The POLITICS of AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

How Ideology Divides Liberals and Conservatives over Foreign Affairs

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Foreword: Partisanship and the U.S. National Interest

David L. Boren

Our dysfunctional political system is a national embarrassment. Whether the issue is the budget, gun control, health care, or immigration, the executive and legislative branches are unable to work together to solve the nation’s problems. Partisan posturing has pushed out bipartisanship and compromise. Cooperation between liberals and conservatives is becoming a quaint memory.

U.S. foreign policy is increasingly hamstrung by partisan politics as well. From Europe to the Middle East to China, Democrats and Republicans not only cannot agree; they are disinclined to work together to promote the national interest. Tom Brokaw’s “Greatest Generation” was comprised of men and women who risked their lives to advance the national interest. Where is that spirit now? Senator Arthur Vandenberg, a conservative who was the champion of bipartisanship during World War II, laid the foundations for the Marshall Plan and a bipartisan foreign policy. Where are his successors today?

When I chaired the Senate Intelligence Committee in the 1980s and 1990s, I was able to work with my Republican colleagues on bipartisan solutions to our nation’s security challenges. Intelligence Committee voting was usually unanimous. In fact, we never divided along strict party lines in any of our rare roll call votes.

Those days are long gone. Voting in most congressional committees today divides along partisan lines. The wise agreement that “politics should stop at the water’s edge” has become a relic of the past.

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During my fifteen years in the Senate, I learned that partisan divisions over foreign policy have consequences. They complicate pursuit of the national interest. They distress our foreign allies and friends. They present to the world a distorted picture of America. At their most damaging, they turn friends into foes and make more difficult the task of advancing our national interest. When foreign policy becomes partisan, the national interest suffers.

In 2008, I wrote in *A Letter to America* that “partisanship clearly becomes destructive when partisan advantage is elevated above the national interest.” Examples abound of partisan politics disrupting orderly governance. During the winter of 2012–13, the “fiscal cliff,” sequestration, and the debt ceiling dominated political debate. Liberals and conservatives representing the extreme wings of their parties refused to compromise, allowing ideological purity to trump the national interest. During that same period, partisan disputes marred the confirmation hearings for President Obama’s national security team. The incoming secretary of defense, former senator Chuck Hagel, received more “no” votes in the Senate than any previous candidate for that office, while confirmation of the new CIA director was held up for weeks by partisan wrangling.

For eleven years, some on the right in the Senate have blocked passage of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, despite support for passage from the business community, the military, and the public. More recently, a group of senators rejected the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, even though the convention mirrored the much admired Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which passed the Senate with bipartisan support twenty-three years ago. In both cases, those in opposition held that the conventions ceded a piece of American sovereignty to the United Nations, an international body that conservatives love to hate.

The American people tolerate partisanship in foreign policy in part because they have little interest in foreign affairs—until something goes wrong. Nor do our citizens show much interest in American history. Despite the fact that we are a practical, problem-solving people, we are cynical towards government and doubtful that Washington will ever accomplish anything that directly affects us. Such cynicism is no surprise given that the picture that emerges in our media is of a people in decline, of special interest groups dominating politics, of vast sums of money lubricating our political system, of declining participation in civic organizations and activities.

But as I wrote in *A Letter to America*, “In all the ways that matter, we Americans have so many reasons to believe that our future can be even greater than our past.” We prize a culture that is dynamic, pragmatic, and innovative. We prize our openness to change, which has long been America’s default position. And we have surmounted obstacles in the past. In this instance, we can start by
trying to understand why and how hyper-partisanship has come to dominate our political discourse.

In *The Politics of American Foreign Policy*, Peter Gries analyzes partisanship—affecting both domestic and foreign policy—and finds its origins in the deeply embedded ideologies that are changing our electoral landscape. Ideological self-sorting, aided by the gerrymandering that once again took place after the 2010 census, is dividing America into warring political camps. The majority of congressional districts have now become hyper-partisan—so red or blue that general elections are often mere formalities. Instead, a majority of the members of Congress face their stiffest competition in the primaries, where the 10 to 20 percent of eligible voters who do vote usually represent the extreme wings of their parties. “For the most part,” Professor Gries writes, “politicians today are not elected by the median voters in their districts. Their job security, instead, depends upon a small minority within their parties.” In these circumstances, candidates for office must cater to the ideological extremes, setting the stage for a partisan approach to governing and a bias against—even a fear of—compromise.

Professor Gries argues that while partisanship and ideology tend to go together, ideology is the more fundamental driver of political attitudes and behavior. *The Politics of American Foreign Policy* explores the nuances of American ideology, including its complex of values, beliefs, and motivations. While partisanship can be fluid, ideology appears more stable, frequently passed from generation to generation. For instance, the once solidly Democratic South is now the solidly Republican South. The partisan alignment has flipped, but the underlying ideologies have changed only marginally.

Since ideological positions are strongly held and change only slowly, does this mean that our dysfunctional political system will be with us for years to come? The very red and very blue congressional districts that dot the political landscape today are unlikely to change much—at least until the 2020 census, when redistricting and the gerrymandering that will inevitably follow it might partially reshape the electoral landscape, giving median voters a louder voice and reducing the clout of the extreme wings of both political parties.

For this to happen, the ideologies that undergird partisanship will have to change too. Internationalists in both parties must unite to oppose isolationists. Put another way, liberals and conservatives should try to move towards the middle, which is the only place where a bipartisan foreign policy can take root.

As I wrote in *A Letter to America*, “The history of our nation is one of almost unbroken progress. While there have been temporary ups and downs, each generation has been able to say that it has left America better in most ways than it found it.” Despite our broken political system, I still believe that state-
ment is correct. Our pragmatism, our determination, and our free and creative society will help us find ways to right the political ship and steer towards the goals we all share. As Peter Gries explains, the roots of hyper-partisanship have flourished in the extreme ideologies cultivated by the far left and far right of both our political parties. We understand the problem. The task for Americans now is to promote dialogue, cooperation, and compromise between liberals and conservatives, to bring our two great parties together in a joint effort to solve the problems facing us. We have done it in the past. We can do it now.
Both the Democratic and Republican Parties are internally divided over China. On the left, some Democrats argue for a pro-China policy of engagement to better integrate China into the global economic, political, and security orders. Other Democrats, concerned about human rights issues, advocate for tougher China policies. For instance, California congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, quoted above, has been a frequent critic of Chinese human rights abuses. Yet other Democrats on Capitol Hill, many from heavily blue collar districts, join Big Labor in condemning unfair Chinese trade practices and advocating tougher U.S. trade policies towards China.

On the right, Republicans in Washington are equally divided on China policy. Business conservatives have historically promoted a friendlier China policy conducive to increased trade, investment, and profits. For instance, the U.S.-China Business Council and AmCham China, which lobby on behalf of U.S. companies doing business with China, have worked closely with many Republicans on the Hill to support pro-China and block anti-China legislation. Military hawks and Christian conservatives, however, usually argue for tougher China policies. Congressman Randy Forbes of Virginia, quoted in the epigraph, serves on the House Armed Services Committee and cochairs the House’s China Caucus, and frequently promotes tougher positions on China. New Jersey congressman Christopher Smith, who has held dozens of hearings on Capitol Hill to deplore China’s lack of religious freedoms, has also advocated a tougher U.S. China policy, but for very different reasons. “China’s continued repression of religion is among the most despotic in the world,” Smith, a Christian conservative who founded the
House Pro-Life Caucus, argues. “Today, numerous underground Roman Catholic priests and bishops and Protestant pastors languish in the infamous concentration camps of China for simply proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

If Democratic and Republican Party elites are internally divided over China, are Main Street liberals and conservatives also internally divided? If so, do the China policy preferences of the left and right simply wash out?

In their 2010 *Living with the Dragon: How the American Public Views the Rise of China*, political scientists Benjamin Page and Tao Xie repeatedly claim that individual differences like ideology have “little impact” on the China attitudes of the American public. Americans, they assert, share the same basic views of China.

The survey data suggests otherwise. This chapter argues that ideology has a substantial influence on the China and broader Asia attitudes of the American people. In our spring 2011 survey, the average American felt cool (35°) towards China (see Figure 0.3), but the average conservative (22°) felt a full 18° cooler towards China than the average liberal (40°) did (see Figure 0.4), a large difference statistically. By contrast, Americans felt substantially warmer towards the East Asian democracies of Taiwan (49°), South Korea (50°), and Japan (60°), with conservatives feeling just 6°, 6°, and 8° cooler than liberals did towards each. These results are largely consistent with those from the Chicago Council’s 2010 global views survey, Pew’s 2010 global attitudes survey, and a 2011 CNN poll.

What’s more, the large ideological cleavage on feelings towards China has policy consequences. In addition to the “China” item in our 1–7 “much friendlier” to “much tougher” rating scale of foreign policy preferences towards fifteen countries, we included two additional 1–7 “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” items in our survey:

- *The best way to deal with China is to build up our military to counter Chinese power.*
- *The U.S. government should pursue a tougher China policy.*

The resulting three-item scale revealed that on average, conservatives desired a great deal tougher China policy than liberals did.

This chapter seeks to understand the sources of these substantial ideological differences among Americans on China and Asia policy. It begins with a brief review of the history of America’s encounter with the “Orient” and “Orientals,” both at home and abroad. It then disaggregates “China” into the “Chinese people” and the “Chinese government,” exploring two distinct pathways to China policy preferences. Conservatives desire a tougher China policy than liberals do, in small part because, on average, they maintain slightly more prejudicial
attitudes towards Asians in general and the Chinese in particular. However, in larger part conservatives desire a tougher China policy than liberals do because on average they maintain much more negative attitudes towards communist countries in general and the Chinese government in particular. The chapter then turns to a closer examination of how all four dimensions of American ideology that we measured in our 2011 survey contribute to ideological polarization over China. For instance, cultural conservatives and libertarians may disagree over what they most dislike about China, but they can agree that they dislike China more than liberals do.

While internal ideological predispositions are powerful predictors of China attitudes, the external social world matters too (see Chapter 5). The chapter then explores how variations in social experiences, like travel, direct contacts with Chinese, and media exposure shape the China attitudes of the American people. Not all people respond to the same situations in the same ways: ideological predispositions can interact with situational variables to produce different China attitudes.

The chapter then turns to a brief comparative exploration of how ideology shapes American feelings towards the East Asian democracies of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. As was the case with China, slightly greater prejudice against “Orientals” contributes to greater average conservative than liberal coolness towards these East Asian countries. But their greater average libertarianism leads conservatives to feel warmer than liberals do towards these fellow democracies in “Free Asia.” Social and political ideologies, in other words, counteract each other, reducing overall liberal-conservative differences in American feelings towards the East Asian democracies.

The chapter concludes by returning from Main Street public opinion back to Capitol Hill, speculating on the policy implications of American ideological divisions over China. Following the Global Financial Crisis, China has become more assertive in both economic and security matters, and U.S. Big Business is no longer as united in support of China. Greater average conservative coolness towards China, therefore, may begin to be more clearly expressed in the Capitol Hill politics of U.S. China policy.

“CHINKS” AND “JAPS”: ORIENTALS AT HOME AND ABROAD

“Christian Civilization will bring to China a truer conception of the nature of man, a better understanding of his relations and his duties, of his dignity and his destiny.”

—D. Z. Sheffield, Presbyterian missionary to China, 1900

“Once a Jap, always a Jap! You can’t any more regenerate a Jap then you can reverse the laws of nature.”

—Congressman John Rankin (Democrat–Mississippi), 1942
Eighteenth-century Americans first encountered Asia indirectly via European writings about China. To extol the virtues of Liberty, Enlightenment thinkers like Montesquieu constructed the foil of “Oriental despotism.” China was both an ancient civilization with cultural achievements worthy of admiration—and a land of tyranny to be despised.

In the nineteenth century, direct American missionary contacts with China and the Chinese people increased. “In the early nineteenth century the image of a China distant, refined, and exotic began to give ground to that of a China repulsive, reactionary, and heathen as . . . missionaries broadcast their impressions back home,” writes historian Michael Hunt. For instance, to demonstrate the defects of the “Chinese racial character” and justify his Christian civilizing mission, Connecticut missionary Arthur Smith wrote home about “Orientals” as “two-faced” and duplicitous.11

By the late nineteenth century, immigration had led to unprecedented direct American contacts with Chinese workers on American soil. Part of a Republican strategy to gain access to the China market and hold down domestic wages following the slaughter of the Civil War, the 1868 Burlingame Treaty allowed unrestricted Chinese immigration. This gave rise to a nativist backlash, which Democrats sought to capitalize on. They could play to the prejudices of their party base—white racism in the South and among Catholics in northern cities—and appeal to new swing voters in the West, where party loyalties remained weak. In 1879 the Democratic-controlled House and Senate passed the “Fifteen Passenger Bill,” barring vessels from transporting more than fifteen Chinese at a time. Republicans then sought to neutralize the immigration issue with equally anti-Chinese rhetoric.12

Some progressives objected to the growing anti-Chinese sentiment. Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner, an antislavery advocate both during and after the Civil War, championed the rights not just of blacks but of Chinese immigrants as well. In 1868 and 1869 Sumner introduced bills to remove the word “white” from naturalization laws. Neither bill came to a vote. “Senators undertake to disturb us . . . by reminding us of the possibility of large numbers swarming from China,” Sumner lamented in 1870. “But . . . the Chinese . . . are peaceful and industrious; how can their citizenship be the occasion of solicitude?”13

James Wales captured the late-nineteenth-century politics of anti-Chinese prejudice for an 1880 Puck (Figure 9.1). His cartoon depicts the two presidential candidates at the time, James Garfield and Winfield Hancock, nailing a Chinese man between two large “Anti-Chinese” boards labeled “Republican Plank” and “Democratic Plank.” The caption reads, “Where Both Platforms Agree—No Vote—No Use to Either Party.” The cartoon was not really about the Chinese
immigrants themselves, but about how both parties were seeking to capitalize upon widespread anti-Chinese prejudices.

Garfield won the election but was assassinated just two hundred days after taking office. His running mate, Chester Arthur, became president in 1881 and signed the Chinese Exclusion Act the following year. But neither anti-Chinese sentiment nor its political use diminished. In 1888, Democratic president Grover Cleveland declared Chinese immigrants “dangerous to our peace and welfare.” Not to be outdone, his Republican challenger, Benjamin Harrison, claimed that the assimilation of such an “alien” race was “neither possible nor desirable.”

By the turn of the twentieth century, historian Christopher Jespersen argues, American attitudes towards China were driven by “two powerful but contradictory impulses.” On the one hand, “God and Mammon” conspired to draw American missionaries and merchants to China to save the Chinese from hell and to capture profits from the “China market.” “Hardly a town in our land was
without its society to collect funds and clothing for Chinese missions,” statesman Dean Acheson later recalled about the early 1900s, “to educate the minds and heal the bodies as well as save the souls of the heathen Chinese.” On the other hand, Jespersen writes, a “virulent racism” and “fear of a Yellow Peril” persisted. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was only repealed in 1943.

The Japanese were the second group of “Orientals” to find a place in the American imagination. In 1854, Commodore Matthew Perry of Newport, Rhode Island, forced Japan open at cannon point. Japan’s successful Westernization during the Meiji Restoration then evoked much paternalistic American pride. But increased Japanese immigration in the early twentieth century led to an anti-Japanese backlash on the same West coast soils where anti-Chinese nativism had flourished just decades earlier. “As had happened with other foreign peoples, the closer the contact and the larger the numbers,” Michael Hunt maintains, “the more elaborate and negative the American appraisal.”

While both Chinese and Japanese continued to be the objects of American prejudice, the twentieth century witnessed an ongoing exchange of Chinese-Japanese, good guy–bad guy roles in the American imagination. During the Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the century, the Chinese acted the barbarians while the Japanese joined the good-guy Westerners in the Eight-Nation Alliance to relieve the siege of Beijing. But with the rise of Japanese fascism and Japan’s invasion of China in the 1930s and 1940s, the “Japs” were dehumanized while Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek of Nationalist China were lionized as Christian redeemers. “It seems that by juxtaposing these two oriental peoples Americans had found a means of keeping their hopes and anxieties in equilibrium,” Hunt surmises. “While oriental villains served as the lightning rod of American racial fears, more worthy Orientals could be summoned up to keep alive liberal dreams of a prosperous, stable, and democratic East Asia.”

The wartime American press and propaganda machine dehumanized the “Japs” as monkeys, rats, insects, and snakes. “A viper is nonetheless a viper wherever the egg is hatched,” claimed the Los Angeles Times in 1942. “So a Japanese-American, born of Japanese parents, grows up to be a Japanese not an American.” Such blood-is-destiny racism was used to justify the internment of over 100,000 Japanese Americans during the war, as the epigraph from Mississippi congressman John Rankin suggests. Figure 9.2 is a detail from a photograph that Ansel Adams took in 1943 at the Manzanar “War Relocation Center” at the foot of the Sierra Nevada in eastern California. It was one of ten camps where Japanese Americans were incarcerated during the war.

In his moving War Without Mercy, historian John Dower argues that the war in the Pacific was more brutal than the war in Europe because both Americans and Japanese dehumanized and even demonized each other. Surrender thus
became unthinkable, and the extermination of the vermin enemy a moral obligation. "Louseous Japanicas . . . inhabits coral atolls in the South Pacific, particularly pill boxes, palm trees, caves, swamps, and jungles," read the March 1945 Leatherneck magazine of the U.S. Marines. "Flamethrowers, mortars, grenades and bayonets have proven to be an effective remedy. But before a complete cure may be effected, the origin of the plague, the breeding grounds around the Tokyo area, must be completely annihilated." On a single night of firebombing, March 9–10, 1945, 100,000 “Louseous Japanicas” were exterminated in Tokyo.

The 1949 establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) added communism to the mix of factors shaping American views of Asia. The Cold War, Republican president Dwight D. Eisenhower declared in 1953, was a “war of light against darkness, freedom against slavery, Godliness against Atheism.” “Red China” on the mainland was juxtaposed against “Free China” on Taiwan, even though first Chiang Kai-shek and then his son Chiang Ching-kuo maintained strict authoritarian rule in the Republic of China.

Racial images of the “Yellow horde” persisted in the form of a “Red Menace.” “The dragon had awakened, and, rather than turning out to be a friendly one predisposed towards the United States, it instead seemed to confirm the anxieties of those who had looked across the Pacific in fear,” Jespersen writes. The danger was quickly hammered home with the Korean War. “It required an experience as jolting as that in Korea to introduce . . . new images of the Chinese as warriors, for the contrary images of the Chinese as unaggressive,
non-mechanical, and un-martial, are among [our] oldest and most deeply im-
bedded,” wrote journalist and China hand Harold Isaacs in 1957. “‘The Yellow
tide’ in Korea swept up all sorts of ancestral memories . . . that had lain long in
the recesses of time and the mind. The Mongol hordes had reappeared.”

In his thoughtful China and the American Dream, sociologist Richard Mad-
sen argues that the Tiananmen Square Massacre of June 4, 1989, had a profound
impact on American views of China, and that changed American attitudes had
less to do with China than with American national identity itself. For Ameri-
cans, the moral drama of Tiananmen involved an exercise in navel gazing, of
“dreaming their social selves in face of the realities of the other.” Specifically,
Americans had reveled in China’s reform and opening of the 1980s, projecting
their Liberal myths onto China and Deng Xiaoping, who was even declared Time
magazine’s “Man of the Year” in 1985. China’s perceived embrace of the
market was seen as affirming American capitalism and democracy. Tiananmen
shattered that illusion, as the American image of Deng shifted abruptly from
a capitalist “just like us” to that of a “communist tyrant,” the very antithesis of
American Liberty.

RED CHINA AND THE YELLOW PERIL

“The Communists are moving fast towards their goal of world revolution. Perhaps God
brought you to the kingdom for such an hour as this—to stop them. In doing so, you
could be the man that helped save Christian civilization.”

—The Reverend Billy Graham to Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965

Why do conservatives today desire so much tougher a China policy than lib-
erals do? Does the “Yellow Peril” continue to shape American views of China?
Or have the civil rights movement and racial integration since the 1960s elimi-
nated race as an influence on American views of Asia? After thirty-five years of
“reform and opening,” China today is communist in name only. Do liberal and
conservative feelings about “red communism” nevertheless continue to shape
their China policy preferences?

To best answer these questions, we decided to measure how the American
people feel about the Chinese people and the Chinese government separately. In
addition to our 0°–100° feeling thermometer item on “China,” therefore,
we added “the Chinese people” and “the Chinese government.” And to reduce
measurement error and increase the internal reliability of these two measures,
we also added a pair of more cognitive items that were evaluated on the stan-
dard seven-point “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” rating scale:

- The Chinese GOVERNMENT is trustworthy. (reverse coded)
- The Chinese GOVERNMENT is devious.
• The Chinese PEOPLE are trustworthy. (reverse coded)
• The Chinese PEOPLE are devious.

Item sequence was randomized. After reverse-coding the feeling thermometer and trustworthy items, we standardized and averaged them together to form three-item “prejudice against the Chinese people” and “negative attitudes towards the Chinese government” scales, both of good internal reliability.\(^\text{26}\)

Americans felt a whopping 34° cooler towards the Chinese government (21°) than towards the Chinese people (55°), an extremely large difference statistically.\(^\text{27}\) Just as conservatives felt 18° cooler than liberals towards “China,” they felt 11° cooler towards “the Chinese people” and 15° cooler towards “the Chinese government,” medium and large differences statistically.\(^\text{28}\) Our survey also included thermometers measuring feelings towards “Asians” and “Communist countries.” On average, conservatives scored 5° and 19° cooler than liberals on these two items, small and large differences statistically.\(^\text{29}\)

Would cooler conservative than liberal feelings towards the Chinese people and their government, and Asians and communist countries more broadly, help account for conservatives’ preference for a tougher China policy? Figure 9.3 reveals that they did: the inclusion of these four mediators accounts for a full three-quarters of the direct relationship between ideology and China policy preferences.\(^\text{30}\)

![Diagram](Fig. 9.3. Conservatives desire a tougher China policy than liberals do, in small part because of their greater average prejudice against Asians in general and the Chinese people in particular, and in larger part because of their greater average coolness towards communist countries in general and the Chinese government in particular.

Note: A mixed multiple mediation model. With the exception of the two indirect paths via Asians only and via Asians and negative attitudes towards the Chinese government, all indirect paths were statistically significant. Indirect effect statistics are online at SUP.org. All three China measures are three-item scales. Seven demographic covariates, none of which were statistically significant, are not shown. Data source: OU Institute for US-China Issues, 2011.)
Figure 9.3 also reveals that there are two largely distinct pathways to China policy preferences. Liberals and conservatives can differ on China policy because of small differences in their average warmth towards Asians in general and the Chinese people in particular (the top path in the model). As the consistently thicker lines along the bottom path in the model reveal, however, on average liberals and conservatives differ on China policy in larger part because of their greater differences in warmth towards communist countries in general and the Chinese government in particular.31

Prejudice against “Orientals,” we have seen, has been a persistent theme in American history, and as James Wales reminded readers in 1880 (see Figure 9.1), it has often been a source of bipartisan agreement. However, our 2011 data is consistent with work in social psychology demonstrating that on average conservatives are slightly more prejudiced against Asians ($\beta = -0.09$, top left of Figure 9.3) than liberals are.32 As discussed in Chapter 3, differing racial attitudes are in part due to the greater moral value that liberals place on fairness and compassion than conservatives do (see Figure 3.4). For instance, missionaries from liberal and mainline Protestant denominations frequently opposed discrimination against Asians on the basis of compassion. “The status of inferiority thus far imposed upon these people by the West must come to an end,” the ecumenical Foreign Missions Conference of North America declared in November 1949, one month after the establishment of the People’s Republic.
“Asiatics, no less than ourselves, are children of the Heavenly Father and, as such, are entitled to be dealt with on the basis of racial equality.”

But it is greater conservative (13°) than liberal (32°) coolness towards communist countries ($\beta = -0.34$, bottom left of Figure 9.3) that plays the larger role in accounting for overall liberal-conservative differences over China policy. The ideological sources of American feelings about communism therefore merit closer examination. A multiple mediation analysis revealed that three of the four dimensions of American ideology that we measured contributed to the substantial 19° gap between liberal and conservative feelings towards communist countries. As shown in Figure 9.4, only social dominance orientation did not mediate the relationship, which makes sense as communism is not a racial issue. Together, the three mediators accounted for over 90 percent of the direct relationship between liberal-conservative ideology and warmth towards communist countries.

Cultural traditionalism, the top path in Figure 9.4, was the most powerful mediator of the relationship between ideology and feelings towards communist countries. Christian conservatives have long viewed communism as an atheistic threat to God and Christian values. “Communism is not only an economic interpretation of life,” the Reverend Billy Graham declared in 1949. “Communism is a religion that is inspired, directed and motivated by the Devil himself who has declared war against Almighty God.” In his famous 1983 “Evil Empire” speech given to the National Association of Evangelicals, cited in Chapter 2, President Ronald Reagan similarly equated the fight against communism with the fight against “evil.” “Fighting communism was a religious duty, and the American government was engaged in the work of the Lord when it opposed the Soviet Union,” historian Daniel Williams writes in God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right. “The ‘American way of life’ was therefore the Christian way of life, and a threat to one was a threat to the other.”

Communism is primarily, however, an economic theory; Marx was an economic historian. It is not surprising, therefore, that differences between economic liberals and conservatives over income redistribution would also help account for overall ideological differences over communism (Figure 9.4, middle path). “Fundamentally there are only two ways of coordinating the economic activity of millions,” Milton Friedman wrote in Capitalism and Freedom. “One is central direction involving the use of coercion—the technique of the army and of the modern totalitarian state. The other is voluntary co-operation of individuals—the technique of the marketplace.” The same disagreements that liberals and conservatives have about taxes, social welfare spending, and income redistribution at home, our survey data suggests, also shape their feelings towards “communist countries” abroad.
The political division between libertarians and communitarians also shapes feelings towards communist countries, as the bottom path in Figure 9.4 reveals. In his 1975 *The Broken Covenant*, sociologist Robert Bellah argued that although many Americans dislike communism for economic and religious reasons, it is communism’s perceived threat to cherished American liberties that stings the most. “Though ‘revolutionary’ and ‘atheistic’ would continue to be negative terms used to characterize socialism, it was the attribute of collectivism or statism, in contrast to allegedly American individualism, that would be the central negative image.”38 Remarkably, our 2011 survey data exactly confirms Bellah’s argument that there are three (economic, religio-cultural, and libertarian) distinct ideological ways that Americans think about communism. Historian Andrew Preston has more recently but similarly argued that a libertarian ethic rooted in Protestantism “made Americans suspicious about other nations that relied too heavily upon concentrations of power, be they religious (the Catholic Church) or political and economic (the Communist Party).”39 Libertarians don’t like democratic governments, let alone communist party-states.

**LIBERAL PANDA-HUGGERS AND CONSERVATIVE DRAGON-SLAYERS**

“A Bible-believing Christian Conservative, by definition, is anti-Communist, and therefore anti-Red China.”40

—Evangelist Billy James Hargis, 1972

Broad feelings about “Asians” and “communist countries” thus help account for more-specific feelings towards the Chinese people and their government, respectively, contributing to ideological differences in China policy preferences. As discussed in Chapter 1, when confronted with difficult specific questions like, “How much do you agree or disagree with the statement, ‘The U.S. government should pursue a tougher China policy?’” we frequently resort to “affect heuristics,” substituting easier and broader questions about our gut feelings like, “How do I feel about Asians?” or “How do I feel about communist countries?” Such heuristic devices, social psychologist Daniel Kahneman has argued, help us “generate intuitive opinions on complex matters.”41 This helps explain how Americans, in the absence of much knowledge about China, can nonetheless form consistent opinions about it.

Why do different kinds of American liberals and conservatives differ so systematically in their intuitive opinions about China? The path model in Figure 9.5 reveals that all four of the dimensions of American ideology that we measured in our 2011 survey shaped China policy preferences. Furthermore, all four operate in the same direction. In other words, conservatives of different stripes may disagree over why they desire a tougher China policy than liberals do, but
they can agree on a tougher policy. Similarly, different kinds of liberals may
differ over why they want a friendlier China policy than conservatives, but they
can agree on a friendlier policy. The intensity of the ideological disagreement
on China policy is due in part to the four dimensions of American ideology
working together rather than against one another.

The top path in Figure 9.5 reveals that the same racial politics that divides
Americans today on domestic issues like affirmative action also shapes their
feelings towards the Chinese people ($\beta = .26$) and policy preferences towards
China ($\beta = .12$). A closer look at the substantial influence of social dominance
orientation—the belief that “Inferior groups should stay in their place”—on prejudice against the Chinese people is revealing. Of the five moral values,
compassion and loyalty mediated the relationship between group dominance
and anti-Chinese prejudice, and authority was a marginally significant media-
tor as well. Liberals, generally lower on social dominance, value compassion
more than conservatives do, leading them to oppose anti-Chinese prejudice.
For their part, conservatives, generally higher on social dominance, value loyalty
to the in-group and authority more than liberals do, fostering greater preju-
dice against the Chinese people.

Thomas Nast captured the competing moral values shaping American feel-
ings towards Chinese immigrants in a pair of editorial cartoons for Harper’s
Weekly (Figure 9.6). The 1870 cartoon at the left depicts a group of Caucasians
atop “The ‘Chinese Wall’ Around the United States of America.” They throw

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**FIG. 9.5.** Negative attitudes towards the Chinese people and government act as
separate pathways for four dimensions of American ideology to shape China policy
preferences.

*Note:* A path model. All three China measures are three-item scales. Covariances and prediction
error terms are not displayed. Model fit was excellent and all indirect paths were statistically
down a ladder labeled “emigration” as Chinese workers sporting long Manchu queues look up helplessly from below. The Caucasians above celebrate having kept the Chinese in their subordinate place. Nast objects out of compassion for the Chinese immigrants. A flag on the wall refers to the 1870 “Know-Nothings,” “Pres. Patrick, Vice Pres. Hans,” a clear reference to the Irish and German immigrants who had been persecuted by WASP nativists just a decade earlier. Nast makes his moral stance explicit with his caption, “Throwing Down the Ladder by Which They Rose.” He wants his reader to feel compassion for the Chinese victims of the hypocrisy of earlier Irish and German immigrants.

Nast made the same point a dozen years later (Figure 9.6, right). A castle flying an American flag and labeled “The Temple of Liberty” is surrounded by a deep moat. A guard scrutinizes a Chinese immigrant’s passport, blocking his entry. Nast’s caption again makes his objection explicit: “E Pluribus Unum (Except the Chinese).” White racism is not just doing violence to American democratic values, but harming vulnerable Chinese as well.

A similar clash of moral values was on display in a 2011 controversy over Rush Limbaugh’s derogatory parody of Chinese president Hu Jintao speaking Chinese. On his January 19, 2011, radio show, Limbaugh spoke of watching an
Obama-Hu press conference: “Hu Jintao, he was speaking, and they weren’t translating. . . Hu Jintao was just going . . . ‘chin chang chin chan chong chang chi bababba chi chike zhing zha zhe zhike rrooor ji kedi ba baba.’” Limbaugh’s racist gibberish immediately produced a liberal outcry. “Calling the Chinese names and imitating the Chinese language was a childish and offensive tactic,” said Democratic congresswoman Judy Chu of California, the first Chinese American woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. “It is one thing to disagree with a nation and criticize its policies, but it is another thing to demonize an entire people. Over the last 150 years, Chinese in America have faced severe racial discrimination. It wasn’t that long ago that the Chinese in America were . . . called racial slurs, were spat upon in the streets, derided in the halls of Congress and even brutally murdered.”43 Our survey data suggests that Limbaugh and Chu were not disconnected from Main Street: differing beliefs about proper racial and social hierarchies, and the differing moral values that undergird them, continue to divide American liberals and conservatives today in their feelings towards the Chinese people.

Figure 9.5 reveals that cultural liberals and conservatives also differ in their views of both the Chinese people and U.S. China policy. For cultural traditionalists, Chinese immigrants, like the Mexican immigrants discussed in Chapter 6, may be viewed as a threat to traditional WASP values, contributing to anti-Chinese prejudice ($\beta = .15$) and subsequent desires for tougher China policies ($\beta = .21$). The stronger direct path ($\beta = .25$) from cultural traditionalism to preferences for tougher China policies may reflect a fear-driven response to a rising China seen as different and dangerous. Social psychologists have demonstrated that when confronted by perceived threats to shared cultural beliefs, values, or norms, cultural conservatives are more likely than cultural liberals to respond with aggression.44

Many cultural conservatives advocate tougher China policies. As noted above, Republican congressman Christopher Smith deplores the persecution of Christians in China. Smith serves as cochair of the House Pro-Life Caucus and as a member of its Taiwan Caucus, which generally promotes tougher China policies. Smith is not unusual in linking these seemingly disparate issues. Our 2011 survey included the abortion question “Are you more pro-life or pro-choice?” Answers to this intensely personal question were a substantial predictor ($\beta = .22$) of the China policy preferences of the American people, even after controlling for the standard demographics.

Economic ideology, by contrast, has no influence on feelings towards the Chinese people. Its effect on China policy preferences is instead mediated through feelings towards the Chinese government ($\beta = .21$, Figure 9.5, near-bottom left). Not surprisingly, liberal-conservative disagreements over whether
“The government should decrease income differences” also shape their attitudes towards the “communist” Chinese government. While business conservatives often support pro-China policies out of a material self-interest in profiting from trade and access to the China market, economic conservatism as an ideology is marked by an antipathy towards governments—especially socialist governments—that tax, spend, or redistribute income, all lamented as violations of free market principles.

In Chapter 7 we saw that the Wall Street Journal editorial page frequently comments on the economic policies of European countries like France, Britain, and Germany as proxy battles in domestic economic wars. Its editorials on China often serve the same function. In its June 1, 2011, editorial “Red Ghost over China,” the Journal frets that free market capitalism may be on the defensive in China. “Leftist thinkers are genuinely trying to turn the Party back toward Marxist ideology.” Worse yet, “Wu Bangguo, the Party’s No. 2 man, recently gave a speech in which he attacked private property.” Domestic American debates over economic stimulus were similarly exported to China the next year. “While it must be tempting to goose GDP once more, Mr. Wen and his colleagues should think twice about another round of stimulus,” the editorial board argued in its May 23, 2012, “China Is Stimulused Out.” “Now is not the time to try to reinflate the economy with more wasteful spending and investment.” Economic liberals, by contrast, were more inclined to praise Chinese efforts at economic stimulus during the onset of the Global Financial Crisis in 2008 and 2009—and to advocate more stimulus at home.

Like economic ideology, communitarian-libertarian political ideology is not associated with prejudice against the Chinese people; its influence on China policy preferences is instead mediated through feelings towards the Chinese government ($\beta = .16$, Figure 9.5, far-bottom left). Greater libertarian agreement that “Individuals should be free to follow their own dreams in their own ways, without interference from government” leads to suspicion and hostility towards the American government, which is democratic. It is not surprising, therefore, that libertarians would also tend to feel cooler than communitarians towards the Chinese government, which is authoritarian.

William Allen Rogers captured libertarian fears of “Oriental despotism” in a 1900 Harper’s Weekly (Figure 9.7). The Boxer Rebels had been killing Christian missionaries and their Chinese converts in North China since 1898, and foreigners sought refuge in the legation quarters in Beijing in June 1900. The Empress Dowager Cixi of the Qing Dynasty then decided to throw her support behind the Boxers by declaring war on the foreign powers in China. An Eight-Nation Alliance of American, European, and mostly Japanese troops soon broke the siege of Beijing. Rogers’s July 28 drawing depicts President William McKinley
and Uncle Sam doing battle against crazed Boxers. Severed Western heads are held high on pitchforks, and one Chinese rebel is about to sink a dagger into a prostrate and helpless white woman. Next to her, a white baby lies (dead?) under an American flag. McKinley resolutely holds an American flag that is inscribed with the words “Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness Under Treaty Rights.” The illustration is entitled “Is This Imperialism?” Rogers quotes President McKinley to answer his own question with a resounding no: “No Blow Has Been Struck Except for Liberty and Humanity, And None Will Be.” Americans are not imperialist aggressors in China; they are defenders of liberty against a tyrannical Chinese government that has unleashed its fanatical people.

Libertarian fears of the Chinese government persist today, contributing to conservative desires for tougher China policies (Figure 9.5, bottom path).
“Remember, there are reasons why Communist China remains under an arms embargo,” Republican congressman Dana Rohrabacher of California said at an April 2, 2009, congressional hearing on export controls. “The Tiananmen Square massacre, where the tyrannical and brutal Chinese government murdered thousands of peaceful reformers, changed the course of history.” Note both the reference to “Communist China” and the clear distinction drawn between the “tyrannical and brutal Chinese government” and the Chinese people, described as “peaceful reformers.” Libertarians, Figure 9.5 reveals, do not harbor prejudices against the Chinese people. Their fears, instead, are directed against governments, especially strong authoritarian governments like that of “Communist China.”

GLOBALIZATION AND U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS:
CONTACT, KNOWLEDGE, AND AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINA

“I am convinced that as the Chinese study abroad, trade with free nations, build enterprises, and become increasingly exposed to people and cultures around the world, they will demand freedom and genuine democratic reforms.”

—Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, 2010

Ideological predispositions are powerful predictors of the China policy preferences of the American people. But they are not the only source of American attitudes towards China. Globalization is increasingly compressing both time and space, bringing the world closer and closer together. Airplane travel and new communications technologies such as e-mail and Skype now allow Americans and Chinese to interact more directly and frequently than ever before. Television, movies, and the Internet are dramatically increasing indirect contacts as well.

Do these growing interactions shape how Americans and Chinese feel and think about each other? Americans like Mitt Romney, quoted above, believe that increased contacts will be a good thing, leading Chinese to embrace American-style democracy. “The exposure of the Chinese people to our way of life can be the greatest force for change in their country,” the “2012 Republican Platform” similarly declares. “We should make it easier for the people of China to experience our vibrant democracy and to see for themselves how freedom works.”

The Chinese government seems to have embraced a similar logic: if only Americans knew more about China, they’d like China more. Since 2004, the PRC Ministry of Education has launched hundreds of Confucius Institutes around the world, aggressively promoting Chinese language education as well as renewed international academic and cultural exchanges. The underlying assumption appears to be that increased contact with and knowledge about China will improve foreign attitudes toward China.
We decided to test this assumption by measuring both knowledge about China and contacts with Chinese in our 2011 survey. The average American scored a 43 percent on our five-item China knowledge quiz. The five questions are listed in Table 9.1 for readers to judge for themselves the difficulty of the quiz. It covered basic politics and geography, and in our judgment was not too difficult. With just four response choices each, pure chance alone would have resulted in a score of 25 percent, so we interpret the 43 percent to mean that Americans on average are not very knowledgeable about China. This interpretation is arguably supported by a 2013 Pew Internet survey, which found that only 57 percent of Americans could correctly identify the flag of the People’s Republic of China when shown images of the four very different flags of the PRC, Turkey, Japan, and South Africa.49 Overall, the American public does not appear to be very knowledgeable about either China or the world (see Table 5.1).

Indeed, there are areas where the American public is clearly misinformed about China. Our 2011 survey measured the perceived economic power of foreign countries on a seven-point “extremely weak” to “extremely strong” scale. Of the fifteen countries we measured, China and the United States were seen as the two most economically powerful countries, with China seen, on average, as slightly more economically powerful than the United States.50 GDP and GDP per capita are two of the better objective measures of national economic power. According to the International Monetary Fund, in 2011 the nominal U.S. GDP ($15 trillion+) was over twice that of China ($7 trillion+), and the U.S. GDP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response choices</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following is a current leader of China?</td>
<td>Hu Jintao/Mao Zedong/Jiang Zemin/Deng Xiaoping</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dominant ethnicity/race in China is the</td>
<td>Han/Manchu/Hui/Zhuang</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following countries does NOT border China?</td>
<td>Singapore/Mongolia/India/N. Korea</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Three Gorges Dam, a massive construction project begun in 1994, is located on which of these Chinese rivers?</td>
<td>Yangzi River/Yellow River/Pearl River/West River</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the name of the political party that governs the People’s Republic of China today?</td>
<td>The Communist Party of China</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Chinese Republican Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Democratic Progressive Party of China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Nationalist Party of China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AVERAGE SCORE 43%

Note: Response choice sequence was randomized. Correct answer underlined and placed first here only. Data source: OU Institute for US-China Issues, 2011.
per capita ($48,000+) was six times higher than China’s ($8,000+). In the spring of 2011, however, U.S. unemployment was high and media coverage of China highlighted Chinese purchases of American debt, China’s favorable balance of trade with the United States, and China’s high growth rate, all of which likely contributed to the widespread American misperception that China was economically more powerful than the United States.

Our 2011 survey also included two items measuring the quantity and quality of direct contacts with Chinese:

- **How frequently do you have contact with Chinese?**
- **Do you have many friends who are from China?**

Responses were averaged together to form a two-item “Chinese friends/contacts” scale of good internal reliability.

Do contacts then with Chinese and knowledge about China shape the China attitudes and policy preferences of the American people? The statistical model displayed in Figure 9.8 reveals that they do, but that increased knowledge about China is indeterminate when it comes to U.S. China policy. Greater knowledge about China is associated with substantially decreased ($\beta = -0.34$) prejudice against the Chinese people, but substantially increased ($\beta = 0.36$) negative attitudes towards the Chinese government. The former contributes to desires

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**Fig. 9.8.** When knowledge is a double-edged sword: Contact with Chinese increases knowledge about China, which decreases prejudice but increases negativity towards the Chinese government.

*Note: A structural equation model. Ovals are latent variables. To reduce clutter, observed variables, and measurement and prediction error terms, are not displayed. Model fit was excellent and all indirect paths were statistically significant. Statistics are online at SUP.org. Data source: OU Institute for US-China Issues, 2011.*
for *friendlier* ($\beta = .22$) China policies, while the latter contributes to desires for much *tougher* ($\beta = .61$) policies towards China.

The reduced prejudice finding is consistent with half a century of scholarship in social psychology on the intergroup “contact hypothesis.” In 1954 Gordon Allport proposed that increased contact between racial groups living in close proximity would increase their knowledge about each other, decreasing prejudice. Allport’s influential hypothesis contributed to social policy, as busing and integration were implemented during the U.S. civil rights movement in an attempt to reduce prejudice between American racial groups. Decades of research and policy experiments have revealed that increased intergroup contact, under the right conditions, can reduce prejudice. Increased contact under the wrong conditions, however, can exacerbate conflict and prejudice, as Michael Hunt suggested in the context of Chinese and Japanese immigration to the United States. Psychologists Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp have noted in a recent meta-analysis that along with perspective taking and anxiety reduction, knowledge is a mediator of the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice reduction.

Figure 9.8 reveals, however, that while increased knowledge about China decreases prejudice against the Chinese people, it increases negativity towards the Chinese government. From a theoretic perspective, this finding has two implications. First, contact theory can travel from prejudice reduction between groups within nations (such as blacks and whites in the United States) to prejudice reduction between groups across nations (such as the United States and China). Contact theory, in other words, has international wings. Second, the increased knowledge that follows from increased intergroup contacts only improves attitudes towards certain types of out-groups. Our analysis above suggests that it may be the association with “communism” that contributes to greater American knowledge about China leading to greater negativity towards the Chinese government. But psychologists may wish to explore whether there are more generalizable features of the kinds of out-groups to which contact theory applies.

From a policy perspective, Figure 9.8 reveals that the Chinese government’s massive investment in Confucius Institutes and educating Americans about China is a mixed bag. On the one hand, increasing positive contacts with Chinese can increase knowledge and reduce prejudice, contributing to desires for *friendlier* China policies. On the other hand, greater knowledge about China contributes to greater negativity towards the Chinese government, fostering desires for *tougher* China policies. Greater knowledge about China can thus be a double-edged sword.

Different kinds of people can also respond to the same social experiences
in very different ways. In Chapter 5 we saw that as foreign travel, friends, and contacts increase, nationalism decreases among cultural liberals but increases among cultural conservatives (see Figure 5.4). Cultural ideology, in other words, polarizes the effect of foreign contacts on American nationalism. Similarly, ideology also moderates the influence of contact on China attitudes. A statistical analysis revealed that as foreign and Chinese friends, contacts, and travel increase, desires for tougher China policies decrease—but only among cultural liberals and not among cultural conservatives. This could be based in personality: it may be that greater average liberal than conservative “openness to new experience” leads cultural liberals to embrace contacts with Chinese more, increasing their warmth towards China.

Finally, media exposure appears to act as a kind of indirect contact, having similar effects on China attitudes as did direct contacts with Chinese. As discussed in Chapter 5, our 2011 survey included two items measuring time “paying attention to international news” and the degree of “interest in news and public affairs.” Averaged together, they formed a “media exposure” scale which predicted decreased prejudice against the Chinese people \( \beta = -0.11, p = 0.003 \) but increased negativity towards the Chinese government \( \beta = 0.26 \) in a pair of regressions controlling for the seven standard demographics. This is consistent with the “double-edged sword” of direct contacts with Chinese people on China policy preferences discussed above. So media exposure acts as a type of indirect intergroup contact polarizing American attitudes towards the Chinese people and their government.

**FREE ASIA AND THE YELLOW PERIL**

“When Japanese pilots were flying suicide missions into American battleships, it seemed impossible that six decades later Japan would be a democracy, a lynchpin of security in Asia, and one of America’s closest friends.”

—Republican President George W. Bush, 2008

“America and Taiwan are united in our shared belief in fair elections, personal liberty, and free enterprise.”

—“2012 Republican Party Platform”

What influence does ideology have on American feelings towards the East Asian democracies of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea? Statistical analysis revealed that of the four dimensions of American ideology that we measured in our survey, only social dominance orientation and communitarian-libertarian politics mediated the relationship between ideology and warmth towards these three East Asian countries (Figure 9.9). But the two indirect effects canceled each other out.

Greater average conservative than liberal social dominance \( \beta = 0.36 \) con-
tributed to conservatives’ greater coolness \((\beta = -0.10)\) towards these three Asian lands (Figure 9.9, top path). Chinese are thus not the only Asian objects of prejudice in America today. “It’s because of you little motherfuckers that we’re out of work!” Ronald Ebens yelled at Vincent Chin outside a nightclub in Detroit in 1982. Ebens, an autoworker, thought that Chin, a Chinese American, was Japanese, and hence the source of Detroit’s economic woes. Ebens and his stepson, Michael Nitz, tracked Chin down later that night and bludgeoned him to death with a baseball bat. Ebens and Nitz were not sentenced to prison time, provoking Asian American outrage and greater Asian American involvement in the civil rights movement.\(^59\) Thirty years later, Assistant Attorney General Thomas E. Perez of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division marked Chin’s death by writing, “In a diverse, democratic nation like ours, we all must be able to live and work in our communities without fear of being attacked because of how we look, what we believe, where we are from, or who we love.”\(^60\) Differences among Americans today about proper race relations at home, our survey reveals, also shape their feelings not just towards China but towards other Asian countries as well.

Greater average conservative libertarianism \((\beta = 0.26)\), however, contributed to greater conservative warmth \((\beta = 0.11)\) towards these Asian democracies, suppressing the overall effect of ideology (Figure 9.9, bottom path). In other words, if it were not for the fact that conservatives tend to be more libertarian than liberals, on average conservatives would feel more coolly towards these Asian democracies. For libertarians, the success of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea represents the triumph of freedom in East Asia. When promoting the democratization of the Middle East, President George W. Bush frequently extolled
Japan and Germany as “great democracies” capable of “sustaining democratic values.”

“Today the great powers are also increasingly united by common values, instead of divided by conflicting ideologies. The United States, Japan and our Pacific friends, and now all of Europe, share a deep commitment to human freedom,” Bush declared in his 2002 commencement address at West Point. “And the tide of liberty is rising.”

Taiwan—“Free China”—has also long been held up by American libertarians as a beacon of liberty in the Chinese world. “Taiwan is one of the strongest democratic partners of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region and serves as a model of freedom and democracy,” Republican senator Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma wrote in 2008. Although the state of Oklahoma has few commercial or other ties with Taiwan, Inhofe has served on the Senate Taiwan Caucus since its founding in 2003, and is currently its cochair. Supporting Taiwan appears to be a way for some American politicians to express their antipathy towards Chinese communism. “I want to express my strong support for Taiwan,” Republican congressman Michael McCaul of Texas declared in 2009. “We like our independence in Texas and I think that’s what we have in common. America stands for freedom and democracy and the fight against oppression and dictatorships. And so we stand with you.”

Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea thus appear to receive a libertarian boost for being democratic or capitalist that counteracts the negative influence of lingering racism. Turning to South Asia, India receives a similar democratic/capitalist boost: greater libertarian warmth ($\beta = .07$) towards India partially counteracts the negative influence of racism/social dominance ($\beta = -.14$) on feelings towards India. The suppression effect of greater conservative libertarianism helps explain why the overall ideological gap between liberals and conservatives on these Asian democracies is much smaller than that between them on communist countries like China and North Korea. Our survey data thus supports Michael Hunt’s contention, noted above, that American hopes for a “democratic East Asia” and “racial fears” about “oriental villains” exist in equilibrium—or at least coexist.

**MAIN STREET, WALL STREET, AND U.S. CHINA POLICY**

“America’s relations with other countries—particularly a Communist country like China—must rest on a solid foundation of public opinion. When the Chinese government resorts to the wanton violation of human rights, it will inevitably pay a price with the American public and its elected representatives.”

—Congressman Stephen Solarz (Democrat–New York), 1989

This chapter has argued that while conservatives feel somewhat cooler than liberals towards “Free Asia,” they feel much cooler towards “Red China.” It fur-
ther argued that the sources of these ideological differences in attitudes towards Asian countries can be found in many of the same issues that divide them on domestic politics.

One source of greater overall conservative coolness towards Asian countries is conservatives’ greater average prejudice. “I think one man is just as good as another so long as he’s honest and decent and not a nigger or a Chinaman,” future president Harry Truman wrote in 1911. “Negroes ought to be in Africa, yellow men in Asia and white men in Europe and America.” While such overt prejudice has declined over the last century, our survey reveals that it does persist, and that greater average conservative than liberal prejudice has a small but statistically significant influence on American attitudes towards Asian countries.

But communism was an even larger source of ideological differences over China. For cultural, social, economic, and political reasons, conservatives felt cooler than liberals towards both communist countries in general and the Chinese government in particular. By contrast, their greater libertarianism warmed conservatives towards the Asian democracies of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, attenuating the overall ideological gap.

If ideology powerfully divides Americans on China, why is that division not more clearly reflected on Capitol Hill? First, ideology is not the sole determinant of American attitudes towards China. This chapter has shown that variations in contact with Chinese and knowledge about China mold the China attitudes of the American people as well. Further research is needed to better understand how such external situational variables interact with internal ideological predispositions to shape the China attitudes of the American people.

Second, public opinion is not the sole determinant of the policy preferences of our elected representatives. As noted in the discussion of the Israel lobby in Chapter 8, campaign contributors and special interest groups can exert an independent influence on members of both the legislative and executive branches. It may be that the pro-China advocacy of business groups like the U.S.-China Business Council and AmCham China has been able to neutralize the anti-China leanings of congressional Republicans and their conservative constituents. Similarly, the anti-China advocacy of Big Labor has likely counteracted the greater liberal warmth towards China within the Democratic Party.

Will this delicate balance endure? While candidates from both political parties have long sought to use China against their political opponents in their political campaigns, Republican politicians today appear to have begun utilizing anti-China tactics more frequently. Republican campaign ads often invoke the “Red Menace” and “Yellow Hordes” views of China, appealing to their conservative constituents’ fears of both communism and Asians.
Meanwhile, pro-China business groups, so united in the 1990s as apologists for China during the fight against President Clinton over China’s most-favored-nation status, may now be dividing over China. During the Global Financial Crisis in 2008–9, the Chinese government made the case to its people that the Chinese economic model was superior to the West’s, contributing to greater Chinese assertiveness and tougher policies towards the Western business world. “In my more than two decades in China, I have seldom seen the foreign business community more angry and disillusioned than it is today,” China business expert James McGregor wrote for *Time* magazine in 2010. “Anti-foreign attitudes and policies in China have been growing and hardening since the global economic crisis.”

This recent development raises an important question. If business Republicans become divided on China policy and stop counterbalancing the anti-China leanings of Main Street conservatives and their elected representatives, what is to keep the Republican Party from moving towards a substantially tougher China policy? We may be poised for a significant change in the politics of China policy on Capitol Hill.
Chapter Nine


4. Page and Xie 2010: 37. See also 57, 66, and 103. For a critique, see Gries 2011.

5. Feelings towards Taiwan: $F(1, 420) = 6.94$, $p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .02$, controlling for the seven standard demographics.

6. Feelings towards South Korea: $F(1, 420) = 6.00$, $p = .015, \eta_p^2 = .01$; Japan: $F(1, 420) = 10.75$, $p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$, controlling for the seven standard demographics.

7. In the Chicago Council’s 2010 “countries and peoples” feeling thermometer, the average American felt coolest towards North Korea ($26^\circ$), followed by China ($45^\circ$), South Korea ($52^\circ$), and Japan ($61^\circ$), the same sequence as our 2011 survey (it did not measure feelings towards Taiwan). Conservatives ($39^\circ$) in its survey felt $10^\circ$ cooler towards China than liberals ($49^\circ$) did, a small-to-medium-sized difference statistically: $F(1, 1002) = 41.41$, $p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .04$, controlling for age, gender, education, income, and being from the South. Democrats had a more favorable view of China than Republicans in Pew’s 2010 global attitudes telephone survey: $F(1, 1869) = 36.31$, $p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .02$, controlling for age, gender, education, and income. And in a September 2011 CNN telephone poll, conservatives scored higher than liberals did on a China as ally-to-enemy question: $F(1, 270) = 8.53$, $p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .03$. The smaller effect sizes in the CNN and Pew polls are likely due to the greater measurement error in telephone polls, as well as the more restricted response options, which limited the variation they captured.

8. $F(1, 419) = 89.47$, $p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .18$, controlling for the seven standard demographics. Three-item China policy scale $\alpha = .68$.


22. Isaacs 1957: 10, 11.
25. As noted in the Introduction, the Chicago Council’s feeling thermometer solicits feelings towards a list of “countries and peoples,” conflating these two attitude objects.
26. Cronbach’s $\alpha = .78$ and .79, respectively. Together with the three-item China policy scale introduced above, these two three-item scales were used in all the mediation, path, and structural equation models in this chapter.
27. $t(999) = 34.29, p < .001$. Cohen’s $d = 1.05$.
28. $F(1, 419) = 24.02, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$; and $F(1, 419) = 59.44, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .12$, controlling for the seven standard demographics.
29. $F(1, 419) = 6.40, p = .012, \eta_p^2 = .02$; and $F(1, 419) = 89.79, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .18$, controlling for the seven standard demographics.
30. The direct effect was reduced from 10.9 percent (semipartial correlation = .33) to 2.8 percent (semipartial correlation = .17) with the inclusion of the four mediators.
31. The only crossover between the two paths was that warmth towards communist countries had a small impact ($\beta = -.12$) on prejudice, although it was overwhelmed by the impact of feelings towards Asians ($\beta = -.56$).
34. The direct effect was reduced from 8.8 percent (semipartial correlation = -.296) to just .8 percent (semipartial correlation = -.09).
42. Indirect effect statistics are online at SUP.org under “Chapter 9, policy section. Social dominance to prejudice against Chinese.”
47. E.g., Giddens 1987.
48. GOP 2012: 49.
50. t(999) = –8.78, p < .001; Cohen’s d = –.28.
51. World Economic Outlook Database, imf.org.
52. Cronbach’s α = .74.
53. Allport 1954.
55. See Gries, Crowson, and Cai 2011.
56. Interaction ΔR² = .01, F(1, 415) = 4.35, p = .037. The negative slope for cultural liberals (low traditionalism) was statistically significant, $B = -.22, p = .03$; the positive slope for cultural conservatives was not, $B = .08, p = .49$.

Chapter Ten

2. GOP 2012: 45.