

# Popular Protest, Nationalism, and Domestic-International Linkages in Chinese Politics

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## Abstract

The study of Chinese politics has become increasingly specialized, reflecting broader trends in social science that favor islands of knowledge that can be defended with rigor. Yet many phenomena of interest in Chinese politics are located at the intersection of comparative politics and international relations, where the two levels are connected and strategically linked. Nationalist, anti-foreign protest is a good example, as Chinese officials must choose whether to repress or tolerate nationalist demonstrations based on domestic and international considerations. In turn, the decision to allow or stifle street demonstrations affects the degree of popular influence on Chinese foreign policy, constraining the government's diplomatic options or enhancing its flexibility. Ongoing research into the subnational patterns of Chinese nationalism and popular protest offers a promising avenue of inquiry. Combined with close qualitative assessments to identify mechanisms and processes, meso-level investigations can provide additional leverage in the study of Chinese nationalism. Future research should aim to bring nationalism back into the mainstream study of state-society relations in China, bridging the gap between nationalism and other varieties of social mobilization and political contestation.

## INTRODUCTION

The study of Chinese politics has become increasingly specialized, reflecting broader trends in social science that favor islands of knowledge that can be defended with rigor. Whether rigor is defined by close process tracing or well-identified quantitative tests, this trend has been described as the "hollowing out" of the China field, favoring small bore projects at the expense of understanding the broader political system (O'Brien, 2011). Crossing subfield and disciplinary boundaries is particularly difficult because audiences and reviewers have different theoretical inclinations and evidentiary standards. The attempt to do so is a high-risk gamble but one with high reward—not only yielding insights and connections along paths less traveled but also

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requiring the explorer to be potentially convincing to few and provocative to many.

Crossing the domestic–international divide in Chinese politics is particularly challenging because it requires moving across traditional levels of analysis, requiring scholars on both sides of the divide to yield explanatory power to factors they are not used to privileging. “Second image” approaches, which look at how domestic factors influence foreign policy choices and international outcomes, have long been recognized as an important level of analysis (Waltz, 1979). But bringing domestic factors into the study of China’s foreign relations is often empirically difficult because the mechanisms are not formal. China’s leaders do not stand for election, nor does the National People’s Congress take meaningful roll call votes. Because the foreign policy process is so opaque, it is difficult to evaluate the influence of bureaucratic, military, or factional interests on foreign policy in a systematic way. Scholars of China’s international political economy may have an advantage in this regard, because the variables of interest, such as policies and patterns of foreign direct investment and trade, can often be more easily disaggregated and observed than those of concern to security scholars.

For those who study domestic phenomenon in Chinese politics, international factors are typically given a back seat to domestic variables. “Second image-reversed” approaches (Gourevitch, 1978), which reverse the direction of influence so that international factors influence domestic outcomes from the outside in rather than inside out—are still relatively uncommon in the study of Chinese politics.<sup>1</sup> The study of Chinese political economy is again an important exception, with many scholars showing that foreign investment has altered local incentives and practices.<sup>2</sup> In the security realm, Tom Christensen cites international fears as crucial factors behind domestic mobilization campaigns in China and the United States during the Cold War (Christensen, 1996). But it is far more common in the China field to view the relationship between domestic politics and international relations as unidirectional, where domestic politics influence China’s foreign policy choices, but not vice versa.

Many phenomena of interest in Chinese politics are located at the intersection of comparative politics and international relations, where the two levels are connected and strategically linked. As Rosemary Foot notes, “while it remains valuable to study the role of domestic processes and domestic interests in shaping policies toward the outside world, as liberal theorists have long argued, it also has become essential to examine the reverse as well as circular flows of influence” (Foot, 2013). Nationalist, anti-foreign protest

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1. But see Ross (1986).

2. For example, see Gallagher (2005) and Wang (2015).

is a good example of the intersection of domestic and international politics. In *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations*, I argue that it is important to consider international as well as domestic variables in explaining the pattern of nationalist protest in China (Weiss, 2014). In confronting popular anger, Chinese officials must choose whether to repress or tolerate nationalist demonstrations, considering both domestic and international consequences. In turn, the decision to allow or stifle street demonstrations affects the degree of popular influence on Chinese foreign policy, constraining the government's diplomatic options or enhancing flexibility.

At the same time, the international perception and credibility of nationalist protests depends on their domestic character. Anti-foreign protests that appear government-mobilized or insincere are likely to be dismissed by international observers as "cheap talk," revealing more about the government's domestic insecurity than its foreign policy intentions. After presenting this framework, I contrast it with other primarily "second-image" approaches to the role of nationalism in Chinese foreign policy. Next, I suggest directions for future research, pointing out opportunities to leverage subnational variation in Chinese nationalism to assess our intuitions and hypotheses more systematically. I conclude by noting the importance of incorporating nationalism more fully into the study of state-society relations in China.

#### FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH: PUBLIC OPINION AND NATIONALISM IN CHINA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

It has become a truism among many scholars as well as officials that public opinion has become a powerful driver of Chinese diplomacy. Less discussed are the mechanisms that link public opinion to policy making and the conditions under which public sentiments constrain Chinese foreign policy. I argue that popular nationalism, particularly in the form of anti-foreign street protests, often constrains China's diplomatic options. But the extent to which domestic pressures shape foreign policy—and the credibility of such claims—depends on whether nationalist protests are allowed or repressed.<sup>3</sup>

#### FROM THE OUTSIDE IN: A "SECOND-IMAGE REVERSED" APPROACH TO NATIONALIST PROTEST

My argument gives weight to international as well as domestic factors in explaining China's management of nationalist protest. Conventionally, domestic factors have been preeminent, with the Chinese government balancing the risks of allowing protest against the costs of suppressing them.<sup>4</sup>

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3. This section adapts the arguments and evidence developed in Weiss (2013, 2014).

4. Johnston & Stockmann, 2007, p. 194. On the concession-repression dilemma more generally, see Cai (2008).

Allowing protests may be beneficial as a “safety valve” for citizens to vent their domestic grievances. However, tolerating protests is also risky, as these same domestic grievances may seize the opportunity to mobilize under the protective cloak of patriotism. Likewise, nipping protests in the bud may benefit regime stability, avoiding the risks that accompany mobilization. But repression is also costly, exacerbating resentment against the regime’s high-handed suppression of patriotic sentiments. These trade-offs suggest that domestic factors are important but often not decisive as the government considers how to respond to nationalist mobilization. Given these domestic dilemmas, the government’s diplomatic motivations—a desire to show resolve or reassurance—may tip the scales toward allowing or preventing nationalist protest.

Demonstrations of popular anger can be helpful when the leadership seeks to signal resolve and demonstrate its commitment to defending China’s sovereignty and national interests. After US planes mistakenly bombed the Chinese embassy in Kosovo during NATO airstrikes in 1999, anti-American demonstrations across China conveyed domestic outrage and the government’s determination to stand up to the United States. Popular anger also enables the government to play “good cop” to the often xenophobic and racist voices in the street and on the Internet. When Japan’s bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council gained momentum in 2005, anti-Japanese demonstrations showcased popular anger over Prime Minister Koizumi’s repeated visits to Yasukuni Shrine and helped China make a principled case against Japan’s candidacy.

Yet China has repeatedly stifled popular nationalism when street protests would have jeopardized the government’s efforts to improve diplomatic relations. During two crises over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands in the East China Sea in the 1990s, China repressed anti-Japanese demonstrations. Although China launched a patriotic education campaign to bolster the regime’s diminished legitimacy, nationalist propaganda did not translate into permission for anti-Japanese protests. After the 2001 EP-3 incident, when a Chinese fighter jet and American reconnaissance plane collided over the South China Sea, China prevented anti-American street demonstrations. Seeking to contain the damage to China’s fragile rapport with the new Bush administration, Chinese authorities instructed students to stay on campus and told the media to tone down its coverage of the crisis.

Because nationalist protests are costly to repress and can spiral out of control, triggering domestic or diplomatic instability, the choice of whether to tolerate protests or not communicates the government’s vulnerability to domestic sentiment and incentives to take a tough diplomatic stance. The decision to stifle protests demonstrates the government’s willingness to

spend domestic capital to restrain domestic voices that might reduce diplomatic flexibility and prevent cooperation. Provided that foreign observers can tell the difference between sincere and manufactured protests, the government conveys greater resolve when protests are allowed to erupt and greater reassurance when protests are kept in check. During the EP-3 crisis, for example, China's efforts to repress protests helped send a signal of reassurance to the Bush administration as both sides negotiated a face-saving compromise over the release of the American crew. As John Keefe, special assistant to Ambassador Prueher, later recounted: "University students wanted to hold demonstrations to vent their anger. The government forbade them from taking such action [and] repeatedly stressed ... that this event should not be seen as a major affair in U.S.-China relations." (Keefe, 2001, p. 10).

#### "SECOND-IMAGE" APPROACHES

In contrast, most scholars of Chinese nationalism, public opinion, and diplomacy take a "second-image" approach: examining the impact of domestic factors on international-level outcomes. Scholars who view Chinese nationalism as a largely grassroots, spontaneous, and sincere phenomenon tend to give public opinion and nationalism the greatest weight (e.g., Gries, 2004; Shirk, 2007). Particularly with the spread of the Internet, public opinion is said to hinder the government's ability to conduct diplomacy with discretion and flexibility (Wu, 2007, p. 185). Those who see Chinese nationalism as more state-led also attribute substantial foreign policy influence to nationalist sentiment, as leaders become constrained by nationalist rhetoric and myth-making used to buttress their domestic legitimacy and rally the public (e.g., He, 2009; Zhao, 2004; Zheng, 1999). Other scholars suggest that the influence of public opinion is greatest when elites are in conflict (e.g., Fewsmith and Rosen, 2001; Reilly, 2012). At the same time, public mobilization may exacerbate elite conflict and thereby have a more direct effect on policy.<sup>5</sup>

These scholars rightly acknowledge that domestic constraints may reduce the set of acceptable agreements, thus reducing the likelihood of cooperation (Putnam, 1988). But a government may choose short-term delay or escalation over cooperation on unfavorable terms. As the two-level games literature points out, if the foreign negotiator understands that nationalist opinion has reduced the government's "win set," the foreign negotiator is more likely to offer concessions to salvage an agreement and avoid conflict. Demonstrating that the government is unable or unwilling to make concessions helps shift

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5. As Susan Shirk (2007, p. 48) notes: "Large protests increase the risk of a split by showing leaders that a following is already in place ... The danger is not a matter of the particular personalities in the Party oligarchy at any one time, but is built into the structure of communist systems."

the burden of compromise to the other party. If credibly revealed, domestic constraints can improve a government's chances of achieving a favorable outcome, even if the likelihood of bargaining failure is higher.

To be sure, others have suggested that playing the "nationalist card" may be diplomatically advantageous.<sup>6</sup> Another possibility is that conservative elements in the government encourage protests to strengthen their own position. Yet few have given the diplomatic consequences of nationalist mobilization a central place in the Chinese government's decision making. In suggesting that diplomatic objectives influence how authoritarian governments manage nationalist sentiment and popular protest, I make a "second-image reversed" argument, whereby the international environment influences domestic choices. Although domestic factors are important considerations, diplomatic incentives also warrant systematic attention. Concluding that the Chinese government is strategic about its willingness to tolerate anti-foreign protest may be cynical. But it is also important to understanding why and when China will resist domestic demands to take a tougher stance, despite the domestic costs of defying nationalist pressure.

Each time that nationalist, anti-foreign demonstrations have erupted, as after the accidental US bombing of the Chinese embassy in 1999 and Japan's purchase of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea in 2012, scholars and commentators have debated the role of domestic grievances and government machinations in fomenting nationalist protests. Yet focusing only on cases where nationalist protests have erupted tends to bias our conclusions about the impact of public opinion on Chinese foreign policy. Rather than select the dependent variable, it is critical to look at the full range of how the Chinese government has responded to nationalist sentiment and managed anti-foreign demonstrations, including repression as well as acceptance. As often as not, the Chinese government has circumscribed the influence of popular opinion by restraining and even preventing public displays of nationalist anger.

#### FROM THE INSIDE OUT: DOMESTIC POLITICS AND THE CREDIBILITY OF INTERNATIONAL SIGNALS

Government efforts to channel nationalism and thereby mitigate the danger to the regime and diplomatic relations run a different risk: that nationalist opinions will be dismissed by foreign observers as manufactured. This was one of the reminders of the 1999 Embassy bombing protests. In addition to damaging US diplomatic property, the highly orchestrated nature of the protests on the second, third, and fourth day of the crisis drew bipartisan censure in the United States. Although the protests still communicated

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6. See, for example, He (2009, p. 230) and Reilly, (2012, p. 46).

Chinese resolve to US negotiators, the contribution to Chinese negotiating leverage was reduced by foreign skepticism.

Whether foreign negotiators expect Chinese leaders to be constrained by domestic sentiments matters as much as whether nationalist sentiments are actually spontaneous or state-led. Foreign perceptions of China's domestic motivations and constraints are critical. As Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Stanley Roth noted during a Senate hearing: The nationalist card is being played ... the hard question is, how much and how permanent is it?<sup>7</sup> If protests are seen as "safety valves," releasing pent up grievances and then subsiding with no impact on foreign policy, foreigners have little inducement to offer concessions, because they can expect China's leaders to show flexibility soon thereafter.

Yet other observers are less skeptical. Many US officials share the belief that Chinese leaders have become trapped by the popular nationalism that they themselves have encouraged. As Condoleezza Rice writes: "Time and time again we would see this. China would stir up nationalist sentiment in the population through the state-controlled media, diminishing its own room for maneuver as it reacted to the very passions it had created" (Rice, 2011, pp. 46–47). So long as foreign negotiators believe that domestic pressures reduce China's diplomatic flexibility, the specter of nationalist mobilization is credible, whether or not these sentiments are "real or induced," in the words of John Keefe (Keefe, 2001). Indeed, the Chinese government did not even have to allow anti-American protests in 2001 to communicate their vulnerability to domestic nationalism. Online commentary and abortive attempts to hold protests were sufficient reminders of the popular sentiments that China worked hard to keep in check after the plane collision.

Why should foreign governments make concessions if the risks of nationalist mobilization are primarily borne by the Chinese government? Many external actors—from governments to multinational enterprises to international investors—have a stake in the stability of the Chinese regime. To maintain the status quo, foreign negotiators may be willing to make concessions to prevent the toughening of Chinese policy. As Henry Kissinger writes, "A prudent American leadership should balance the risks of stoking Chinese nationalism against the gains from short-term pressures" (Kissinger, 2001).

By accommodating Chinese interests, foreign decision makers assuage nationalist concerns in China and ease domestic pressures on the incumbent leadership. Faced with a more hawkish alternative, foreign governments may see concessions as a wise hedge against a worse fate. Often, it is the "moderate autocrat" whom foreign governments seek to bolster against conservative competitors who might gain influence with the eruption of

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7. "U.S. Senator Craig Thomas holds hearing on U.S.-China relations," May 27, 1999, FDCH Political Transcripts.

nationalist protests. For example, after Chinese students took to the streets to protest Japan in 1985 and again in 1986 to protest official corruption and lack of political freedom, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone stopped visiting the Yasukuni Shrine in deference to General Secretary Hu Yaobang's vulnerable position (Nakasone, 2006, p. 96). When divisions within the government are apparent, foreign decision makers may show lenience to support embattled moderates.

## CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH

### EXPLORING SUBNATIONAL VARIATION IN CHINESE NATIONALISM

Many questions remain about the relative weight of domestic and international factors in shaping the pattern of nationalist protest in China. At the national level, our empirical leverage is limited by the small number of observations over time. The number of large-scale nationalist protests has grown—including anti-Japanese protests in 2012 and anti-French protests in 2008. But it remains challenging to discriminate among many different explanations for the same handful of events. When multiple factors point in the same direction, it is difficult to evaluate their relative weight.

Employing carefully paired comparisons can help isolate the effect of certain factors, such as two US-China crises that occurred within a relatively short time frame: the 1999 embassy bombing and 2001 EP-3 incident (Weiss, 2013). And careful process tracing can get us much closer to identifying the role of perceptions and anticipated reactions in government decision making, illuminated by official documents, party histories, policy analysis, and interviews with officials and influential commentators. Yet it is impossible to fully control for many variables when explaining such a small set of outcomes. In this regard, there are many advantages to expanding the number of observations by turning to the subnational level, teasing out the domestic implications of international relations theories. Many of our theories and intuitions about Chinese nationalism and protest have implications at the local and individual level.

For example, new research into the 2012 anti-Japanese protests utilizes cross-sectional variation at the city level to assess the impact of both state and societal factors (Wallace and Weiss, 2013). A subnational and multivariate approach allows us to simultaneously examine factors such as state-led patriotic education, the legacy of Japanese occupation, and the concentration of "biographically available" populations such as students, migrant workers, and unemployed graduates. Variation in the local political opportunity structure, namely, local government insecurity and fears of social unrest, has also played a key role. In determining whether protests



were allowed to occur, local officials interpret national-level windows of opportunity and “stability maintenance” guidelines in the context of local concerns. In this way, disaggregating the study of Chinese nationalism and popular protest offers promising avenues of inquiry. Combined with close qualitative assessments to identify mechanisms and processes, these sorts of meso-level investigations—analyses above the level of the individual but below the level of the state as a whole—can provide additional empirical leverage on theories of popular protest.

### KEY ISSUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

#### CIVIL SOCIETY: BRINGING NATIONALISM BACK IN

In much of the contemporary study of Chinese politics, a body of water separates scholarship on nationalism and nationalist protest from studies of state–society relations and political protest more generally. The exclusion of nationalist, anti-foreign mobilization from general studies of social contention is not limited to the China field. One of the most prominent cross-national datasets used by political scientists to gauge domestic unrest explicitly excludes protests against foreign targets (Banks, 2010).

Is the gulf between studies of nationalism and civil society in China justified? Some scholars have pointed to the degree of government support as evidence of a qualitative difference between nationalist mobilization and other types of resistance. For example, in comparing China’s response to the 1999 anti-American demonstrations with protests by members of Falun Gong, laid-off workers, and impoverished farmers, Elizabeth Perry writes:

Nationalistically inspired student unrest is another story altogether, however. In the case of the 1999 student protests against the bombing of China’s Belgrade embassy, we find a considerable degree of overt central government support—sanctioning the demonstrations on national television, providing buses to take students to foreign embassies and consulates, and even supplying the slogans that they should shout once they got there.

(Perry, 2001, pp. 168–169)

At the same time, even the heavy-handed stage management of protests in 1999 reflected official fears that protests would otherwise get out of hand, which Perry notes were particularly high before the tenth anniversary of June 4, 1989. Efforts to corral and ultimately curtail the anti-American demonstrations were not easy, as sociologist Dingxin Zhao has documented. Many students refused to take university buses and became angry after being told that the window of opportunity had closed (Zhao, 2003).

Indeed, there is much more ambiguity and conflict between grassroots nationalists and government authorities than may be apparent at first glance. Nationalist mobilization is no exception to the uncertain and shifting boundaries between state tolerance and repression (Stern and O'Brien, 2012), although the penalty for nationalist organizers tends to be lighter. In interviews, nationalist activists talk candidly about the process by which they discern and probe whether it is safe to organize activities. Many forms of anti-Japanese mobilization have been met with state takeover and suppression as well as cooptation (Xu & Pu, 2010).

Although nationalists may help the government demonstrate resolve and gain diplomatic leverage, they are not reflexively pro-government, often accusing the government of betraying the national interest. Nationalist protest is also a form of "rightful resistance" (O'Brien, 1996), insofar as it challenges the state to live up to its own rhetoric and ideals and defend the nation's sovereignty from foreign encroachments and insults. However, in part because protesters can envelop themselves in the language of patriotism and cry, "patriotism is innocent," the costs of suppressing anti-foreign sentiment are often higher than protests that advance more particularistic interests. Nationalists are also useful to the government, and they are rarely treated as harshly as domestic dissidents.

For example, the Xiamen-based nationalist activist, Li Yiqiang, was detained by authorities on June 3, 2007, after participating in protests against the proposed construction of a paraxylene (PX) chemical plant.<sup>8</sup> The participation of a nationalist activist in a domestic protest suggests one of the government's greatest fears: linkage across aggrieved groups. Although he was held for several days in the aftermath of the protests, by 2009 he was again active in attempting to organize activities in Changsha.<sup>9</sup> He and his group were prevented from sailing to the islands during controversies with Japan in 2010 and in 2012, but he has not been silenced, with even mainstream media interviewing him.<sup>10</sup>

The government has dealt more harshly with anti-Japanese activists who have strayed further across the bounds of the permissible, particularly those who have directly challenged the central government's legitimacy. In the early 1990s, a Shanghai activist who had participated in the 1989 democracy movement, Bao Ge, was placed under house arrest after threatening a hunger strike and self-immolation to demand an apology from the Japanese

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8. Weiss, 2014.

9. <http://bbs.china918.cn:81/showtopic.aspx?topicid=28156&page=end>, last accessed March 12, 2011.

10. "Dalu Baodiao zhe bei gongan lanzu deng chuan," BBC Chinese, September 12, 2010, accessed at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/simp/china/2010/09/100912\\_brief\\_china\\_japan\\_baodiao.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/simp/china/2010/09/100912_brief_china_japan_baodiao.shtml); Guo Kai, "Mainland, Taiwan activists pull out of Diaoyu trip," *Global Times*, August 15, 2012.

emperor.<sup>11</sup> In 1994, Bao was sentenced to 3 years of reform through labor after linking demands for compensation from Japan to sweeping political reform, calling upon the National People's Congress to hold a referendum on war reparations.<sup>12</sup> Bao had stated that a referendum would "open the way to a constitutional democracy" in China.<sup>13</sup>

Given these potentially treacherous waters, many nationalists are quick to proclaim their support for the central government. In 2003, for example, the Patriots Alliance Network organized an Internet signature campaign demanding Japanese compensation for victims of poison gas bombs left near Qiqihar in northeastern China. In announcing the start of the petition campaign, the official declaration read: "We firmly support the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' stern negotiations with Japan on August 8 and August 12 [and] hope that this campaign will help the government put pressure on Japan."<sup>14</sup> Privately, however, activists were more willing to criticize the government. As a leading nationalist activist acknowledged,

In Sino-Japanese relations, the Chinese government overemphasizes government-to-government relations and neglects the interests of individuals (*geti liyi*). The government doesn't want the stories of the victims to come out, because the government would look bad for having done nothing so far. I'd like the government to adopt a more open-minded policy. The public security bureau did not agree (*meiyou tongyi*) to the internet signature campaign, but we did it anyway.<sup>15</sup>

More generally, the separation of domestic and foreign policy activism may reflect self-censorship by activists concerned about the risk of linking nationalist to domestic demands. One QQ group, "Patriots," used the following tag line: "Sensitive topics that concern national politics or reactionary statements against the motherland are forbidden. Violators will be removed from the group without exception."<sup>16</sup> As James Mulvenon notes, patriotic hackers likewise self-police their activities, explicitly warning their members against attacking domestic websites. At least part of their restraint appears to be tactical, not ideological, as they try to avoid giving the government cause for repression (Mulvenon, 2009).

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11. Kent Chen, "Activist to continue fight for apology," *South China Morning Post*, November 5, 1992.

12. "Bao Ge released, brother of other Shanghai dissidents penalized," *Ming Pao*, June 5, 1997.

13. "Activist bids for vote on war cash," *South China Morning Post*, March 10, 1993.

14. <http://bbs.1931-9-18.org/viewthread.php?tid=22454>, last accessed March 16, 2011.

15. Interview with CFDD organizer, Beijing, July 27, 2006.

16. <http://qun.qq.com/#search/cnum/0/st/0/c1/0/c2/0/c3/0/pg/1/tx/%E7%88%B1%E5%9B%BD%E8%80%85>, last accessed September 16, 2010.

Activists who cross between the nationalist and domestic spheres of civil society may also be more likely to face suppression over time, feeding government paranoia of dissidents looking for any means to advance their aims. As Yu Jie writes,

Even self-proclaimed ‘pursuers of democracy and liberty’ also take anti-Japan thought as useful resources . . . . They tried to establish a democratic and constitutional government through nationalistic movements. This kind of thinking will not lead anywhere, but will push China into further misery.<sup>17</sup>

Activists who do “too much”—challenging the government on multiple fronts and providing the human capital that might potentially link up disparate grievances—are more likely to be deemed sensitive and their activities thwarted.

Together, state repression and self-censorship have winnowed out the population that vocally mobilizes on both sides of the domestic-foreign policy divide. Despite this induced separation, it is important to acknowledge the analytic similarities and linkages between the liberal and nationalist spheres of civil society. Whether or not these connections have been driven underground or weeded out, as scholars it is critical that we problematize this distribution of voices in civil society and how it has varied over time. Breaking down the divide between international relations and comparative politics in the study of Chinese politics is both an analytical task and a substantive one, with important implications for our understanding of popular protest and China’s foreign relations.

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