ABSTRACT

It is conventional wisdom in academic, policy and media analysis of post-June 4th China that Chinese nationalism is on the rise. This rather blunt conclusion comes mainly from anecdotal or unsystematically collected evidence, and it has not been subject to any rigorous testing. Drawing from the Beijing Area Study, an annual, randomly sampled survey of Beijing residents, this working paper examines in a preliminary fashion a subset of survey responses from 2000 to 2002 that tap into nationalist sentiment. The working paper finds that respondents who are in the middle class, who have some university education, or who have traveled abroad tend to hold less nationalistic attitudes than those who are poorer, less educated or who have not traveled abroad. Moreover, there is no evidence that those who 'came of age' politically in the post-June 4th period are more nationalistic than older political generations.

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The Correlates of Nationalism In Beijing Public Opinion, 1998-2002

by

Alastair Iain Johnston

Introduction

In the past public opinion has never really been an important issue in Chinese foreign policy studies for obvious reasons. China, after all, is not a country where voters can recall poorly performing political leaders. Foreign policy is still one of the most sensitive public policy issues where unapproved or sharp public dissent and criticism can be politically risky.[1] And the Chinese political system is still a dictatorship.

Yet in recent years there has been more talk from both outside observers and Chinese analysts about the constraints that public opinion – meaning at its simplest the opinions of some representative sample of the entire politically aware population -- places on Chinese leaders.

Moreover, there is evidence that the Chinese leadership is increasingly sensitive to and/or constrained by the opinion of "attentive publics" (primarily urban political, economic and military elites) on issues running from Taiwan to Japanese reparations to the treatment of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Joseph Fewsmith and Stanley Rosen suggest that public intellectuals in particular have a growing impact on foreign policy making through opportunities for consulting with relevant bureaucracies, through high profile writing in an increasingly commercialized press, and through efforts to mobilize broader sectors of the public whose views may then be reflected

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[1] When the regime has not clearly articulated a policy or when it has signaled that it wants to generate ideas for policy the public debates among scholars and pundits can be quite sharp. In recent years these debates have flared over whether Deng Xiaoping's judgment that this is an epoch of peace and development still applies, and over the pros and cons of WTO membership. See for instance, the range of views on how to respond to US power after Kosovo that appeared in a remarkably open debate in the pages of Global Times (Huan Qiu Shi Bao, published by the People's Daily) in the second half of 1999. This debate was sanctioned by the Foreign Ministry, according to one interviewee. Also interesting in this respect is the relatively open critique from nationalist and mercantilist voices of China's efforts to get into the WTO. One such critique mirrored almost exactly the US Republican critique of Clinton's China policy when it dismissed the notion that US and China could build a "constructive strategic partnership". The author argued that China and the US were not strategic partners, but are strategic adversaries, and he basically accused supporters of the partnership idea of being "pro American" (*qin Mei de*). See Han Deqiang, Pengzhuang: quanqiuhua xianjin yu Zhongguo xianshi xuanze [Collision: the trap of globalization and China's realistic choices] (Beijing: Economic Management Publishing House, 2000) pp.362-363. Comparatively speaking, hard line punditry in China has more political space than soft-line punditry. None the less, there is still little space for direct criticism of the top leadership's handling of foreign relations.

in public opinion polling by the state or Party[2] (though they do not address mobilization on foreign policy issues *per se*).

It is not unreasonable to believe that just as the cultural, political and economic preferences of various sectors of the Chinese public may increasingly influence the domestic policies of the central government so too their foreign policy preferences may constrain the options of China's leaders. Just which sectors matter, of course, is unknown, though one suspects it will be urban and the burgeoning urban middle class's preferences that predominate. This may be even more likely in the event that political reform leads to limited democratization. As it is, with Jiang Zemin's decision to sanction the induction of capitalists and entrepreneurs into the Communist Party, one could plausibly expect that a wider range of voices will be heard increasingly within the ruling party itself.[3]

If this general impression in punditry and scholarship is true, then it is important to learn more about public opinion on international relations and foreign policy questions. This raises two basic questions about which we know relatively little. First, what is Chinese public opinion? Second, how does it affect the leadership's foreign policy decisions? Even if we had good measures of public opinion it may be that how Chinese leaders understand public opinion is different than actual opinion. For instance, some argue that US national security elites over-estimate the degree of casualty-aversion and the degree of isolationism in post-Cold War US public.[4]

This paper is a first cut at the first question but with a focus on one element of public opinion – nationalism. What is the structure of nationalist attitudes in the Chinese public? Do these attitudes vary? The second question is harder to answer without detailed interviewing inside, and data from, the foreign policy process. US studies of the impact of public opinion on foreign policy reveal very complex relationships. Some research suggests, for example, that there

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[2] Joseph Fewsmith and Stanley Rosen, "The Domestic Context of Chinese Foreign Policy: Does 'Public Opinion' Matter?", in David M. Lampton, ed., The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000 (Stanford University Press, 2001) pp.151-187

[3] Jiang Zemin, "Speech at the Meeting Celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China" (July 1, 2001) http://www.china-un.ch/eng/14905.html. For an explanation of why the requirements of China's integration into global politics and economics has created space for attentive public, expert and sub-elite opinion see Joseph Fewsmith and Stanley Rosen, "The Domestic Context of Chinese Foreign Policy: Does 'Public Opinion' Matter?", in David M. Lampton, ed., The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000 (Stanford University Press, 2001), pp.151-187.

[4] On elite misperceptions of casuality aversion see Charles K.Hyed, "Casuality Aversion: Implications for Policy-makers and Senior Military Officers" Aerospace Power Journal (Summer 2000) pp.17-27 http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/apj00/sum00/hyde.pdf On misperceptions of public isolationism see Steven Kull and I.M Destler, Misreading the Public: The Myths of a New Isolationism (Brookings Institute, 1999) (online at: http://brookings.nap.edu/books/0815717652/html/index.html.)

is a spiral relationship between opinion polls, media coverage of an issue, elite responses to this coverage, and then government policy.[5] New research on the impact of US infotainment suggests that instant and graphic media coverage of relatively low stakes foreign policy crises mobilizes public opinion which in turn limits the political space for decision-makers to back down in crises. This constrains decision-makers from getting into such crises in the first place through risk-acceptant, escalatory policies.[6] Some research suggests that incumbents, in particular, will anticipate public reactions to foreign policy successes and failures and thus adjust their policy choices accordingly while in office. Massive public relations campaigns behind new foreign policies – as the Reagan administration engaged in to shift opinion in favor of the Contra war against Nicaragua -- also suggests that politicians believe it is important to change opinion, thus implying they believe it is a potential constraint on their options.[7] There is some evidence that foreign policy decision-makers themselves believe that they are influenced by public opinion, though it is unclear whether they themselves tend to conflate congressional opinion, media opinion, special interest opinion with voter or public opinion.[8] Other studies show that the degree to which opinion influences decision-makers depends on the decision-maker's *a priori* normative believe in the legitimacy and desirability of public opinion as an input in decisions.[9]

Anecdotally it seems that in the Chinese case there are channels through which public opinion is reflected and refracted. These include inner party communications networks; classified polling; an increasingly commercialized punditry (TV talking heads, sensationalist publications and books etc). So this question is crucial. Future work on Chinese public opinion and foreign policy would probably benefit by a careful translation of the hypothesized causal mechanisms from the US and Western European literature into a marketized Leninist system. Needless to say I can not do this here.[10]

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[5] Justin Lewis, Constructing Public Opinion: How Political Elites Do What They Like and Why We seem to Go Along With It (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

[6] See Matthew A. Baum, Soap Opera Wars: The Mass Media, Public Opinion, and the Decision to Use Force Abroad (PhD Dissertation, US San Diego, 2000).

[7] On these arguments see Ole R. Holsti, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almost-Lippman Consensus" International Studies Quarterly 36 (1992) pp.439-466

[8] On the self-reported impact of public opinion on decision-elite's choices see Richard Sobel, The Impact of Public Opinion on US Foreign Policy Since Vietnam: Constraining the Colussus (Oxford University Press, 2001).

[9] See Douglas Foyle "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Elite Beliefs as a Mediating Variable" International Studies Quarterly 41 (1997) pp.141-169

[10] For one of the few efforts to understand how China's leaders might be constrained by popular opinion on foreign policy issues see Fewsmith and Rosen, pp.172-175

The Conventional Wisdom about Nationalism in Chinese Public Opinion

There is a general impression in the U.S. and other countries' policy and punditry worlds that whatever Chinese public opinion is, it is increasingly nationalistic (and anti-American). A number of analyses argued, for instance, after embassy bombing in May 1999 and the EP-3 incident in April 2001 that the PRC leadership could not afford to take a soft-line on the US because public opinion might turn against the CCP.[11] Most recently, a China specialist influential in Republican Party circles in the US has argued that "The generation of young Chinese who began to come of age after 1989 is notably more xenophobic, antidemocratic, and confrontational than its immediate predecessors."[12] This assessment of 'rising Chinese nationalism' is almost axiomatic in commentary on Chinese public opinion. What worries analysts and policy-makers in the US and in many other countries in the Asia-Pacific is that rising Chinese nationalism, particularly among younger generations, will persist whether or not China democratizes. The result, they fear, will be a nationalistic, militarized and dissatisfied China akin perhaps to Wilhelmine Germany or fascist Japan.

However, the conclusions about rising Chinese nationalism come mostly from anecdotal evidence from foreign media reporting, relatively unsystematic reliance on high profile, popular publications in China, or individual interactions between foreign scholars and officials and Chinese scholars and offices.

To use one example, the sources that the US media rely upon to make these inferences about public opinion, however, are severely biased (in a sampling sense). An analysis of US newspaper articles from October 2000 to July 2001 that mentioned Chinese nationalism shows that in the 15 papers that had such articles, almost 30% of the citations were to interviews with

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[11] CNN, 05/10/99; The National Interest (Winter 2000/2001); CNN 04/03/01; Newsweek 04/16/01; Al Hunt on CNN 04/21/01; David Shambaugh, Congressional Testimony: East Asian and Pacific Affairs Sub-committee, Senate, 05/01/01; Newsweek 05/07/01, to list a few sources. In fact, a search of Congressional sources, transcripts, Washington-based newsmagazines and other pundit outlets (National Interest, National Review, New Republic, US News and World Report, Washington Quarterly, Foreign affairs, Newsweek, Post magazine, The Weekly Standard, Insight on the News, CNN) from 1996-2002 found 23 references to public opinion in China. Of these, 15 references suggest that public opinion is mostly increasingly nationalist and that the Chinese leadership cannot ignore this content. Six references suggest the reverse – that the leadership rather than being constrained by public opinion either ignores it or is whipping up nationalism and anti-americanism. Both groups of analysis, though, tend to agree about the content of this opinion. My thanks to Manjari Chatterjee Miller for her excellent research assistance on this question.
[12] Arthur Waldron, "The Chinese Sickness" Commentary (July-August 2003) p.41. See also the brief review of scholarship on rising Chinese nationalism in Erica Strecker Downs and Phillip C. Saunders "Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands" International Security Vol. 23, No. 3 (Winter 1998/99), pp. 115-116. Downs' and Saunders's article is one of the few to emphasize caution in prognostications about rising Chinese nationalism on the basis of their analysis of the Chinese government's reluctance to mobilize nationalist sentiment over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands issue.

non-randomly selected Chinese students, while another 22% were to young Chinese professionals. Only 12% were to US (non-PRC) China specialists (see Fig 1).[13]

Books such as the nationalist screed The China That Can Say No are often held up as evidence of a rising tide of anti-Americanism. Yet another best seller in this time frame was Studying in America (*Liuxue Meiguo*)(1997) written by Qian Ning, the son of senior foreign policy figure Qian Qichen. According to both American and Chinese readers, this book was considered a balanced and fair treatment of images of the US that were often contrasted positively with images of China.[14] Where the evidence seems strong that nationalism is at least meant to be one of the ideological bases of CCP legitimacy[15] the research has generally not tried to control for socio-economic status or ideological views to see how nationalist sentiment may vary or cause variation in other sets of attitudes.

Finally, while there is no reason to doubt that Western scholars and officials are being told by their Chinese interlocutors about rising Chinese nationalism, one has to treat this information with some caution. Elites can often mis-estimate popular opinion in their own country. Moreover the total number of different scholars with whom Western specialists on Chinese politics and foreign policy interact is exceedingly small and may not be unrepresentative of popular attitudes.

In short, all three sources of information need to be treated cautiously, just as we would urge caution for Chinese colleagues who drew inferences about US opinion from non-random interviews with US college students, a small selection of elite scholars, or a couple of best selling books (say The China Threat by Bill Gertz).

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[13] My thanks to Michael Griesdorf for collecting these articles articles.
[14] See Fewsmith and Rosen note 40 pp.434-435 for an analysis of the impact of China Can Say No on readers views.
[15] See, for instance the insightful analysis of popular cultural commentary Geremie R. Barme "To Screw Foreigners is Patriotic: China's Avant-garde Nationalists"The China Journal , No. 34, (July 1995) pp.209-234;
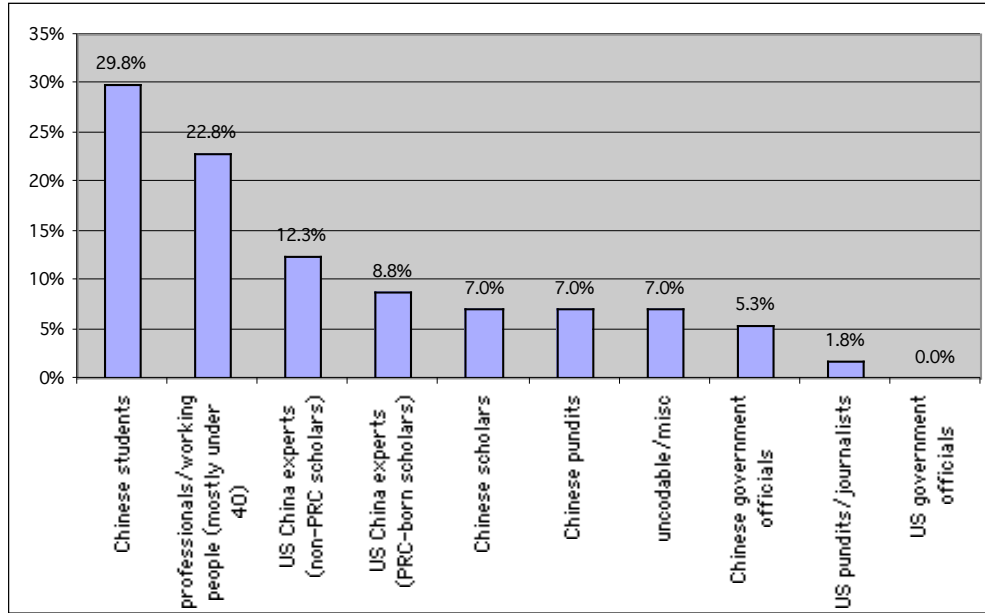
Fig. 1: Sources on 'rising Chinese nationalism' in US newspapers, October 2000-July 2001[16]

In recent years a fourth source of information about public opinion and attitudes towards IR and the US has become available, namely quantitative polling data. These have provided data of varying representativeness and reliability. Perhaps the most well-known of these is the China Youth Daily polls from the mid 1990s that claimed the US was the most disliked country among Chinese citizens (over 90% of the respondents were under 35 years old)[17]. This poll is sometimes invoked as evidence of growing nationalism among Chinese youth, even though this particular survey did not meet any social scientific sampling criteria[18] There have been a number of other surveys of attitudes towards the US, though none have focused on nationalist sentiments per se.[19]

[16] Using a keyword search of Lexis-Nexis for the phrase 'Chinese nationalism', the search came up with a list of 57 identified, quoted sources in fifteen different newspapers: Baltimore Sun, Houston Chronicle, Washington Post, Boston Herald, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Boston Globe, USA Today, Chicago Sun-Times, St Petersburg Times, Atlanta Constitution, Star Tribune, San Diego Union-Tribune, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and the Seattle Times.

[17] See Zhongguo qingnian bao July 14, 1995

[18] In fact the survey was a readers' voluntary response survey, not a random sample of Chinese youth. Interestingly enough the authors of China that Can Say No, and their more recent, China's Road Under the Shadow of Globalization, designed the 1995 survey. See Fang Ning, Wang Xiaodong and Song Qiang, Quanqiuhua yinying xia de Zhongguo zhi lu (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Science Press, 1999) pp.92-93. For an extensive analysis of the methodology used in this poll, based on interviews in Beijing, see Fewsmith and Rosen, "The Domestic Context", footnote 30 (p.443-444)

[19] See, for instance, Jianwei Wang, Limited Adversaries: Post-Cold War Sino-US Mutual Images (Oxford University Press, 1999); Chen Jie, "Urban Chinese Perceptions of Threats from the United States and Japan" Public Opinion Quarterly 65: (2001) pp.254-266; Yu Gouming, "Zhongguo ren yanzhong de Riben he Riben ren" [The Japan and Japanese people viewed by Chinese people" Guoji xinwen jie [International

The Beijing Area Study Survey

The analysis I present below is based on the Beijing Area Study (BAS) survey of Beijing citizens. The BAS has been conducted annually since 1995 by the Research Center on Contemporary China (RCCC) at Peking University, perhaps the most authoritative and sophisticated academic social science survey institutes in China today.[20] My analysis draws from a unique subset of the 2000, 2001 and 2002 BAS data on attitudes towards international relations, including specific questions that tap into the degree of nationalism among respondents. Sampling was done according to probability proportional to size, a form of stratified random sampling, to ensure as representative a sample of the Beijing population as possible. The polling involved lengthy face-to-face interviews with respondents conducted by trained graduate students associated with the RCCC. The interviews were done in December or January at the end of each year. Some of the questions were modeled off those used in the 1994 and 1998 Chicago Council of Foreign Relations surveys. Some questions were experimental, designed to test measures of in-group identification and the degree of 'othering' of national out-groups. Some were designed to tap into attitudes related to China's growing participation in international institutional life. The questions on foreign affairs were only a small part of a large list of annual questions on a range of socio-economic indicators. Overall, the BAS is modeled off the University of Michigan's Detroit Area Study.[21] These are, as far as I am aware, among the first systematic, social scientific, non-governmental, *time-series* data on the contemporary Chinese public's attitudes towards a wide range of international issues.

There are, of course, many problems with public opinion polling, let alone polling in the PRC: the susceptibility of responses to word choice and order, to respondent deception, to un-related exogenous conditions in the interview situation, and to questions that have low construct validity; the meaning of 'don't knows'; the shoe-horning of peoples' complex and often contradictory attitudes into categories of analysis determined by an outside scholar, among others. But in addition to all its standard advantages (relative transparency, reproducability, capturing the attitudes of representative samples, etc.) polling is also a way to provide a voice to individuals

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news media] No. 6 (1997) pp.58-65; Yu Sunda et al, "Zhong Mei guanxi: lai zi minzhong de kanfa" [Sino-US relations: views from the masses] Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi [World economics and politics] No.6 (2001) pp.33-38

[20] In 2000 the sample size was 757, while the 2001 sample size was 615. In 2002 the sample size was 662. On the sampling procedures see Hao Hongsheng, "The Sampling Design and Implementation for the 1995 Beijing Area Study" (The Research Center for Contemporary China, Peking University, March 7, 1996).

[21] See the BAS Data Report. (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, forthcoming)

when they may have few opportunities to express opinions.[22] These data are an additional method for tapping into Chinese preferences and attitudes on foreign policy that can be analyzed along side qualitative and more impressionistic data. Indeed, findings that are similar across sources and methods should be considered especially robust. Findings that are inconsistent should compel us to rethink conventional wisdom whether it is derived from qualitative or quantitative sources.

That said, the analysis that follows should not be considered a definitive study of urban Beijing opinion, let alone urban Chinese opinion. This study is about the 'correlates', not the causes or the deep structure, though I will explore these latter two questions at the end. The problem with *explaining* opinion is two-fold. First, I am not developing or testing a theory of opinions, so I have no particular reason to posit some variables as critical independent variables. I will hazard guesses about direction of influence between control variables and nationalist attitudes, but these should be taken as heuristic at best. Second, except for some basic socio-economic data I do not have access to other questions on the BAS that one might use to model causes of these nationalist sentiments, particularly questions that related to domestic issues. Thus I have to use a limited number of questions as proxies for deeper ideational constructs. This is tricky. So I will only explore the correlates rather than hypothesize about general causes nationalist attitudes.

BAS Questions Used to Measure Nationalism

The paper examines four main questions that pertain to nationalist attitudes as dependent variables. As I will explain in more detail, as a first cut at explaining these attitudes the paper controls for the effect on them of a number of socio-economic and demographic variables and ideational or ideological variables.

The first item on the survey that taps into nationalist attitudes relates to identity and 'othering'. How a social group describes its own traits and those of other groups appears to be a critical indicator of how it will behave towards the other. The differences in these characterizations matter and they are not necessarily epiphenoma of prior conflicts of material interest. Based on some very robust empirical findings social identity theory (SIT) argues, for example, that the construction of ingroup identity generally leads to the construction of different and often de-valued notions of outgroup identity, in order to consolidate the legitimacy of the group's internal order. This process is commonly if awkwardly referred to as 'othering'. The degree of de-valuation of the outgroup will vary depending on the requirements for ingroup identity construction. Less differentiation and thus less devaluation is hypothesized to be

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[22] See Lewis, Constructing Public Opinion.

associated with less competitiveness directed at the outgroup.[23] The boundaries between ingroup and outgroup are messier, allowing people to hold marginal (liminal) identities, creating more situations where individuals may sometimes share an identity with some members of the erstwhile outgroup. Conversely, more differentiation, *ceteris paribus*, can lead to more devaluation and this is associated with more competitive views of an even more threatening outgroup.[24] One can hypothesize, therefore, that more exclusive or xenophobic notions of nationalist are associated with a higher degree of devaluation of the outgroup, that is, a wider perceived difference between one's own traits and those of the outgroup.

The BAS surveys from 2000-2002 asked questions about self and other using what are called Osgood semantic differential scales.[25] These are common in social psychology and are used to determine the traits that different identities are associated with, and the degree to which differences within and across identity groups are salient. Basically respondents are asked to assess where on a 5,7, or 9 point scale anchored by polar opposite adjectives they would classify a subject (e.g. peaceful----warlike; moral----immoral). Means and spread/dispersion of responses are used to determine differences between groups and degree of ingroup identification.[26]

For this study I constructed an 'othering' scale for the 2000, 2001, and 2002 data using the peaceful-warlike and moral-immoral scales (1-7). Respondents were asked to determine where on these scales they would consider "the Chinese" to be and where they would situate "Americans" (see Fig. 8 and 9). To capture the degree of difference that any given respondent

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[23] See Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergoup Conflict" in Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, editors, <u>Intergroup Relations : Essential Readings</u>, (Psychology Press, 2001). See also Peter Gries' paper for this conference on the scope conditions under which this differentiation leads to competition and then to conflict.

[24] On SIT see Henri Tajfel, <u>Social Identity and Intergroup Relations</u> (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982); Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg eds., <u>Social Identity Theory</u> (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990); John C. Turner, <u>Rediscovering the Social Group</u> (Oxford: Basil Blackwill Ltd, 1987). On its application to political science and international relations, see Jonathan Mercer (1995) "Anarchy and Identity" <u>International Organization</u> 49:2 (1995) pp.229-252; William Connolly, <u>Identity/Difference</u> (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Paul Kowert, "The Construction of National Identity" in Vendulka Kubalkova et al, eds., <u>International Relations in a Constructed World</u> (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998) pp.101-122.

[25] On the logic behind Osgood semantic differential scales see Charles E. Osgood, George Suci and Percy H. Tannenbaum, <u>The Measurement of Meaning</u> Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1957. In contrast with Likert scales (e.g. strongly opposed, somewhat opposed etc.) semantic differential procedures allow respondents to make more active judgements/assessments of a wider range of possible responses: since they are being asked to place self (and/or other) on a logically inclusive range of possibilities, respondents are more likely to tap into an internally generated concept of self than they are with Likert scales.

[26] For examples of the Osgood semantic differential scale in assessing identity see Peter J. Burke and Judy C. Tully, "The Measurement of Role Identity" <u>Social Forces</u> 55:4 (June 1977) pp.881-897; Peter J. Burke and Donald C. Reitzes, "The Link Between Identity and Role Performance" <u>Social Psychology Quarterly</u> 44 (1981) pp.83-92. In the Chinese foreign policy field, the first to understand the centrality of these kinds of bipolar value-judgments in determining images of the 'other' was Allen Whiting. See his discussion along these lines in <u>China Eyes Japan</u> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) p.18.

believed existed between Chinese and Americans in terms of their inherent traits and characteristics,[27] I constructed an 'othering' scale. This was calculated by averaging the multiple scales into one identity score and then subtracting the Chinese composite score from the American composite score. The lower this figure the narrower this difference and the more 'like us' the Americans are considered by Chinese respondents.

The second set of items used to tap into levels of nationalist where three questions about attitudes towards China as a country. Three questions were used. They move progressively from a more general pride or identification with the PRC to a more exclusivist, xenophobic, and unquestioning commitment to the Chinese state. These were only asked in the 2002 survey so there is at this point no time series data. Responses were coded using a 5 point likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). The questions were:

• "I would prefer to be a citizen of the Peoples Republic of China than of any other country in the world";

• "Generally speaking China is a better country than most other countries"; and

• "People should support their country even if it is in the wrong".

The following control variables were used to determine the degree to which these nationalist attitudes varied.

• <u>Income level</u> (middle class, non-middle class).[28] For the purposes of this analysis, I have used the in criteria developed by two Chinese analysts, Ming Ruifeng and Yang Yongyi. In their 1997 study, the middle class in 1995 was that socio-economic group with annual household earnings of 30,000 RMB ($3600 US at 1996 exchange rates) or more.[29] At the time of their study

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[27] Unfortunately, I have no data on the 'othering' of China in US public opinion. The interactive effects of this process -- mediated by the news media and punditry worlds on both sides -- is a critical topic that deserves more research.

[28] Unfortunately, whether inside or outside China there is little scholarly or official agreement on what constitutes 'the middle class'. In the US, income tends to be the dominant dimension for determining class or socio-economic status (SES). Even so, there is no consensus in the public policy world nor in the academic world where the income cut points are to divide the population into poor, middle, and rich or affluent classes. Great Britain has traditionally used occupational categories for definitions of SES. Some Western European states have used educational levels, or some composite index that combines education, occupational category, and income to determine SES for public policy purposes.[28] In Singapore, the quality of housing is sometimes used as a proxy for SES.[28] According to an unscientific email poll of over 20 university-based economists about an 'industry standard' in defining the middle class, the overwhelming answer was that there was none. My thanks to Michael Griesdorf for providing this information.

[29] Ming Ruifeng and Yang Yiyong "Yi ye chun feng: chengli ren de shouru chu tu xiang se" [An evening of spring breezes: urban population income] in Yang Yiyong ed., <u>Gongping yu Xiaoyi: Dangdai Zhongguo de Shouru Fenpei Wenti</u> (Equality and Efficiency: The Issue of Distribution of Income in Contemporary China (Beijing, Jinri Zhongguo Press, 1997) p.133. I thank Zhang Ming for pointing out this source. Interestingly, this is close to how the Agricultural Trade Office at the US Consulate in Shanghai defines the

this constituted 9% of urban families.[30] I divided the BAS sample into three groups using the income categories suggested by Ming and Yang. The middle class is constituted by respondents whose monthly household income is 3000 RMB or more. The potential middle class has household incomes from 800-2999 RMB, and the poor respondents have monthly household incomes of less than 800 RMB. Inflation has been was very low and possibly negative over the last few years, so it is reasonable to use the same SES thresholds for the 1998-2001 period.[31]

        • Foreign travel. In the 2001 and 2002 BAS the questionnaire asked whether respondents had traveled abroad. This variable can help test whether exposure to the outside world is associated with variations in nationalist attitudes.

        • Education levels: Education levels are tapped by a clustered 'level of achieved education' variable (do respondents have at least some primary, some secondary, or some university education).

        • Age cohort and political generation. In addition to using age in years, I developed two 'political generation' variables. One is codes for membership in the post-Mao age cohort. Those born in 1962 or after (15 years old in 1977) were coded as post-Mao generation. The assumption here is that those who became more politically and socially aware in the Dengist reform era may have less nationalistic views about international relations than those socialized in an era of greater autarchy and isolation. The other codes for membership in the post Tiananmen generation. Respondents who were 21 years old or younger in 1989 are coded as members of post-Tiananmen generation (thus 33 or younger in 2002). This is designed to test the general impression that the post-1989 generation has, in particular, been the target of a state effort to whip up nationalism in an effort to repair the damaged legitimacy of the CCP after 1989.

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middle class (household annual income of over 24,000 RMB). See http://www.atoshanghai.org/shanghai.html David S.G. Goodman developed a slightly higher threshold for defining the middle class based on what was needed to be "well-off" in the developed coastal areas in 1997 (above 5000-6000 RMB/month). See "The New Middle Class" in Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar eds., The Paradox of Post-Mao Reforms (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) p.243.

[30] More recently, two Chinese scholars at Lund University's Center for East Asian and Southeast Asian Studies have reports that among some journalists and scholars in China the middle class is constituted by household income that comes close to levels one might use in developed economies (100,000-400,000 renminbi or about $12,100-48,400 in current US dollars). They also note, however, that occupation, education and consumption patterns can be used as criteria for middle class membership as well. See Li Jian and Niu Xiaohan. "The New Middle Class in Beijing: A Case Study" (Unpublished paper, Lund University, Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies, 2001). Yet another analyst defines the middle class as the "professional and entrepreneurial stratum in cities earning between $2,500 and $25,000 per year", about 20% of the urban population. See Thomas Lum, "The Marginalization of Political Activism in China" (paper prepared for the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, August 30-September 2, 2001) p.4.

[31] The CIA estimates China's inflation for 1999 was –1.3%. See the Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook, at http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/fields/inflation_rate_(consumer_prices).html.

• Gender: This variable is a standard demographic variable in polling on foreign relations. In the US, at least, there is evidence that women tend to adopt somewhat more 'liberal' and 'internationalist' attitudes towards international relations.[32]

• Support for increase in military expenditures. Respondents were asked whether they supported an increase in Chinese military spending, supported no change, or opposed an increase. I assumed that opposition to increases would be an indicator of a somewhat more 'liberal' attitude towards international relations, and thus lower levels of nativist or xenophobic nationalism

• Elimination of tariffs: After a brief description of the pros and cons of tariffs respondents were asked whether they supported the elimination of tariffs or their retention. Support for the elimination of tariffs would be more consistent with a 'liberal' internationalist foreign policy ideology, hence would predict to a less nativist nationalism.

Data Analysis: Identity Difference ('othering')

The analysis first starts with the correlations with 'othering'. Figure 2 shows the mean perception on the semantic differential scale for BAS respondents. It is clear that they perceived Chinese to be much more peaceful and moral by nature than Americans and Japanese. This suggests that there is considerable ingroup-outgroup differentiation made by Chinese respondents. However, it is important to note that when one calculates the identity difference, the degree of 'othering' between Chinese and Americans (Fig 3) has not changed over the past three years. In other words, there does not seem to be a 'worsening' degree of othering. In terms of this particular expression of nationalism – a stereotyping of self and other – there does not appear to be much change. While there has been considerable volatility in Sino-US relations from 2000 on, reflected in ups and downs in levels of amity expressed by Chinese respondents towards the United States, the stability in the degree of 'othering' is worth noting..[33]

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[32] This does not hold for all regions of the world, of course. One study of middle eastern women found no association between gender and support for peaceful resolution of conflicts. Rather liberal attitudes towards women's rights, whether held by men or women, was a good predictor. See Mark Tessler et al, "Further Tests of the Women and Peace Hypothesis: Evidence from Cross-National Survey Research in the Middle East" International Studies Quarterly 43 (1999) pp.519-531

[33] The BAS also used a 100 degree feeling thermometer to measure the level of amity of respondents towards the US and other states. The mean temperature in 1998 was around 62 degrees; in 1999 it fell to around 53 degrees; increased to 57 degrees in 2000; dropped dramatically in 2001 to 47 degrees, and rose again in 2002 to around 52 degrees. This volatility tracks with major events in the overall relationship. The large drops in 1999 and 2001 came after the Belgrade embassy bombing and the EP3 incident respectively.
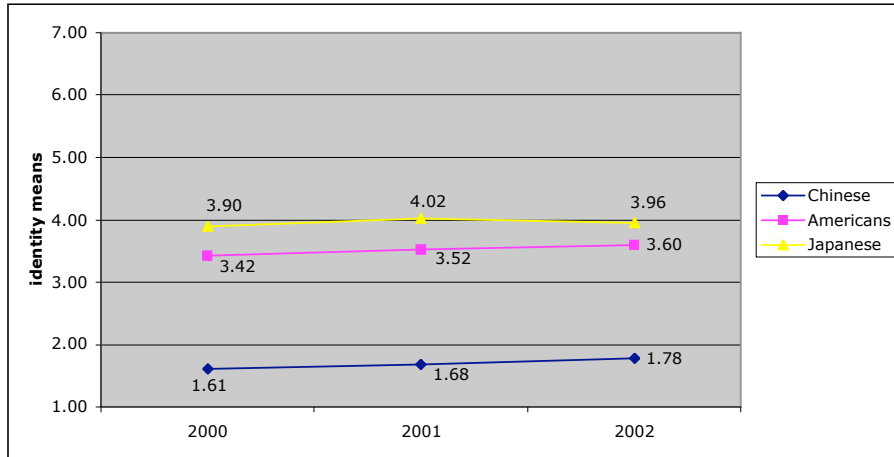
Fig. 2: Perceptions of mean levels of peacefulness and morality for Chinese, Americans and Japanese: Source: Beijing Area Study data.
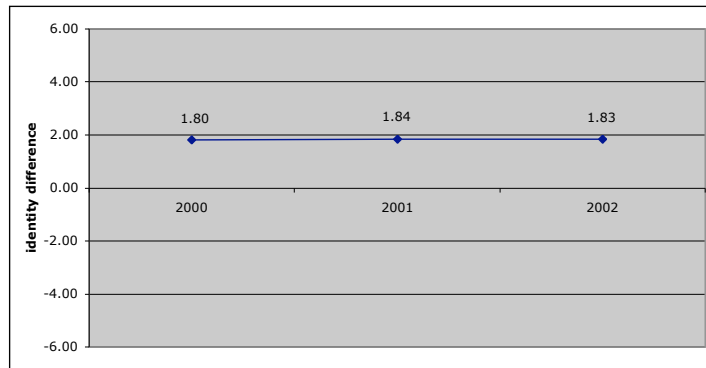

Fig 3: Perceptions of identity difference between Chinese and Americans (American identity mean minus Chinese identity mean): Source: Beijing Area Study data.

Figure 4 shows the relationship between othering and income. As we might expect, the middle class respondents perceived a lower level of difference between Chinese and Americans. The Analysis of Variance statistic (ANOVA) shows that these difference in means were statistically significant in 2000 and 2002.

Figure 5 examines the relationship between othering and educational levels. It is clear that those respondents with at least some university education perceive lower degree of difference with regard to the peacefulness and morality traits than those with less education. These differences are also statistically significant.

Figure 6 clearly shows that those who have traveled abroad perceive much lower degrees identity of difference between Chinese and Americans. It is unclear, of course, what the causal direction might be here. Are those who travel abroad more likely to have a priori a lower

perception of difference (due perhaps to wealth or education qualifications that enable travel I the first place), or does travel abroad help create a less 'black and white' perception of the 'other'? Most likely the relationship is endogenous, though the data do not allow sorting through this relationship since the respondents change from year to year. A panel study, of course, might help settle the question.
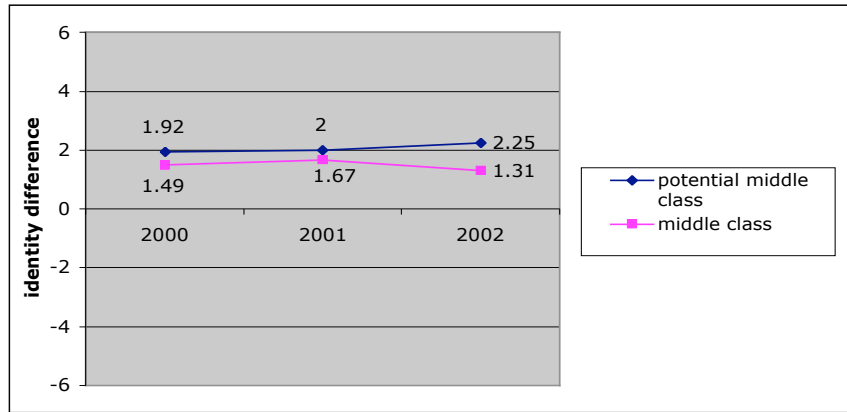

Fig. 4: Income category and 'othering'
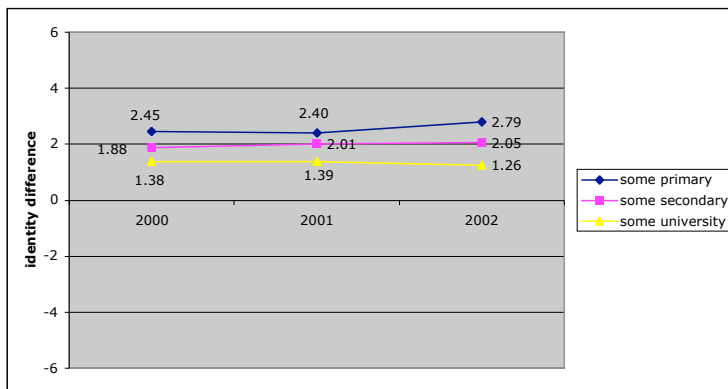
Fig. 5: Education and 'othering'
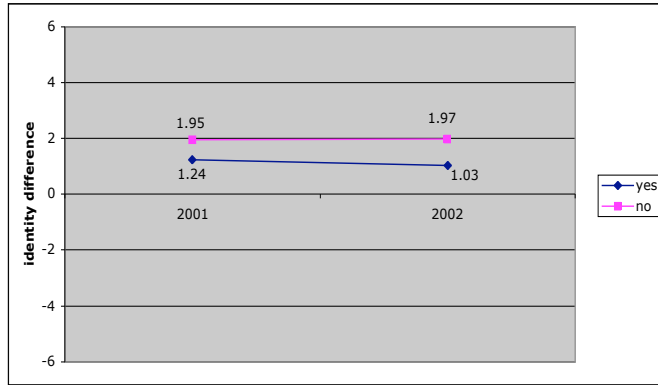
Fig. 6: Foreign travel and othering

Figure 7 indicates that the post-Mao generation consistently perceived a lower degree of difference between Chinese and Americans, though this difference was only statistically significant in 2000 and 2001. If one examines the post-Tiananmen generation (Fig 8), there is no statistical difference in the degree of othering compared to the pre Tiananmen generation.[34] These two findings about political generation and othering are analytically significant because they run counter to the strong assumption in US policy and punditry discourse that younger Chinese are more nationalistic than older Chinese.
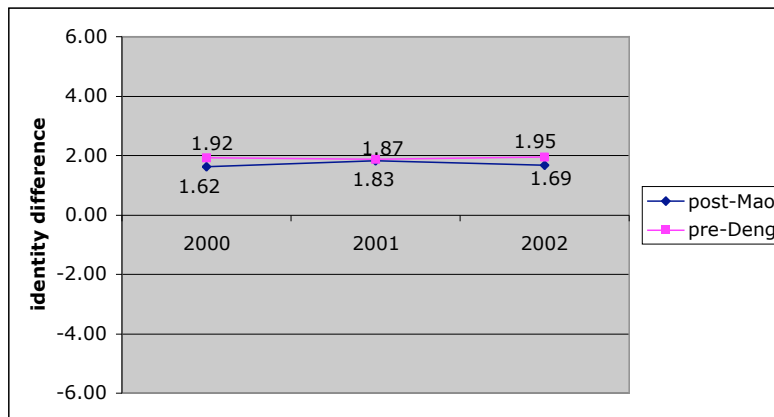
Figure 7: Political generation and 'othering': The post-Mao generation

As for gender, Figure 9 shows that the differences between males and females is statistically significant. Females perceive greater levels of identity difference between Chinese and Americans than males do.

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[34] In 2000 and 2002 the ANOVA approaches significance at the p=0.1 level, but the direction of the difference suggests the post-Tiananmen generation holds lower perceptions of difference.
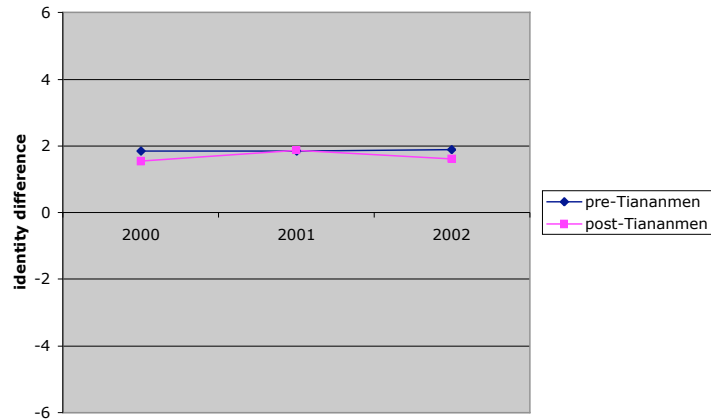
Fig. 8: Political generation and othering: The Post-Tiananmen generation
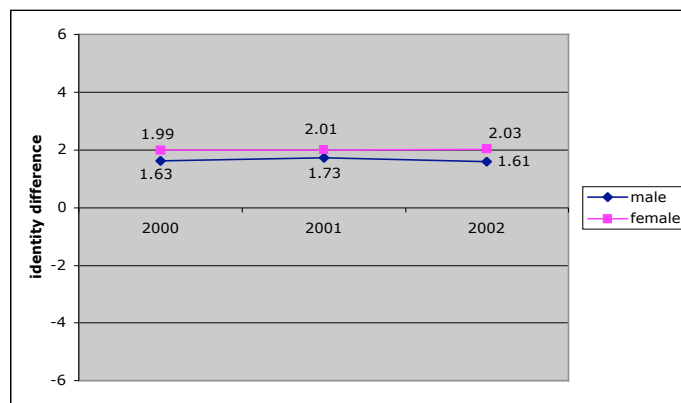

Fig. 9: Gender and othering

As for the ideological control variables, over time othering is positively correlated with support for increasing China's military spending (Fig 10). That is, those who support increasing military spending demonstrate a significantly higher degree of othering than those who oppose and increase. Those who support a reduction of military spending are also those who perceive the lowest identity difference between Chinese and Americans. Again, the causal direction is unclear: Do attitudes towards Americans determine positions on military spending or the other way around? Or are they both explained by a hierarchical structure of foreign policy attitudes whereby even more deeply held beliefs (e.g. structures that vary along idealpolitik-realpolitik, liberal-conservative, or nationalist-internationalist dimensions, for example) explain both sets of

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attitudes. Unfortunately, without data on domestic political attitudes it is a little tricky to build a multi-variable explanatory model of attitudes towards othering and military spending.
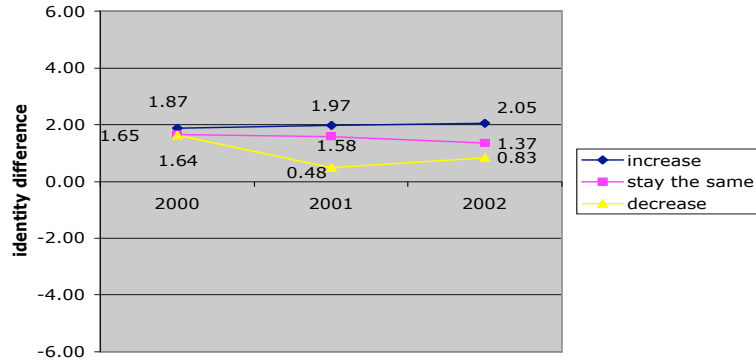
Fig.10: Othering and attitudes toward military spending

As for othering and attitudes towards free trade, interestingly, there appears to be no significant difference. Those who support free trade (the elimination of tariffs) perceive about the same degree of difference between Chinese and Americans as those who oppose free trade. This is perhaps understandable as even in the US, opponents of free trade are not necessarily politically more conservative (e.g. witness the anti-globalization movement) or less cosmpolitan and informed about world affairs. That is, one could be reluctant to 'other' other nations and peoples while still, nonetheless, be skeptical of free trade.
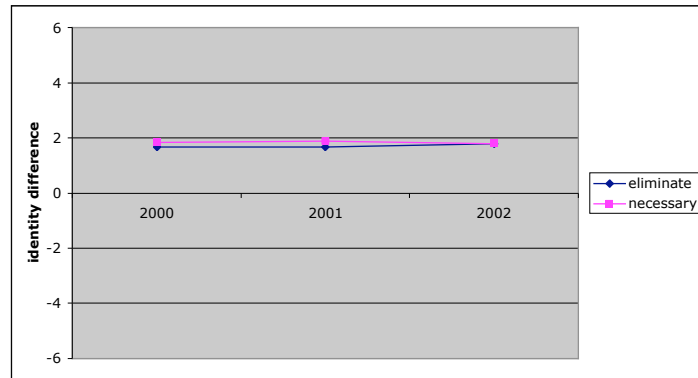

Fig. 11: Othering and support for free trade.

In sum, to the extent that the identity difference or 'othering' scale captures one element of nationalist attitudes – the degree to which self and other are stereotyped whereby self is attributed much more positive traits than other – there appears to be considerable variation across respondents. This variation correlates with wealth, education and travel in particular, and with

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attitudes towards military spending. The wealthier, better educated, more traveled, and more skeptical of increase military spending, the lower the perceived differences in basic identity traits between Chinese and Americans. Clearly there is considerable variation among the public in this element of nationalist attitudes.

**Data Analysis: nativist or xenophobic nationalism:**

As noted above, the BAS 2002 asked three questions designed to tap variously into a basic pride in Beijing a citizen of China and a narrower xenophobic, nativist or uncritical nationalism. As with the analysis of 'othering', the responses to the three likert-scale questions on nationalism indicates a much more complex picture about the variation in levels and types of nationalism than the conventional wisdom suggests. As the change in the frequency distributions in Figures 12-14 show, more respondents demonstrate pride-based nationalism than nativist and conformist nationalism.

prefer to be a citizen of China
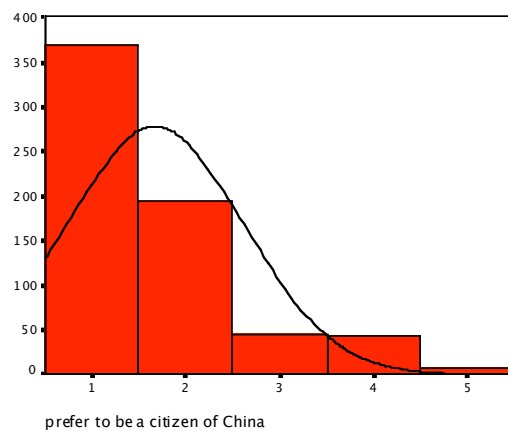
Fig. 12. "I would prefer to be a citizen of the PRC than of any other country in the world.
**1= strongly agree; 2=somewhat agree; 3=neutral; 4=somewhat disagree; 5=strongly disagree**

China is a better country than most
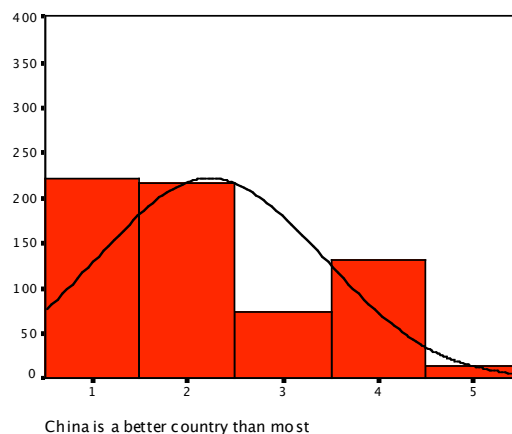
Fig. 13: "Generally speaking China is a better country than most other countries":
1= strongly agree; 2=somewhat agree; 3=neutral; 4=somewhat disagree; 5= strongly disagree

people should support their country even if it is wrong
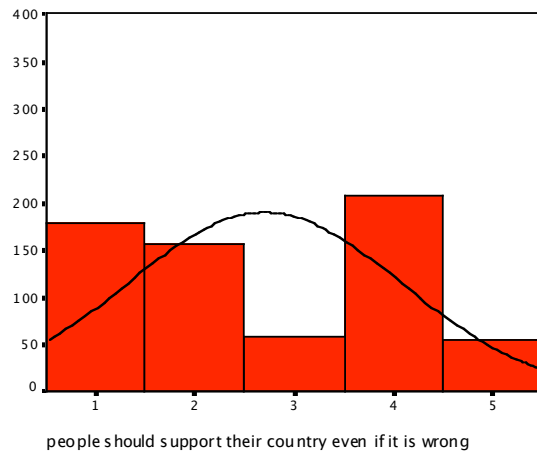
Fig. 14: "People should support their country even if the country is in the wrong":
1= strongly agree; 2=somewhat agree; 3=neutral; 4=somewhat disagree; 5= strongly disagree

In the analysis below, I focus on the correlates for this last question. Since it captures a more nativist and xenophobic form of nationalism – the kind that much of the conventional wisdom believes is rampant in China today – it is important to understand how it varies when controlling for socio-economic and ideological variables.

Figure 15 shows the relationship between income category and respondents' answer to the question about unconditional support for the PRC. It is clear that the middle class respondents are not as supportive of unconditional support as the non-middle class. These differences are statistically significant (using both a *chi* square measure of association and multinomial logistic regression procedures). This suggests that middle class respondents maintain a more skeptical attitude towards nativist or exclusionary nationalist sentiments.
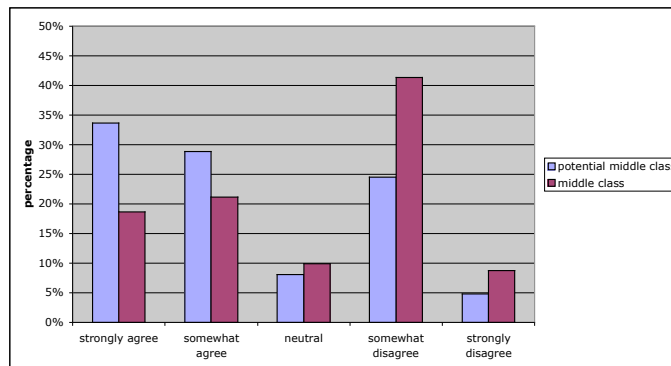
**Fig. 15: Income category and nationalism**

Figure 16 shows that those respondents with at least some university education express less nativist nationalist sentiments that those with lower levels of education, especially compared

to those with at least some primary education. As is clear, those with at least some university are far more likely to somewhat disagree and less likely to strongly agree with the state about support for country than those with primary or less education. These differences are also statistically significant. This result is consistent with the findings about 'othering'.
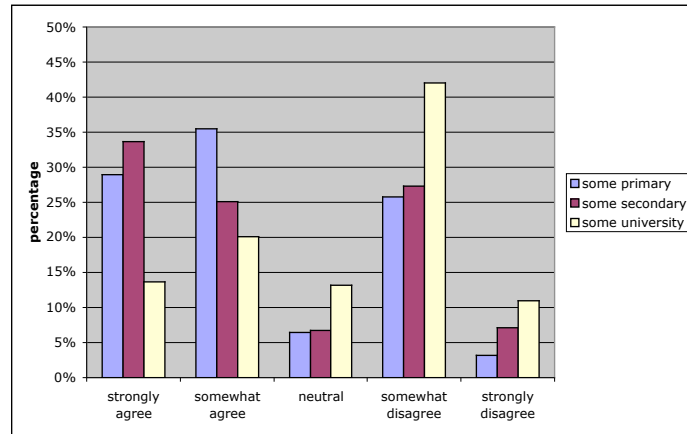

Fig. 16: Education levels and nationalism

As for foreign travel, again, like the findings about othering, those with foreign travel are significantly more likely to disagree with the nativist nationalist responses (Fig 17). Interestingly, this difference disappears in responses to the question about pride in being a PRC citizen. Perhaps those who travel abroad come back with a stronger or reinforced sense of attachment to their citizenship. Whatever the reason, respondents who travel abroad clearly differentiate between the sentiments involved with being a citizen and the sentiments of narrow, unquestioning attitude towards one's country.
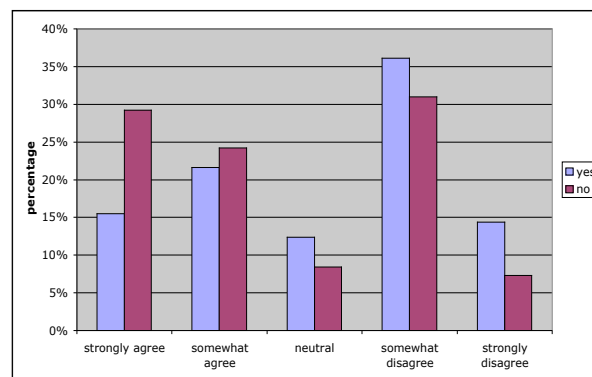

Fig. 17: Foreign travel and nationalism

The other socio-economic control variables appear not to be related to nationalism. Gender does not predict to one's answer to the question about support for one's country. The association is not statistically significant (see Fig. 18). Nor does political generation predict to the degree of nationalist sentiments. The post-Tiananmen generation respondents show no evidence of being more uncritically nationalistic than prior generations (Fig. 19). These last two findings suggest that the conventional wisdom about younger generations in China being inherently more nationalistic than older ones are highly problematic.
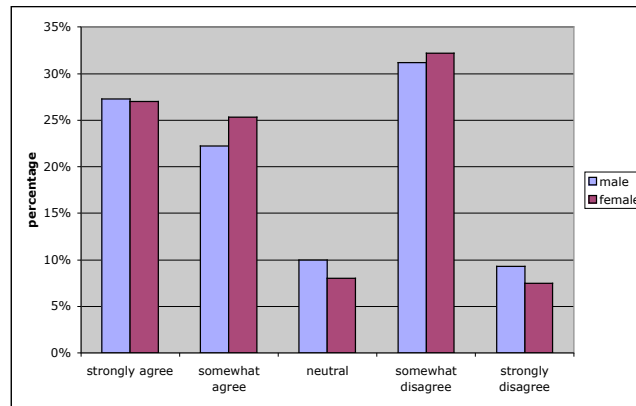
Fig. 18: Gender and nationalism
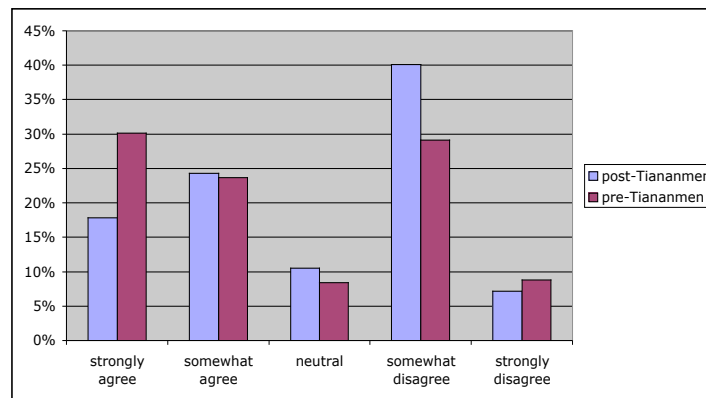
**Fig. 19: Political generation and nationalism**

As for nationalism and the two ideological control variables – position on increasing China's military spending and position on free trade – the findings are mixed. Figure 20 shows that while most respondents prefer to increase military spending, a greater proportion of those who want to reduce spending come from those who are skeptical of nativist nationalism. If one
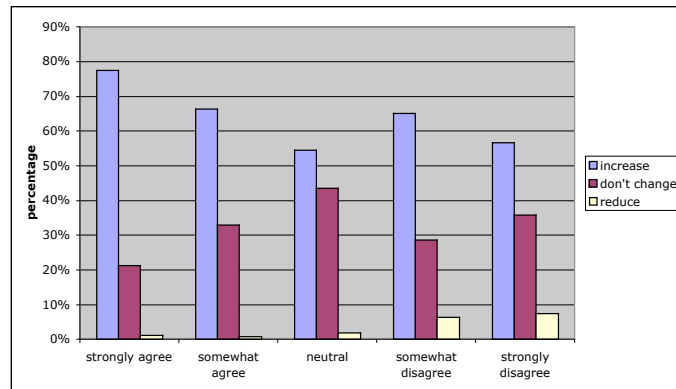
Fig. 20: Nationalism and support for change in military spending.

considers those who do not support any change in military spending, the differences in nationalist sentiments with those who want to increase military spending are quite sharp. Overall, those who oppose any increase ('do not change' plus 'reduce') are less nationalistic than those who support an increase (Fig. 21). The associations in the two graphs are statistically significant. This relationship stands to reason – nativist or uncritical nationalists tend to understand the world in black and white terms, and tend to be more militaristic in their attitudes than those who are less nationalistic.

However, there does not seem to be any ideological divide when it comes to support for free trade (Fig. 22). The majority of respondents support maintaining some tariffs to protect Chinese industries. But those who support free trade appear to be somewhat over-represented in the strongly nationalist and strongly skeptical camps alike. It would appear that strong nationalists and weak nationalist are likely to be equally supportive of free trade. Thus, for some reason, political or identity nationalism does not translate into economic nationalism. It is possible that economic interest, therefore, is not determined by nativist nationalist sentiments, nor do nativist nationalist sentiments appear to be determined by economic interest (at least using this measure of economic interests).
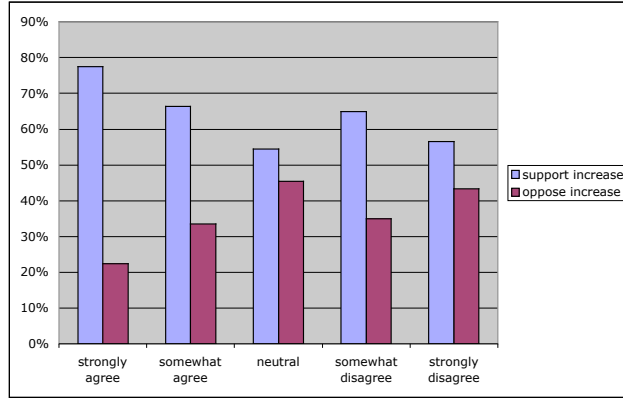
Fig. 21: Nationalism and opposition to or support for increasing military spending
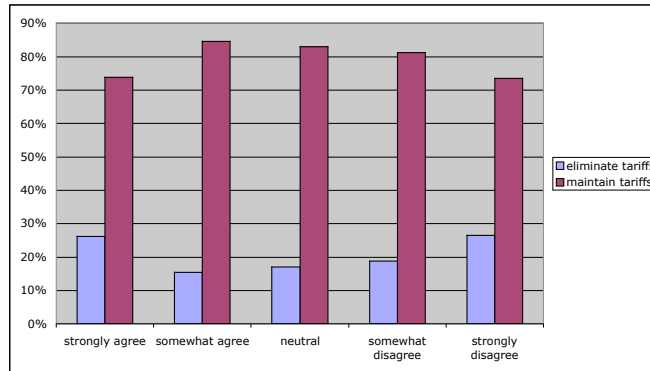
Fig. 22: Nationalism and support for free trade

Finally, it is worth noting that there is a strong, statistically significant linear relationship between levels of nationalism and perceived identity difference between Chinese and Americans. As one would expect (according to social identity theory) those who are most strongly supportive of a uncritical nationalism also perceive the greatest degree of difference between Chinese and Americans in terms of basic identity traits (see Figure 23). This confirms that the identity difference index (or 'othering' index) that I constructed is a valid, indirect, indicator of nationalist sentiment.
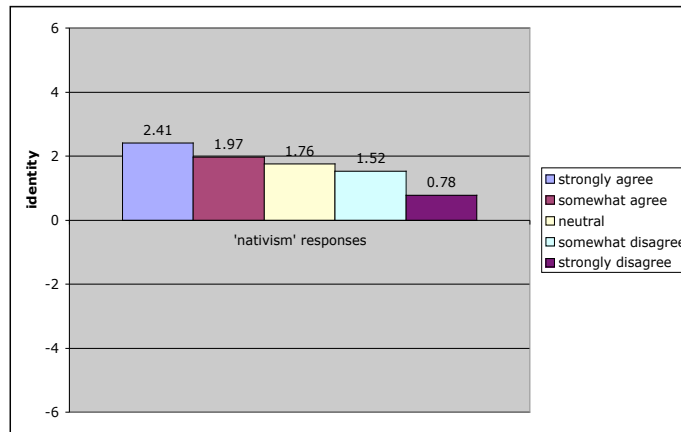
Figure 23: Nationalism and perceptions of identity difference

By way of summary, the correlations with the question tapping into nationalism examined here appear to be largely similar to those with 'othering'. Wealth, education, foreign travel, and opposition to increases in military spending all seem to correlate or are associated with disagreement with a narrow nationalism. Gender and political generation do not predict to nationalist attitudes. This last finding is particularly importance, since it challenges the axiomatic claim among many US government analysts, policy pundits and even China specialists that the upcoming generation(s) in China are more nationalistic than their predecessors.

Conclusion

Before moving toward a conclusion about the implications of these findings, it is important to outline the caveats of these data and this preliminary study. First, Beijing is not necessarily representative of the rest of China. Until similar polling is conducted in other major cities, and across smaller regional cities and within the countryside, we will not know if these findings are reproduced elsewhere in China.

Second, there are a number of relevant omitted variables in these BAS data that could help clarify some of the findings. Attitudes towards domestic economic reform, the legitimacy of the state, whether one's economic wellbeing is connected to state bureaucracies or enterprises or the private economy are likely to matter in explaining nationalist sentiments in the populations. Without access to such data it is highly risky trying to build a multivariate explanatory model of nationalist attitudes. Moreover, since the BAS does not specifically sample high school and university students (it only samples members of households holding Beijing residency, thus the number of students in the sample is typically quite low), it is impossible to test the argument that students in particular are increasingly nationalistic.

Third, except for the othering data, the BAS has at this point only one year of data on nationalism. Obviously without times series data it is hard to determine to what degree and in which direction levels of nationalism are changing. One of the basic problems in the current discourse about 'rising Chinese nationalism' is that no one has developed a baseline against which to measure any changes, in any direction, in levels of nationalism. The 2002 data analyzed here do provide a baseline for observing or estimating future levels of nationalism, but there is no way to determine retrospectively whether the levels observed in 2002 are higher, lower or the same as those in the early 1990s or earlier. To do this would probably require sophisticated content analysis of texts across time. Choosing which texts to sample, however, would require a great deal of thought – what texts are most likely to embody nationalist messages internalized by mass publics or urban elites? Popular culture (novels, plays, songs, television shows, movies)? History textbooks? The media?[35]

Fourth, an uncritical nationalism does not necessary mean opposition to international cooperation. Uncritical support for one's country may lead to support for whatever policies Chinese leaders decide to pursue. For example, the uncritical nationalists do not appear to be more likely to oppose China's entrance into the WTO than those who strongly disagree with the proposition 'my country right or wrong'.[36]

Finally, it is unclear what influence popular opinion has on Chinese decision-makers, thus the whole question of the relevance of studying nationalist sentiments in the public still remains up in the air.[37]

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[35] For one example that uses novels to explore identity see Ted   Hopf, Social Origins of International Politics. Identities and the Construction of Foreign Policies at Home (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002)

[36] For example, 54% of those who strongly agree with the statement about supporting one's country even if it is in the wrong also strongly agreed that entry into the WTO will have a positive effect on China's economy. 44% of those who strongly disagreed with the nationalist statement also strongly agreed that entry into the WTO was positive.

[37] The 'so what' question is hard to answer at this stage Since the Chinese political system is not an electoral democracy without better information about the impact of popular opinion on decision making at the moment this is a hard question to answer. It should be noted, however, that over a large voting population, even small differences in the positions of two or more groups can translate into large numbers of votes. Depending on the form of the institutions that translate these votes into political power (parliamentary, presidential, first-past the post, proportional representation, etc.) these small differences can translated into large political effects. Obviously there is no way of knowing at this point whether the differences in attitudes towards the US across, say socio-economic groups, or levels of education, will have any political effect. But, to the extent that, as in the US, the urban educated and wealthy groups are likely to be more politically active than poorer and less educated groups, and to the extent that the current Chinese leadership realizes that the urban entrepreneur and white collar citizen is a social, economic and political force to be incorporated into 'the system', some of these differences may come to matter in internal policy debates. To those used to studying countries with large social, economic and political cleavages manifested in open political systems some of differences reported in this paper may appear to be like a glass 'half empty'. To those who study closed societies where the intent of the state socialization systems has been to

That said, the data suggest that scholars and policy makers need to pay more attention to a critical factor -- namely the potential influence of narrow or uncritical nationalists. These data suggest that this influence may be limited by two factors: the proportion of narrow nationalists in the population and the type of political change in China. In the BAS narrow nationalists (those who strongly agreed and agreed with the item about unquestioning support for one's country) constituted about 51% of the respondents. Around 40% disagreed with the uncritically nationalist statement. This suggests that there is a largish pool of people with somewhat more critical attitudes towards narrow nationalism. Moreover, the pool of narrow nationalists tends to be poorer, less well-educated and less well-traveled than those who are more critical or skeptical. To the extent that wealth and education (and to some degree youth) are likely to be better predictors of more proactive interest in public policy, gradual political reform in China may actually reduce the influence of uncritical nationalists. On the other hand, political collapse that encourages the rise of new elites who use nationalism, xenophobia and militarism to establish their legitimacy may have a fairly large pool of uncritical nationalists to mobilize. Thus, the *form* of political change in China will have a bearing on the levels of nationalism manifested in Chinese foreign policy. Those who predict that a more democratic China will inevitably be a more nationalistic one may be missing important socio-economic and ideological differences in nationalist attitudes within the Chinese population, differences that will matter depending on how democratization in China comes about.[38]

As I noted, this is a very preliminary look at a complex set of data. There are, therefore, a at least three research implications that scholars and policy analysts alike need to consider.

• how is public opinion articulated or reflected in the Chinese policy process? This will help establish a baseline or benchmark against which to judge whether changing levels or types of nationalism actually matter in Chinese foreign policy.

• how is public opinion constructed in China? This will help establish a baseline or benchmark against which to judge whether nationalism is increasing or decreasing. Research on

inculcate uniform attitudes towards major public policies – especially foreign policy – these emergent differences in the Chinese data could be likened to a glass 'half full'.

[38] For references to this and similar arguments about the danger of democratization in China see the summary of the Institute of International and Strategic Studies Annual Conference, Manila September 14-17, 2000 at: http://www.vuw.ac.nz/css/docs/reports/IISS.html; June Dreyer's testimony to the House Armed Services Committee, July 19, 2000 at http://www.house.gov/hasc/testimony/106thcongress/00-07-19dreyer.html; Barrett McCormick, "Introduction" in Edward Friedman and Barrett L. McCormick, eds., What if China Doesn't Democratize: Implications for War and Peace (Armonk NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000) p.11; David Bachman, "China's Democratization and US-China Relations" in ibid., p.196; Harvey Nelsen, "Caution: Rough Road Ahead" in ibid., p.279; Ying Ma, "China's America Problem" Policy Review No. 111, (February / March) 2002: http://www.policyreview.org/FEB02/ma.html.

this question will require figuring out which 'texts' (e.g. history texts, popular culture, the media) and which 'institutions' (e.g. education systems, propaganda systems, the family) matter most in the socialization of Chinese citizens in nationalist sentiments. It will also have to examine the scope conditions that affect the degree of salience and intensity which nationalist sentiments have for different people.

• what kinds of scenarios for political change in China can be plausibly constructed, and that will help understand the scope conditions under which the influence of narrow nationalist sentiments will increase or decrease? Different constituencies may matter under different scenarios and different kinds of political accountability. At the very least, an attentiveness to these questions will help problematize the commonly held view that there is a 'rising Chinese nationalism' which presents potentially dire problems for cooperation in East Asia.

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