

Coverage without Integration?

Patriotic Education, Mourning Ming, and Prompted Recognition in China

1. Puzzle

In early November 2025, a rumor spread quickly across Chinese social media claiming that the Kangxi Emperor was not a biological son of the Shunzhi Emperor, but a secret child of a surrendered Ming official Hong Chengchou. Very quickly, this rumor expanded beyond court gossip, pulling in a wider wave of “Mourning Ming” content that recast 1644 as a civilizational rupture, and treated Qing conquest as more than an ordinary dynastic transition.

What matters analytically is not the rumor itself, but the kind of coexistence it reveals. Many participants endorsed claims that, if taken seriously, would weaken core premises of the state’s official nationhood narrative: the Qing belongs to continuous Chinese history; China is a unified multi-ethnic nation; the modern state’s territorial claims are grounded in that history continuity.

This study does not assume that every anti-Manchu or Mourning Ming claim automatically contradicts territorial nationalism. It asks whether some revisionist claims undercut load-bearing historical premises of official nationhood, whether ordinary respondents themselves register that dependency when rival claims are jointly activated, and whether such recognition extends into subsequent judgments about official nationhood premises and revisionist claims.

The broader question is about political education: has state-led patriotic education achieved broad coverage of official premises without producing comparable integration? A null on attitude change after successful recognition would itself be substantive, pointing to the alternative organizing principles §3 specifies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Education and official nationhood

Modern states do not only tax, police, and fight wars. They also try to shape how people understand order, authority, and political community. Recent work on mass education argues that central governments entered primary schooling to secure social order and moral information, not simply to raise skills.¹

The Chinese case fits that state-building logic and also offers clear evidence that curricular change can move political attitudes. Cantoni et al.’s natural experiment on the 2004-2010 curriculum reform shows that curricular change produced measurable attitude shifts among

¹ Agustina S. Paglayan, *Raised to Obey: The Rise and Spread of Mass Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2024), 2-8.

exposed students.² At the same time, work on patriotic education in China shows that this state-building project has had a specific historical content, organized around a humiliation-and-rejuvenation narrative.³

The point for this study is not that schooling determines all later belief. It is that state-led education can diffuse official political premises and shape how students understand institutions, democracy, and the state's role in the economy. The evidence that it reshapes national identity or interethnic attitudes is more limited, but the reform still shows that official curricular content can leave measurable cognitive and evaluative traces.

2.2 Mass belief and prompt dependence

That state-led diffusion does not by itself tell us how citizens organize what they have learned. Converse's classic argument is that mass publics typically display much weaker ideological constraint than elites. Citizens can absorb labels, fragments, and associations without integrating them into a strongly connected belief system.⁴ Zaller reformulates the issue at the level of survey response. Citizens do not usually retrieve a fully stored attitude; they answer from whatever considerations are most accessible at the moment. Different prompts therefore activate different parts of a loosely organized consideration set; different cues, including identity labels, may function as such prompts.⁵ Geddes and Zaller extend this to authoritarian Brazil, where under dominant state discourse and partial counter-flow, the awareness-regime support relationship was non-monotonic; accordingly, this study treats curriculum exposure as an exploratory moderator rather than a core hypothesis.⁶ Luskin sharpens the point by distinguishing the possession of political cognitions from their organization: sophistication concerns size, range, and organization, not just ordinary attitude consistency.⁷

These works motivate the present study's outcome variable. Rather than measuring Converse's ideological constraint or Luskin's cognitive organization, the study focuses on a more specific

² Davide Cantoni, Yuyu Chen, David Y. Yang, Noam Yuchtman, and Y. Jane Zhang, "Curriculum and Ideology," *Journal of Political Economy* 125, no. 2 (2017): 338-392.

³ Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 71-79, 103-10, 133-40.

⁴ Philip E. Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics" (1964), reprinted in *Critical Review* 18, nos. 1-3 (2006): 1-74.

⁵ John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 40-48, 76-88.

⁶ Barbara Geddes and John Zaller, "Sources of Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes," *American Journal of Political Science* 33, no. 2 (1989): 319-347.

⁷ Robert C. Luskin, "Measuring Political Sophistication," *American Journal of Political Science* 31, no. 4 (1987): 856-899.

task: whether respondents recognize a load-bearing dependency or incompatibility among official nationhood premises when those premises are jointly activated. The question is not whether citizens possess an integrated belief structure, but whether they register a particular logical relationship when otherwise separate claims are brought together.

2.3 Identity, boundaries, and why recognition may not travel

Low logical integration does not mean the absence of all organization. Political commitments may be organized through more than one principle.

A first organizing principle is identity-based rather than propositional. Anderson's account of official nationalism suggests that national narratives can remain stable even when they cover over a discrepancy between nation and dynastic realm, because what is sustained is not a chain of explicit inferences but an imagined political community.⁸ Connor makes the point more directly: the national bond is affective and can persist in the face of contrary factual material.⁹ Huddy and Khatib similarly distinguish national identity from more overtly ideological forms of patriotism, showing that identity strength is not the same thing as a coherent policy worldview.¹⁰ Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe show the same logic in partisan politics: expressive identity can motivate emotion and action more strongly than issue intensity.¹¹ In settings of stable dominant discourse, this mechanism predicts attitude maintenance through identification rather than propositional defense. It is distinguishable from motivated reasoning in §4.4's open-ended probe: motivated reasoning generates active counter-argumentation, identification-based maintenance does not.

A second organizing principle operates through membership and categorical closure. Wimmer's boundary-making approach directs attention to how political communities are organized through distinctions between insiders and outsiders, and through the closure practices that protect those

⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 6-7, 86.

⁹ Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 202-11, 229-34.

¹⁰ Leonie Huddy and Nadia Khatib, "American Patriotism, National Identity, and Political Involvement," *American Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 1 (2007): 63-77.

¹¹ Leonie Huddy, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aarøe, "Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity," *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 1 (2015): 1-17; see also Lilliana Mason, *Uncivil Agreement: How politics Became Our Identity* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2018), 67-70. Mason extends this logic to partisan identity in the United States and shows that behavioral coherence can persist even when issue positions are weakly constrained, as long as identity alignment is strong.

distinctions, not only through logically connected propositions.¹² This matters here because a respondent may interpret anti-Manchu claims and territorial closure through an outsider logic rather than a Qing-continuity dependency; for instance, by treating the Qing as a foreign conqueror whose territorial acquisitions the present state nonetheless inherits. Apparent nonrecognition may then reflect boundary-level organization rather than cognitive fragmentation. Finally, even when tension is recognized, revision may not follow. Directional goals bias memory search and belief evaluation, so that people counterargue uncongenial information and accept congenial information more easily, especially when prior commitments are strong.¹³ Achen and Bartels provide an event-level illustration: following Watergate, partisans did not update symmetrically from shared information, but reinterpreted evidence in identity-consistent directions.¹⁴

These three alternatives mean that low recognition need not indicate cognitive incapacity, and even successful recognition need not produce attitude revision.

Applied to the Chinese case, the boundary account points to a shared anti-foreign logic linking anti-Manchu and territorial closure; the motivated-defense account points to prior commitments resisting update. These are competing possibilities that §3 and §4 will operationalize.

3. Theoretical Framework

The framework begins with an important distinction. The official nationhood narrative includes certain mutually-supporting premises: China is a unified multi-ethnic nation; Qing rule belongs to continuous Chinese history; present territorial claims inherit legitimacy from that continuity. State-produced materials link these premises into a single historical-political argument (official discourse treats that as load-bearing).¹⁵ The study takes this official linkage as the starting point

¹² Andreas Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-5.

¹³ Ziva Kunda, "The Case for Motivated Reasoning," *Psychological Bulletin* 108, no. 3 (1990): 480-498; Charles S. Taber and Milton Lodge, "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs," *American Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 3 (2006): 755-769.

¹⁴ Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 290-291.

¹⁵ This structure of mutually-supporting premises is documented across several literatures. On the state's persistent claim to define national membership, see John Fitzgerald, "The Nationless State: The Search for a Nation in Modern Chinese Nationalism," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 33 (January 1995): 75-104; on the fifty-six-*minzu* classification as an ongoing state project requiring active maintenance, see Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); and on the humiliation-to-rejuvenation chronology diffused through post-1990s patriotic education, which anchors territorial claims to a continuous dynastic past, see Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), esp. chaps. 4-5. During the Mourning Ming wave, the official Zhejiang

for constructing its paired recognition tasks. However, it does not assume that ordinary respondents organize their own commitments through the same chain of inference. Whether they do is what the study tests.

This distinction matters because three organizing logics are possible. Under logical integration, respondents recognize that attacking Qing continuity may also undercut a territorial-historical claim. Under identity-based integration, respondents may maintain attachment to China even when they do not explicitly reconcile the premises. Under boundary-level organization, respondents may judge the same pair as compatible because both claims can be folded into a broader distinction between inside and outside, self and foreign conqueror, or legitimate and illegitimate membership. These alternatives yield three empirical expectations.

H1: Coverage will exceed prompted recognition. Respondents who separately classify official and revisionist claims correctly will still often fail to recognize the load-bearing dependency or incompatibility among them when asked directly. High coverage from official discourses' saturation and much lower rate of dependency recognition are expected.

H2: Joint cueing will raise recognition more than one-sided cueing. If contradiction is usually latent because rival premises are encountered separately, then recognition should increase most clearly when official and Mourning Ming cues are presented together rather than singly.

H3: Recognition effects should be more immediate than attitude effects. The post-treatment battery will distinguish among three official-premise dimensions: Qing/historical continuity, territorial indivisibility, and multi-ethnic unity; and one revisionist dimension: endorsement of 1644-rupture and anti-Qing claims. Three attitude patterns are distinguished when recognition rises: a shift toward the official frame (revisionist endorsement falls, official-premise endorsement holds); selective loosening of the historical justification (territorial commitment holds, Qing-continuity endorsement weakens); and stable dual endorsement (neither side moves), which is more consistent with identity-based, boundary-based, or motivated maintenance. The interpretive payoff depends on the open-ended probe in §4.4: stable dual endorsement driven specifically by identity-based articulation would support Anderson's claim that nationhood, as an imagined community, is sustained by collective identification rather than propositional

provincial Party channel explicitly linked 1644 revisionism with New Qing History, and supported historical continuity and multi-ethnic unity as grounds for territorial legitimacy, confirming that the Qing-continuity dependency is load-bearing in official discourse. See Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee Propaganda Department, “警惕‘1644 史观’带乱了节奏,” *浙江宣传* (WeChat public account), December 16, 2025, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/7HYzoxnR3FbMFSyFS9uj1g>. The present study takes this documented official linkage as given and asks whether ordinary respondents reproduce it.

consistency; that claim that can be restated in Brubaker's schema-theoretic terms, as the hypothesis that a territorial-sovereignty schema may contain no slot into which Qing-continuity information can be integrated.¹⁶ Other drivers (boundary closure, prompt-separated considerations, motivated counter-argument, alternative integrated justification) support Wimmer, Zaller, Taber-Lodge, or the fifth-category account respectively.

The instrument is designed to detect both missed contradiction and compatibility under alternative organizing logics. A single survey cannot show whether state-led nationalism is vulnerable to cognitive activation, because at least five organizing logics predict observationally similar stable-attitude patterns. Four are catalogued earlier: propositional fragmentation (Zaller), identity-based attachment (Huddy, Mason), boundary-level closure (Wimmer), motivated defense (Taber and Lodge). A fifth, distinct from all four, is an internally coherent alternative justification for territorial claims that routes around the Qing node entirely, such as a class-revolutionary, absolute-sovereignty, or non-Qing civilizational account. For respondents in this fifth category, the analyst-defined high-tension pair is not experienced as tense because the Qing dependency is not load-bearing in their own reasoning; this is not Brubaker's schema separation but an alternative integrated account.¹⁷ Taken together, null results on attitude change therefore speak to which maintenance mechanism is operative.¹⁸

4. Research Design

4.1 Overview

This study combines three elements: a pretest, a main web survey, and an embedded experiment. The Xiaohongshu corpus plays a limited but important role. It will be used to extract natural wording, validate recurring claim types, and characterize the information environment.

¹⁶ Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), chap. 3, "Ethnicity as Cognition" (with Mara Loveman and Peter Stamatov), 64-87. The present application extends Brubaker's schema framework to a claim Brubaker does not himself advance: that the absence of a Qing-continuity slot in a sovereignty-oriented schema would render co-activation cues inert rather than contradiction-surfacing.

¹⁷ Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, chap. 3. Schema separation refers to respondents holding two mutually relevant schemas in parallel without ever jointly activating them, and is distinct from the schema-gap application in the preceding section; the fifth category here describes respondents whose territorial commitments are organized through an entirely different schema, in which Qing-continuity plays no structural role.

¹⁸ The five mechanisms are not empirically indistinguishable: each predicts a different dominant response type in the §4.4 open-ended probe (boundary articulations, prompt-separation articulations, identity-based articulations, motivated counter-argument, alternative justification). The framework is falsified in its weak form if probe responses distribute roughly evenly across categories rather than concentrating on one, indicating the instrument cannot discriminate in practice. A stronger falsification would require each candidate mechanism to be pre-committed to a numerical dominance threshold, which belongs to the pre-analysis.

The main survey has two parts. Part A contains the core recognition tasks. Respondents first classify short single claims as closer to the official nationhood narrative, closer to Mourning Ming revisionism, or unclear. These items measure premise-level coverage. A short factual-awareness battery (ten to twelve items covering non-sensitive international and domestic facts, selected to avoid topic-overlap with the Qing/1644 treatment) is then inserted as an exploratory moderator of current information uptake in Zaller's sense, distinct from the curriculum-exposure proxy.¹⁹ Respondents then complete a smaller set of pair-based relation tasks. The question is how two claims relate. The primary format asks whether both claims can be simultaneously true (compatibility recognition); a secondary format asks whether one claim helps justify the other (justificatory recognition), used as robustness.

Part B records background variables, a forced-choice territorial-justification item with response options calibrated from the pretest open-ended results (used to mark each respondent's individual-level legitimation path for heterogeneity analysis), and identity measures: education, birth cohort, gender, self-reported *minzu*, province of schooling and cohort year²⁰, self-reported encounters with Mourning Ming or related content, and the identity-content and self-categorization measures described in §4.3.

4.2 Pair taxonomy and minimum support rule

The pair-based instrument does not assume that any pair is inherently contradictory or inherently compatible. It selects pairs that are analyst-anticipated to vary in perceived tension. Some are expected to be high-tension because the official narrative itself treats the dependency as load-bearing. Others are expected to be more readily fusible under identity or boundary logics.²¹

Whether respondents actually treat any given pair as contradictory, fusible, or unrelated is an

¹⁹ The position of this battery between the classification and pair-based tasks is not incidental: it also functions as a task-order buffer, allowing the "official narrative" frame activated by classification to decay from working memory before the compatibility tasks begin, so that pair judgments are less contaminated by the immediately preceding authority-framed categorization.

²⁰ Post-2004 politics curriculum exposure is externally coded from province of schooling and cohort year, following the province-by-cohort rollout documented by Cantoni et al.; self-reported exposure is retained as a robustness check.

²¹ An illustrative high-tension pair: Claim A "The Qing dynasty completed the political integration of Xinjiang, Tibet, and the southwest into a unified multi-ethnic polity whose territorial continuity the present state inherits;" Claim B "The Qing was a foreign conquest regime whose rule marked a civilizational rupture rather than a dynastic transition." An illustrative fusible pair: Claim A "Han civilizational traditions are the cultural core of China;" Claim B "The Qing was a foreign conquest regime whose rule marked a civilizational rupture." The first pair is high-tension because the official linkage depends on treating Qing incorporation as continuous with Chinese history; the second is fusible because both claims can be accommodated within a Han-centered civilizational reading that treats the Qing as an interruption without disturbing the cultural core. Final pairs will be calibrated against Xiaohongshu corpus wording in pretest.

empirical question for the instrument to answer. Support for the core recognition claim requires a preregistered pooled test showing that the compatibility-recognition index across high-tension pairs is lower under joint cueing than under one-sided cueing, while fusible pairs show no comparable movement. Individual-pair results will be reported descriptively as robustness checks.²²

4.3 Pretest as a construct-validity gate

The main methodological risk in this study is not randomization failure, but construct validity. The pretest therefore functions as a construct-validity gate, combining three cognitive probes adapted from Zaller's pilot techniques and the Groves et al. response-process framework: a territorial-justification probe (how respondents justify China's territorial integrity), a stop-and-think probe (what comes to mind before answering), and a retrospective probe (what the respondent was thinking when deciding whether two claims fit together).²³ These probes distinguish spontaneous reasoning from post hoc rationalization and show whether the Qing-dependency is actually operative for respondents.

The coding frame for the justification probe explicitly admits multiple routes: historical continuity, class-revolutionary succession, absolute-sovereignty doctrine, ethno-cultural commonality. Whether Qing-dependent historical continuity is the operative route is itself a central empirical question of the pretest.

Two parallel identity-content probes "What does being Chinese mean to you?" and "What does being a member of your own *minzu* mean to you?" together with a relational probe asking how the two identifications relate, are deployed first in the pretest (to refine the coding frame and diagnose unreflective Han defaults) and then in the main survey's pre-treatment module (to establish each respondent's baseline identity-content mapping for interpreting their post-

²² The pair set is treated here as a fixed, theory-guided, and pretested instrument rather than as a random sample from a broader population of possible stimuli. Accordingly, the success criterion above is stated as a substantive pattern rather than as a single-threshold significance rule. A pooled by-participant analysis could inflate Type I error by ignoring pair-level variance, whereas a mixed-effects specification treating pair as a crossed random factor depends on how many pairs survive pretest gating. The choice between these specifications, together with the full analysis plan, will be locked in at the pre-registration stage following pretest calibration. See Charles M. Judd, Jacob Westfall, and David A. Kenny, "Treating Stimuli as a Random Factor in Social Psychology: A New and Comprehensive Solution to a Pervasive but Largely Ignored Problem," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 103, no. 1 (2012): 54-69, esp. tables 2 and 4.

²³ Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, 84-88; Robert M. Groves et al., *Survey Methodology*, 2nd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2009), 53-58, 209-214.

treatment open-ended follow-up). Responses are coded following Abdelal et al. for constitutive norms and relational comparisons.²⁴

The main survey includes a Citrin-Sears-adapted self-categorization item asking whether respondents approach political and historical questions first as “Chinese,” as a member of their own *minzu*, as both, or context-dependently; this item is triangulated against the pretest content probes described above.

The pilot yields an explicit go/no-go decision rule. If historical-continuity reasoning (Qing-era or broader pre-modern dynastic continuity) does not emerge as the clearly dominant route among the four coding categories when pretest respondents are asked to justify territorial integrity, the core paired-recognition task must be redesigned, and the study reframed as a descriptive inquiry into which legitimation paths dominate mass reasoning about territory. Two coders will independently code pilot materials; Krippendorff’s $\alpha \geq .70$ is treated as the threshold for proceeding; disagreements adjudicated beforehand.²⁵

4.4 Embedded experiment: a 2×2 cue-combination design

The experiment tests what happens when claims that are usually encountered separately are cued singly or jointly. The 2×2 design crosses an official-premise passage (absent / present) with a Mourning Ming passage (absent / present), yielding four conditions: baseline, official only, Mourning Ming only, and joint cueing.

Both passages will be written in neutral, unattributed language and calibrated in pretesting against naturally circulating wording from the Xiaohongshu corpus. Each passage states its own premises without invoking the rival frame, so that joint activation of the dependency occurs only in the joint cueing condition rather than being implicitly delivered by the official-only passage alone. Respondents will not be told that either passage represents the Party-state’s position: attribution would conflate failure to recognize the dependency with reluctance to disagree with authority.

Post-treatment measures include a recognition battery and a four-component attitude battery: Qing/historical continuity, territorial indivisibility, multi-ethnic unity, revisionist endorsement. Multi-ethnic unity is included for premise-level coverage; the load-bearing pattern predictions in

²⁴ Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott, “Identity as a Variable,” in *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*, ed. Rawi Abdelal et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 17-27.

²⁵ Kimberly A. Neuendorf and Paul D. Skalski, “Quantitative Content Analysis and the Measurement of Collective Identity,” in *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*, ed. Rawi Abdelal et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 203-233.

H3 focus on the Qing-continuity and territorial dimensions. Pattern interpretation when recognition rises follows the schema laid out in H3. All respondents complete an open-ended follow-up asking them to describe what connects or separates the two claims in their own words. This probe serves two discrimination tasks depending on the respondent's recognition and attitude pattern. Where recognition fails to rise under joint cueing, the probe distinguishes a boundary-level reading, under which respondents articulate a unifying anti-foreign logic linking the two claims, from a prompt-separation reading, under which respondents report that the two claims had not previously been considered together, consistent with Zaller's consideration-set mechanism applied to distinct identity-linked cues. Where recognition rises but attitude dimensions remain stable, the probe distinguishes synthetic reconciliation (a newly articulated compatibility frame) from identity-, boundary-, or motivated-maintenance accounts that register tension without revising commitments. Responses will be coded: historical-continuity linking; prompt-separated considerations; boundary-level closure; motivated defense; alternative integrated justification; synthetic reconciliation; non-endorsement; and identification-based maintenance.²⁶

4.5 Measurement validity and limits

The target sample size is approximately 1,500-2,000 respondents, sized to detect the main effect of joint versus one-sided cueing on the order of $d \approx 0.20$, at $\alpha = .05$ and 80% power.²⁷ Primary analysis is restricted to Han respondents, where identity asymmetries described in §4.3 are least severe; non-Han subgroups are reported as exploratory.²⁸ Subgroup moderation across pair types and identity measures is reported as exploratory, not as confirmatory inference.

²⁶ A concern is that joint-cueing effects on recognition may reflect the artifact of physically juxtaposing two normally separate claims on the same screen rather than the activation of latent tension. The probe categories above provide partial leverage: prompt-separation articulations are sensitive to mere juxtaposition while boundary-level and historical-continuity articulations are not. A finding of predominantly prompt-separation articulations under successful joint cueing would therefore weaken the latent-contradiction reading of H2.

²⁷ This working magnitude is calibrated to the 0.20-0.25 standard-deviation shifts Cantoni et al. report for political-trust and democracy-perception indices in the 2004-2010 Chinese curriculum reform, which is the closest published benchmark for state-diffused political content in the Chinese context. Cognitive recognition effects may differ in magnitude from attitude effects in either direction. Final power calculations belong to the pre-analysis plan following pretest calibration.

²⁸ The reason: Mourning Ming's core claims presuppose a Han-centric reading of Chinese civilization; non-Han respondents engage these claims from a structurally different position and their recognition responses are not comparable to Han responses on the same scale.

Recruitment will be through a Chinese university if feasible, otherwise a commercial web panel with national coverage; either option overrepresents younger, urban, and educated respondents, limiting population-level generalization while preserving internal validity.

The survey will be administered as a self-completed web questionnaire. The choice of web mode is driven by the design's reliance on cognitive classification tasks, which do not require interviewer administration and whose sensitivity profile differs from direct regime-support items. Sensitive political questions pose three distinct problems: intrusiveness, social desirability, and disclosure threat. In authoritarian settings, disclosure threat is the most severe, and direct regime-support items face serious disclosure bias. Indirect tools like list experiments pay a steep variance cost.²⁹ The study therefore frames outcomes as classification and relation tasks, which weaken disclosure threat without requiring indirect-question variance penalties.³⁰

This study nonetheless has clear limits. It does not measure deep and stable belief structure. It measures prompted recognition under survey conditions. The education variable is a coarse historical proxy and later information exposure is retrospective and endogenous. The web sample cannot stand in for the full PRC population. Cognitively framed items may retain some residual sensitivity. The post-experimental open-ended probe cannot fully distinguish pre-existing organizing logics from logics constructed under the experimental prompt, since motivated articulation applies to the probe response itself; the pre-treatment identity-content baseline from §4.3 provides a partial check, allowing post-treatment articulations to be compared against each respondent's own prior mapping. These limits define the claim: the study asks whether premise-level coverage exceeds dependency-level recognition, and what happens under joint activation.

²⁹ Roger Tourangeau and Ting Yan, "Sensitive Questions in Surveys," *Psychological Bulletin* 133, no. 5 (2007): 859-883; Darrel Robinson and Marcus Tannenber, "Self-Censorship of Regime Support in Authoritarian States: Evidence from List Experiments in China," *Research & Politics* 6, no. 3 (2019): 1-9; Graeme Blair, Alexander Coppock, and Margaret Moor, "When to Worry about Sensitivity Bias: A Social Reference Theory and Evidence from 30 Years of List Experiments," *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 4 (2020): 1297-1315.

³⁰ This framing is an empirical assumption, not an established design advantage. Pretest and main survey monitor three disclosure-sensitivity indicators on pair-relation items: "unclear" responses on high-tension versus low-tension pairs, item nonresponse on recognition and attitude batteries, and evasive language in open-ended follow-ups. Elevated rates on any indicator would qualify the sensitivity claim.

Appendix: Survey Design

1. Pretest

The pretest proceeds in two stages:

- (1) Open-ended online pretest: N = 120, including approximately 90 Han respondents and 30 non-Han respondents.
- (2) Cognitive interviews: N = 18-24, focused mainly on Han respondents while retaining a small number of non-Han respondents to detect differences in interpretation.

The pretest includes five kinds of tasks:

- (1) Territorial-justification probe: “If you had to explain to someone why China’s present territorial integrity should be maintained, how would you explain it?”
- (2) Stop-and-think probe: after a pair task, ask “What came to mind first when you decided whether the two statements could both hold?”
- (3) Retrospective probe: after a completed relation task, ask “What did you rely on when you finally decided that the two statements were connected or not connected?”
- (4) Identity-content probes: “What does being Chinese mean to you?” and “What does being a member of your own *minzu* mean to you?”
- (5) Treatment-wording calibration: test whether the official-like and Mourning-Ming-like passages sound natural, whether they are too strong, and whether they reveal the study’s intent too clearly. Also test whether respondents intuitively understand the speaker-type categories used in the source-attribution items.

The core go/no-go rule: in the open coding of the territorial-justification probe, if Qing-era continuity or broader historical continuity does not clearly emerge as a dominant legitimation path relative to class-revolutionary succession, absolute-sovereignty doctrine, or ethno-cultural commonality, then the instrument must first be rewritten.

2. Main Experiment: 2×2 Cue-Combination Design

Group	Slot A	Slot B
G1 Baseline	Neutral filler	Neutral filler
G2 Official only	Official-premise passage	Neutral filler
G3 Mourning Ming only	Neutral filler	Mourning Ming passage
G4 Joint cueing	Official-premise passage	Mourning Ming passage

To keep reading burden comparable, all groups read two passages of roughly similar length. The neutral filler should avoid keywords or dispositions related to the Ming-Qing transition, ethnicity, frontier territory, national unity, or foreign conquest.

3. Main Questionnaire Flow

Module	Content	Pre/Post treatment	Estimated time
0	Consent, age/region eligibility, one pre-treatment attention screener	Pre	1 min
1	Background (age, gender, education, <i>minzu</i> , high-school province/year, track, information sources; no exposure item here)	Pre	1.5 min
2	Territorial-justification forced choice + brief open-ended supplement	Pre	1 min
3	Identity-content open-ended probes + identity salience + self-categorization	Pre	2-3 min
4	Source-attribution battery (coverage)	Pre	2-3 min
5	Factual-awareness battery (exploratory moderator)	Pre	1.5-2 min
6	Random assignment to four groups; read two passages	Treatment	1-1.5 min
7	Pair-based relation tasks	Post	3-4 min

	(primary recognition battery)		
8	Open-ended follow-up	Post	1-2 min
9	Attitude battery (includes reverse-coded items + Path-5 standalone indicator)	Post	2-3 min
10	Manipulation check + information-exposure item + end page	Post	1 min

The entire questionnaire should be kept within approximately 15-18 minutes.

Rationale for the order: (1) the territorial-justification module precedes identity probing because the territorial item is more cognitive and the identity module is more affectively activating; placing identity too early risks contaminating later coverage tasks; (2) the open-ended probe is before the attitude battery so that the respondent's reasoning about the pair tasks can be captured while it is still fresh rather than after attitude items invite post hoc rationalization; (3) the information-exposure item is at the end of the questionnaire so that references to the Hong Kangxi controversy or related Ming-Qing content do not prime respondents before treatment.

4. Experimental Materials

Neutral filler passage (primary version: content-unrelated historical paragraph)

The Roman Empire was one of the most important political entities in the Mediterranean world for several centuries around the turn of the Common Era. Its provincial system allowed local areas to retain a degree of autonomy, while governors appointed by the center were responsible for taxation and order. After the third century, the empire faced growing fiscal pressure and mounting threats along its frontiers, and by the fifth century its western provinces gradually disintegrated. This process involved both internal political fragmentation and external population movements.

Neutral filler passage (robustness version: purely procedural waiting page)

(Display the following text: “Please remain on this page for about 45 seconds before continuing. The system is timing automatically, and the ‘Next’ button will become available when the timer ends.” Unlock the next-page button automatically after 45 seconds.)

Official-premise passage (primary version: assertive)

China’s history has maintained continuity over a long period of time. Dynasties change, but the historical and civilization process are not thereby broken. The Qing dynasty is usually understood within this continuous history, and its governance and integration of frontier regions formed an important historical stage in the making of the later national territory. Today’s state territory and political community are the result of long-term historical continuity rather than the product of any single dynasty.

Official-premise passage (robustness version: hedged)

One common historical view holds that China’s history has maintained continuity over a long period of time. From this perspective, dynasties change, but the historical and civilization process are not thereby completely broken. The Qing dynasty is usually understood within this continuous history, and its governance and integration of frontier regions are likewise viewed as an important historical stage in the making of the later national territory. Accordingly, today’s state territory and political community are often understood as the result of long-term historical continuity rather than the product of any single dynasty.

Mourning Ming passage (primary version: assertive)

The fall of the Ming in 1644 was not an ordinary dynastic transition but a deeper rupture. Policies such as the queue order and literary inquisitions under the Qing suppressed earlier cultural traditions, and many of the cultural and institutional achievements accumulated during the Ming were severely damaged in the process. The Ming-Qing transition was therefore not a natural continuation within the same historical trajectory, but a civilizational turn produced by conquest. From this perspective, the fall of the Ming represented a major historical loss.

Mourning Ming passage (robustness version: hedged)

Another common historical view holds that the fall of the Ming in 1644 was not an ordinary dynastic transition but a deeper rupture. From this perspective, policies such as the queue order

and literary inquisitions under the Qing suppressed earlier cultural traditions, and many of the cultural and institutional achievements accumulated during the Ming were severely damaged in the process. The Ming-Qing transition is therefore more plausibly understood as a civilizational turn produced by conquest rather than a natural continuation within the same historical trajectory. From this perspective, the fall of the Ming represented a major historical loss.

5. Pair Taxonomy and Final Pair Battery

Design principles:

- (1) The four high-tension pairs each captures a different load-bearing dependency rather than repeat the same dependency in slightly different wording.
- (2) The three fusible pairs each corresponds to a different organizing logic.
- (3) Two content-unrelated filler pairs helps prevent respondents from becoming cognitive about the purpose of the battery.
- (4) One cross-era decoy pair serves as a data-quality check.
- (5) The wording of the pair battery should not overlap with the source-attribution items in Module 4.
- (6) No pair should be pre-declared in the main analysis as an “objectively contradictory” pair. Final wording should be fixed only after cognitive interviewing and calibration against Xiaohongshu corpus material during the pretest.

Code	Type	Statements	Dependency / organizing logic measured
HT1	High tension	S1: Today’s Xinjiang, Tibet, and other regions became part of Chinese territory largely because of the Qing’s frontier governance. S2: The Qing was not China’s own dynasty but a foreign conquest and rule of China.	Territorial legitimacy: Qing belongs to Chinese history
HT2	High tension	S1: One major feature of Chinese civilization is its uninterrupted	Civilizational continuity: Ming-Qing transition is

		continuity over thousands of years. S2: After 1644, authentic Huaxia cultural transmission was fundamentally broken.	not rupture
HT3	High tension	S1: China is a unified multi-ethnic state because it historically carries forward successive dynasties, including the Qing. S2: The Qing should not count as a Chinese dynasty but as a foreign occupation.	Multi-ethnic unity: historical incorporation of Qing
HT4	High tension	S1: China's century of humiliation begins in 1840 with the Opium War. S2: China's real decline began in 1644 when Qing forces entered the passes.	Century-of-humiliation narrative: implicit acceptance of Qing as Chinese dynasty
FU1	Fusible	S1: Han language, ritual, and thought are the most important cultural roots of Chinese civilization. S2: Qing literary inquisitions and queue policies severely suppressed Han traditions.	Han-centric logic
FU2	Fusible	S1: Modern humiliation and current rejuvenation form one historical arc. S2: Without Qing isolation and corruption, China would not have fallen behind the West.	Rise-fall-rejuvenation schema
FU3	Fusible	S1: China's present territorial integrity should be maintained regardless of how any dynasty is judged.	Alternative justification that bypasses the Qing node

FI1	Filler	<p>S2: Criticizing the Qing does not imply rejecting today's Chinese state.</p> <p>S1: The Opium War marks the start of modern Chinese history.</p> <p>S2: The Four Great Inventions advanced world civilization.</p>	Content-unrelated filler
FI2	Filler	<p>S1: The Silk Road promoted East-West exchange.</p> <p>S2: The Great Wall was built mainly for defense against northern nomads.</p>	Content-unrelated filler
DC1	Decoy	<p>S1: Qing governance in Xinjiang and Tibet laid the basis for modern territorial boundaries.</p> <p>S2: The Tang was one of the most outward-looking dynasties in Chinese history.</p>	Cross-era decoy for quality control

Survey Instrument (English Version)

Unless otherwise specified, all items are single-choice. Within the source-attribution battery, pair battery, and attitude battery, item order should be randomized. Within each pair, Statement 1 and Statement 2 should remain fixed for the same respondent.

Module 0: Consent and eligibility

Q0.1 Hello. This is an academic survey about how people understand questions of Chinese history. The survey is anonymous; you may skip any question and may quit at any time. It will take about 15-18 minutes. Do you agree to participate?

- Agree, continue
- Do not agree, end survey

Q0.2 Are you at least 18 years old?

- Yes
- No (end survey)

Q0.3 Do you currently reside in mainland China?

- Yes
- No (end survey)

Q0.4 Attention check

Statement 1: This item is designed to check whether you are reading each question carefully.

Statement 2: Please select “Definitely no” below.

For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no (correct)
- Hard to say / not sure

Module 1: Background information

Q1.1 Year of birth: _____

Q1.2 Gender:

- Male

- Female
- Other / prefer not to say

Q1.3 Highest completed level of education:

- Junior high school or below
- Senior high school / vocational high school
- Junior college
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree or above
- Prefer not to say

Q1.4 What is your *minzu* (official ethnic category)?

- Han
- Ethnic minority (please specify: _____)
- Prefer not to say

Q1.5 In which provincial-level region did you spend most of your senior high school years?

_____ (drop-down list of provincial-level regions)

Q1.6 Year you entered senior high school (Grade 10 or equivalent): _____

Q1.7 Main track during senior high school:

- Sciences / natural sciences
- Humanities / social sciences
- No tracking
- Other / don't remember

Q1.8 Current place of residence:

- Municipality / provincial capital or prefecture-level city (urban)
- County-level city or county seat
- Town
- Rural area
- Prefer not to say

Q1.9 Main sources of information about public affairs (select all that apply):

- Domestic internet platforms (e.g. WeChat, Weibo, Xiaohongshu, Douyin, Bilibili, etc.)
- International internet platforms
- Television / radio

- Newspapers / magazines
- Classes / lectures / books
- Friends and family
- Other

Q1.9b Among the sources you selected above, which one do you use the most?
 ____ (drop-down list; select one from Q1.9 checked items)

Q1.10 Roughly how much time per day do you spend following public affairs or current events?

- Almost none
- Under 15 minutes
- 15-30 minutes
- 30-60 minutes
- More than 1 hour

Module 2: Territorial justification path (pre-treatment)

Q2.1 If you needed to explain to someone why China’s present territorial integrity should be maintained, which of the following reasons comes closest to your own thinking?

- Because today’s China inherits long-term historical continuity spanning multiple dynasties
- Because a modern sovereign state has legitimate authority over its existing territory, without needing to rely on any particular dynasty
- Because modern revolution and state-building established today’s territorial order
- Because different peoples who share a common language, culture, and historical memory constitute today’s China
- Other (please specify: ____)
- Hard to say

[Pretest note] The four options above are preliminary. They must be calibrated after coding the open-ended territorial-justification probe in the pretest.

Q2.2 Why did you choose the answer above? (Brief response is fine.)

Open response: ____

Module 3: Identity-content probes and self-categorization (pre-treatment)

Q3.1 What does “being Chinese” mean to you? Please answer briefly in your own words.

Open response: _____

Q3.2 What does “being a member of your *minzu*” mean to you? Please answer briefly in your own words.

Open response: _____

Q3.3 In your view, what is the relationship between your “Chinese” identity and your “*minzu*” identity? Please answer briefly in your own words.

Open response: _____

Q3.4 The identity of “being Chinese” is important to how I see myself.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Not sure
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q3.5 The identity of “being a member of my *minzu*” is important to how I see myself.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Not sure
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q3.6 When I think about historical or political questions, I usually start from which identity first?

- From my “Chinese” identity first
- From my “*minzu* member” identity first
- Both at the same time
- It depends on the situation
- Hard to say

Module 4: Source-attribution battery (coverage)

Instructions: Each statement below is something people sometimes hear in different settings.

Please judge where each statement would most likely appear.

(Randomize order of all 10 items within this module.)

Q4.1 “China is a unified multi-ethnic country; different ethnic groups together constitute today’s China.”

- More likely to appear in history textbooks or official media
- More likely to appear in informal discussions on social platforms like Xiaohongshu or Zhihu
- Could appear on either side
- Hard to say

Q4.2 “After 1644, the authentic transmission of Chinese civilization was already broken.”

- More likely to appear in history textbooks or official media
- More likely to appear in informal discussions on social platforms like Xiaohongshu or Zhihu
- Could appear on either side
- Hard to say

Q4.3 “The Qing dynasty can be understood as part of China’s continuous history.”

- More likely to appear in history textbooks or official media
- More likely to appear in informal discussions on social platforms like Xiaohongshu or Zhihu
- Could appear on either side
- Hard to say

Q4.4 “The Qing was closer to a foreign conquest regime than to an ordinary Chinese dynasty.”

- More likely to appear in history textbooks or official media
- More likely to appear in informal discussions on social platforms like Xiaohongshu or Zhihu
- Could appear on either side
- Hard to say

Q4.5 “The Qing dynasty’s governance and integration of frontier regions was of major significance for the formation of China’s later territorial boundaries.”

- More likely to appear in history textbooks or official media
- More likely to appear in informal discussions on social platforms like Xiaohongshu or Zhihu
- Could appear on either side
- Hard to say

Q4.6 “The Qing dynasty’s literary inquisitions and mandatory queue order inflicted devastating damage on Han cultural traditions.”

- More likely to appear in history textbooks or official media
- More likely to appear in informal discussions on social platforms like Xiaohongshu or Zhihu
- Could appear on either side
- Hard to say

Q4.7 “China’s present territorial integrity is the result of long-term historical continuity and does not depend on any single dynasty.”

- More likely to appear in history textbooks or official media
- More likely to appear in informal discussions on social platforms like Xiaohongshu or Zhihu
- Could appear on either side
- Hard to say

Q4.8 “The fall of the Ming was a major civilizational loss, not just an ordinary dynastic transition.”

- More likely to appear in history textbooks or official media
- More likely to appear in informal discussions on social platforms like Xiaohongshu or Zhihu
- Could appear on either side
- Hard to say

Q4.9 [filler] “The Silk Road facilitated economic and cultural exchange between East and West.”

- More likely to appear in history textbooks or official media
- More likely to appear in informal discussions on social platforms like Xiaohongshu or Zhihu
- Could appear on either side
- Hard to say

Q4.10 [filler] “Zheng He’s maritime voyages were a major event in the history of Chinese navigation.”

- More likely to appear in history textbooks or official media
- More likely to appear in informal discussions on social platforms like Xiaohongshu or Zhihu
- Could appear on either side

- Hard to say

[Scoring note] Coverage index is based on Q4.1-Q4.8 (8 items). Expected correct attributions: Q4.1, Q4.3, Q4.5, Q4.7 → “history textbooks or official media”; Q4.2, Q4.4, Q4.6, Q4.8 → “social platforms.” “Could appear on either side” and “Hard to say” are scored as 0 (not correctly attributed). Q4.9-Q4.10 are fillers and are excluded from the main score.

Module 5: Factual awareness battery (exploratory moderator)

(Randomize order of all 10 items within this module.)

Q5.1 The United Nations headquarters is located in New York.

- Correct / Incorrect / Not sure

Q5.2 The European Union is a military alliance.

- Correct / Incorrect / Not sure

Q5.3 India is located in South Asia.

- Correct / Incorrect / Not sure

Q5.4 Japan uses the euro as its national currency.

- Correct / Incorrect / Not sure

Q5.5 The World Bank headquarters is located in Geneva.

- Correct / Incorrect / Not sure

Q5.6 The UN Security Council has five permanent members.

- Correct / Incorrect / Not sure

Q5.7 Brazil is located in Africa.

- Correct / Incorrect / Not sure

Q5.8 The US presidential term is six years.

- Correct / Incorrect / Not sure

Q5.9 Russia is a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

- Correct / Incorrect / Not sure

Q5.10 ASEAN has more than fifteen member states.

- Correct / Incorrect / Not sure

Module 6: Reading materials (random assignment to one of four conditions)

(All respondents read two passages. Display by condition: G1 filler + filler; G2 official + filler; G3 filler + Mourning Ming; G4 official + Mourning Ming. Order is fixed: Slot A then Slot B.)

Record page dwell time per passage. Primary version uses content-unrelated filler Roman Empire passage. Robustness version uses procedural wait page.)

Passage A

(System displays assigned text)

Passage B

(System displays assigned text)

Module 7: Paired-claim relation tasks (primary recognition battery)

Instructions: Each item below presents two statements. Please judge whether, in your view, these two statements can both be true at the same time. There is no right or wrong answer; we simply want to know your view.

(Randomize order of all 10 pairs within this module. Statement 1 and Statement 2 order remains fixed within respondent.)

Q7.1 [HT1] Statement 1: Today's Xinjiang, Tibet, and other regions became part of Chinese territory largely because of the Qing dynasty's more than two centuries of frontier governance.

Statement 2: The Qing was not China's own dynasty but a conquest and rule of China by a foreign people. For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no
- Hard to say / not sure

Q7.2 [HT2] Statement 1: One of the most distinctive features of Chinese civilization is its continuous transmission over thousands of years, never fully interrupted. Statement 2: After 1644, the authentic transmission of Chinese culture was fundamentally broken; Chinese culture after that point has been an altered version. For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no
- Hard to say / not sure

Q7.3 [HT3] Statement 1: China is a unified multi-ethnic country precisely because it has historically carried forward the legacy of successive dynasties, including the Qing. Statement 2: The Qing should not be counted as a Chinese dynasty but should instead be seen as a foreign occupation of China. For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no
- Hard to say / not sure

Q7.4 [HT4] Statement 1: China's modern century of humiliation began with the Opium War of 1840, after which the Chinese people embarked on a path of national salvation and rejuvenation. Statement 2: China's real decline did not begin in 1840 but had already started in 1644 when Qing forces entered through the passes. For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no
- Hard to say / not sure

Q7.5 [FU1] Statement 1: The language, rituals, and intellectual traditions of the Han are the most important cultural foundations of Chinese civilization. Statement 2: The Qing dynasty's literary inquisitions and mandatory queue order severely suppressed Han cultural traditions. For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no
- Hard to say / not sure

Q7.6 [FU2] Statement 1: China's modern experience of falling behind and being bullied is a history of humiliation, and the country is now on the path of national rejuvenation. Statement 2: If not for the Qing dynasty's isolation and corruption, China would not have fallen behind the West. For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no
- Hard to say / not sure

Q7.7 [FU3] Statement 1: Regardless of how one evaluates any particular dynasty, China's present territorial integrity should be maintained. Statement 2: Criticizing the Qing does not mean rejecting identification with today's Chinese state. For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no
- Hard to say / not sure

Q7.8 [FI1] Statement 1: The Opium War marked the beginning of modern Chinese history. Statement 2: China's ancient Four Great Inventions advanced the development of world civilization. For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no
- Hard to say / not sure

Q7.9 [FI2] Statement 1: The Silk Road facilitated economic and cultural exchange between East and West. Statement 2: The Great Wall was built mainly for defense against northern nomadic peoples. For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no
- Hard to say / not sure

Q7.10 [DC1] Statement 1: The Qing dynasty's governance of frontier regions such as Xinjiang and Tibet laid the foundations for modern China's territorial boundaries. Statement 2: The Tang

dynasty was one of the most open periods in Chinese history for foreign exchange. For you, can these two statements both be true at the same time?

- Definitely yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- Definitely no
- Hard to say / not sure

The next two items are supplementary items testing the direction of logical implication.

Q7.11 If you accept “Today’s Xinjiang, Tibet, and other regions became part of Chinese territory largely because of the Qing dynasty’s more than two centuries of frontier governance,” can “The Qing was not China’s own dynasty but a conquest and rule of China by a foreign people” still hold?

- Definitely can hold
- Probably cannot hold
- Definitely cannot hold
- Hard to say

Q7.12 If you accept “China is a unified multi-ethnic country precisely because it has historically carried forward the legacy of successive dynasties, including the Qing,” can “The Qing should not be counted as a Chinese dynasty but should instead be seen as a foreign occupation of China” still hold?

- Definitely can hold
- Probably cannot hold
- Definitely cannot hold
- Hard to say

Module 8: Open-ended explanation

Q8.1 You just judged whether several pairs of statements can both be true. In your own words, what did you most often consider when making those judgments? For example, was it certain historical facts, whether certain positions are right or wrong, or your overall understanding of China? Which consideration mattered most to you?

Open response: _____

Module 9: Attitude battery (post-treatment)

(Randomize item order within this module.)

Qing / historical continuity dimension (4 items: 3 forward + 1 reverse)

Q9.1 The Qing should be treated as part of China's continuous history.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.2 Completely excluding the Qing from Chinese history would distort one's understanding of Chinese history.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.3 One cannot understand today's China without addressing the Qing period.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.4 [Reverse] It makes more sense to treat the Qing as separate from Chinese history than to include it as part of it.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Territorial indivisibility dimension (3 items: 2 forward + 1 reverse)

Q9.5 China's present territorial integrity has a deep historical foundation.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.6 Even when dynasties change, the historical continuity of territory still matters.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.7 [Reverse] China's present territory was mainly re-established in the modern era and has little to do with ancient dynasties.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Multi-ethnic unity dimension (4 items: 3 forward + 1 reverse)

Q9.8 The most appropriate way to understand China is as a unified multi-ethnic country.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.9 China should be understood as a country constituted by multiple ethnic groups together.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.10 Different *minzu* together constitute China as a whole.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.11 [Reverse] Ultimately, China's core is the Han and Han culture; other ethnic groups are secondary.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Revisionist / 1644-rupture dimension (4 items: 3 forward + 1 reverse)

Q9.12 1644 was more than a dynastic transition; it was a deeper historical rupture.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.13 It is reasonable to interpret the fall of the Ming as a major civilizational loss.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.14 Mainstream narratives often underestimate the destructive impact of Qing conquest.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Q9.15 [Reverse] The Ming-Qing transition was an ordinary dynastic change and should not be exaggerated.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Path-5 standalone indicator (not included in any sub-index above)

Q9.16 Regardless of how one evaluates any particular dynasty, China's present territorial integrity should be maintained.

- Strongly disagree / Somewhat disagree / Not sure / Somewhat agree / Strongly agree

Module 10: Manipulation check, information exposure, and end page

Q10.1 Which theme did the reading materials emphasize more?

- More emphasis on historical continuity and multi-ethnic unity
- More emphasis on 1644 as a major rupture
- Both equally
- Neither / not sure

Q10.2 Before today, had you seen discussions or content online related to Ming-Qing transitional history, Manchu-Han relations, or descriptions of the fall of the Ming as a major historical rupture?

- Never
- Once or twice
- Occasionally
- Frequently
- Not sure

Q10.3 Is there anything else you would like to add? (Optional)

Open response: _____

[End page] Thank you for participating.

调查问卷（中文版）

模块 0：同意书与资格筛查

Q0.1 您好！这是一项关于人们如何理解中国历史问题的学术调查。问卷匿名，不收集您的姓名；您可以跳过任何题目，也可以随时退出。完成时间约 15-18 分钟。您是否同意参加？

- 同意，继续
- 不同意，结束问卷

Q0.2 您今年是否已满 18 周岁？

- 是
- 否（结束问卷）

Q0.3 您目前是否常住中国大陆？

- 是
- 否（结束问卷）

Q0.4 注意力测试：本题请选“完全不能同时成立”

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立
- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立（正确选项）
- 很难判断 / 说不清

模块 1：背景信息

Q1.1 您的出生年份是：_____

Q1.2 您的性别是：

- 男
- 女
- 其他 / 不便回答

Q1.3 您目前完成的最高教育程度是：

- 初中及以下
- 高中 / 中专
- 大专
- 本科
- 硕士

- 博士及以上
- 不便回答

Q1.4 您的民族是:

- 汉族
- 少数民族 (请填写: _____)
- 不便回答

Q1.5 您高中 (普通高中/中专阶段) 主要就读于哪个省级地区?
____ (下拉列表: 31 个省级地区 + 港澳台/境外 + 不便回答)

Q1.6 您进入高中阶段 (高一/相当于高一) 的年份是: _____

Q1.7 您高中阶段的主要分科是:

- 理科 / 自然科学方向
- 文科 / 人文社会科学方向
- 未分科
- 其他 / 记不清

Q1.8 您目前常住于:

- 直辖市 / 省会或地级市城区
- 县城或县级市城区
- 乡镇
- 农村
- 不便回答

Q1.9 您平时获取公共事务信息的主要来源是 (可多选) :

- 国内互联网平台 (如微信、微博、小红书、抖音、B站等)
- 国际互联网平台
- 电视 / 广播
- 报纸 / 杂志
- 课堂 / 讲座 / 书籍
- 亲友交流
- 其他

Q1.9b 在上面选择的来源中, 您使用最多的一个是:

____ (从 Q1.9 已选项中选一个)

Q1.10 您平时每天大约会花多长时间关注公共事务或时事?

- 几乎不看

- 不到 15 分钟
- 15-30 分钟
- 30-60 分钟
- 1 小时以上

模块 2: 领土正当化路径 (pre-treatment)

Q2.1 如果要向别人说明为什么中国今天的领土完整应该得到维护, 下面哪一种理由最接近您的想法?

- 因为今天的中国继承了跨越多个朝代的长期历史延续
- 因为现代主权国家对其现有领土拥有合法权威, 不必依赖某个朝代
- 因为现代革命与国家建构确立了今天的领土秩序
- 因为共享语言、文化和历史记忆的不同人群构成了今天的中国
- 其他 (请填写: _____)
- 说不清

Q2.2 您为什么会选上面的答案? (可简短作答)

开放作答: _____

模块 3: 身份内容与自我分类

Q3.1 “做一个中国人”, 对您来说意味着什么? 请用自己的话简要回答。

开放作答: _____

Q3.2 “做您所属民族的一员”, 对您来说意味着什么? 请用自己的话简要回答。

开放作答: _____

Q3.3 对您来说, “中国人”身份和“您所属民族”身份之间是什么关系? 请用自己的话简要回答。

开放作答: _____

Q3.4 “中国人”这个身份, 对我如何看待自己是重要的。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q3.5 “我所属的民族”这个身份, 对我如何看待自己是重要的。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q3.6 当我思考历史或政治问题时，我通常更先从哪一种身份出发？

- 首先从“中国人”身份出发
- 首先从“我所属民族成员”身份出发
- 两者同时
- 视具体情境而定
- 说不清

模块 4: 来源归因任务

说明：下面每一句话都是人们有时会在不同场合听到的说法。请您判断，这句话最有可能出现在下面哪种地方？

(本模块 10 题在模块内随机顺序呈现。)

Q4.1 “中国是一个统一的多民族国家，不同民族共同构成了今天的中国。”

- 更可能出现在历史教科书或官方媒体上
- 更可能出现在小红书、知乎等社交平台的民间讨论中
- 两边都可能出现
- 说不好

Q4.2 “1644 年以后，真正的华夏文化遗产已经断了。”

- 更可能出现在历史教科书或官方媒体上
- 更可能出现在小红书、知乎等社交平台的民间讨论中
- 两边都可能出现
- 说不好

Q4.3 “清代可以被放在中国连续历史当中来看待。”

- 更可能出现在历史教科书或官方媒体上
- 更可能出现在小红书、知乎等社交平台的民间讨论中
- 两边都可能出现
- 说不好

Q4.4 “清朝更接近一个外来征服政权，不是普通意义上的中国王朝。”

- 更可能出现在历史教科书或官方媒体上
- 更可能出现在小红书、知乎等社交平台的民间讨论中
- 两边都可能出现
- 说不好

Q4.5 “清代对边疆地区的治理和整合，对后来中国版图的形成有重要意义。”

- 更可能出现在历史教科书或官方媒体上
- 更可能出现在小红书、知乎等社交平台的民间讨论中
- 两边都可能出现
- 说不好

Q4.6 “清代的文字狱和剃发令对汉族文化传统造成了毁灭性打击。”

- 更可能出现在历史教科书或官方媒体上
- 更可能出现在小红书、知乎等社交平台的民间讨论中
- 两边都可能出现
- 说不好

Q4.7 “中国今天的领土完整是长期历史延续的结果，不取决于某个单独朝代。”

- 更可能出现在历史教科书或官方媒体上
- 更可能出现在小红书、知乎等社交平台的民间讨论中
- 两边都可能出现
- 说不好

Q4.8 “明亡是一场重大的文明损失，不只是普通的改朝换代。”

- 更可能出现在历史教科书或官方媒体上
- 更可能出现在小红书、知乎等社交平台的民间讨论中
- 两边都可能出现
- 说不好

Q4.9 [filler] “丝绸之路促进了东西方的经济和文化交流。”

- 更可能出现在历史教科书或官方媒体上
- 更可能出现在小红书、知乎等社交平台的民间讨论中
- 两边都可能出现
- 说不好

Q4.10 [filler] “郑和下西洋是中国古代航海史上的重大事件。”

- 更可能出现在历史教科书或官方媒体上
- 更可能出现在小红书、知乎等社交平台的民间讨论中

- 两边都可能出现
- 说不好

模块 5: 事实认知题

(本模块 10 题在模块内随机顺序呈现。)

Q5.1 联合国总部设在纽约。

- 正确
- 错误
- 说不清

Q5.2 欧盟是一个军事同盟。

- 正确
- 错误
- 说不清

Q5.3 印度位于南亚。

- 正确
- 错误
- 说不清

Q5.4 日本使用欧元作为本国货币。

- 正确
- 错误
- 说不清

Q5.5 世界银行总部设在日内瓦。

- 正确
- 错误
- 说不清

Q5.6 联合国安理会有五个常任理事国。

- 正确
- 错误
- 说不清

Q5.7 巴西位于非洲。

- 正确
- 错误

- 说不清

Q5.8 美国总统任期是六年。

- 正确
- 错误
- 说不清

Q5.9 俄罗斯是上海合作组织的成员国。

- 正确
- 错误
- 说不清

Q5.10 东盟的成员国超过十五个。

- 正确
- 错误
- 说不清

模块 6: 阅读材料 (随机进入四组之一)

(所有受访者阅读两段材料。按实验组分别展示: G1 filler + filler; G2 official + filler; G3 filler + Mourning Ming; G4 official + Mourning Ming。材料顺序固定为 Slot A 后 Slot B。记录每段材料页面停留时长。主版本使用内容无关的罗马帝国段; robustness 版本使用纯程序性等待页。)

材料 A

(由程序随机呈现对应文字)

材料 B

(由程序随机呈现对应文字)

模块 7: 两句关系判断 (primary recognition battery)

说明: 下面每题都给出两句话。请判断, 对您来说, 这两句话是否可以同时成立。没有标准答案, 我们只想了解您的看法。

(本模块 10 对在模块内随机顺序呈现。每对内的第 1 句/第 2 句顺序在同一受访者内固定不变。)

Q7.1 [HT1] 第 1 句: 今天的新疆、西藏等地区能够成为中国领土, 与清代两百多年的边疆经营密切相关。第 2 句: 清代不是中国自己的王朝, 而是外来民族对中国的征服和统治。对您来说, 这两句话是否可以同时成立?

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立
- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立
- 很难判断 / 说不清

Q7.2 [HT2] 第 1 句：中华文明最突出的特征之一是几千年来从未彻底中断的连续传承。

第 2 句：1644 年之后，真正的华夏文化传承已经被根本性地打断，此后的中国文化是被改造过的。对您来说，这两句话是否可以同时成立？

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立
- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立
- 很难判断 / 说不清

Q7.3 [HT3] 第 1 句：中国之所以是统一的多民族国家，离不开对包括清代在内的历代王朝的历史承接。第 2 句：清代不应当被算作中国的朝代，而应当被看作对中国的外来占领。对您来说，这两句话是否可以同时成立？

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立
- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立
- 很难判断 / 说不清

Q7.4 [HT4] 第 1 句：中国近代百年屈辱的起点是 1840 年的鸦片战争，此后中国人民走上了救亡图存和民族复兴的道路。第 2 句：中国真正的衰落不是从 1840 年开始的，而是从 1644 年清军入关就已经开始了。对您来说，这两句话是否可以同时成立？

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立
- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立
- 很难判断 / 说不清

Q7.5 [FU1] 第 1 句：汉族的语言、礼仪和思想传统是中华文明最重要的文化根基。第 2 句：清代的文字狱和剃发令对汉族文化传统造成了严重压制。对您来说，这两句话是否可以同时成立？

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立
- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立
- 很难判断 / 说不清

Q7.6 [FU2] 第 1 句: 中国近代落后挨打是一段屈辱的历史, 现在正走在民族复兴的道路上。第 2 句: 如果没有清代的封闭和腐败, 中国本来不会落后于西方。对您来说, 这两句话是否可以同时成立?

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立
- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立
- 很难判断 / 说不清

Q7.7 [FU3] 第 1 句: 不管怎样评价历史上的某个朝代, 今天中国领土的完整都应该得到维护。第 2 句: 对清代的批评不等于不认同今天的中国国家。对您来说, 这两句话是否可以同时成立?

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立
- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立
- 很难判断 / 说不清

Q7.8 [FI1] 第 1 句: 鸦片战争是中国近代史的开端。第 2 句: 中国古代的四大发明推动了世界文明的发展。对您来说, 这两句话是否可以同时成立?

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立
- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立
- 很难判断 / 说不清

Q7.9 [FI2] 第 1 句: 丝绸之路促进了东西方的经济和文化交流。第 2 句: 长城的修建主要出于防御北方游牧民族的需要。对您来说, 这两句话是否可以同时成立?

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立

- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立
- 很难判断 / 说不清

Q7.10 [DC1] 第 1 句：清代对新疆、西藏等边疆地区的治理奠定了现代中国的疆域基础。第 2 句：唐代是中国历史上对外交流最开放的朝代之一。对您来说，这两句话是否可以同时成立？

- 完全可以同时成立
- 大体可以同时成立
- 大体不能同时成立
- 完全不能同时成立
- 很难判断 / 说不清

下面两题是补充题，测量逻辑蕴涵方向。

Q7.11 如果您接受“今天的新疆、西藏等地区能够成为中国领土，与清代两百多年的边疆经营密切相关”，那么“清代不是中国自己的王朝，而是外来民族对中国的征服和统治”在您看来还能成立吗？

- 完全可以成立
- 不太能成立
- 完全不能成立
- 说不清

Q7.12 如果您接受“中国之所以是统一的多民族国家，离不开对包括清代在内的历代王朝的历史承接”，那么“清代不应当被算作中国的朝代，而应当被看作对中国的外来占领”在您看来还能成立吗？

- 完全可以成立
- 不太能成立
- 完全不能成立
- 说不清

模块 8：开放式解释

Q8.1 刚才您判断了几对句子能否同时成立。现在请您用自己的话说明：在这些判断里，您最常考虑的是什么？比如，是某些历史事实，某些立场是否合理，还是对中国整体的理解？哪一种考虑对您来说最重要？

开放作答：_____

模块 9: 态度题

(在本模块内随机呈现题目顺序。)

清朝历史连续性维度 (4 题: 3 正向 +1 反向)

Q9.1 清代应被视为中国连续历史的一部分。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.2 把清代完全排除在中国历史之外, 会使对中国历史的理解失真。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.3 理解今天的中国, 不能绕开清代这一历史阶段。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.4 [反向] 把清代单独拿出来看待, 比把它当作中国历史的一部分更合适。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

领土不可分割维度 (3 题: 2 正向 +1 反向)

Q9.5 中国今天的领土完整有深厚的历史基础。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意

- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.6 即使朝代发生变化，国家疆域的历史延续性仍然重要。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.7 [反向] 中国今天的领土主要是近代以来重新建立的，与古代王朝关系不大。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

多民族统一维度 (4 题: 3 正向 +1 反向)

Q9.8 中国最合适的理解方式是“统一的多民族国家”。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.9 中国应该被理解为由多个民族共同构成的国家。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.10 不同民族共同构成中国整体。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清

- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.11 [反向] 说到底，中国的核心还是汉族和汉文化，其他民族只是附带的。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

修正主义 / 1644 断裂维度 (4 题: 3 正向 +1 反向)

Q9.12 1644 不仅是改朝换代，更像一次更深的历史断裂。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.13 把明亡理解为重大文明损失，是一种可以成立的历史视角。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.14 主流叙事常常低估了清代征服带来的破坏性影响。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

Q9.15 [反向] 明清交替就是一次普通的朝代更替，不应该被过分渲染。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意

- 非常同意

Path-5 独立指标 (不进入上述任何子量表)

Q9.16 无论如何评价某个朝代，今天中国的领土完整都应该得到维护。

- 非常不同意
- 比较不同意
- 说不清
- 比较同意
- 非常同意

模块 10: 信息接触与结束页

Q10.1 您觉得刚才阅读的材料更偏向哪种历史看法？

- 更偏向强调中国历史的连续性和多民族统一
- 更偏向强调 1644 年明朝灭亡是一次重大断裂
- 两种都有强调
- 都没有明显偏向 / 说不清

Q10.2 在今天之前，您是否在网上见过与明清之际历史、满汉关系、或将明朝覆灭描述为重大历史断裂的讨论或内容？

- 从未见过
- 见过一两次
- 偶尔见到
- 经常见到
- 说不清

Q10.3 您还有其他想补充的吗？（可不答）

开放作答：_____

[结束页] 感谢您的参与。