Images of the Outside World: Chinese Overseas Returnees’ Attitudes towards International Affairs

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Images of the Outside World: Does Studying Abroad Affect Chinese Attitudes towards International Affairs?

Introduction

The movement of people across borders affects international relations and domestic politics.\(^1\) Internationally, increased immigration and emigration challenge state sovereignty,\(^2\) increase dependency\(^3\) and expand transnational linkages.\(^4\) Domestically, migration not only contributes to the internationalization of local and domestic politics,\(^5\) but also affects national security and social stability.

China, today, is deeply affected by the movement of people across borders: though China was not founded or built by immigrants, as was the U.S., Canada and Australia, China’s past has been shaped by returnees from overseas. Overseas returnees played an active role in China’s modern history. The first group of returned student who studied in the United States became leading engineers, naval commanders, and even a Prime


Minister.\(^6\) Between 1896 and 1911, a “Japan fever” saw at least 22,000 Chinese study in Japan; and these returnees were very active in the 1911 Revolution, giving Japan great influence on Chinese politics for decades. Founders of both the Nationalist (KMT) and Communist (CCP) parties studied in Japan, including Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Wang Ching-wei of the KMT and Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao of the CCP. Similarly, many Long Marchers, who led the CCP for decades studied or worked in France, including Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai and Zhu De.

Many of the people who led China in the 1990s had studied abroad. Jiang Zemin, Zhu Rongji and Li Peng had studied in the former Soviet Union in the 1950s, and according to Cheng Li, more and more foreign-educated returnees are joining the political, academic, cultural and economic elite.\(^7\) Among members of the 16\(^{th}\) CCP Central Committee, overseas returnees held nine full seats and 13 alternate seats, accounting for 4.5 percent and 8.2 percent, respectively. At the same time, 5.8 percent of provincial leaders have overseas experience, as do 13.6 percent of government ministers. By 2008, China had two ministers with overseas Ph.D.s, while perhaps 100 officials at the vice-governor level and above have spent at least one year studying or researching overseas.

But does overseas study affect the attitudes of returnees? Are they more open to international values and universal norms than those who do not study abroad? Although the jump in the number of returnees is a recent phenomenon, making it difficult for this


\(^7\) Cheng Li, “The Status and Characteristics of Foreign-Educated Returnees in the Chinese Leadership,” *China Leadership Monitor* (Hoover Institute, Stanford University)
cohort to move into China’s elite, if 40-50,000 students return from overseas each year imbued with more pro-western attitudes, and if these people join the business, academic, cultural and even political elite, their impact on China’s future foreign policy could be significant.

Political psychologists believe that cross-culture experiences generate predictable change in political values.\(^8\) Research on political socialization emphasizes the malleability of political attitudes during the formative stages of adulthood, when people respond to life transition, social change and other socializing influences.\(^9\) Thus, students entering foreign universities could be deeply influenced by their host country’s values, making the age when someone studies abroad an important variable in foreign policy orientations. If these students return home, they could strengthen links to their “host” country, and at the very least, be more familiar and better informed about their host country’s value system.

China imposes serious constraints on the impact of public opinion on Chinese foreign policy.\(^10\) Nevertheless, with returnees taking leading positions in many key universities and government think tanks, returnees may have an indirect impact on foreign policy making, contributing their preferences on foreign policy to what Gabriel

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Almond called “the attentive public.” And as China’s foreign policy making process becomes increasingly pluralistic, the views of returnees and the attentive public may increasingly influence the policies of the Central government, or at a minimum, set some constraints on its decision-making.12

This paper looks at the foreign policy attitudes of a cohort of returnees who studied in Japan and Canada over the past 15 years. Japan and Canada may represent a range of countries, as the literature on immigration categorizes industrialized countries into three types, according to their immigration history and policy: classic, reluctant, and latecomers.13 Canada belongs to the former; Japan to the latter. Thus we find that returnees from Japan and Canada differ on a number of issues. And while we show that returnees are more liberal than people who have not studied abroad, it is difficult to assert that the values of returnees have a significant impact on Chinese foreign policy. Nevertheless, we do find grounds for optimism about China’s increasing integration into the international system, as this current generation of returnees moves into more influential positions in society and the Chinese polity.

13 “Classic” countries of immigration are those founded, populated, and built by immigrants in modern times, including the U.S., Canada and Australia. “Reluctant” countries of immigration are those with some experience of immigrants but who deny officially that they are countries of immigration, such as France, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. “Latecomers” did not have notable immigration in the post-World War II era, but now are importing many immigrants because of negative demographic trends. These countries include Japan, Spain, Italy and South Korea. See Wayne A. Cornelius, Takeyuki Tsdua, Philip L. Martin & James F. Hollifield, eds, Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).
Methods

Our study draws on surveys in 2006-07 by the Ministry of Education’s Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE) with the cooperation of the Center on China’s Transnational Relations at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in 2006-07. CSCSE is the government agency responsible for certifying the overseas degrees claimed by returnees. Given the propensity in China for people to put fraudulent credentials on their vitae, most employers want proof that the returnee actually completed their degree as they claim.

The first survey of returnees from Japan was done in 2006. Over 50,000 returnees have registered their degrees with the CSCSE, of whom about 7,000 had returned from Japan. So the CSCSE picked one of every two names on their list of returnees from Japan, tried to contact them, asking if they would fill in a questionnaire, and if they agreed, the CSCSE staff mailed it to them. The CSCSE followed up with a phone call to encourage them to respond. In total, they received 1381 surveys, a 46 percent response rate. The second survey, of returnees from Canada, was carried out in summer 2007, and followed the same strategy. Drawing on a list of 2,233 returnees from Canada, the CSCSE found 1,215 people who were mailed a survey questionnaire. Eventually, 529 people replied, yielding a response rate of 44 percent.14

The CSCSE list does not include all returnees. The degree certification system was established in that late 1990s, so it lacks records of early returnees. Second, returnees who set up their own company need not validate their degrees, though some chose to do

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14 The funding for the study of returnees from Japan came from the Hong Kong office of the Japan External Trade Office (JETRO), while the Canadian research was supported by
so. Still theirs is the most comprehensive list of returnees in China available for a national
survey, and we believe the missing returnees do not bias the results.

Not only did we find differences among returnees and people who did not go
overseas, but we found significant differences in the attitudes towards international
affairs among those who studied in Japan and Canada. Perhaps some self-selection was
involved here, as those who wanted a more liberal education chose Canada over Japan.
Yet as we show, returnees from Canada were more, not less, hawkish, on some
dimensions than returnees from Japan.

The Flow of Students In and Out of China

Massive numbers of Chinese students and scholars have gone overseas to study and
carry out research since China opened in the late 1970s. By 2007, over 1.21 million
Chinese had gone abroad to study and 319,700 had returned.¹⁵

The current wave of overseas study is the largest in Chinese history. For many years
the United States received the most students, but recently both the UK and Japan have
hosted the largest number of returnees.¹⁶ As table 1 shows, among returnees to China
who registered their degrees with the Ministry of Education’s CSCSE, the majority came
from Japan and the U.K., and out of a total of s out of total of 44,565 returnees who had

¹⁵ Cong Cao, “China’s brain drain at the high end: Why government policies have failed
to attract first-rate academics to return,” *Asian Population Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3
¹⁶ It lacks detailed number of returned overseas students based on host country origin. The U.K. has received a very large number of MA students in the past few years and most have returned. Thus the UK may now have trained more returnees than any other country.
registered with the CSCSE as of 2005, around 10,000 were from U.K and 5,000 were from Japan.

Table 1. Overseas Degrees Authenticated in China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>Top 3 Countries Issuing Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. (4,027)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Japan (1,584) U.S.A (590) Germany (390)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA (31,965)</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>UK (9,979) Japan (2,893) Australia (2,802)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergrads (7,158)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Russia (469) Japan (436) UK (415)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** China Service Center for Studies in Education, Ministry of Education, Beijing. 17

**Note:** This breakdown is based on the total number of degrees that have been authenticated by the CSCSE between 1991 and 2005. Data in parenthesis is the total number of degrees validated during the entire period.

According to the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO), an independent institution in Japan, in 2007 Japan hosted 71,277 Chinese students, 60 percent of all international students in Japan. Canada hosted many fewer students than Japan, and while Canada remains attractive to Chinese students, fewer students go there than go to the U.S., UK, Germany or Japan. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the number of Chinese students going to Canada was approximately 1,000 annually until 1997. the numbers took off in 1998, after the Canadian Education Centre Network (CEC) opened its first office in Beijing, reaching around 10,000 annually in recent years.

17 Shao Wei, “Jin wunian zifei chuguo liuxue qingkuang huigu yu zhangwang” [Review and prospectus of studying aboard by self-financed students in the recent five years], *Chuguo liuxue gongzuo yanjiu* [Research on Study Abroad], Vol. 51 (September 2006):
Theory and Research Questions

Scholars see an individual’s subjective values and predispositions, their experiences, and their economic interests as determining an individual’s attitude towards foreign policy. Converse believed that people possess “constrained belief systems,” which affected their political attitudes. So, their views on some issues predicted their views on others, due to an interconnection among their values. Other studies found that people’s political attitudes and opinions towards domestic politics were consistent with certain core beliefs and values, such as humanitarianism, equality of opportunity, and individualism. Foreign-policy attitudes, too, were structured by core values, such as militarism, internationalism, and ethnocentrism. Scholars see two kinds of internationalism, “cooperative internationalism” and “militant internationalism.”

“Cooperative internationalism” revolves around “cooperative ties with other nations,“

64-70.

while “militant nationalism” involves support for using military force in the international arena.23

Economic interest may determine foreign policy preferences, particularly towards trade. Potential losers under free trade oppose it, while potential beneficiaries support it.24 In the U.S., economic interests are the most important pathway through which the international economy influences public opinion.25 Finally, individual belief systems can reflect lifetime experiences, such as one’s social or economic situation.26 Thus, cross-cultural experience is seen to generate predictable kinds of attitude change in one’s political values.27

Many of these factors play out in the lives of returnees to China, leading us to generate several hypotheses. First, since returnees have had a close relationship with the outside world, their overseas experience and self-interest should cause returnees’ values to reflect “cooperative internationalism” more than “militant nationalism.”

Second, because overseas experiences can deepen people’s understanding of foreign cultures, which in turn can create positive feelings towards their host country, returnees will have a more positive country image towards their “host” country than towards other foreign countries.

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Third, most developed countries promote free trade, so the values of an open global economy could have affected returnees while overseas. They would have how free trade benefited foreign citizens and China. Also, they may engage in some kind of international exchanges upon their return, making them beneficiaries of the free exchange of goods and services. In fact, many returnees see international ties as their comparative advantage. Thus we hypothesize that, due to their interests, returnees will be more supportive of free trade than the Chinese public.

Finally, the political cultures of Canada and Japan differ, and the media in these two countries present different portraits of the world. So returnees’ experiences are likely to be quite different. For example, Canada is much more welcoming to mainland students than Japan, allowing mainlanders to count some of their years in universities towards their citizenship; Japan, on the other hand, makes it very difficult for mainland students to stay. As a result, we hypothesize that returnees in China from Japan and Canada will have different attitudes towards international affairs.

Our analysis involves three steps: first, we present the data from the two surveys; second, we compare the attitudes of returnees from Canada and Japan; finally, we compare the views of our returnees to the middle class in China. If we find that the middle class in China, most of whom have not studied abroad, and returnees share common attitudes, we can discount the impact of the overseas experience.

Returnees’ Foreign Policy Attitudes

a. The Country Image

To capture the returnees’ attitudes towards, or images of, different countries, we used a feeling thermometer, through which returnees expressed their feelings towards seven states—the U.S., Russia, France, Japan, Canada, DPRK (North Korea) and India. While the survey involved a scale, running from -5 to +5, we recalculated their responses, yielding a scale running from 0 (most unfavorable) to 100 (most favorable).29

Feelings towards a foreign country indicate the image that country has in a returnee’s value system, and the image one holds of a country can influence how one views that country’s foreign policy. For example, softer perceptions of the former Soviet Union in the late 1980s triggered more “dovish” attitudes towards Russia’s policies.30

To assess the impact of overseas study, we compare the views of our returnees to the images of foreign countries as held by China’s middle class.31 We use the middle class as our comparative group as the vast majority of returnees will move into the middle class when they return to China. We extract the values of the middle class from the Global View 2006 Survey of Public Opinion and Foreign Policy which was carried out in the United States, China, India, Australia, and South Korea in 2006 by the Chicago Council on Global

29 The original question is “Indicate your personal feelings towards some foreign countries, from -5 (most unfavourable) to 5 (most favourable).” To make our returnees’ data consistent with the Global View 2006 scale, we made these changes: if the original value was x, the value after transformation was y, where y was equal to (x + 5) x 10.
31 Middle class is defined as total household income above RMB50,000 in 2005 before taxes.
Affairs and the Asia Society. Figure 1 compares the average scores of the country image among returnees from Canada, Japan and China’s middle class for six different countries; the higher the score, the more positive the image. Returnees from Japan and Canada each favored their host country, indicating the impact of their overseas experience. Even returnees from Japan prefer Japan above all other countries. In contrast, returnees from Canada are significantly more hostile to Japan than to any other country. Similarly, returnees from Canada favour their host country, Canada, above all other countries. In fact, the most positive image in all three surveys was that held by returnees from Canada towards Canada.

32 In China, the survey adopted a stratified multi-stage probability, proportional to size (PPS), random sample. As a result, the Chinese sample was representative of all adults nationwide, aged 18 or older. All 31 provinces were divided into three strata, according to their geographic location and their Human Development Index (HDI). Illiterate individuals or those with no formal education were excluded. The survey was carried out between 10 and 26 July 2006 and yielded 2000 responses. “Middle class” is defined as total household income higher than 50,000 in 2005 before taxes. The data was retrieved from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, Michigan, ICPSR04650-v1.

33 These findings were statistically significant at the .05 level.
Figure 1. Feelings of Returnees and China’s Middle Class towards Foreign Countries

Note: Global Views 2006 does not provide a country image for Russia and Canada. For Russia, we adopt results from the Beijing Areas Survey, 2004. However, this figure represents the feeling of all classes towards Russia, not just the middle class.34 We could not find an image of Canada in the existing literature.

Returnees from Japan also express a much more positive image of Japan than the middle class, a finding consistent with our first hypothesis. However, the middle class in China has a more positive view of Japan than the returnees from Canada; in fact, the most negative image in the three surveys is held by returnees from Canada towards Japan. So, while living in Japan created a positive image of Japan, staying abroad in Canada, and perhaps having the freedom to read about Sino-Japanese relations, may generate more negative feelings than would be developed simply by staying at home in China.

Because returnees from Canada and Japan held distinctly different images of countries that were not their host country, the host country’s political culture and information flow may affect a person’s views of the world. The media in Western societies, such as Canada, is more critical towards other countries, and their citizens emphasize individualism more, than Eastern societies, such as Japan. As a result, returnees from Canadian were more critical towards foreign countries than returnees from Japan. So, while Japan’s populace and media dislike North Korea, returnees from Japan were less hostile attitude towards the Hermit Kingdom than returnees from Canada. Not surprisingly, returnees from Canada also view the United States less positively than returnees from Japan. Again, the host country’s media and the political climate probably influenced the returnees’ views, as Canada’s political culture is far more critical of the U.S. than Japan’s. Similarly, given the large number of Indian immigrants in Canada, returned Chinese from Canada may have a more critical view of them than returnees from Japan, who have limited interactions with Indian immigrants.

**Subjective Orientations towards Foreign Policy**

Each respondent was asked 11 questions about their foreign policy orientations. An exploratory factor analysis shows that six questions are interrelated, forming two factors which we label as “cooperative internationalism” and “assertive nationalism”\textsuperscript{35} (table 2). “Cooperative internationalism” reflects a willingness to help other nations,\textsuperscript{36} and in our

\textsuperscript{35} We borrow the concept “assertive nationalism” from Allen S. Whiting, “Chinese Nationalism and Foreign Policy after Deng,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 142 (June 1995): 295-316.

\textsuperscript{36} Michael A. Maggiotto, Eugene R. Wittkopf, “American Public Attitudes toward
study it is measured by a returnee’s response to two statements: (1) “China should increase its financial aid to Third World countries;” and (2) “Though Africa is far way from China, we should increase our medical teams to serve our African friends.”

“Assertive nationalism” is based on responses to four statements, and we further divide it into two sub-categories, “political nationalism” and “economic nationalism.” Assertive nationalism treats outsiders, or the “out-group,” as a negative reference group which challenges the “in-group’s” (China’s) interests and identity.\(^{37}\) In China, assertive nationalists attribute China’s weakness to external economic exploitation and cultural infiltration, pursuing a cautious Chinese involvement in world affairs as they seek to limit their vulnerabilities and humiliations.\(^{38}\)

The two questions comprising “political nationalism” are: (3) “Everyone should support their own country even they think it is wrong” (Support own country); and (4) “To protect our country's national interests, we should use military force if necessary” (Use military force). The two questions composing “economic nationalism” are: (5) “To protect our country's economy, we should limit other countries' imports” (Limit imports); and (6) “We should prohibit foreigners from buying our large state-owned enterprises” (Prohibit buying SOEs).

Table 2 shows that the two cooperative items are not correlated with the four nationalist items, indicating that we are correct to cluster these attitudes this way.

Together, these two factors explain 53 percent of the variance of our six questions.

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37 Whiting, “Chinese Nationalism and Foreign Policy.”
with "cooperative internationalism" and “assertive nationalism” explaining 27 percent and 26.5 percent of the variance, respectively.

Table 2. Factor Analysis of Cooperative Internationalism and Assertive Nationalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cooperative Internationalism</th>
<th>Assertive Nationalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give financial aid</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send medical teams</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support own country</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use military force</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit imports</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibit buying SOEs</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlations among the Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperative Internationalism</th>
<th>Assertive Nationalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertive Nationalism</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 shows the level of support for “cooperative internationalism” among our returnees. Returnees view China’s role in international affairs positively; 60 percent agree that China should increase its financial aid to Third World countries, and 79 percent support more medical teams for Africa. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) finds no statistically significant difference between returnees from Japan and Canada on these two questions at the .05 level, showing that returnees from these two countries share similar subjective orientations towards international cooperation.

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39 The p-values of the F-test, 0.3077 and 0.103, respectively, are not statistically significant.
Figure 2. Support for “Cooperative Internationalism” (Combined views of returnees from Japan and Canada)

On the other hand, the difference in attitudes between returnees from Canada and Japan towards “using military force to promote China’s national interest” is statistically significant (p > .05), with the former group being more nationalistic (figure 3).40 Among all returnees, 44 percent support the use of military force, while 30 percent oppose its use. But returnees from Canada are more hawkish than returnees from Japan; more than 55 percent of returnees from Canada agree with using military force if necessary, while only 43 percent of returnees from Japan support it. This finding, while somewhat surprising, could reflect the strong pacifist ethos in Japan—something most non-Japanese ignore in their rush to emphasize Japan’s militaristic tradition. After all, Japan is the only country

40 The p-value of the F-test is 0.166 and 0.00, for these two questions, respectively.
in the world to suffer a nuclear attack and Hiroshima Day is a major event in the Japanese political calendar.

Figure 3 Support for Using Force to Promote China’s National Interest

![Bar chart showing support for using force to promote China’s national interest](chart.png)

Note: We drop Missing and Don’t Know responses, which comprise 5.5% of the sample.

Similarly, 40 percent of returnees from both countries will support China’s foreign policy, even if it is wrong (figure 4), while 35 percent are more introspective, saying that their support of China’s foreign policy depends on whether it is right or wrong. Still, more agree with the statement than disagree with it.
Figure 4. Those Willing to “Support China’s Foreign Policy, even if it is Wrong”

![Chart showing support for China's foreign policy](chart)

**Note:** We drop Missing data and “Don’t Know,” which contribute 4.0% of the sample.

We measure support for economic nationalism by a returnee’s views about “limiting imports” and “prohibiting the sale of large SOEs” to foreigners. However, only the difference between returnees from Japan and Canada for the idea of “limiting imports” is statistically significant ($p<.000$). Figure 5 shows the differences between returnees from Japan and Canada on the questions that measure political and economic nationalism and which are statistically significant.
Figure 5. Support for Economic and Political Nationalism

Note: This figure reports the detailed distribution of the items with statistically significant differences between Japan and Canada (p-value of the F-test is less than 0.05).

While returnees from Japan are more pacifist than returnees from Canada, the latter are more supportive of free trade. Thus returnees from Canada more strongly oppose limiting imports than returnees from Japan. Perhaps the greater openness of the Canadian economy towards foreign (particularly Chinese) imports affects their views. But, taking the returnees together, only 22 percent support “limiting imports,” while less than 30 percent support “prohibiting foreigners from buying our large SOEs” (table 3). Again this group of returnees is quite liberal and supports opening China to the international system.
Table 3. Overseas Returnees’ Views on International Affairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperative Internationalism</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give Financial Aid</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send Medical teams</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assertive Nationalism</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Own Country</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Military Force</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit imports</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibit Selling SOEs</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, we test the hypothesis that personal interest leads returnees to support free trade. Here we compare the views of returnees from Japan, who work for firms with Japanese investment, with the rest of the returnees from Japan—in terms of their support for the four questions that comprise our concept of “assertive nationalism.” We believe that employees in these firms oppose constraints on Japanese imports into China because import constraints would put their jobs at risk. Among the 1,400 returnees from Japan, 25 percent work for Japanese-invested firms, and our analysis (table 4) shows that whether or not one works for a Japanese firm affects their views towards foreign trade.

Table 4. “Assertive Nationalism,” by Employment in Japanese-Invested Firms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Prob.&gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>65.11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65.11</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>13521.70</td>
<td>1694</td>
<td>7.982</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13586.8</td>
<td>1695</td>
<td>8.016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-----------------------------------------------
A hard-line nationalistic, and strongly anti-Japanese, sentiment was measured by views towards the statement: “In order to force Japan to make concessions in the East China Sea, I support boycotting Japanese goods.” Responses ran from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” To understand why someone would hold this view, which reflects “economic nationalism,” we tested a multiple regression model (table 5).

Table 5. Support for Boycotting Japanese Goods to Pressure Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Absolute value of t</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender = Female</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>0.276***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log (age)</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>-0.322**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (years)</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of Japan</td>
<td>9.49</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-0.118***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Time Overseas</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-0.021*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in Politics</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership in the CCP</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive Nationalism</td>
<td>17.47</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>0.152***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Internationalism</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment in a Japanese JV = yes</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>0.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country = Canada</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>0.299***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.561</td>
<td>1.992***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * p > .05; ** p >.01; *** p > .001

As predicted by the literature, older people (age) are less willing to support a boycott than younger people. People who are “assertive nationalists” are more likely to support a boycott, as are those who studied in Canada (rather than Japan). Similarly, those with a more positive image of Japan oppose a boycott, as do those who have stayed overseas for a longer period. [The negative score shows opposition to the statement.] Number of years
abroad also leads to less support for the boycott, as predicted. The only surprising finding is that women, more than men, support the boycott.

Comparing Returnees and China’s Middle Class

This section compares the subjective orientations of returnees and members of the middle class in China towards cooperative internationalism and assertive nationalism (figure 6).\textsuperscript{41} We draw the middle class dispositions from the 2006 China General Social Survey (GSS), which was an annual survey of China’s urban and rural households.\textsuperscript{42} The 2006 GSS questionnaire included questions about international affairs which matched the questions in the CSCSE survey.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} To determine who belongs to the “middle class,” we selected people whose annual household income was over 50,000 RMB. For “cooperative internationalism,” we coded “strongly agree” as 5 and “strongly disagree” as 1 and then added the responses to the two questions which formed the concept. Ten reflected the strongest support, while 0 reflected the least support. We adopt the same method for assertive nationalism. However, as there are 4 questions measuring assertive nationalism, we add the four responses together and then divide the result by half. So 10 again reflects the most nationalistic, while 0 is the least nationalistic. We thank the Survey Research Center of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), and Yanjie Bian, for providing the data.

\textsuperscript{42} This survey uses a multi-stage stratified sampling scheme with unequal probabilities.

\textsuperscript{43} The scale used in the GSS survey was 4 point, not 5. So we multiplied the sum of the responses to our measures of cooperative nationalism by 1.25. With four questions in our concept of assertive nationalism, we multiple the sum of assertive nationalism questions by 1.25 and then by 0.5. As a result, the scale of both concepts runs from 0 to 10. One question measuring assertive nationalism--"To protect our country's national interests, we could use military force if necessary" (use military)--does not appear in GSS data, so instead we used the responses to another statement: “Some international power tries to contain China’s development and rise.”
Results confirm our hypotheses about returnees’ attitudes towards international affairs. Returnees believe more strongly in cooperative internationalism and are less supportive of assertive nationalism than China’s middle class. No doubt, a selection bias could be at work, as people who go abroad may be internationalists to begin with. Second, the benefits of international exchanges cause returnees to favour free trade over economic nationalism, a result consistent with Johnston’s findings that travel abroad and socio-economic class have an important interactive effect in promoting more liberal attitudes towards trade.\textsuperscript{44} However, returnees and the middle class are closer in their attitudes towards cooperative internationalism than they are towards militant nationalism, showing that, on the latter, the impact of overseas experiences is more extensive.

\textsuperscript{44} Alastair Iain Johnston, “Chinese Middle Class Attitudes toward International Affairs:
Conclusion

Our research shows that studying overseas affects one’s views towards the international system. First, our returnees looked more favourably on their host country than they did on any other country, so hosting Chinese students who return home enhances the host country’s “soft power,” as returned students—academics, scientists, businessmen or political elites—become part of the “attentive public” who pay attention to international affairs, or even opinion leaders, who possess a more positive view about the country in which they studied or worked. No wonder the Japanese government funds so many Chinese students to come to Japan. China’s government sees this link, so it has mobilized its educational establishment to increase substantially the number of China-bound foreign students. Today, that number is well over 100,000 foreign students, making China one of the top five destinations of foreign students.

Our returnees were also more supportive of international cooperation than the middle class in China who had not gone abroad. But this result may reflect a selection bias, as people with greater affinity for international cooperation are more likely to go abroad. Still, living abroad should make one more supportive of a globalist viewpoint. Interestingly, the media and political environment in the two countries has an important affect, as whether people studied in Canada or Japan also affected their feelings towards all other countries, as well as their orientations towards international affairs in general.

46 Almond, The American People and Foreign Policy.
Yet while returnees are more supportive of engagement with the developing world, and are less jingoistic than those who have never gone abroad, a strikingly significant proportion of returnees support Chinese foreign policy, whether it is right or wrong. Many of them also believe that using force to promote China’s national interests is acceptable, with sojourners to Canada being more assertive in foreign policy than those who went to Japan. Perhaps Japan’s truly post-WWII pacifist ethos plays a role. But the finding that returned overseas students rally around the flag helps explain the intensely nationalistic outpouring of the overseas mainland students at the time of the Olympic torch relay. We are probably also tapping into the intense patriotic education that filled China’s classrooms in the wake of the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown. Perhaps the young age of the returnees, or their access to information, also explains why those who studied in Canada are even more anti-Japanese than the domestic middle class.

Still, we cannot say much about the returnees’ direct impact on China’s foreign policy. Walter Lippmann believed that public opinion is a projection of elite opinion.\textsuperscript{47} As most average citizens know little about international politics,\textsuperscript{48} returnees are likely to be better informed on foreign policy issues than people with little overseas experience, particularly in a country such as China, and perhaps have stable, deeply held views. Those returnees in academia or in business have channels through which to send their views to the top political elites—through think tanks, policy papers, meetings, journals


and business associations. Though only a few returnees may make it to the inner circle of policy influentials, the impact of an informed citizenry on foreign policy is likely to increase over the coming decades.

Returnees to China constitute a tiny minority, as very few Chinese have lived abroad for any length of time. And, it remains to be seen if and when elites and members of the middle class who possess overseas experiences will influence state policy. Still, China’s modern history shows the enormous impact of the students who returned to China after study abroad. They led the modernization of the late 19th century, they overthrew the Qing Dynasty in the 1900s, and they led the KMT and the CCP in their struggle for power from the 1920s to the late 1940s. Another cohort that returned from the USSR ruled China for a decade in the 1990, significantly transforming the economy and China’s place in the world. As we look 10 years down the road, we may find another cohort of returnees playing an important role in determining China’s ties to the world.