liang had discussed the theory of ‘assimilative power’ already in 1902 in the essay About the General Tendency of Ethnic Struggles (Lun Minzu Jingzheng Zhi Dashi 論民族競爭之大勢). Its validity was based on the assumption that there were ‘superior ethnicities’ (youqiang minzu 優強民族) which could ‘swallow inferior, weak ethnicities and erase their frontiers’. In 1903, Liang identified the Chinese ethnicity as one of these superior ethnicities. The assumption that their superiority enabled them to change other people’s identity was based on older Chinese culturalist assumptions, such as the late imperial reading of the Mengzi (孟子, (372-289 BC) motto ‘using the Xia [Chinese] to change the Yi [barbarians]’ (yong Xia bian Yi 用夏變夷), and on social Darwinist ideas of people being divided in superior ones and inferior ones, with the former having the natural right to rule and dominate the latter. Already Bluntschli had used social Darwinist classifications of people and had followed the general idea of dominant or superior people being able to assimilate and to change others especially in order to unify the people of a nation, and at the same time to withstand change by others. Bluntschli particularly referred to several people who possessed such power, the Romans and the Greeks in antiquity, and the contemporary United States of America (as a nation) as well as the French and the Russians. One important precondition according to Bluntschli was that this kind of assimilation ‘only succeeds where the dominant people are decidedly superior to the rest in education, mind, and power’. Liang did not fully accept this precondition. Although he agreed that superiority in power was useful, he assumed that only superiority of education and mind was indispensable.

Consequently, Liang meant by ‘China’s assimilative power’ that the Chinese, which by his definition were the Hanzu 漢族, were capable to transform everyone, groups as well as individuals, and assimilate them into Chinese (Han) culture and ethnicity. According to Liang, irrespective of the Chinese political, social, and military situation, their culture would always put them in the superior position and enable them to assimilate others under all circumstances.

Liang applied the theory within two fields, historiography and political strategy. As a political strategy, Liang used the theory of ‘China’s assimilative
power’ to argue for the possibility of integrating non-Chinese peoples into the Chinese nation and nation-state in his contemporary times. As a historiographical theory, Liang used ‘China’s assimilative power’ as a basis to evaluate all kinds of contacts between Chinese and non-Chinese in all periods of time. Rather than analyzing these contacts in detail, he claimed that all had the same outcome: the non-Chinese peoples could not help but assimilate into the Chinese. His strongest argument was his interpretation of the histories of dynastic empires founded by non-Chinese peoples who conquered Chinese-inhabited regions, later called ‘foreign conquest dynasties’. (The label ‘conquest dynasties’ of course only holds true from a limited perspective and otherwise strengthens the ‘monolithic assumption that there were “Chinese” dynasties that were somehow not conquest dynasties’.18) This argument was particularly strong, because, according to Liang, although non-Chinese conquerors were politically, socially, and militarily superior, even they could not avoid their assimilation into the Chinese culture and people. The assumption of their assimilation thus meant that in the end every people, irrespective of their position with regard to politics, military, or social stratification, could be assimilated into the Chinese due to the Chinese superior culture and identity as an ethnicity or people.

The application of the theory of ‘China’s assimilative power’ in the field of historiography was in fact based on the necessity to prove its validity as a political strategy. With selected examples from history, Liang tried to provide evidence for the applicability and successful prospects of assimilation into the Chinese when ‘China’s assimilative power’ was used strategically to build and to unify the Chinese nation. Since the 1920s, the terms Hanhua 漢化 or Huahua 華化 (sinicization, or Sinification) became to be used to refer to the specific processes of (assumed) assimilation into Chinese culture and people.

**Chinese political thinkers and nationalisms**

Like Liang Qichao, most Chinese political thinkers accepted the idea that states with a homogenous nation were more likely to be strong and successful in the contemporary situation. Their approach towards nationalism was thus closely linked to the wish to withstand imperialist threats especially of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan. Based on his reading of Bluntschli, Liang had defined the unifying aspects

18 Crossley (1999, pp. 29f).
of a people based on place, blood relation, physical appearance, language, script, religion, tradition, and way of living, emphasizing language, script, and tradition. Liang’s strategy was to claim that the assimilation of most of the non-Chinese people in the Qing Empire had already happened in the past without revealing substantial proof for this claim. Based on older sinocentric approaches to other cultures and peoples, Liang’s claim was generally accepted. This is reflected in the new genres of history textbooks and general histories published since the 1900s. History books of these genres had the purpose to educate and from the start they had strong nationalist tendencies, not only in the Qing Empire or the Republic of China but also in Japan and in the countries of their origin in Central and Western Europe.

Zhang Taiyan offered an alternative approach. He accepted the existence of ‘China’s assimilative power’, but doubted that the Tibetans, Mongols, and Turkic Muslims (later called Uyghurs) were in fact already assimilated. He thus accepted the possibility of a contemporary, but not so much historical effectiveness of ‘China’s assimilative power’. Like Liang, he found language and script important aspects of national unity. He stressed a second aspect, ‘[way of] living, eating, and occupation’ (jushi zhiye 居食職業), which might be comparable to Liang’s aspect of ‘tradition’ (fengsu 風俗). However, there is no detailed description, neither by Liang of ‘tradition’ nor by Zhang of ‘living, eating, and occupation’, so it remains unclear what they meant by these terms. Zhang moreover added a third aspect, ‘laws and orders’ (falü fuling 法律符令).19 He found Tibetans, Mongols, and Turkic Muslims all lacking particularly with regard to one of these three aspects. If they were to become part of the Chinese nation-state, meaning political participation, it would be necessary for them to adjust to Chinese ways.20 Although Zhang stated that every people should decide on their own if they wanted to found a nation-state or become part of another, he left no doubt that he found the integration of all three peoples, Tibetans, Mongols, and Turkic Muslims, highly desirable and expected them to be sensible enough to see how unwise a separation from the Chinese would be.21

According to Zhang, the processes of assimilating Tibetans, Mongols, and Turkic Muslims could be finalized within twenty years, given that there was a concrete state program providing education in Chinese language and culture, promoting Chinese ways of living, eating, and occupation, especially

19 Zhang (1907/1984, IV, p. 257).
20 Zhang (pp. 257-258).
21 Zhang (p. 262).
in the field of agriculture, and implementing a Chinese legal system.\textsuperscript{22} In contrast to Liang, he did not find it necessary to refer to history to prove that people living in the Qing Empire had already been assimilated into the Chinese people and culture in the past. Zhang’s argument was based on the simple power-political equation that the larger a state’s territory was, the more powerful the state would be. At the same time, he assumed that the people in this state’s territory had to be unified as a nation, because the size of the state was only an advantage when it was based on national unification. He did not base his acceptance of the possibility of sinicization on historical arguments like Liang did, but on the sheer necessity of unification – what had to be possible, was possible.

**Nationalism as religion: Nationizing as missionizing?**

I find the theory of ‘China’s assimilative power’, as used in early Chinese nationalist discourse, close to religious concepts of missionizing. To approach Chinese nationalism based on the suggestion that nationalisms are like or are religions, as done by several scholars, means that it might be reasonable to apply concepts of missionizing to the theory of ‘China’s assimilative power’ and the idea of sinicization.\textsuperscript{23} To what extent does the idea of sinicization resemble certain aspects of religious missionizing as transformation and change of a peoples’ identity in discourse and in reality?

Scholars such as Frank Wright write that ‘nationalisms are not merely “like” religions – they are religions’;\textsuperscript{24} and Joseph R. Llobera claims that ‘nationalism has become a religion – a secular religion where god is the nation’.\textsuperscript{25} Both statements are about western European nationalisms and they both refer to the fact that these appeared at a time when religious identities – Christianity and Judaism alike – were losing their attractiveness to people in Europe and North America. This crisis of religion happened due to the Enlightenment and scientific findings and inventions.

In the Western context, changes of identities due to cultural assimilation and changes due to processes of religious missionizing seem not to have been analyzed in parallel so far. In the Chinese discourse on national assimilation, its drawing on earlier ideas of Confucian civilizational assimilation

\textsuperscript{22} Zhang (p. 257).
\textsuperscript{23} Wright (1988); Llobera (1994, p. 143); Anderson (2006, p. 5).
\textsuperscript{24} Wright (1988, pp. 128-148).
\textsuperscript{25} Llobera (1994, p. 143).
are much more evident. By revealing its roots in earlier ideas of civilizational assimilation, the Chinese nationalist discourse reveals that the mechanics and underlying discourses, both on Confucian civilizational assimilation in Ming and Qing dynasties and on Chinese national assimilation in late Qing and Republican eras, are built on one another.

By this understanding of Chinese discourses on assimilation, linking pre-nationalist discourses with those after the idea of nation-building became part of these discourses, it becomes obvious that also in Europe two discourses which have not been interpreted as being related, might be more closely related than previously thought: Christian missionizing or Christian religious assimilation on the one hand, and on the other hand, processes of active or passive ‘nationizing’ in the course of nation- and state-building, nationizing being understood as imagined and real processes of integrating people into a nation and nation-state who have so far not been part. Whereas the connection between Western discourses on Christian missionizing and nationizing cannot be discussed within the frame of this essay, parallels between the Chinese and the Western discourses are analyzed further below.

The superiority of the Chinese as a people and a culture

In the Western context, nationalism and Enlightenment developed in parallel. Similarly, in parallel to the development of theories of Chinese nationalism since the late nineteenth century, Chinese thinkers became frustrated with traditional Chinese philosophies, ethics, and morals. This refers to several layers with regard to the wish for reforms which developed chronologically in parallel to political and historical events. Like in the Western context, the idea of identity shifted from one based on general ethics and moral to a nationalist idea of identity based on a specific ethnic belonging.

In the late nineteenth century, Chinese reformers wished for a strong Qing Empire. It was not considered to be a major obstacle that the Qing emperors were of Manchu ethnic background, as long as a reform towards constitutionalism was possible. However, the Hundred Days’ Reform proved unsuccessful and important reformist thinkers like Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Zhang Taiyan had to leave the Qing Empire. In their Japanese exile and based on their discussions of nationalism, more and more came to believe that the problem was exactly the non-Chinese identity of the Qing emperors and ruling elites. It came to be understood that the Qing Empire’s desolate situation was the fault of the Manchu emperors, of whom
the Chinese thinkers now thought as conquerors or even as colonizers. Chinese nationalist reformers and revolutionaries alike argued that due to the Manchus’ assumed ethnic and cultural inferiority, imperialist powers had been able to overrun the Empire in the nineteenth century. (They also blamed their Chinese fellow subjects for their passivity in letting themselves be ruled by non-Chinese conquerors). Under the preconditions of a growing anti-Manchuism, it was claimed that the Chinese as a cultural and ethnic group were superior to non-Chinese, especially to non-Chinese within the Qing Empire. Therefore, they did not aim at a constitutional monarchy with Manchu emperors anymore, but at a republic with a Chinese ruling elite who would lead the non-Chinese inferior people towards their integration into a Chinese nation-state. This integration would be based on ‘China's assimilative power’ which the Chinese possessed because of their cultural and ethnic superiority.

When the Republic of China (ROC), the first Chinese nation-state, was finally founded in 1911, it became obvious that ‘China’s assimilative power’ and the attraction to be part of a powerful, united nation-state under Chinese dominance were obviously not as appealing as previously thought. Non-Chinese peoples, especially Tibetans and Mongols, later also Turkic Muslims, who began to call themselves ‘Uyghurs’ under Soviet rule in the 1920s, developed their own ideas of nation-building or at least of state-building. They aimed at independent (nation-) states and did not want to be part of a Chinese dominated nation-state. Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan had assumed that non-Chinese would be naturally inclined to remain part of a Chinese successor state of the Qing Dynasty before 1911. Now, their hopes were proven incorrect. In the 1920s, Liang Qichao nevertheless worked even harder on this theory of ‘China’s assimilative power’, renaming it ‘assimilative power of the Zhonghua [Chinese] ethnicity’ (Zhonghua minzu tonghuali 中華民族同化力). Instead of asking why the Chinese people and culture were not as attractive as assumed, he concentrated on showing that at least in the past, the ‘assimilative power of the Zhonghua [Chinese] ethnicity’ had worked indeed as smoothly as he had claimed in the 1900s.

Others, however, paid more attention to the process of weakening of the Chinese nation-state. Nearly from the start, the ROC had been in a complicated situation, because of the influence of Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859-1916) and his Beiyang Army clique, who jeopardized the Republican

government and ruled the ROC more and more autocratically. Already before the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, when the allied powers of World War I gave the German concessions in China to Japan, Chinese thinkers, especially the younger ones, had become disappointed by the Western states, which for them lost their model character to some degree. They became engaged in the May Fourth Movement (1915-1925), whose aim was to reform Chinese culture and enable it to resist imperialism. One part was that they wanted to lessen the influence of Chinese traditional ideology, often called ‘Confucianism’ in English.

Traditional ideology, which was the moral and ethnic basis of government and ruling, of social organization and hierarchy in general, embraced in fact more than Confucian ideology based on the Four Books and the Five Classics (Sishu Wujing 四書五經). It also contained legalist, Neo-Confucian, and even Mongol and Manchu ways of government and ruling. However, (Neo-) Confucian ideology certainly was its decisive part. By critically judging traditional ideology and aiming at abrogating certain parts of it, the participants of the May Forth Movement not only wanted to reform Chinese culture, but they also aimed at changing and reforming the whole Chinese way of life with regard to society and politics.

The point I want to make here is, that like Christian ethics and morals were criticized in the context of Enlightenment and then nationalism, traditional ways of ethics and morals also were criticized in the Chinese nationalist and reformist discourses. The triggers for turning away from traditional ideologies differed from those in the West. In the West, scientific and technical developments and thus a new way of looking at the world played a great role. Among Chinese thinkers, however, the political, economic, and social decline since the beginning of the nineteenth century shook the belief in Confucian ethics and finally resulted in a general disappointment of Chinese traditional ethics and values in the late 1910s. Although I am not sure if one can label traditional Chinese ideology, or rather ideologies as ‘religion’, I nevertheless find the parallelism of the developments, which ultimately lead to nationalism and a new way of narrating identities in Western and in Chinese contexts striking. In both settings, the older traditional/religious and younger enlightened/national, identities were based on, first, certain ways of behavior linked on the one hand to social rules of ethics and moral and on the other hand to cultural markers, such as language, dress, way of living and eating, occupations, etc., and second, an imagined genealogical connection and the idea of same descent. However, the emphasis of the markers shifted, and social rules, language, dress, way of living and eating, occupations, and particularly the
idea of descent changed. New ways of imagining identity were embedded into the framework of a national identity.

Did nationalism offer a new ‘religious’ way of identification? Can nationalism be described as a new ‘religion’ in the Chinese context, too, as claimed by scholars working on West European nationalisms? And can the wish to assimilate non-Chinese peoples into the Chinese nation, their ‘nationalization’, be seen as a way of missionizing, as ‘an organized effort for the propagation’\(^{28}\) of Chinese nationality?

**Assimilation as missionizing in the context of Ming and Qing colonialism**

In a pre-1900 context, general concepts of Chinese-Confucian civilizing and change of identity indeed seem to resemble the idea of Western-Christian missionizing. Rites, rules, and morals based on the respective traditions, whether Confucianism or Christianity, were considered to be ultimately true, correct, and infallible by the bearers of the respective tradition. The assimilation of non-Confucians into the Confucian community, their adoption of Confucian rites, and the acceptance of certain rules and morals, in connection with the ability to read Chinese (at least among the upper social strata) are similar to Christianization and the Christian mission, the process of becoming part of the Christian community, based on education not only with regard to Christian ideology, but also to language and other subjects considered necessary knowledge in the context of Christian missionizing.

The similarities increase, if Chinese concepts and realities of pre-1900 ‘Confucian civilizing missions’ and its legacy in post-1900 assimilation and nationizing by ‘China’s assimilative power’ are compared to approaches to Christian missionizing in the context of colonialism, especially since the nineteenth century, when ideas of racial inequality were brought into the debate. It is undeniable that the process of Christian missionizing has run parallel to that of colonization with regard to time and space since the first seafarers, financed by and supported by European powers, left Portugal and Spain for new continents in the fifteenth century.\(^{29}\) Colonial rule and the ‘Christian “conquest of the world”’\(^{30}\) went hand in hand, and European Christian churches declared that European expansionism was ‘God’s plan’

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30 Gründer (p. 7).
to propagate the ‘Kingdom of God’ in the world. They thus readily used
the protection of the colonial states for their missions.\(^{31}\) At the same time,
colonial states often transferred the task of pacification of the colonies
to the missionaries, who consequently became central to colonial power.
Missionaries and colonial powers worked together in order to achieve the
embedding of the colonized into the colonial system and structure with
regard to rites, rules, and morals, which were to provide the base for a
political, administrative, economical, and also linguistic integration. This
integration would, however, not be an integration on eye level, but one
resulting in the economical exploitation of the colonies. The pacification
of the colonies managed by missionaries was thus especially based on an
education of the conquered and colonized people which supported obedi-
ence and labor.\(^{32}\) Christianity consequently was the ‘ideological and ritual
accompaniment of Western imperialism’.\(^{33}\)

Processes of enforced change and assimilation based on education,
together with the seizure of power from local power holders and often
with a displacement of the local populations, such as happened in the
colonies of European imperial powers, are comparable to the processes of
change in Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Sichuan since the
Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), when the growth of population in the Chinese
(Han) inhabited regions caused increasing migration of Chinese people
into these areas. Ming colonization was linked to a claim of a ‘Confucian
civilizing mission’\(^{34}\) or ‘civilizing project’\(^{35}\) whereby ‘civilizing’ actually
meant assimilation of the local non-Chinese/non-Confucian population
into Chinese ways of living with regard to rites, rules, and morals, but
also with regard to politics, administration, economy, and language. As
described by John E. Herman, the official slogan of a ‘Confucian civilizing
mission’ in fact concealed the Ming’s military role in this conquest, which
was an ‘uninterrupted campaign of state-sponsored violence’.\(^{36}\) In the case
of European colonialism, missionaries came together with or shortly after

\(^{31}\) Gründer (pp. 8-9).
\(^{32}\) Gründer (p. 9).
\(^{33}\) Gründer (p. 11).
\(^{34}\) Herman (2007, p. 13).
\(^{35}\) With regard to China, Stevan Harrell uses the term ‘civilizing projects’ to describe ‘a series
of attempts by dominant powers to transform them [“peripheral peoples” or “minorities”], to
make them more like the transformers, or, in the parlance of the transformers themselves, to
“civilize” them’. He especially refers to ‘at least four such civilizing projects’, conducted by the
three ‘Chinese governments’ as well as by ‘Western missionaries’ between 1842 and today: the
\(^{36}\) Herman (2007, p. 13).
the armies of the colonial powers. Similarly, the ‘missionaries’ of Chinese-Confucian culture, military officials, and civil servants, who engaged in the building of schools and temples to educate, civilize, and ‘missionize’ the locals, followed the military conquest immediately.

In the case of European colonialism, the purpose of educating and missionizing the colonized was based on the assumption that they were inferior to the Europeans and generally lacked culture, civilization, and, of course, the correct faith. Since the introduction of social Darwinism and Lamarckism into the discourse on colonizing and missionizing, the colonized peoples’ alleged inferiority was additionally explained by their racial condition and also by their environments, which were now understood as the causes of their cultural and civilizational inferiority. Christian missionaries would compare local people, whom they perceived of as ‘less gifted’ races, to children in need of a fatherly education. Stevan Harrell argues that the ‘child’ metaphor demonstrates not only the inferiority of the other, but also their ‘civilizability’, thus giving further legitimacy to Christian or any other civilizing mission.37 The integration and dominance of colonies was furthermore justified by an evolutionary progressing image of history and culture, which argued that these people, as long as they were inferior, had to be dependent on and lead by the superior colonial power, like children were dependent on and lead by their parents (or rather, fathers).

A similar narrative can be found among Chinese scholar-officials in the Ming and Qing dynasties. They, too, argued that the non-Chinese people in the south and southwest were uncivilized and thus in need of guidance. This guidance would naturally be that of the Chinese people, who had achieved a superior culture. It was thus the duty of the respective central state to support the civilizing of these ‘barbarians’ in order to pacify the regions.38 At the basis of both, the Christian and the Confucian missions, lay the assumption of European39 respectively Chinese superiority. One outcome was a depiction of non-Europeans/non-Chinese peoples as inferior, uncultivated, barbarian, even as inhuman and beastlike. In both contexts, the outsiders’ group was portrayed in contrast to the insiders’ group, thereby creating a highly simplified dichotomy between self and other.

39 I use the term ‘Europe’ in a broad general sense here. It has to be mentioned, that ‘Europe’ did not necessarily refer to everyone on the continent of Europe, because especially in imperialist contexts, only peoples in the imperialist states were perceived as truly civilized, whereas other people in Europe were only seen as partly civilized.
Stevan Harrell gives three different sets of metaphors, which are used in Chinese discourses to refer to the non-Chinese people until today, especially in the south and southwest, and have been in use at least since late Qing times and in some cases much longer. These three metaphors reveal the Chinese imagination of a hierarchical, but also dichotomous relationship of themselves with the non-Chinese, by positioning themselves and the non-Chinese in certain hierarchical settings with regard to family relations (father-child), gender relations (male-female), and temporal relations (contemporary-ancient).

The first metaphor, which resembles how Christian missionaries viewed their colonized ‘flocks’, is that of the non-Chinese as ‘children’. In Chinese discourses, the child metaphor as a reference to non-Chinese people is, in fact, still in use in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) today for certain ‘minority nationalities’ (shaoshu minzu 少數民族). Its function is to mark a clear position of the non-Chinese as children in relation to the Chinese as fathers, a relationship today also reformulated as that of ‘older brother/younger brother nationalities’ (xiongdi minzu 兄弟民族).40 Like in the context of Christian missions, the ‘child’ metaphor refers to a patriarchal relation between family members and moreover stands for educability and civilizability.

The second metaphor Harrell mentions, identifies the non-Chinese as inferior, too, but adds another connotation. It is the metaphor of non-Chinese as women.41 As Harrell points out,

sexual relations, seen as a man doing something to a woman, are a pervasive metaphor for a variety of relations of domination in many cultures, but they are particularly noteworthy in the imagery of civilizing projects.42

Basically, uncivilized people are imagined as erotic, but also as promiscuous due to their inferior level of civilization. This image has several aspects. First, in both contexts, Christian missionizing and Confucian civilizing, rules of sexual propriety and of sexual repression, but also a high degree of hypocrisy are obvious. In the Chinese context, this imagining of non-Chinese peoples as erotic and as demonstrating improper sexual behavior has been continued under Communist rule. Second, the non-Chinese

peoples are imagined as erotic and as sexually desirable in their feminized version. This is an aspect not found in the discourse on the ‘uncivilized people’ in the context of Christian missions, however, it is a trope found in a Western Orientalist approach were the ‘Orientals’ frequently appear as erotic and female. Third, particularly in pictorial representations, many non-Chinese people are depicted as women, who wear colorful, ‘exotic’ clothes (or, in fact, do not wear many clothes at all). In such pictures, non-Chinese women do not only function as the carriers of non-Chinese culture, but the reductionist tendencies of this portrayal deny the non-Chinese people ‘in a male-dominated society, [...] full male status’.43

The third metaphor mentioned by Harrell is that of non-Chinese peoples as ‘ancient’.44 Although this metaphor was sometimes used in the pre-1949 Chinese context, it gained prominence in the Communist state on the basis of historical materialism, but it has also been and still is prominent not only in the Christian missionizing context, but also in Western discourses on ‘aboriginal’, ‘natural’, or ‘primitive people’. The ‘ancient’ metaphor serves to explain why uncivilized people indeed have no civilization, but are at the same time civilizable. This metaphor gained acceptance when racial arguments fell short. The latter could be used to explain why people were uncivilized, but they could not satisfyingly explain why these people then could be civilized, because according to racial theories savagery was inborn. Therefore, another explanation was needed. With historicism, that is, the idea of a universal pattern of linear progressive history, interpreted as a cultural, material, political, and social progress, different stages of civilizational development could be explained. At the same time, civilizability was ensured.

Until late imperial times, an often-used metaphor for non-Chinese people in the Chinese discourse similar to the ‘ancient’ metaphor was not that of a temporal but a spatial distance from the Chinese people and thus the civilizational center of the world. This spatiality was as symbolical as the temporality of the ‘ancient’ metaphor, because it did not mean that by coming closer to the civilizational center physically the ‘far-away’ status of the non-Chinese could be changed. Only if they approached the civilizational center with regard to morals, behavior, ethics, etc. could they come closer to civilization in the end.

The metaphors given by Harrell can be supplemented by the important ‘animal’ metaphor, which is a reinforced ‘hierarchization’. Horst Gründer

mentions e.g. Manoel da Nóbrega (1517-1570), a Jesuit, who equated Brazilian Indians with ‘dogs’ and ‘pigs’. According to Frantz Fanon, the colonized subject ‘is reduced to the state of an animal. And consequently, when the colonist speaks of the colonized he uses zoological terms’. Indeed, ‘describing colonized people as animals who lack the ability to reason is a long-standing tradition in colonial texts’, states Deborah Root.

Within Chinese thinking, the equation of non-Chinese peoples with animals, based on the categorization of the Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters (Shuowen Jiezi 説文解字, 121 AD), was indeed a very old one, and groups of non-Chinese people were regarded as stemming from dogs, pigs, and other animals, symbolically or in reality, until the twentieth century. Although on first view the functions of the ‘animal’ metaphor seem to resemble that of the ‘children’, ‘woman’, and ‘ancient’ metaphors as it equally creates a strong hierarchy, an important difference lies in the factor of ‘civilizability’, which in case of the ‘animal’ metaphor cannot be ensured. Thus, in both, the Christian missionizing and the Confucian and Chinese contexts this metaphor could not be used to show the possibility of civilizing, missionizing, or assimilating the other, but rather that ‘natural’ borders between the human self and the ‘animal’ other had to be obtained. Therefore, the ‘animal’ metaphor seems not to have been part of the wider discourse on civilizing and missionizing, but rather of a different, although related discourse on the violence against the ‘other’ and its justification.

Another noteworthy parallel is the ideal of the ‘noble savage’ in the European context with its Chinese counterpart in the assumption of the non-Chinese being ‘pure’ in their ‘simplicity’. In both cases, however, the image of the other in the end serves to criticize the culture of the self. The characterization of the ‘noble savage’ as pure and naturally good or human opposes the Europeans, who were corrupted despite their civilization. In the Chinese context, the non-Chinese barbarians’ simplicity can on the one hand aim at deploring that the Chinese people are too soft in contrast to the barbarians, who are able to endure extreme hardship and thus be military more successful. On the other hand, the succession of chieftainship among tribal people was represented in the Chinese discourse as quasi-democratic. These representations could serve as criticism of autocratic and centralized forms of government like that of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

48 Zhang (1900/1984, III, pp. 21-22; ch. 11 ‘Yuan ren’ 原人); Liu (1903/1997, II, pp. 3b-4a).
In the discourse on nationalism and the integration of non-Chinese people into the Chinese nation-state these metaphors come to the surface only rarely, although they certainly informed Chinese thinkers and provided a background for their image of non-Chinese peoples. Indeed, they were influenced by many different ways of imagining the non-Chinese ‘other’, based on older concepts of culturalism, social Darwinism, and pseudo-scientific racism, personal experience, and the assessment of the Manchu emperors and regents, etc. However, the ultimate aim of most of these thinkers was an inclusion of the non-Chinese people and territories and thus the acceptance of the possibility to assimilate them. This acceptance was again based on older narratives of the effectiveness of the Ming and Qing ‘Confucian civilizing missions’ (and also on the historical interpretation of non-Chinese conquest dynasties as assimilated by their Chinese subjects, a topic which I discuss elsewhere),49 which were thought to have contributed significantly to the integration of the southern and southwestern regions.

Herman argues, that a ‘Confucian civilizing mission’ could only really have been successful, if the Chinese social and state institutions would truly have been open to non-Chinese people, which they were not in the case of non-Chinese people in the south and the southwest.50 Based on Michael Hechter’s study, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966,51 which focuses on the UK and Ireland, Herman claims that the Ming government in fact created a ‘cultural division of labor’, instead of allowing or even supporting real inclusion and integration by their acclaimed ‘Confucian civilizing mission’.

The term ‘cultural division of labor’ was originally introduced by Hechter to describe attempts to ‘stabilize and monopolize [a superordinate group’s] advantages through policies aiming at the institutionalization and perpetuation of the existing stratification system’.52 Herman uses the term to describe a certain situation in the preindustrial Ming Empire, whereas Hechter originally used the term to describe how cleavages between ‘advanced and less advanced groups’, or ‘core and peripheral groups’ developed due to the ‘uneven wave of industrialization’ in the UK and Ireland in particular. Nevertheless, Herman’s use of the phrase for the situation in the southern and southwestern provinces of the Ming Empire makes sense, because the

49 Schneider (2017).
50 Herman (2007, p. 13).
51 Hechter (1975).
52 Hechter (1975, p. 39).
precondition for this kind of division of labor was an ‘internal colonialism’, which Hechter equally describes for the case of the UK and Ireland.

**Ming and Qing expansionisms as colonialisms**

The migration of Chinese settlers to the south, which had begun before 1368, but was institutionalized and officially supported, also by military action, under Ming rule and further professionalized under the Qing, has been labeled ‘colonialism’ by scholars of China’s history since less than two decades. According to Emma Jinhua Teng, Peter Perdue, and others who contributed to a special issue of *The International History Review* titled ‘Manchu colonialism’ were the first scholars who used the term ‘colonialism’ for Qing expansionism. Since then it has been used especially for the Qing Empire’s administration of conquered regions, but in recent times it has also been applied to the Ming Empire’s inclusion of southern and southwestern regions into its provincial administration. With regard to Ming and Qing expansionism into the south and southwest, the term ‘internal colonialism’ has been applied as a specification of ‘colonialism’.

Teng criticizes the use of the adjective ‘internal’ for Qing colonialism. According to her, the term ‘internal colonialism’ seems to imply that Qing colonization, for example of Taiwan and Tibet, was somehow domestic, which strengthens ‘the ahistorical conception of the Qing frontiers as essentially “Chinese”’. The application of the term ‘internal colonialism’ to the Ming and Qing cases can make sense, however, if one differentiates between two meanings of colonialism based on two different processes. First, colonialism refers to the process of conquering territories, depriving local rulers of their power, and establishing a rudimentary colonial administration with certain instruments of military, political, and economic dominance. This process is concluded shortly after the conquest. Generally speaking, in this process, the conquerors and colonial powers are the main actors, whereas the conquered and colonized people are often forced to react. Second, colonialism also refers to a process, which begins with the conquest, continues long afterwards, and is at the same time more irreversible than the first. This is the process of enforcing and increasing the

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54 The term ‘internal colonialism’ has been in use at least since the 1950s, but became only influential since the mid-1960s through Pablo Gonzalez Casanova’s article ‘Internal colonialism and national development’. See Casanova (1965).
colonizers’ social, cultural, and mental dominance. In this second process, the colonized people are not only as active as the colonizers, cooperating unconsciously or consciously in order to achieve their respective aims in the colonial system by accepting exactly this system, they are moreover decisive to this process.56

The term ‘internal colonialism’ as used by Hechter referred explicitly to the second process in a specific setting. This setting was that of a colonial power, England, which integrated immediately adjacent regions as colonies: Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. The term ‘internal’ was maybe an unfortunate choice, and Teng is right to point to the fact that it seems to imply that the colonies were somehow domestic even before they were colonized in the first process. However, Hechter’s main point, I think, was to differentiate between processes of colonialism in ‘external’ colonies, which are on another continent and governed in a set of administration, military, economy, and also culture and education largely different from the colonial state, from ‘internal’ colonies, which are not only spatially close, but which also seem to be fully integrated with regard to politics, administration, military, economy, culture, and education. Hechter argues that due to the closeness to England, the Irish, Welsh, and Scots should long ago have been absorbed into the English nation. That this has not happened, Hechter argues, is because of structures of ‘internal colonialism’ and the resulting ‘cultural division of labor’. Against this background of Hechter’s explanations, the term ‘internal colonialism’ becomes at least partly meaningful for the Ming and Qing cases. However, one important difference between ‘internal colonialism’ on the British Isles and Ming-Qing colonialism in the south and southwest are the differences between colonizers and colonized with regard to customs, language, religious beliefs, way of living, etc., which in the case of China’s south and southwest are much bigger than in the case of the British Isles. In this respect, Ming-Qing colonialism comes closer to European overseas colonialism and distances itself from British ‘internal colonialism’.

Teng’s second critique of the term ‘internal colonialism’ is that it implies a fundamental difference between Qing colonialism and Western colonialism in that the former was ‘only’ the colonization of ‘fellow Orientals’.57 Instead, Teng argues that the colonization and integration of the southern and southwestern regions into the Qing Empire functioned according to the same logics as European imperial colonialism. Her conclusion is that the study of Qing colonialism

56 Bhabha (2004).
is important precisely because it destabilizes the dichotomy between the West/colonizers and the non-West/colonized, a dichotomy that has largely continued to structure our common sense perception of global power configurations and cultural differences well past the end of formal imperial rule.\textsuperscript{58}

Whereas I have just shown that by using the term ‘internal colonialism’ it is not necessarily implied that Asian colonialism is ‘fundamentally different’ from Western colonialism as the term has in fact been created for a European case, I agree that, indeed, not only Ming and Qing expansionism, but non-European processes of expansion and conquest in general have not been discussed under terms of colonialism and under the impression of post-colonial discourses on a general level. Only very recently a post-colonial discourse has been set into motion with regard to the Ming and Qing expansions and conquests. Among others, one reason for that, I think, lies in the fact that colonialist structures are still in existence in today’s PRC, as Shu-mei Shih claims for the Tibetan, Mongol, and Uyghur inhabited regions.\textsuperscript{59} One might add to that list the southern and southwestern regions of the PRC, and the regions inhabited by the ‘original inhabitants’ (\textit{yuanzhumin 原住民}) in Taiwan (which originally was, of course, the whole island of Taiwan). The PRC and the Republic of China (Taiwan) are the successors of the Qing Empire, also with regard to the territories which the Qing conquered militarily and integrated colonially, or took over from the Ming, ‘Outer Mongolia’ being the only larger conquered region which effectively broke apart.

\textbf{Confucian civilizing mission and Christian missionizing}

Not only the notion of a ‘Confucian civilizing mission’, but also the history of military conquest and political integration of the southern and southwestern regions supports the assumption that Ming and Qing expansionism can be interpreted as colonialism and can thus be analyzed based on similar theories and methods as Western colonialism. For some regions this has been done already, for example by Emma Jinhua Teng,\textsuperscript{60} who analyzes the images of Taiwan during the Qing Dynasty, and by John E. Herman,\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{58} Teng (2005, p. 257).
\textsuperscript{59} Shih (2011, pp. 710-711).
\textsuperscript{60} Teng (2005).
\textsuperscript{61} Herman (2007).
who provides a history of Guizhou’s colonization from late Song until early Qing times.

With regard to the question to what extent and on what level Christian missionizing and Confucian civilizing can be compared, I first would like to point out differences, in order to clarify if they can weaken the above-mentioned conclusion that European and Ming and Qing expansionisms and their accompanying civilizing projects are similar. One difference seems to lie in the spatial characters of the Christian and the Confucian communities. They are not only of different size and dispersion, but the Christian community seems to be transcultural and trans-ethnic from the start, presenting itself as non-ethnic due to its allegedly unlimited validity, whereas the Confucian community seems to be more closely linked to a certain group of people, the Chinese, who are defined and define themselves based on characteristics which are usually linked to ethnicity, that is, culture, language, genealogy, traditions, etc. Today, the perception of Confucianism as ‘nationally Chinese’ is further supported by the foundation of ‘Confucius Institutes’ as a means of transporting Chinese culture into the world outside the PRC. Confucius and the philosophy based on his teachings, Confucianism, thus appear as something ‘Chinese’. However, Chinese and other Asian peoples of pre-1900 or pre-nationalist times would not necessarily have agreed with this representation of Confucianism as Chinese, although the relations were strong.

An important Christian idea which accompanied colonialist and imperialist expansions was that mission as part of colonialism was the propagation of the ‘Kingdom of God’ or ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ in the whole world, whereby this godly kingdom was the realm where God’s will prevailed. Similar to the Christian ‘Kingdom of God’ was the fundamental Confucian belief in the ‘Way of [Benevolent] Kings’ (wangdao 王道) to govern ‘all under heaven’ (tianxia 天下), that is, the whole world, whereby similar to the Christian idea, this government was transcendental and indirect. The respective missionizing or civilizing only reinforced these godly rights, which according to both were already there. Like Christians, Confucians too perceived of the Confucian philosophy as unlimitedly valid and thus trans- or non-ethnic. Therein, in fact, lies the most important reason for the idea of the missionizing or civilizing of others, so that they also become part of and accept the universality of the respective worldview. Like Christians thought and think of their ethics and morals as universal, the followers of the Confucian worldview believed the same premise. Nevertheless, despite these universal claims, both, the Christian worldview underlying colonialist Christian missions and the Confucian worldview underlying the ‘Confucian civilizing
mission’, are irremediably particular (and thereby resemble nationalism as described by Benedict Anderson, see above). Like Christianity ‘could be de facto classified as the religion of Europe’ (‘faktisch als die Religion Europas gelten konnte’)\(^{62}\), a ‘white man’s Church’\(^{63}\), especially when its entanglement with colonialism and imperialism became inextricable, Confucianism was an explicitly Chinese worldview, ‘Chinese’ here being understood as a cultural space, not a political one. This became obvious when the ‘Confucian civilizing mission’ was used to justify the Ming and Qing conquests and colonialism in the south and southwest and thus Confucianism became closely linked to Ming and Qing expansionism.

**Conclusion**

In the post-1900 political discourses, the question of how to build a Chinese nation-state was a dominant one. The idea of a successful ‘Confucian civilizing mission’, which was thought to work via superior ethics and morals, implemented by force if necessary, was reformulated and reformed as the idea of ‘China’s assimilative power’. Liang Qichao assumed this power would work unconsciously, in contrast to Zhang Taiyan, who thought that it had to be supported by official educational and political measures. The belief in its effectiveness became a basis for Chinese approaches to nation-building within the borders of the Qing Empire.

Before 1900, the discourses on civilizing and assimilation of non-Chinese people did not link this process to ethnic identity, but connected it to universally valid morals, rites, and a spiritual identity. At the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, however, there were theories of a Chinese identity based on ethnicity, for example by philosophers like Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), which implied that ‘Confucian civilizing’ was not possible after all. However, these theories disappeared into (officially supported) oblivion. Only in the late Qing Dynasty, the works of early Qing philosophers were reprinted and became widely read among political reformers and nationalist thinkers. At the same time, Chinese identity became connected to an ethnic affiliation in a way it had not been before. Confucianism at first remained part of this identity, but was not the most important part of the ‘civilizing mission’ anymore, which became rather a ‘nationizing mission’. In the course of the May Fourth Movement, Confucianism was even supposed to be removed

\(^{63}\) Fanon (2004, p. 7).
from Chinese identity altogether.\textsuperscript{64} Based on the fact that different thinkers imagined the nation differently, the content of this ‘nationizing mission’ necessarily differed accordingly. However, education of the non-Chinese in Chinese ways, whatever these ways were, was usually an important part. This was based on similar assumptions, such as the belief in the legitimacy of a ‘Confucian civilizing mission’. In the same way as Confucianism had been considered to be superior to other worldviews and approaches to ethnic and morals, Chinese culture and ethnicity were considered to be superior to non-Chinese cultures and ethnicities. And like in the setting of a ‘Confucian civilizing mission’ it was also thought to be the duty of superior people to help inferior ones to gain a ‘higher’ level with regard to culture and ethnicity. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the court and officials referred to the ideal of a ‘Confucian civilizing mission’ in order to justify the violence of the colonization of the southern and southwestern regions for a Confucian audience. The real cause for the mission, – the acquisition of land and settlement areas at the expense of non-Chinese people – was downplayed. Against the background of the Chinese nation-building project, the ideal of a national and cultural superiority of the Chinese people was understood to inform a duty to guide others towards this superiority and thus include them in the nation-state. It was put forward to equally justify the military and political violence needed for this ‘nationizing project’ and to conceal the real cause for it, which was the strong belief in power politics based on the size of a state and its unity.

As described, seemingly different discourses and approaches resemble each other and are linked to each other over time and space. In the Chinese discourses, the late imperial idea of ‘nationizing’ is closely linked to the Ming and early Qing approaches of ‘Confucian civilizing’. ‘Confucian civilizing’ and its link to the conquest and colonization of non-Chinese regions, on the other hand, resembles European Christian missions in European-dominated colonies on other continents, especially South Asia, Africa, and South and Central America. All attempts to integrate the other through a change of identity with regard to ethics, morals, and other markers of the self within the framework of Christian missionizing, ‘Confucian civilizing,’ or Chinese nationizing are linked by a general assumption of the superiority of the self, versus the inferiority of the other, an understanding which seems to be a universal link between discourses on identity and integration.

\textsuperscript{64} Zarrow (2005, pp. 137-140).
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