

**Partner, Rival, or Something in Between?
Politics, Economics, and the Development of U.S. Elite Opinion about China**

Abstract

What explains attitudes toward China in the U.S. Congress since the normalization of relations in 1979? These attitudes matter, both because of their impact on policy and because of their effect on broader public opinion. Security interests and humanitarian concerns, public goods entering the political process through ideology, as well as economic issues, which make themselves felt through constituent economic interests, have all influenced congressional attitudes toward China. However, we hold that economic interests will predominate when all three sets of issues are salient. Because ideology encompasses many issues, ideological positions on the overall relationship will change depending on the issue that is most salient at any particular time. By changing their issue priorities, members of congress can reconcile their ideological position about the relationship with the economic interests of their constituents. By contrast, the pressure of constituent economic interests resists this kind of adjustment. We test our argument using sponsorship decisions by members of the House of Representatives in ten congresses between 1979 and 2010. We also use elite surveys conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs to examine whether policy experts outside the government formed different opinions about China than civilian policymakers. We find no evidence of substantial differences between these different elites.

Benjamin Fordham, bfordham@binghamton.edu
Katja Kleinberg, kkleinbe@binghamton.edu
Department of Political Science
Binghamton University

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Should American policymakers regard China as a partner or a potential rival? The answer to this question has provoked considerable disagreement throughout the last four decades, and the sources of the divisions over it have been neither obvious nor consistent. The end of the Cold War greatly changed the international context of the relationship, as did internal developments in China, such as the Tiananmen Square massacre. A more assertive Chinese foreign policy and changing American relations with other states in the region also have potentially important implications. Perhaps the largest change is the enormous expansion in commercial relations between the world's two largest economies. Despite public pronouncements about an impending rivalry between the United States and China, the implications of all these events are not obvious.

The need to discern the meaning of changing events and conditions within important major power relationships, like the one between the United States and China, is an important element of world politics. Morgenthau (1993, 75) held that detecting imperialist intentions on the part of other states is "the fundamental question that confronts officials responsible for the conduct of foreign policy as well as citizens trying to form an intelligent opinion on international issues." Answering this question has been historically important. Britain and other European powers had to assess the implications of the rapid growth of the American economy in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. The United States and its allies had to reconsider their relations with Russia after the breakup of the Soviet Union, and again in light of Vladimir Putin's recent aggressive actions toward Ukraine. European states have had to consider the meaning of German unification in both 1871 and 1990. These assessments are a fundamental part of making foreign policy.

In this paper, we will argue that American assessments of the U.S.-Chinese relationship depends on the domestic political pressures that policymakers face, not just the international environment. Policymakers observe the same international events and conditions, but the implications of what they see depend on their ideological and political commitments. Their decision to treat China as an enemy depends on their ideological orientation, the demands of their party, and the interests of the societal groups who support and maintain them in office. These considerations will rarely point to the same conclusion for all political actors. Whether international events and conditions ultimately lead to a cooperative or conflictual relationship between the United States and China--or any pair of states--depends on the outcome of political wrangling among the factions that these considerations define.

We will argue here that a wide range of economic, security, and humanitarian concerns can shape a policymaker's position on relations with China, but these considerations are not equally important. Because they are public goods, controversy over humanitarian and security issues tends to be expressed through ideological divisions. On the other hand, debate over economic relations enters the political process largely through their impact on constituent economic interests. Because ideological divisions encompass many issues, the positions of ideologically motivated actors are subject to interpretation in ways that constituent economic interests are not. Ideologues might accept policies that advance their goals on some issues, even if they have to set aside their preferences on other issues to make these gains. By contrast, economic considerations arise from brute facts about the world that are more difficult to negotiate. Industries or groups of workers who see an appreciable decline in their wealth and income are not likely to accept the argument that they or their descendants may be better off in another line of economic activity at some point in the future if they ignore these immediate losses. Those in a position to gain will be similarly insistent. While policymakers can adjust their ideological positions to accommodate the economic interests of their constituents, they cannot easily bend their constituents' economic interests to suit their ideological predispositions.

We will examine congressional sponsorship of measures hostile to China in the last three decades, supplemented with elite opinion surveys administered during the same period. In the following sections, we draw on existing research to develop our arguments about the sources of congressional hostility toward China. After outlining a research design for testing hypotheses drawn from this argument, we will present our empirical results. We find that ideology and party influenced whether members of congress sponsored measures hostile to China during the 1980s and 1990s, though the nature of this influence varied. Sometimes conservatives and Republicans were more hostile toward China, and sometimes liberals and Democrats were. On the other hand, economic interests grew in importance over the course of the period we examined. They began to have an effect during the 1990s, and were the dominant influence on sponsorship activity during the 2000s, crowding out other considerations. In spite of the fact that some foreign policy elites are not formally responsible to societal constituencies in the same way that members of congress and other government official are, we find no evidence in elite surveys that these independent elites held different opinions about China. The views of members of congress and other government officials, and those of academics, think tank scholars, and members of the media

mirrored each other and changed in the same ways over time. The concluding section of the paper discusses the implications of these findings for U.S. relations with China and also for our broader theoretical concerns about the interaction of elite and public opinion.

What Shapes Congressional Positions on China?

Members of Congress do not exclusively determine the quality of U.S. relations with states like China, but their views matter. They have both an institutional role in the policymaking process and also a platform from which to influence public opinion. Legislation can have a substantial impact on bilateral relations, as the Jackson-Vanik amendment concerning emigration and human rights did on American relations with the Soviet Union, and the Helms-Burton Act did on U.S. relations with Cuba. Even if Congress enacts no legislation, the leaders of other states may react to legislative comment and criticism in consequential ways. Members of Congress can also influence public opinion, which can in turn have its own effect on policy. We nevertheless remain mindful of the fact that members of Congress and other government officials are not the only groups that might influence public opinion. Academics, policy experts in think tanks, and others might also do so. These elites also have constituencies, but may relate to them in different ways and might thus form somewhat different opinions. Our analysis of elite opinion surveys is intended to test whether government officials and non-governmental elites have formed divergent opinions about whether China poses a threat to the United States.

The Politics of Bilateral Relations

Why would some Members of Congress express greater hostility or friendliness than others toward another state? Simply listing a range of potential influences on congressional positions does not provide an entirely satisfactory answer to this question. We also need to know when particular considerations will predominate if we are to understand why policymakers' assessments might change, and when we might expect them to converge on a friendly or hostile perspective. We begin by observing that economic, security, and humanitarian concerns enter congressional deliberations in somewhat different ways. Security and humanitarian concerns involve public goods. Both safety from potential foreign threats and the presence of conditions that accord with American beliefs about human rights are non-excludable and non-rival from the American point of view. Most Americans, including members of Congress, want at least some of

these public goods, though they will certainly differ on appropriate quantity. These issues evoke what Lowi (1964, 711) called "redistributive" politics, characterized by conflict between "money providing" and "service demanding" groups. The latter want relatively more of the public good, while the former worry about the costs of obtaining it, either in terms of the resources required or interference with the pursuit of other policy goals.

Lowi (1964, 711) notes that the stakes in redistributive issues "are sufficiently stable and clear and consistent to provide the foundation for ideologies." As his argument would suggest, there is evidence that ideology is related to the quantity of these public goods that members of congress prefer. Research about congressional voting on these issues offers evidence that liberal-conservative ideology constitutes the principal political fault line on these questions. Most work on the politics of defense policy has found that conservatives, who value the public good of security more highly, support greater military spending and the like than liberals do, and that these concerns usually predominate over parochial interests in defense contracting (e.g., Bernstein and Anthony 1974; Lindsay 1991; Wayman 1985). Similarly, research on human rights has typically found that liberals, who place a higher value on the public good of humanitarian conditions abroad, are more likely to favor legislation and other action to advance these conditions than are conservatives (e.g., McCormick and Mitchell 2007).¹

By contrast, questions of bilateral economic relations do not always involve public goods. Policies to limit or encourage economic interaction will advantage some actors and disadvantage others. These questions thus more closely resemble Lowi's "distributive" issues, "characterized by the ease with which they can be disaggregated and dispensed unit by small unit, each unit more or less in isolation from other units and from any general rule" (Lowi 1964, 690). In the case of economic interaction with another state, whether an individual stands to gain or lose from a particular policy depends on that individual's role in the economy, including his or her ownership of human capital, industry of employment, and home region. Research on the politics of foreign economic policy in congress accords a substantial role to constituent economic interests reflecting these considerations (e.g., Bailey and Brady 1998; Fordham and McKeown 2003). Ideology might still play a role, but it will be less important on these distributive issues

¹ Neither the politics of national security policy nor of international human rights are entirely free of distributive concerns (e.g., Fordham 2008a; Cutrone and Fordham 2010). However, the structure of these issues suggests that ideology should play a more important role in shaping political conflict over them than it does on questions of foreign economic policy.

than on questions concerning public goods like security and the international observance of human rights norms.

The question facing scholars is whether distributive or redistributive politics will prevail at particular moments in shaping policymakers' attitude toward the other state when both are salient. This is an easy question to answer when one issue overshadows all others, as it might in the aftermath of an especially visible event such as a military clash, massacre, or the negotiation of a trade agreement. It is more difficult to answer when a range of issues are salient. Unfortunately, the latter condition is more common.

One important aspect of ideology suggests that it will be less influential than constituent economic interests when there are a range of salient issues in relations with another state. Ideology links together a wide range of issues. Most research on the topic understands ideology as a set of commonly held ideas and arguments that links issues together for a group of people. As Converse (1964) noted, it acts as a constraint on the combination of issue positions that adherents of the ideology will take. In the U.S. context, ideology is usually understood in terms of a one-dimensional continuum between "liberals" and "conservatives," with implications on a wide range of issues.² The wide applicability of liberal-conservative ideology across issues is a source of ambiguity in its implications for friendly or hostile attitudes a particular state when several issues are relevant. These relationships nearly always involve a range of different issues. There is no reason to expect that all these will align with ideology in the same way. An observer might find its behavior in one issue area appealing while its actions on other matters are repugnant. Put differently, both liberals and conservatives might be able to find ideologically resonant reasons for adopting either a friendly or critical posture toward the other state. To make matters worse, issues can be difficult to separate in the relationship. Political hostility in one issue area can easily spill over into another. Individuals who share the same ideology, but prioritize issues differently might come to different conclusions about relations with the other state. Indeed, the same individual ideologue might reach different conclusions about the other state at different points in time as events alter the relative salience of the issues.

Constituent economic interests do not have a comparable source of ambiguity in their effects on members of congress. Their effects arise from changes in their constituents' wealth and

² It is possible to imagine issue-specific ideologies that linked together fewer issues or perhaps applied only to a single question. Unfortunately, this version of ideology is difficult to distinguish from the specific issue positions most research uses the concept to explain.

income. Unlike liberal or conservative ideology, whose implications for hostility toward China could vary depending on the issues most salient at a given time, import-competing interests should always imply hostility and export-oriented interests should always imply more friendly relations if they are large enough to be politically relevant at all. This difference is one reason that economic interests may predominate when both considerations are relevant. Under these circumstances, members may be able to harmonize their ideological orientation with the economic interests of their constituents by emphasizing issues that imply either more cooperative or more hostile relations within their ideology. Manipulating their constituents' economic interests is more difficult. It may be possible to construct a re-election coalition around a set of interests that suits the member's preferred ideological position, but this will become more difficult as the constituency becomes less diverse, and the economic interests at stake become larger (e.g., Bailey and Brady 1998).

Economic interests may also predominate through their role in selecting candidates and determining electoral outcomes. If economic interaction is highly consequential, and ideology largely determines members' attitudes toward the trading partner, then the constituents who hold these economic interests could use ideology as a device for selecting candidates who will take the positions they favor. To the extent that they are successful, part of the apparent effect of ideology will embody their influence over the electoral process (e.g., Fordham and McKeown 2003). Members from export-oriented and import-competing districts will begin to look ideologically different as this process proceeds, even if none of them adjusts their positions in response to the demands of these groups.

Economic, Security, and Humanitarian Concerns in U.S. Relations with China

How should these processes play out in U.S. relations with China during the past four decades? Economic, security, and humanitarian concerns have all played a role in shaping American attitudes toward China. Security and human rights concerns have always been relevant, through their salience has varied with events such as the end of the Cold War, recent Chinese activism in the South China Sea, and the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. The most important change is the rapidly rising salience of economic relations with China during the last 15 years.

There are good reasons to expect economic interaction with China to influence American attitudes toward the country. Its effects should work primarily through constituent economic

interests. Even if this economic relationship provides aggregate benefits to the nation as a whole, it also generates domestic winners and losers. These distributive effects link trade to political relations. Political hostility can interfere with commerce because states may be reluctant to contribute to the economic growth of an enemy (Gowa and Mansfield 1993) or because they may seek to use economic relations a source of political leverage over the other state (e.g., Hirschman 1980 [1945]). In cases like this one, where relations are not clearly established as either friendly or hostile, this linkage between economic and political relations provides important incentives to the winners and losers from economic interaction. Those who gain from international trade and investment should prefer a more cooperative relationship and thus oppose measures that could exacerbate hostile relations. For the economic losers, hostile political relations provide an opportunity to diminish their losses without having to advocate explicitly parochial protectionist measures.

We expect that members of congress whose constituency includes more people who gain from economic interaction with China should oppose hostile policies toward it. Those whose constituency includes more people who lose from trade have no reason to oppose hostile measures. Instead, these members might seek to play up the negative aspects of political relations as a basis for restricting economic interaction. The large literature on the politics of trade policy offers at least two ways of sorting out those whose income should rise as a result of trade from those whose income should fall. The Stolper-Samuelson theorem suggests that the income due to ownership of factors of production that are relatively abundant should rise under free trade. Income to relatively scarce factors should fall. In the case of the United States, a relatively capital-abundant country, this line of argument implies that individuals who possess more human capital--generally the better educated--should benefit from trade with relatively labor-abundant countries like China. Those who have relatively less human capital should see their incomes decline as a result of this trading relationship.

The Stolper-Samuelson theorem assumes that factors are mobile between sectors. If this assumption does not hold, then individuals invested in relatively uncompetitive industries will see their income decline regardless of whether they hold the relatively scarce or the relatively abundant factor of production. If this is the case, the relevant measure of individual economic interest for United States trade with China is not human capital endowment but the industry in which one is employed. Those working in export-oriented industries stand to benefit, while those

working in import-competing industries will see their income decline.³ We expect that members from districts facing greater import competition from China will favor more hostile measures toward the country, while those who gain more from exports to the country should oppose these measures.

These economic interests are not always relevant to political relations. They arise only when the level of economic interaction is large enough to produce substantial winners and losers in the American economy. Figure 1 depicts the economic salience of trade with China over time. This trade, especially imports from China, is enormously important today, but was not for much of the 1980s and 1990s. It is also worth emphasizing that the manipulation of political hostility to support economic interests assumes that members of congress can make a case for hostile measures against the trading partner. This strategy is plausible against China, but is probably not open to members whose constituents must compete with imports from long-time allies such as Britain or Germany. Even so, widespread anti-Japanese rhetoric during the 1980s and early 1990s suggests that even broadly friendly relations do not necessarily rule out the use of political hostility to motivate trade protection.

[Figure 1 about here.]

Ideology should be the primary source of division over security and human rights issues. Both liberals and conservatives have characteristic issue positions that are relevant to U.S. relations with China, and might thus be expected to influence their adherents' level of hostility or friendliness toward the country. For conservatives, previous research has found that anti-Communism and security are especially salient (e.g., Wayman 1985). Regarded in these terms, China's Communist regime and growing military assertiveness might provoke conservative animosity. On the other hand, contemporary conservatives also prize free markets and oppose regulations that interfere with business, considerations that could lead them to oppose hostile measures that propose economic sanctions to deal with the Chinese. Just as conservatives stress security, previous research has found that liberal prioritize humanitarian concerns (McCormick and Mitchell 2007). On this basis, they might be expected to respond with hostility to Chinese human rights abuses. On the other hand, liberals tend to oppose military action and to prefer lower military spending than conservatives. To the extent that a hostile posture toward China

³ For a more extensive discussion of the distributional effects of trade and their effect on politics, see, among others Hiscox (2001), Rogowski (1989), and Scheve and Slaughter (2001). The original reference is Stolper and Samuelson (1941).

raises the possibility of military conflict, liberals should prefer a more conciliatory stance. These issue positions do not exhaust the catalog of "liberal" and "conservative" positions that might bear on relations with China. China's population-control policy has elicited liberal and conservative commentary because of its relationship to their respective positions on abortion and birth control.

For reasons we have already noted, the wide range of relevant issue positions modifies the influence of ideology and the economic and security concerns it conveys. Liberal and conservative ideological orientations do not point to a single clear position on relations with China. Consistently "liberal" or "conservative" legislators might justify different positions on China by stressing different issue positions that are important within their ideology. World events might raise the salience of one issue or another at particular points in time. For instance, the 1995-96 crisis in the Taiwan Straits might provoke greater security-based conservative hostility, and the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre might provoke greater liberal hostility out of concern about human rights concerns. Under normal conditions, however, it is not clear what consideration should predominate, and thus whether conservatives or liberals should be more hostile to China.

To be clear, our point is not that ideology makes no difference in assessing whether a state like China poses a threat. However, there must be broad agreement among the ideology's adherents about the most important issue on which to evaluate the other state before ideology can produce an observable difference between adherents. This condition is indeed met in many cases. For instance, conservatives generally evaluated the Soviet Union based on its communist government during the Cold War. Similarly, liberal concerns about human rights predominated in their assessment of South Africa under apartheid. In the analysis that follows, we will test for ideological differences, but we are agnostic about the direction of these differences in any particular congress.

While we are primarily interested in the role of ideology as a conduit for security and humanitarian concerns, in order to consider its effects we must also consider the related influence of political party. In recent years, as the parties have become more homogenous, the two considerations have become difficult to distinguish. However, party works differently than ideology in at least two important ways. First, the party is a cooperative arrangement. Members of congress must rely on the help of their co-partisans to advance their own legislative agenda. If

they consistently refuse to support the party's preferred position, they may find it more difficult to obtain this assistance. They should thus tend to adopt the party's preferred position when they would otherwise be indifferent. While potentially important, the two parties' rarely adopted a clear and consistent position on relations with China during the period we will examine here. Members of both parties were critical of the Chinese at different points, and for somewhat different reasons.

A second reason party might influence members' position on China concerns the presidency. When their party controls the White House, its electoral success depends to some extent on their president's effectiveness in managing the executive branch in general and foreign policy in particular. Members of Congress may be under pressure to refrain from interfering in the executive branch's efforts in dealing with China under a president of their own party. In the analysis that follows, we will assess whether members defer to the executive branch when their party controls the presidency. Because of the importance of relations with China to executive branch policymakers, this process may be important, especially if the executive views relations with China differently than do members of Congress from their own party.

Where possible, it makes sense to estimate separate effects for party and ideology. When the two considerations cannot be separated in practice, these effects of party should still modify the impact of ideology. We will take this into account when presenting our results.

Research Design

In the remainder of the paper, our goal is to test several implications of our theoretical discussion. Table 1 lists these hypotheses. We require several types of data to test them. This section explains how we obtained them. First, we need data on measures about China introduced in a range of congresses across the last three decades. We will code these measures according to their posture toward China, and identify the individual members who sponsor or co-sponsor them. Second, we will use data on the economic interest of these members' home districts, as well as on their party and ideology, to predict their sponsorship activity. The party and ideology data are straightforward, but the economic data require some explanation.

[Table 1 about here.]

Congressional Sponsorship Data

Our main dependent variable is the number of legislative measures hostile to China that a Member of Congress sponsored or co-sponsored in a given congress. Our focus here is on the House of Representatives. The House is the more attractive chamber for our purposes because there are more members and more measures introduced, allowing us to discern the hypothesized effects more readily. House districts are also more homogenous in size than states, removing one potentially confounding factor from our analysis.

We identify relevant bills, resolutions, and amendments through a keyword search. A measure is coded as hostile to China when it is critical of the Chinese government's actions, supportive of states in direct conflict with the Chinese government, or if it expresses sympathy with Chinese dissidents. For example, a typical human rights measure, H.R. 2759, introduced on June 25, 1991, conditioned renewal of MFN status on Chinese termination of coercive abortion and sterilization programs. A typical security measure, H.Con.Res. 41, introduced on February 1, 1979, called for the recognition of the Republic of China as the legitimate government of Taiwan. A measure is coded as friendly if it praises or expresses sympathy for the Chinese government or its actions. For instance, H.R. 2312, introduced on May 7, 2009, called for an energy cooperation agreement with China. H.R. 1195, introduced on May 14, 2008, expressed sympathy for earthquake victims in China. Measures that mention either the Chinese government or the Chinese people without taking an explicit position are coded as 'neutral' or 'unknown,' respectively. All bills are coded based on the version first introduced in the House rather than on amended versions; relevant amendments are coded separately.⁴ We chose to use hostile measures in our analysis because they constitute the vast majority of those introduced. Since the normalization of relations with China in 1979 and the granting of most-favored nation status in 1980, relations with China have been on a generally normal and friendly footing. Members hostile to China must thus seek to change the status quo, and therefore have more incentive to introduce and co-sponsor legislation for this purpose. Those friendly to China do not usually need to propose legislation, and do so much less frequently.

Sponsorship and co-sponsorship of relevant bills is especially useful for our study of elite opinion. In contrast to roll-call votes, pre-floor legislative activity is relatively unconstrained as

⁴ In the analyses to follow, we exclude measures in which China is only one of (at least) three countries mentioned in the same context as well as omnibus and appropriations bills.

members of congress may choose to co-sponsor measures on any issue they consider intrinsically important or of strategic value. And while sponsors may have to invest scarce resources of time and staff in introducing measures, co-sponsorship is usually an inexpensive activity (Mayhew 1974). As a result, members will introduce a large number of measures in each congress, providing an informative glimpse of the issues and positions that this particular political elite perceives as important. The unconstrained nature of co-sponsorship also allows us to isolate more clearly the factors that may motivate this activity, including constituency interests.

One may object that a focus on roll-call votes would be more appropriate here, given that many measures introduced in Congress stand little chance of being brought to a vote, and even fewer result in legislation that will directly affect relations with other countries. In fact, research has found that co-sponsorship has a negligible effect on the odds that a bill will pass (e.g., Wilson and Young 1997). While this point is well-taken, other aspects of sponsorship and co-sponsorship are arguably more salient for our purposes. Following Mayhew (1974), we focus on sponsorship activity as position-taking. Members of Congress adopt positions or, in Mayhew's words, make judgmental statements, to signal to constituents that their interests are being represented and will be able to claim credit even if the bill or amendment fails to pass. Position-taking and credit-claiming can provide information about elite opinion to the Member's constituents, including those whose interests are not directly implicated by the particular piece of legislation.

As an initial step, we will focus on a subset of congresses that provides variation on several key considerations. First, we sought to identify congresses that varied in the issues they considered in the U.S.-China relationship. These include Congresses before and after the end of the Cold War, before and after the 1989 events in Tiananmen Square, and at various points along the trajectory of growing commercial relations. We also chose several congresses that bracket changes in the party of the president, in order to test our hypothesis that members from the president's party are less likely to sponsor hostile measures out of deference to the executive. Figure 2 shows the number of measures we coded for each congress we selected.

[Figure 2 about here.]

Data on Party, Ideology, and District Economic Interests

Keith Poole, Howard Rosenthal, and their colleagues have assembled comprehensive data on the party and ideology of members of congress (Poole and Rosenthal 2016). As is conventional in the literature, we will use the first dimension of the DW-NOMINATE scores to represent ideology. Including this indicator of ideology in the same model produces conservative estimates of the effect of economic interests. As Jackson and Kingdon (1992, 809–814), Vandoren (1990, 315, 316), and others have pointed out, indicators of ideology drawn from members' voting records embody some of the effects of other considerations that influence voting behavior, including constituent economic interests. To the extent that they do, including them in the same model will diminish the apparent effect of economic interests and other considerations that might influence the member's ideological position through their impact on either the electoral process or the member's subsequent decision to take those interests into consideration. As the parties have become more ideologically polarized, this indicator of ideology has become increasingly correlated with party affiliation. As we will note in the empirical analysis, this correlation is so high in recent congresses that including both party and ideology in the same model is misleading.

Data on economic interests in China by congressional district require several different types of data. To measure the ownership of human capital in each district, we will use the percentage of the population over age 25 that has completed college. The use of education to indicate human capital is not without controversy (e.g., Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006; Mansfield and Mutz 2009), but is nevertheless common in research on trade policy attitudes (e.g., Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Mayda and Rodrik 2005; Kleinberg and Fordham 2010). The Census Bureau provides these and other population data for congressional districts drawn from each decennial census⁵. The Census Bureau gathered these data for the population two years before the first congress in which districts relying on those data are created. Moreover, the Census Bureau does not estimate changes these data for congressional districts between censuses, so the estimates change only once each decade. Fortunately, population statistics change relatively slowly. The measurement error is unfortunate, but biases against rejection of the null hypothesis in our analysis.

⁵ A variety of sources offer access to Census data. We obtained them using the Social Explorer database (<http://www.socialexplorer.com/>).

Assembling data on sectoral economic interests is more complicated. In general, we have more comprehensive and detailed data for recent congresses, with progressively less available as we move back in time. We begin with sectoral employment data for each congressional district from the decennial census. We use the proportion of the workforce in each sector to capture that sector's share of the economy in that area. These data contain the same sources of measurement error as the indicator of education within each district. The sectors of employment are also not as highly disaggregated as one might like for our purposes. For instance, they treat manufacturing industries as a single sector. We list the industries available in the employment data for each census in the appendix.

Next, we estimate the import sensitivity and export orientation toward China at the national level for each of the sectors for which we have district-level employment data. These measures are simply the value of imports from China or U.S. exports to China in that sector, divided by its total output at the national level. The availability of data once again limits what we can do. The Census Bureau provides commodity-level trade data with China from 1992 through the present (U.S. Census Bureau 2016). The Department of Commerce provides data on trade in services (U.S. Department of Commerce 2016a) from 1999-2014, and total output by sector for a much longer period (U.S. Department of Commerce 2016). Using these data, we compute an index of export orientation and import sensitivity for each district by summing sectoral export orientation and import sensitivity across all industries in that district, using the proportion of total district employment in that industry there as a weight.

The data impose greater limitations on our analyses of earlier congresses. Our export orientation and import sensitivity figures from before 1999 do not include data on trade in services with China. The lack of commodity-level trade data before 1992 prevents the computation of these indices entirely. For congresses that met before 1992, we will simply use the percentage of the workforce in the district employed in manufacturing. This is a crude indicator, but is nevertheless defensible because more than 95 percent of Chinese imports into the United States throughout the period we are considering were manufactured goods. The story of import competition with China is a tale about the manufacturing sector. As we shall see, the size of the manufacturing sector is an excellent proxy for import competition in the later congresses for which we have data on both considerations. It is also worth remembering that the volume of trade with China remained relatively small though the early 1990s. The political

effects of import competition and export orientation during this period reflected anticipation of future trade rather than its immediate ongoing effects, which were small.

Temporal Scope

As a starting point for our analysis, we selected ten congresses between 1979 and 2010. Extensions of this project will expand the data to include additional legislative periods up to the most recent Congress but this initial selection covers the most significant developments in the U.S.-Chinese relationship during this period. Each set of congresses discussed here also relies on a common set of Census data.

The first set of congresses includes the 96th and 97th Congresses, which met from 1979 to 1982. It captures the states of relations during the Cold War, and before substantial trade relations between the two states began. They encompass a presidential transition from Carter to Reagan and thus afford an opportunity to see if this affects party sponsorship activity. Relations during this period were generally harmonious. The Carter administration continued the opening to China that Richard Nixon had initiated, normalizing diplomatic relations in 1979. China also obtained most-favored nation trade status in 1980. (This measure is included in our data, H.Con.Res.204, which passed the House on January 24, 1980.) Reviewing public and elite opinion about China through the normalization of relations in 1979, Kusnitz (1984) argues that security-related events dominated the American side of the relationship. The status of Taiwan after recognition of the People's Republic was a major point of controversy. Tension over arms sales to Taiwan persisted through 1982 (Mann 1999, 115-33).

The second set contains the 100th through 102nd Congress (1987-1992). We selected these congresses to encompass the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the Tiananmen Square massacre. The 100th Congress precedes these events, while the next two follow them. Tiananmen Square cast a long shadow over the relationship, provoking lasting American concern over Chinese human rights violations (Cohen 2000, 211-42; Mann 1998, 210-53), a development that is definitely reflected in our data. The renewal of Chinese most-favored nation status became controversial during this period, with members of congress seeking to attach conditions to the measure.

The third set of congresses includes the 103rd and 104th Congress (1993-1996). We selected them to capture a party transition in control of the White House as well as the period

when the volume of trade between the two states began to take off. This period is also interesting because it included both continuing debate about the renewal of Chinese MFN status as well as security concerns prompted by the third Taiwan Straits Crisis in 1995-96 (Cohen 2000, 232-6).

Finally, we analyze data from the 109th through 111th Congress (2005-2010). We selected this set of congresses to represent the most recent stage of the relationship, as well as to cover another party transition in control of the White House. Annual debates over renewal of China's MFN status ceased after 2000, when the People's Republic joined the WTO and made this status permanent. As Figure 1 indicates, the salience of trade with China during this period was much higher than it had been even during the 1990s. There was periodic controversy about Chinese currency manipulation, as well as about security issues in its relationship with neighboring states.

Empirical Results

In this section we will first present our results concerning sponsorship activity in congress, beginning with the early congresses. Next, we will turn to a more exploratory analysis of elite survey data, assessing whether governmental and non-governmental elites reached different conclusions about the possible threat from China.

Hostile Measures in the 96th and 97th Congresses, 1979-82

Compared to most subsequent congresses, the 96th and 97th Congresses saw relatively few measures introduced concerning China. In the 96th Congress, which included the period when the United States and China established formal diplomatic relations, there were 18 such measures, 13 hostile and 5 friendly. There were a total of 56 sponsorships and co-sponsorships. In the 97th Congress, there were only 4 measures: 2 hostile and 2 friendly. These involved 52 sponsors and co-sponsors.

Table 2 presents the results of our models of sponsorship in these two congresses. In the 96th Congress, only ideology influenced these decisions. Conservatives were more likely to sponsor hostile measures toward China. A conservative Republican with a DW-NOMINATE score of 0.4 had a 0.20 probability of doing so, compared to a 0.08 probability for a liberal Democrat with a -0.4 DW-NOMINATE score. It is perhaps not surprising that the economic variables were not significant in 1979-80. Even though the U.S. manufacturing sector was relatively large, the volume of trade with China was still quite small.

[Table 2 about here.]

The small number of hostile measures introduced in the 97th Congress prevented us from estimating an event count model of the number of co-sponsorships. Only 3 members sponsored more than one measure, so we estimated a logit model of whether each member sponsored at least one measure instead. As in the 96th Congress, political ideology made a difference, while the size of the manufacturing sector did not. A conservative Republican had a 0.21 probability of sponsoring at least one measure, while a liberal Democrat had a 0.05 probability of doing so. These are nearly identical to the previous congress.

The size of the college-educated population was statistically significant in the 97th Congress, but its effects were not consistent with the presence of more human capital in districts with more college-educated persons. Instead, members from these districts were slightly more likely to sponsor hostile measures. Those from districts where the college-educated share of the population was one standard deviation above the mean had a 0.15 probability of sponsorship. This probability was 0.08 for members from districts where this share was one standard deviation below the mean. As we will see, this reversal of the expected effect recurs in later congresses. We will return later to the question of what these effects might mean, but they are clearly inconsistent with factor ownership.

Hostile Measures in the 100th-102nd Congresses, 1987-92

The number of measures introduced about China remained small in the 100th Congress, but dramatically increased in the 101st and 102nd, after Tiananmen Square. In the 100th Congress (1987-88), there were 16 measures, 15 of them hostile. This rose to 69 total measures in the 101st Congress (1989-90), 63 of them hostile. In the 102nd (1991-92), there were 42 measures, 39 of them hostile.

Table 3 presents the results of sponsorship models for these three congresses. Those concerning the 100th Congress look somewhat like those from the 96th and 97th Congress, though neither party nor ideology were significant in this instance. The size of the college-educated population was again positively associated with the sponsorship of hostile measures toward China. Members from more educated districts had a 0.17 probability of sponsoring one or more hostile measures. This probability fell to 0.09 in districts with a less-educated population.

[Table 3 about here.]

In addition to the enormous increase in the number of hostile measures introduced, the variables that predicted these measures were also quite different in the 101st Congress (1989-90). A larger college-educated population in their district was again associated with the sponsorship of more hostile measures toward China. However, the magnitude of this effect is much larger than in the earlier congresses. The probability that a member from a highly educated district would sponsor more than the median number of hostile measures (2) is 0.59. This probability falls to 0.32 for a member from a less-educated district.

As in the 1979-82 period, ideology predicts sponsorship. However, unlike these earlier congresses, liberals rather than conservatives were more hostile. A liberal Democrat with a DW-NOMINATE score of -0.4 had a 0.57 probability of sponsoring more than 2 hostile measures. For a conservative Republican with a DW-NOMINATE score of 0.4, this probability was 0.36. As one would expect given prior research linking liberal ideology to support for international human rights, liberal Democrats appear to have reacted more strongly to events in Tiananmen Square than conservative Republicans did.

Another novel result from the 101st Congress is the significance of the size of the manufacturing sector. Trade with China had increased during the 1980s, but was still much less than it would later become. Nevertheless, members from districts with manufacturing sectors one standard deviation above the mean had a 0.52 probability of sponsoring more than two hostile measures. Those from districts with a manufacturing sector one standard deviation smaller than the mean had a 0.39 probability of sponsoring more than 2 measures. This effect is somewhat surprising. Though consistent with the import competition that the sector would later face, as Figure 1 suggests, this result occurs before imports from China were economically salient. We will return to this possible anomaly in the next section.

The results concerning the 102nd Congress (1991-92) are similar to those from the 101st. Members from relatively well educated districts are once again more likely to sponsor hostile measures. The magnitude of the effect is nearly the same as in the 101st Congress as well. Members from highly educated districts had a 0.48 probability of supporting more than the median number (1) of hostile measures. This probability was 0.24 for members from less-educated districts.

Liberals were once again more likely than conservatives to sponsor hostile measures. This difference was larger in the 102nd Congress. A liberal Democrat had a 0.53 probability of

sponsoring more than 1 hostile measure. For a conservative Republican, this probability was 0.25. This ideological difference might still be due to the increased salience of human rights in U.S.-China relations in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre. Mann (1999, 246-53) argues that it took the Chinese government several years to make its way back to "respectability" in the diplomatic circles around the world.

As in the 101st Congress, the size of the manufacturing sector influenced sponsorship in the 102nd but the effect was smaller. A member from a district with a relatively large manufacturing sector had a 0.40 probability of sponsoring more than 1 measure. A member from a district with a relatively small manufacturing sector had a 0.31 probability of sponsoring more than 1 hostile measure.

Hostile Measures in the 103rd-104th Congresses, 1993-96

The number of hostile measures concerning China was less than the high levels reached during the 101st Congress, but there was still more activity than there had been before then. There were 28 measures proposed during the 103rd Congress, 26 of them hostile. In the 104th, there were 46 measures: 42 hostile, 2 friendly, and 2 neutral.

We have more detailed economic data for the 103rd and 104th Congresses. The Census Bureau's disaggregated bilateral trade data begin in 1992. We are thus able to compute our measures of export orientation and import sensitivity for congressional districts beginning with the 103rd Congress. Unfortunately, because most imported Chinese commodities were manufactured goods, and because the Census does not disaggregate employment data within the manufacturing sector, our indicators of sectoral economic interests are highly correlated during this period. The fact that data on service trade do not begin until 1999 increases the role of the manufacturing sector in our export orientation and import sensitivity indices. In the end, these measures are almost perfectly correlated with one another, and with the size of the manufacturing sector. We cannot reliably estimate their effects in a together in a single model. Instead, we will present results from the best fitting model. For both congresses, this was the one employing our indicator of export orientation.⁶

⁶ We computed a BIC statistic from the models using export orientation in Table 3, and alternative models that substituted import sensitivity, and the size of the manufacturing sector. Export orientation produced a BIC statistic of 1450.06, import-sensitivity produced a BIC of 1451.94, and the size of the manufacturing sector produced a

Party and ideology present a similar problem in these congresses. As the polarization of Congress proceeded, DW-NOMINATE became more strongly correlated with party. By the 103rd Congress, the correlation between Democratic Party affiliation and the first dimension of the DW-NOMINATE score was -0.92. In the 104th it was -0.93. We will use DW-NOMINATE to represent both party and ideology in these models of the 103rd and 104th Congresses. There was very little ideological overlap between the two parties. In the 103rd Congress, only 8 Democrats had ideology scores more conservative than the most liberal Republican. Only 2 Republicans had scores more liberal than the most conservative Democrat. DW-NOMINATE thus captures the differences between the two parties, as well as providing an indication of ideological variation within each of them.

Table 4 presents the results of four models, two from each Congress. The export orientation variable is statistically significant only in the 103rd Congress, and the magnitude of its effects there are relatively small. A member from a relatively export-oriented district had a 0.34 probability of sponsoring more than the median number of hostile measures (1). This probability rose to 0.44 in a relatively less export-oriented district. While this effect accords with our theoretical expectations about the impact of export orientation, it is worth noting that neither the import sensitivity measure nor the size of the manufacturing sector produces the expected effects when used in its place. Overall, these results do not support a very strong claim about the role of trade interests in shaping hostility toward China in the mid-1990s.

[Table 4 about here]

Party and ideology, as indicated by the DW-NOMINATE scores, also have limited effects during these two congresses. Like export-orientation, they were significant in the 103rd Congress but not in the 104th. Its effects resemble those found for the 1979-82 period more than those evident in the immediately preceding congresses in that conservatives were more likely to sponsor hostile measures. In the 103rd, a conservative with a DW-NOMINATE score of 0.4 had a 0.43 probability of sponsoring more than one hostile measure. This probability fell to 0.34 for a liberal with a -0.4 DW-NOMINATE score.

Education had statistically significant effects in both Congresses, and these were somewhat larger than those of either ideology or export orientation. In the 103rd Congress,

statistic of 1453.04. By conventional criteria (Long 1997; Clarke 2001; Raftery 1995), this weakly to positively supports the export-orientation model we present in the table.

members from a district with a relatively large college-education population had a 0.47 probability of sponsoring more than 1 hostile measure. For those from districts with relatively small college educated populations, this probability fell to 0.32. In the 104th Congress, these probabilities were 0.43 and 0.30, respectively.

Hostile measures in the 109th to 111th Congresses, 2005-10

Congress was quite active concerning China in these three congresses. While the number of measure introduced did not reach the total of 69 during the 101st Congress at the time of Tiananmen Square, they were consistently high compared to other periods. In the 109th Congress, there were 53 measures, 44 of them hostile. For the 110th, these numbers were 57 and 43. For the 111th, they were 42 and 33. As Figure 2 suggests, the salience of relations with China increased over time.

We have substantially more detailed economic data from this period than for any other. The 2000 Census disaggregated the sectoral employment data more than in previous censuses, though the manufacturing sector remains undifferentiated. Above all, data on the trade in services helps differentiate export orientation from import sensitivity within congressional districts. The different picture is not merely an artifact of better data availability. Trade in services with China increased substantially during the 2000s. The correlation between export orientation and import sensitivity across congressional districts drawn from the 2000 Census is 0.66, sufficiently low to allow us to include them in the same regression. Because more than 95 percent of Chinese imports were manufactured products, the size of the manufacturing sector is correlated with import sensitivity at 0.90. We will present models with the import sensitivity measure and also with the size of the manufacturing sector as a substitute for it. Because the latter measure is available for the entire period considered in this table, its effect provide a basis for assessing the changing political effects of trade with China at different points in time.

Table 5 presents the results of six models of the 109th through 111th Congresses, two for each congress alternatively using the import sensitivity measure and the size of the manufacturing sector. Party/ideology⁷, as indicated by the DW-NOMINATE scores, is only significant in the 111th Congress, when conservatives were more likely to sponsor anti-Chinese

⁷ DW-NOMINATE and party are even more highly correlated in these congresses than in the 103rd and 104th, so we do not use them in the same model. The correlations are -0.96 in the 109th, -0.96 in the 100th, and -0.95 in the 111th.

measures. A conservative (Republican) with a DW-NOMINATE score of 0.4 had a 0.41 probability of sponsoring more than the median number (2) of hostile measures. A liberal (Democrat) had a 0.30 probability of doing so.

[Table 5 about here.]

The effects of education were quite weak in these three congresses. It was only significant during the 111th Congress, and only in the specification using the size of the manufacturing sector rather than import sensitivity. In this case, a member from a relatively highly educated district had a 0.39 probability of supporting more than the median number of hostile measures. A member from a less educated district had a 0.30 probability of sponsoring at least 2 measures.

Trade with China had much larger and more robust effect across all three congresses. Export orientation, import sensitivity, and the size of the manufacturing sector all had statistically significant effects on members' propensity to sponsor anti-Chinese measures. Table 6 reports the marginal effects for each of the three economic indicators in the 109th-111th Congresses. These effects are among the largest observed for any variable in the entire period considered in this paper. They are substantially larger than those found for other variables in most other congresses, as well as for both party/ideology and education when they are significant in the same time period.

[Table 6 about here.]

For at least two reasons, even these large effects are actually conservative estimates of the impact of trade on hostility toward China. First, the fact that employment data for the manufacturing sector in each district are not disaggregated by industry means that import-competing and export oriented industries are lumped together. In picking up these differences, more disaggregated data could only yield higher estimates. Second, part of the effect of DW-NOMINATE scores used to indicate ideology embody the impact of economic structure on the probability that the district will elect a liberal or conservative member. Modeling this indirect effect could also only increase the total effect of economic structure.

Influences on Congressional Hostility to China across the 1979-2010 Period

Several patterns emerge from this look across congressional sponsorship of hostile measures toward China in the last three decades. We turn first to party and ideology. Figure 3 depicts the

marginal effect of party and ideology in each congress we considered here. It shows the change in the probability of supporting more than the median number of hostile measures associated with the change from a liberal Democrat to a conservative Republican. As the Figure indicates, ideology/party had a statistically significant effect in six of the ten congresses we considered, but its effects changed over time. Conservatives have sometimes displayed more hostility toward China; at other times liberals have done so. At other times, the two groups have not had distinctive views on the relationship.

[Figure 3 about here.]

This result is consistent with our argument that the effect of ideology on elite opinion about China depended on the issue that was salient at the time. During the 1979-82 period, when relations with China took place in the shadow of Cold War anti-communism, conservatives were more critical. During the 1989-94 period, when Chinese observance of human rights was relatively important, liberals tended to be most critical. When external events have not dominated the agenda, individual conservatives and liberals have been more at liberty to choose which issues to stress in evaluating the relationship. Under these circumstances, there may be no clear difference between the two ideological camps. The bottom line is that ideology may help shape elite opinion toward another state, but it is likely to have its greatest effects when a clearly identifiable issue, or set of issues, dominates the relationship.

Evidence across the ten congresses provides some support for our hypothesis concerning constraint on expressions of hostility when a president of one's own party holds the White House. The data contain three instances when control of the White House shifted from one party to another between congresses. In two of these instances, the transition from George H.W. Bush to Bill Clinton in 1993, and from George W. Bush to Barack Obama in 2009, the marginal effect of party/ideology changed in the expected direction. Liberal Democrats became less hostile to China in the 103rd Congress, under Clinton, than they had been in the 102nd, under the elder Bush. Conservative Republicans were the relatively hostile faction in Obama's first Congress, the 111th, a tendency that had been absent during the younger Bush's last Congress, the 110th, a pattern consistent with diminished deference to the president. By contrast, this relationship did not appear in the transition from the Carter to the Reagan administration. Conservatives Republicans were somewhat more hostile toward China in the 97th Congress than they had been in the 96th. It is worth remembering that there were a very small number of measures introduced

during these two congresses, however, so relatively critical conservative Republicans might not have caused the administration enough difficulty to merit an effort to restrain them. On balance, the evidence supports the presidential party constraint hypothesis, but it hardly conclusive.

Turning to the evidence about economic interests, we found no evidence to support the argument that members from districts with relatively abundant human capital in the form of education were less likely to sponsor hostile measures to China. Indeed, in most of the congresses we examined, the opposite was true: members from highly educated districts tended to sponsor *more* hostile measures. Figure 4 depicts this relationship across the ten congresses we examined. It shows the effect of moving from a district with a relatively small proportion of college graduates to a district with a large proportion of these relatively well-educated people. The percentage of college graduates was statistically significant in six congresses, and was especially large during the 101st Congress, around the time of the Tiananmen Square massacre.

[Figure 4 about here.]

We cannot say with confidence what produced this relationship, but two possibilities are worth exploring in future research. The first is that greater education might be correlated with greater cosmopolitan support for human rights within the district. This is certainly consistent with the strong effect in the aftermath of Tiananmen Square, when human rights were highly salient, and the effect of education was especially strong. Alternatively, education might be associated with greater support for foreign policy activism generally within the district, a finding of individual-level research on public opinion (e.g., Fordham 2008b). Members from highly educated districts might simply sponsor more measures about international affairs generally, including those hostile to China. This explanation is consistent with the effect of education during the 96th and 97th Congresses, when human rights were far less important in the U.S.-Chinese relationship than they would later become. Future research might distinguish among these two possibilities by examining sponsorship of measures about military intervention or other activist foreign policies not associated with human rights.

Finally, our analysis produced strong support for our hypotheses about sectoral economic interests. Figure 5 depicts the effect of the manufacturing sector across all ten congresses. It shows the marginal effect of moving from a district with a small to a large manufacturing sector. Import sensitivity and export orientation are preferable indicators, but we have them only for the

later congresses. Even with this imperfect indicator, though, the effects are quite large for the last three congresses, when import competition was most salient.

[Figure 5 about here.]

While the effects of the manufacturing sector match our expectations in most respects, those from the 101st and 102nd Congress are somewhat surprising. As we noted earlier, they are in the expected direction given the budding import sensitivity of the manufacturing sector, but they appear earlier than we expected. It is possible that manufacturers were already concerned about the trend toward greater manufactured imports from China. The unusually large number of measures introduced in this congress gives us greater variance in our dependent variable, and might pick up such a relatively subtle effect that would otherwise be difficult to detect. A more troubling possibility from the standpoint of our theoretical argument is that the effect could result from an unmodeled variable correlated with the size of the manufacturing sector but unrelated to trade. If one could identify such a variable, it would constitute a real threat to our argument about the importance of economic interests. We think the first explanation for this finding is more likely, but we cannot logically rule out the second.

Elite Opinion Surveys and Hostility to China

Members of congress are not the only elite that might influence public opinion. People can get information about China from a number of different sources including educators, the media, independent experts, and others. Unlike members of congress, these groups do not necessarily have a well-defined societal constituency. They are free to form their views based on many different considerations. Do the opinions of these other elites about China differ systematically from those of members of congress and other government officials?

To answer this question, we will examine data from elite surveys conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA), formerly the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, between 1983 and 2014 (Smeltz, et al. 2015; Chicago Council on Foreign Relations 1983; 1987; 1991; 1996; 2000; 2004). The elites samples used in these surveys included academics, experts from foreign policy organizations, media figures, religious leaders, and others interested in foreign policy, as well as members of congress and other government officials. The portion of the sample drawn from congress and the executive branch gives us another window onto the views that government elites hold toward China beyond the legislative sponsorships we

examined in the preceding section. These surveys contain repeated questions that will allow us to examine trends in the salience of China as a foreign policy concern and the extent to which elites perceive China's rise as a threat.

As Figure 3 indicated, the salience of China in Congress has increased fairly steadily over time, increasing with economic interaction. Table 7 provides two different measures of the salience of China in elite opinion in the 1980s and 1990s. The first question concerns whether the United States had a vital interest in China. Here there is overwhelming elite agreement that it does. The percentage of elites expressing this view has increased over time, reaching near consensus by 1994. One noteworthy outlier is the year 1990, when only 73 percent of the sample agreed that the United States had a vital interest in China. This might stem from the fact that the survey was administered in October and November of 1990, when Americans were focused on the impending war with Iraq. In spite of the agreement that China was vitally important, the second question suggests that American elites still did not consider it to be among the most important foreign policy problems the country faced during the two decades these surveys cover. The percentage of elites mentioning China among the top three foreign policy problems was generally higher after the mid-1990s, but remained below 10 percent.

[Table 7 about here.]

Hostility to China was the focus of our analysis of congressional sponsorship activity. The elite surveys contain one commonly asked question that allow us to assess hostility over time, albeit indirectly. Elites were regularly asked to what extent they considered the development of China as a world power to be a threat to vital U.S. interests. Perception of threat is not the same thing as hostility, of course, but elites who did not view China as a threat should be less likely to endorse hostile acts against the country. Table 8 provides the exact wording of the question and the response categories. The statistics in the table compare the responses of government elites with those of academics, independent foreign policy experts, media figures and religious leaders. We report all response categories for each survey in which CCGA asked the question. Our interest here is in whether the changes in U.S. relations with China over time led to a divergence between these two groups' assessments of the country.

[Table 8 about here.]

The most important thing to note about the results in Table 8 is that there are no statistically significant differences between these groups in their assessment of China in any of

the surveys that included this question. This is true in spite of the substantial differences between these elites, as well as the changes in U.S. relations with China and in the perceptions of both elites over time. Perception of a Chinese threat peaked in 1998, the only survey year when majorities of both elites viewed the country as a critical threat. An overwhelming majority of both elites consistently viewed the country as at least an important threat, if not a critical one. The numbers saying China was not an important threat were greatest in 1990, mirroring the results in Table 6 concerning whether the U.S. had a vital interest in China, likely for the same reason. The proportion in this response is also somewhat higher in the most recent iteration.

The 2014 elite survey also included four additional questions about China reflecting recent concerns about economic and security relations. Table 9 reports the exact wording of these questions and the response categories. It also compares responses to these questions by the same two groups examined in Table 8. There is only a statistically significant difference in the groups' responses to these question on one of the four questions, the one concerning whether U.S. debt to China posed a threat. Government elites appear to perceive a somewhat greater threat from China. Though these differences are not large enough to be statistically significant, they are more likely to see Chinese conflict with neighboring states as a threat, and they are more likely to view economic parity between the United States and China as a mostly negative development. They are also somewhat more likely to express support for containing than engaging China, though a large majority still prefers engagement.

[Table 9 about here.]

More research would be needed to identify the sources of non-governmental elites' assessments of China. However, the CCGA surveys contain little evidence that non-governmental elites have held substantially different attitudes about China during the last three decades than have those working in government, in spite of their somewhat different constituencies.

Conclusion

Examining evidence about the U.S.-Chinese relationship over a relatively long period of time points to several conclusions about the sources of elite opinion. First, economic interests are not always important enough to shape hostility toward another state, but they can be decisive when they are. The volume of U.S. trade with China remained relatively low until the early 1990s, and

other considerations, such as ideology and education within their home district, played a larger role in shaping sponsorship activity. However, once economic relations became highly salient after 2000, constituent interests arising from this aspect of the relationship had a decisive influence on sponsorship activity in congress.

Second, ideology can be an important source of elite opinion about another state. It is the principal way that differences over security and humanitarian concerns make their way into politics. However, its role depends on what issue is salient in the relationship. When security issues dominated the U.S.-China relationship, as many observers argue that they did during the Cold War, conservatives were the more hostile faction. When human rights became more salient, as they did after the Tiananmen Square massacre, liberals became the more critical ideological group. When there was less agreement on the most important issue in the relationship, ideology was not an important source of political cleavage. Individual members' ideological views might still have shaped their opinion about China, but in ways that differed across individuals depending on the aspect of the relationship they found most important. Put differently, liberals and conservatives could not be confident that others who shared their ideology would also share their attitude toward China.

Third, examining a relatively long period of time allows us to assess the relationship between the opinions of different types of elites under a range of different historical circumstances. Even though the most salient issues and the background conditions of world politics changed over time, we found little evidence that the opinions of government official and non-governmental elites diverged at any point. Government officials, including members of congress, academics, think tank officials, and media figures may relate to their constituencies in different ways, but these differences did not lead to substantially different opinions about a possible threat from China on the CCGA surveys.

Focusing on sub-national divisions like those we have considered here is a potentially fruitful avenue of research for those interested in the origins of interstate rivalries. The beginnings of these hostile relationships have received less attention than has their maintenance and termination. Most research on the topic has thus far focused on the interaction between unitary states. Our research suggests that hostility may originate in the narrower interests of a sub-national faction. Such a group might eventually persuade policymakers to accept its position, but the real source of antagonism might not lie in the security concerns of central decision-

makers or the unitary state. Of course, our argument here helps explain the politics of the U.S.-Chinese relationship, not outcomes such as the emergence of rivalry. However, these outcomes will have to emerge from struggle and negotiation among the factions we have sought to identify.

The U.S.-China relationship is important, but it is still only one case. It is fair to ask if the conclusions it suggests apply more broadly. The case offers substantial variation over time on some important dimensions, including the salience of economic relations, and the presence or absence of a common security threat from a third state. However, the fundamental nature of relations between the two states remained unclear through the period we have examined. It was never obvious that China was becoming an ally, like Britain, Germany, or Japan, or a rival like the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany had been. If there had been widespread agreement on this issue, the variables we have considered here might have had quite different effects. Importantly, it would have been difficult for elites to use the possibility of hostile relations to justify limits on economic interaction if ideological ties between the two states, or ideological animosity toward a common enemy, had made genuinely hostility seem implausible. If China had been a clear ideological adversary, export-oriented interests might not have been able to block measures intended to limit economic interaction as they did in the decades-long debate over the extension of MFN.

U.S. relations with China clearly differed from the ideologically charged alliances and enmities that characterized many major power relationships during the 20th Century. However, it is far from obvious that the fundamental ambiguity of the relationship makes it unusual in world politics. Before World War I, this kind of ambiguity characterized relations among most of the major powers. States like Britain and Russia could be rivals over their conflicting imperial ambitions in central Asia and the Mediterranean through the beginning of the 20th Century, yet allies a few years later. American attitudes toward Japan could shift from sympathy during the Russo-Japanese War to growing suspicion within a few years of the war's conclusion. Looking at a long historical sweep of world politics, it may be unrealistic to expect a consistent underlying level of friendliness or hostility arising from ideological sympathy to characterize most international relationships, as it often did during the global ideological struggles of the 20th Century.

Not surprisingly, thinking on the sources of friendly or hostile relations before these ideological struggles began was more likely to consider economic influences on security

relationships than most theorists have been during the Cold War. For example, Mahan's (1987 [1890]) discussion of sea power stressed its role in conflict over international commerce and sources of wealth accessible from the sea. Brooks Adams' (1900) arguments about the future role of the United States in world politics hinged on the country's economic power and its prospects for controlling overseas markets and sites for investment. Charles Conant (1900a; 1900b) also treated political relationships as fundamentally driven by economic competition, providing an account resembling Hobson's work on imperialism in some key respects. These well known works were not unusual for their time. The prominent role they gave economic considerations in shaping political relations finds echoes in college textbooks on international politics from the same era (e.g., Reinsch 1900, 31, 39; Williams 1967 [1929]). Recent accounts that stress the role of economic considerations in shaping political relations represent a reemergence of this earlier line of thinking, and arguably reflect the return of world politics from the exceptional condition of ideological conflict that prevailed during the 20th Century (e.g., Frieden 1994; Gartzke 2007; McDonald 2009; Mousseau 2000).

The research in this paper does not provide a comprehensive account of the politics of U.S. relations with China. One especially important piece of the puzzle that we have set aside for now concerns the views of the general public. Elite opinion plays a critical role in shaping public opinion. Messages from elites with whom they have an affinity are the primary conduit through which international events as well as domestic political and economic interests reach most people. At the same time, public opinion may play an independent role in politics. The public's views are not infinitely malleable. If people have received consistent messages that China is an enemy for a long period of time, the sense that the Chinese are fundamentally hostile and untrustworthy might form a durable part of the group identity of many people. As Converse (1964) argued, even those with little information and ideological constraint in their views might form consistent opinion on the basis of such a group attachment or animosity. The glacial pace of at which the U.S. public's perception of China changed between the 1949 and Nixon's opening to the People's Republic provides a useful example here (Kusnitz 1984). Since then, the public's views on China have remained highly variable.

The persistence of elite controversy over relations with China does not rule out the formation of a renewed enemy image of China in the American public. The evidence concerning congressional sponsorship activity suggests that elite messaging does not necessarily reflect the

balance of elite opinion. Depending on institutional factors and the strategic political calculations of elite actors, a relatively narrow group might dominate messaging on relations with China. For example, the overwhelming majority of measures introduced in congress were negative during the period we examined, yet few of them were actually enacted. Members with more positive views of China had fewer reasons to propose legislation because U.S. policy toward China remained friendly in some key respects, including MFN status and normal diplomatic relations. Their reticence allowed critics to dominate congressional debate on the relationship. Even if negative messaging about China comes mainly from a narrow set of interests, it could still have broader effects on mass opinion if these negative messages are all the public hears. We hope to explore this possibility in future research.

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Table 1. Hypotheses about U.S. Elite Hostility toward China

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1. Members of congress whose constituents possess relatively more human capital should express less hostility toward China.
 2. Members of congress whose districts rely relatively more on industries that export to China should express less hostility toward China.
 3. Members of congress whose districts rely relatively more on industries that compete with Chinese imports should express more hostility toward China.
 4. Members of congress facing a president of their own party should express less hostility toward China than members of the opposition party.
 5. Liberal and conservative members of congress should express different levels of hostility toward China, though the direction of this difference will depend on the issues salient in U.S.-Chinese relations at the time.
 6. When both constituent economic interests and member ideology are salient at the same time, economic interests should have larger effects on expressions of hostility to China.
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Table 2. Sponsorship and Co-sponsorship in the 96th and 97th Congress (1979-1982)

	96 th Congress	97 th Congress
Manufacturing employment (%)	0.01 (0.02)	0.001 (0.02)
Ideology	1.88* (0.56)	2.55* (0.76)
Democrat	0.53 (0.38)	0.38 (0.51)
College (%)	0.01 (0.01)	0.04* (0.02)
Constant	-2.94* (0.81)	-3.52* (0.94)
Observations	439	436

Note: Negative binomial regression (96th Congress) and logistic regression (97th Congress). *p<0.05 in two-tailed test.

Table 3. Sponsorship and Co-sponsorship in the 100th through 102nd Congress (1987-1992)

	100th Congress	101st Congress	102nd Congress
Manufacturing employment (%)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02* (0.006)	0.02* (0.007)
Ideology	-0.75 (0.83)	-0.84* (0.26)	-1.59* (0.35)
Democrat	-0.67 (0.63)	-0.13 (0.19)	-0.37 (0.27)
College (%)	0.05* (0.01)	0.04* (0.005)	0.04* (0.006)
Constant	-3.1* (0.9)	-0.44 (0.29)	-1.07* (0.38)
Observations	439	440	436

Note: Negative binomial regression. *p<0.05 in two-tailed test.

Table 4. Sponsorship and Co-sponsorship in the 103rd and 104th Congress (1993-1996)

	103rd Congress	104th Congress
Export orientation	-7.32* (3.29)	-4.2 (3.04)
Ideology	-0.29* (0.13)	0.17 (0.11)
College (%)	0.03* (0.007)	0.03* (0.007)
Constant	0.12 (0.24)	0.53* (0.26)
Observations	437	445

Note: Negative binomial regression. *p<0.05 in two-tailed test.

Table 5. Sponsorship and Co-sponsorship in the 109th through 11th Congress (2005-2010)

	109 th Congress		110 th Congress		111 th Congress	
Export orientation	-4.13*	-4.25*	-7.41*	-8.29*	-2.57*	-2.46*
	(1.86)	(1.91)	(1.94)	(2.1)	(0.82)	(0.84)
Import sensitivity	1.08*		1.87*		0.47*	
	(0.35)		(0.41)		(0.22)	
Manufacturing employment (%)		0.06*		0.12*		0.03
		(0.02)		(0.03)		(0.02)
Ideology	-0.02	-0.03	0.16	0.13	0.48*	0.47*
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.09)	(0.09)
College (%)	-0.29	0.74	-1.57	0.89	0.42	1.15*
	(0.67)	(0.53)	(0.92)	(0.73)	(0.64)	(0.05)
Constant	0.83	0.86	0.95	1.05*	0.94	0.94*
	(0.26)	(0.27)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.27)	(0.27)
Observations	438		446		444	

Note: Negative binomial regression. *p<0.05 in two-tailed test.

Table 6. Marginal Effects of Economic Factors

	109 th Congress Pr(y>2)	110 th Congress Pr(y>1)	111 th Congress Pr(y>2)
Export orientation			
Mean + SD	0.34	0.23	0.25
Mean - SD	0.51	0.57	0.44
Difference	0.17	0.23	0.19
Import sensitivity			
Mean + SD	0.52	0.57	0.4
Mean - SD	0.32	0.3	0.29
Difference	0.2	0.26	0.11
Manufacturing employment (%)			
Mean + SD	0.53	0.58	0.4
Mean - SD	0.32	0.28	0.3
Difference	0.21	0.29	0.1

Note: Probabilities may not sum to 1 due to rounding.

Table 7. Salience of China in Elite Opinion (CCFR-CCGA)

<i>Question: What do you feel are the two or three biggest foreign policy problems facing the United States today? [China]</i>		<i>Question: Many people believe that the United States has a vital interest in certain areas of the world and not in other areas; that is, certain countries of the world are important to the U.S. for political, economic or security reasons. I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me whether you feel the U.S. does or does not have a vital interest in that country. [China]</i>
1983	5.56	84
1986	1.17	89
1990	2.92	73
1994	5.22	95
1998	8.71	95
2002	6.05	[not asked]

Note: Cell values represent percent of respondents.

Table 8. Perception of China as a Threat in Elite Opinion (CCFR-CCGA)

Question: I am going to read you a list of possible threats to the vital interest of the United States in the next ten years. For each one, please tell me if you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all. [The development of China as a world power]

	Critical threat	Important but not critical threat	Not an important threat
1990			
Civilian government	20.77	59.46	20.27
Non-government	13.44	58.06	28.49
1994			
Civilian government	45.45	49.35	5.19
Non-government	44.92	47.06	8.02
1998			
Civilian government	62.65	34.94	2.41
Non-government	57.69	39.01	3.3
2002			
Civilian government	44.44	46.46	9.09
Non-government	50.24	45.37	4.39
2014			
Civilian government	24.0	61.33	14.67
Non-government	28.68	55.43	15.89

Note: Cell values represent percent of respondents. Values may not sum to 100 due to rounding. None of the differences are statistically significant.

Table 9. Concerns about China in Elite Opinion (CCGA 2014)

Question: Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interest of the United States in the next 10 years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all:

	Critical threat	Important but not critical threat	Not an important threat
U.S. debt to China*			
Civilian government	23.08	56.41	20.51
Non-government	11.76	50.59	37.65
Border disputes between China and its neighbors			
Civilian government	19.48	71.43	9.09
Non-government	18.68	62.26	19.07

Question: If China's economy were to grow to be as large as the U.S. economy, do you think that would be mostly positive, mostly negative, or equally positive and negative?

	Mostly positive	Mostly negative	Equally positive and negative
Civilian government	22.73	23.38	53.9
Non-government	22.92	16.84	60.24

Question: In dealing with the rise of China's power, do you think the U.S. should:

	Actively work to limit the growth of China's power	Undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China
Civilian government	15.58	84.42
Non-government	11.41	88.59

Note: Cell values represent percent of respondents. Row values may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

*Difference statistically significant.

Figure 1.
U.S. Trade with China, 1975-2015

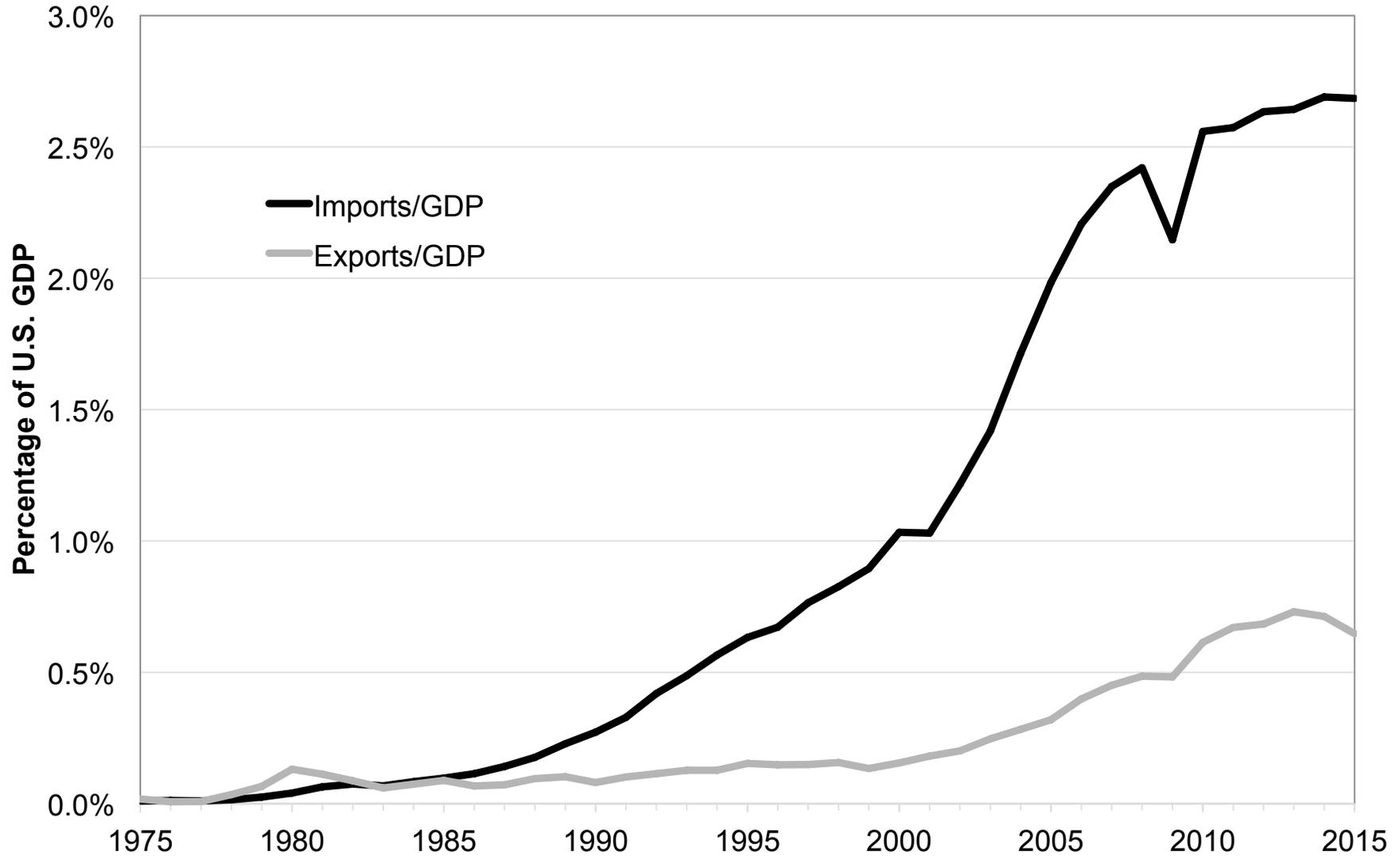


Figure 2.
Measures Concerning China Proposed in Ten Congresses

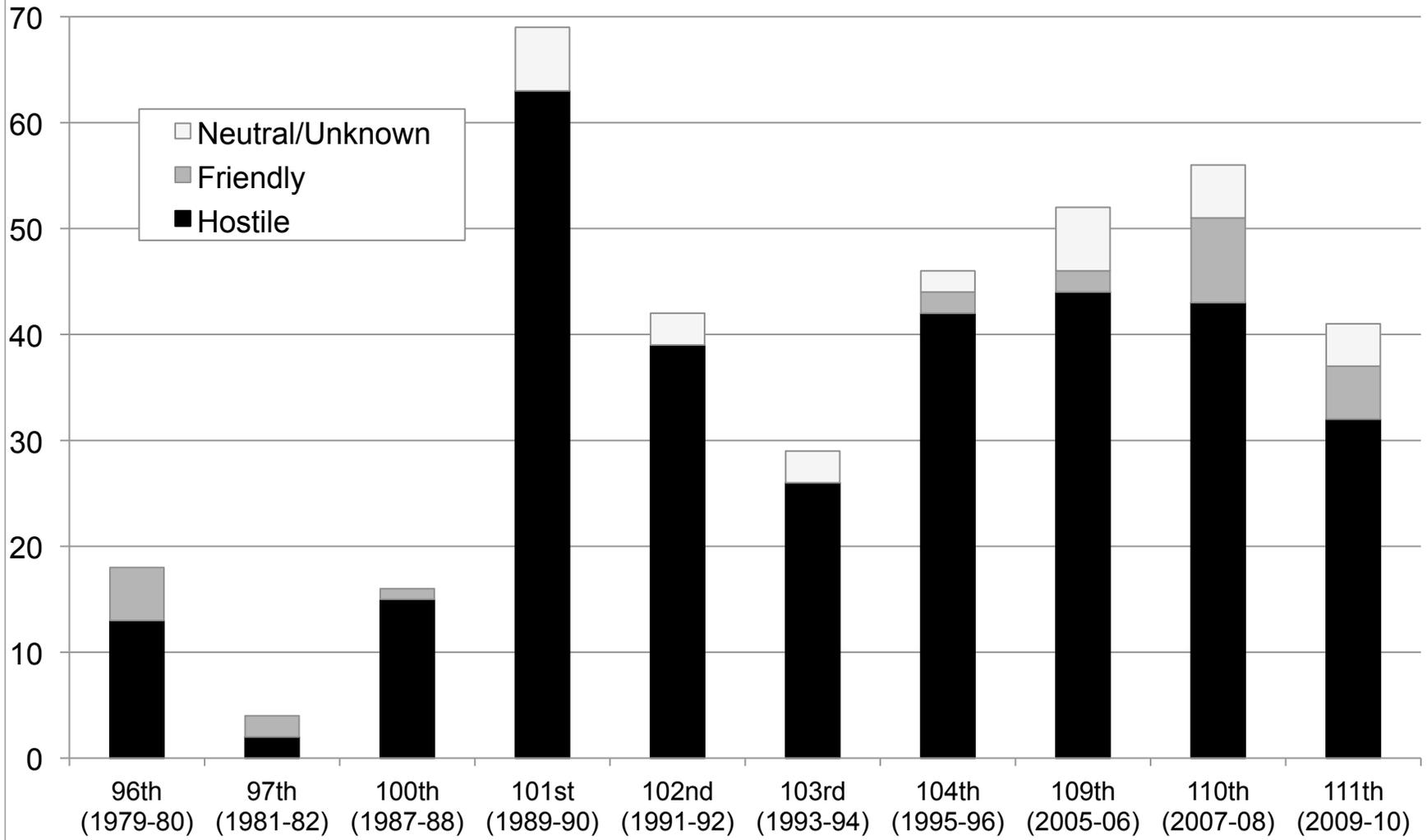


Figure 3.
Effect of Ideology on Hostility to China Across Ten Congresses

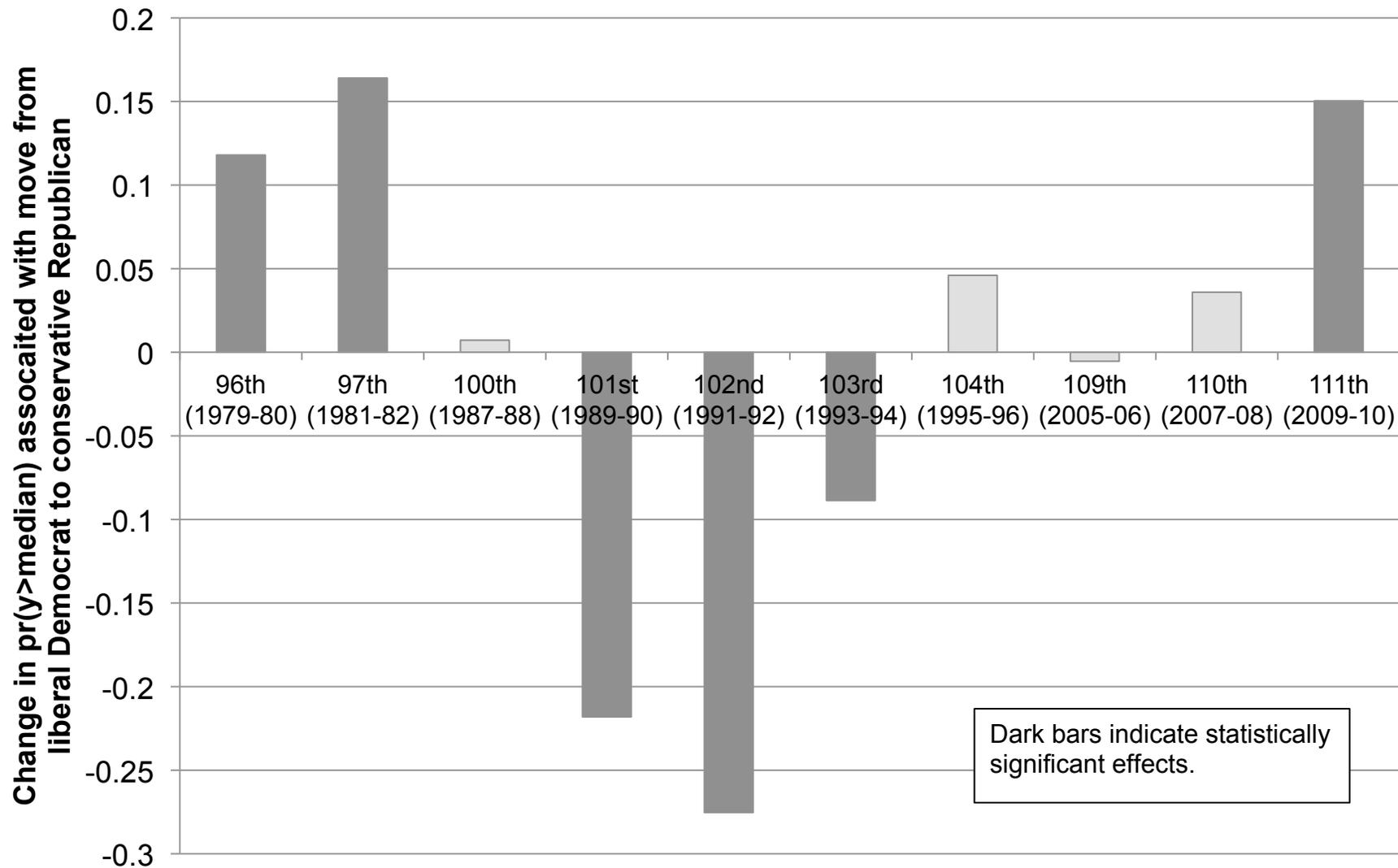


Figure 4.
Effect of District Education on Hostility to China Across Ten Congresses

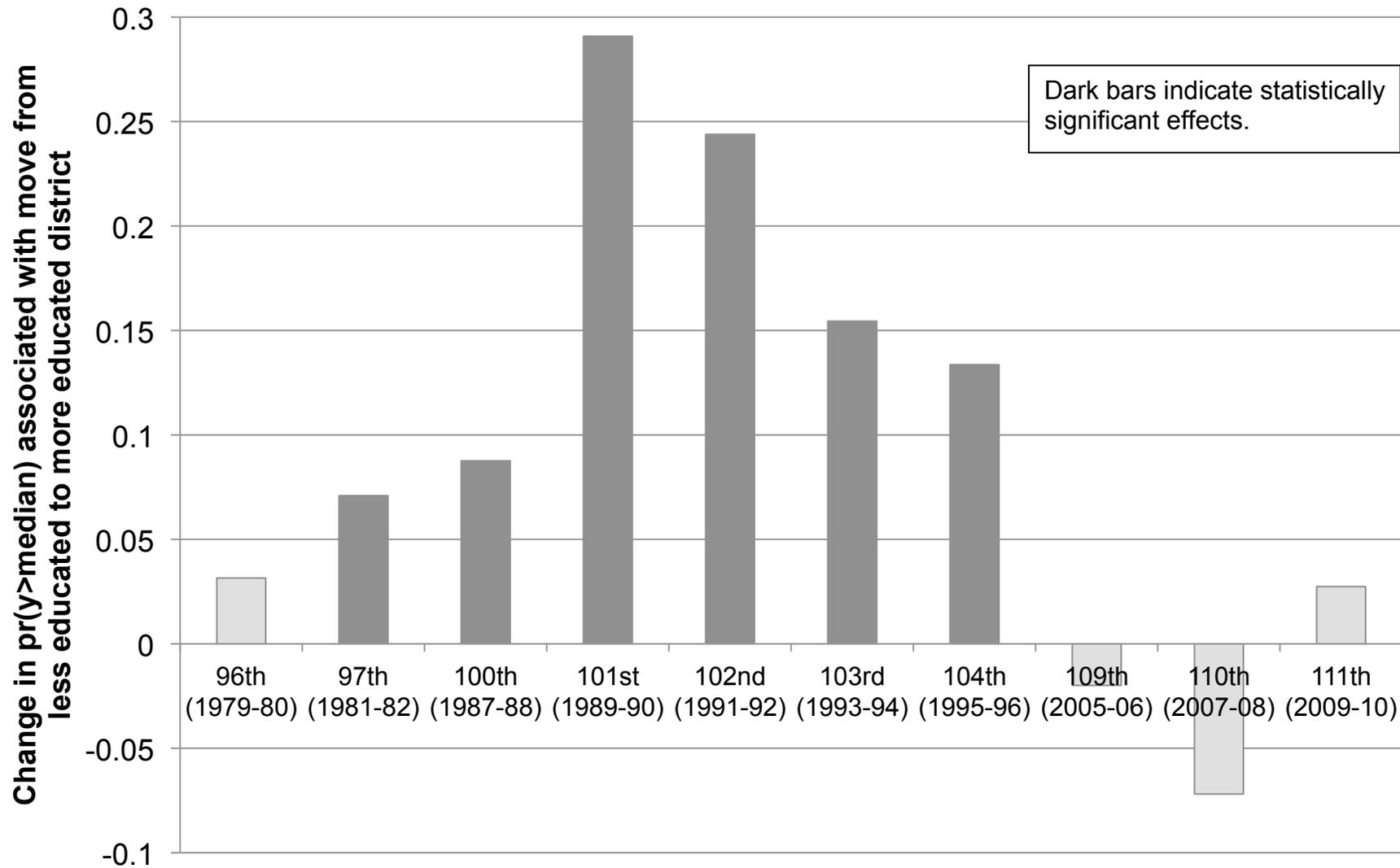


Figure 5.
Effect of Manufacturing Sector on Hostility to China Across Ten Congresses

