

MARCH 2024

U.S.-China Scholarly Recoupling

*Advancing Mutual Understanding in an Era of
Intense Rivalry*

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Scott Kennedy

A Report of the CSIS Trustee Chair in Chinese Business and Economics

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INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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About the Trustee Chair in Chinese Business and Economics

The CSIS Trustee Chair in Chinese Business and Economics provides unmatched thought leadership for the Washington policy community by examining China's economy and the costs and benefits of its commercial relationship with the United States and the rest of the world.

We go beyond the headlines to examine Chinese sectoral trends and industrial policy, the behavior of companies and financial institutions, international trade and supply chains, U.S.-China relations, and the political economy of cleantech and climate governance. With our rigorous empirical and data-driven research, we put forward proposals for how the United States and others can adopt smart policies that take into account the economic and security costs and benefits in an era defined by both deep interdependence and strategic competition.

Our analysis is shared with the policy community, business leaders, scholars, and the public through reports and commentaries, interactive digital content, media engagement, public events, and private discussions.

Acknowledgments

This volume is the product of a multiyear collaborative initiative aimed at rebuilding U.S.-China scholarly ties involving multiple organizations and individuals in both countries.

Sitting at the center of the initiative are over two dozen leading scholars based at U.S. and Chinese universities and research organizations. They have devoted a substantial amount of their time, energy, and expertise to engage with one another and analyze the opportunities and challenges of scholarly ties between the United States and China.

The CSIS Trustee Chair in Chinese and Business Economics is particularly grateful to each of the scholars who participated in the project's two conferences—in Beijing, China, in July 2023 and Washington, D.C., in October 2023. The U.S.-based scholars in this group are: Alastair Iain Johnston, Shanjun Li, Ethan Michelson, Stephen Platt, Meg Rithmire, Daniel Rosen, Scott Rozelle, Matt Sheehan, Deborah Seligsohn, Jessica Teets, and Jessica Chen Weiss. The Chinese scholars are: Da Wei, Dai Xin, Gui Yongtao, Jie Dalei, Niu Ke, Qi Haotian, Wang Jisi, Wu Chunsi, Xie Tao, Yao Yang, Yu Tiejun, and Zhang Ran.

The program is highly appreciative of the dozen other scholars who were only able to attend one of these meetings. In Beijing, they included: Lei Shaohua, Wang Yong, Xu Qinyi, Zhao Minghao, and Zhu Feng. Those who only joined in Washington are: Jude Blanchette, Mary Gallagher, Bonnie Glaser, Kenneth Lieberthal, Bonny Lin, Ilaria Mazzocco, Andrew Mertha, and Suisheng Zhao.

The thoughtful and incisive contributions to this volume are from the experts who attended one or both meetings in 2023.

The program sincerely appreciates the help of the U.S. Department of State and China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including their embassies in Beijing and Washington, respectively, for expeditiously handling visa applications and answering many questions before and during the conferences. The Trustee Chair is also grateful to those in government, business, the media, think tanks, and universities in Beijing and Washington who met with the scholars in this initiative to discuss the opportunities and challenges related to scholarly ties as well as the political, security, and economic aspects of the U.S.-China relationship. The participants learned a great deal from every one of these engagements.

This initiative would not have been possible without the energy and spirit of partner organization, Peking University's Institute of International and Strategic Studies (IISS). The program is deeply grateful for the leadership and wise judgment of both IISS's founding president, Wang Jisi, and its current president, Yu Tiejun, as well as the hard work of their excellent staff, including Sun Yilin, Xu Bei, Hu Ran, Zhao Jianwei, Ma Li'ao, and Chen Danmei. The program also appreciates the heartfelt support of this initiative from Peking University vice president Wang Bo as well as Yuan Ming, the honorary dean of the Yenching Academy and professor at the School of International Studies at Peking University.

Although the editor of this volume is the only individual from CSIS with their name on the cover, many colleagues contributed to the success of the project and this report. The Trustee Chair in Chinese Business and Economics team put in long hours over many months, handling the smallest details and thinking through

the biggest issues. The editor is deeply grateful for the efforts of Matthew Barocas, Ryan Featherston, Elyse Huang, Maya Mei, Andrea Leonard Palazzi, Nic Rogers, Jessica Shao, and Vicky Tu. China Power Project colleagues Bonny Lin, Brian Hart, Samantha Lu, and Truly Tinsley provided valuable help with our October 2023 conference in Washington. As always, CSIS's publications team, led by Jeeah Lee and Katherine Stark, did a fantastic job editing and producing this volume. Finally, the program is indebted to CSIS president and CEO John J. Hamre for his consistent support for this initiative from its very earliest days to its conclusion.

Finally, this project would not have been possible without the financial support and vision of the Henry Luce Foundation. Program Director for Asia Helena Kolenda and Program Officer for Asia Yuting Li offered wise counsel and encouragement throughout the project. The Trustee Chair also wants to acknowledge the funding from the China-United States Exchange Foundation provided to Peking University to support the participation of our Chinese colleagues in this initiative.

Although everyone mentioned here—and others—deserve credit for the achievements of this initiative, the editor alone takes sole responsibility of any remaining errors or mistakes in this volume.

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Introduction

Scholarly Exchange and Reducing Misunderstanding

Scott Kennedy and Yu Tiejun

No Ice to Break: Rediscovering Our Community

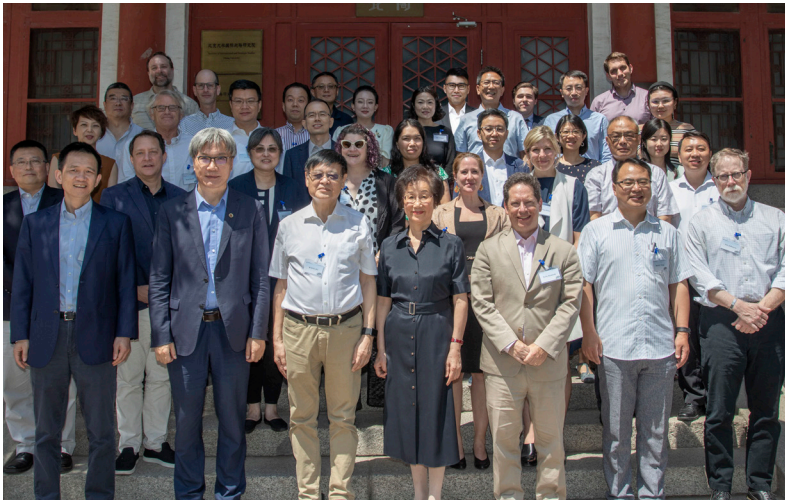
Leading American and Chinese scholars were quite uncomfortable when they arrived at the opening session of a conference in early July 2023 on the campus of Peking University. For most, this was the very first time they had been in a meeting face to face with scholars from the other country in over three and a half years. The intervening period had seen the unleashing of a global pandemic that took millions of lives and caused immense suffering and hardship. Moreover, the official U.S.-China relationship had deteriorated dramatically, leading to escalating tensions, tough talk, and sanctions. But what was more important than the pandemic or geopolitics that morning was the temperature, which hovered around 100 °F (-38 °C) and left everyone dripping in sweat, making them even more anxious.

But once inside, with the aid of air conditioning and friends, temperatures quickly cooled and the spirits of those present lifted. Within about five minutes, you could hear a collective sigh of relief as the conversation picked up pace, with experts from both countries putting forth a range of views on issues large and small. Consensus? No. All issues immediately out on the table? No. But a willingness to be candid in a spirit of collegiality? Absolutely. As one of the Chinese scholars recalled, “We opened up with a sense of camaraderie right away.” There was no ice to break, not only because of the high temperatures, but because American and Chinese scholars have deep ties that a pandemic and political frictions could not easily extinguish.

That said, the resumption of U.S.-China scholarly ties was far from guaranteed, and the obstacles to their full and healthy blossoming still exist. The original hope and the remaining challenges are the reason for this initiative and this volume.

Origins

Scholarly exchange has been an important feature of U.S.-China relations since at least the 1850s. When the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) established diplomatic relations in 1979, the very first agreement President Jimmy Carter and Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping signed was the "U.S.-China Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement," which created a foundation for scholarly ties. In the subsequent four decades, the relationship expanded dramatically. Millions of Chinese and tens of thousands of Americans have studied in undergraduate and graduate programs in the other country. Chinese universities substantially revised their structure and curriculum across disciplines, often drawing inspiration from the United States and other advanced industrialized countries. Professors and think tank scholars from both sides have carried out extensive field work on their own and in collaboration with their counterparts in the other country. This includes not just foreign policy experts from the other side, but scholars across all disciplines, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), the social sciences, and humanities. Universities and research organizations have also established thousands of institutional relationships supporting the activities of students, scholars, and each side's broader societies.



Scholars in front of the North Pavilion, Peking University, Beijing, July 2023.

Credit: Zheng Peijie

and nontraditional security challenges intertwined. The bloody war in Ukraine is still ongoing, responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths and leaving even more homeless. The aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, stagnant global economic growth, and emerging food, energy, and environmental crises have made global governance an even tougher task. But most problematic for U.S.-China scholarly ties has been the reemergence of great power rivalry, particularly the growing strategic competition between the two countries in the past several years. The pandemic brought in-person scholarly ties to a sudden halt, but even with the pandemic's passing, ongoing geopolitical frictions continue to be an enormous obstacle to bilateral educational and scholarly exchanges.

In the last 18 months, since Presidents Joseph Biden and Xi Jinping met in Bali, Indonesia, in November 2022, there has been a modest rapprochement in bilateral relations. There have been subsequent cabinet-level meetings, and the two presidents reached a basic consensus in San Francisco in November 2023 about the need to manage differences, avoid conflict, and pursue areas of cooperation where possible. That said, deep

The expansion of scholarly ties has increased mutual understanding of one another's societies, promoted the advancement of foundational knowledge in many disciplines, and translated into real-world benefits in public health, a wide range of applied technologies, and the economic development of the two countries as well as the rest of the world.

Yet scholarly ties have not been immune to growing geopolitical tensions. In recent years, the world has faced extreme turbulence, with both traditional

tensions between the two countries still exist across all aspects of the relationship. The two governments are still locked in an intense competition across economics, security, and politics, and an overwhelming majority of those polled in both China and the United States hold a negative view of the other country.¹

About This Initiative

It is in this complex climate that the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and Peking University have attempted to provide leadership in the rebuilding of bilateral scholarly ties in order to avoid a more permanent scholarly decoupling. In 2022, in the midst of the pandemic, Wang Jisi, the founding president of Peking University's Institute of International and Strategic Studies (IISS), and Scott Kennedy of CSIS engaged in a pair of individual exchanges meant to break the ice.² They both held meetings over several weeks with the scholarly and policy communities in each other's countries.

On the foundation of that initial exchange, CSIS and Peking University mutually agreed to scale up their efforts and facilitate the exchange of leading experts from both countries across a wide range of disciplines. In July 2023, a delegation of 12 U.S. scholars visited Beijing and held a closed-door conference with 17 Chinese scholars hosted by IISS in the North Pavilion on the campus of Peking University. Under the conference title "Rebuilding China-U.S. Scholarly Exchange," the participants exchanged views on recent developments in universities and think tanks in both countries, the opportunities and challenges of field research, and the prospects of U.S.-China scholarly collaboration, including among students, scholars, and institutions. In October 2023, the scholars from both countries (12 from Chinese institutions and 18 from U.S. ones) held the second of the initiative's two conferences at CSIS's headquarters in Washington, D.C. Titled, "U.S.-China Scholarly Cooperation in an Era of Greater Geo-Strategic Tensions," the participants discussed the value of scholarly collaboration, the challenges to exchanges posed by domestic social and political trends, strategies for navigating and managing national security concerns, and potential principles for managing scholarly ties. In both Beijing and Washington, scholars supplemented the conferences with additional private meetings with government officials, business executives, journalists, and other scholars.

The pair of conferences witnessed a great deal of intensive brainstorming. Although there were substantial disagreements, participants were open-minded, and the discussion throughout included a minimum of superficial comments considered to be politically correct. That was in part made clear by the fact that there were as many differences of opinion within both the U.S. and Chinese sides as there was between them.

A central source of kinship was a recognition of the potential benefits of scholarly exchange to reduce U.S.-China misunderstanding and promote progress in a wide range of fields, but also an awareness that deep-seated tensions

1 On U.S. views, see Laura Silver, Christine Huang, and Laura Clancy, *China's Approach to Foreign Policy Gets Largely Negative Reviews in 24-Country Survey* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, July 2023), <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2023/07/27/chinas-approach-to-foreign-policy-gets-largely-negative-reviews-in-24-country-survey/>. On Chinese public opinion, see "How Do the Chinese People View the 'West'? Divergence and Asymmetry in China's Public Opinion of the U.S. and Europe," Stanford Center on China's Economy and Institutions, *China Brief*, June 1, 2023, <https://scee.fsi.stanford.edu/china-briefs/how-do-chinese-people-view-west-divergence-and-asymmetry-chinas-public-opinion-us-and>.

2 Scott Kennedy and Wang Jisi, *Breaking the Ice: The Role of Scholarly Exchange in Stabilizing U.S.-China Relations* (Washington, DC: CSIS, April 2023), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/breaking-ice>.



Scholars in front of CSIS, Washington, D.C., October 2023.

Credit: Truly Tinsley.

journals, and governments alike to normalize scholarly ties more fully. It is the hope of both of this chapter's authors and their home institutions that this initiative will, as the Chinese saying goes, be a "single spark [that] can light a prairie fire."

About This Volume

The U.S. and Chinese participants to the conferences in Beijing and Washington were invited to contribute essays on the topics raised during the meetings. Those essays compose the current volume. Scholars had wide latitude in selecting issues to address, and the project team encouraged everyone to express their own perspectives to facilitate a vigorous debate and did not attempt to reach a collective common point of view. This volume adheres to this goal.

The contributions in Section I consider the reasons why scholarly collaboration between the United States and China is valuable. Authors evaluate the costs and benefits to the academic enterprise itself and to the two societies. Several grapple with the debate about the national security implications of extensive scholarly ties.

The essays in Section II examine the components of scholarly exchange and collaboration, including institutions (such as university departments), the Fulbright Program, research data, and publications. Each author identifies current problems and proposes specific solutions.

In Section III, the discussion shifts to consider the issue of scholarly exchange and collaboration through the lens of several disciplines. Authors weigh in on issues facing international relations and security studies, climate change, area studies, economics, history, and artificial intelligence. This section exhibits the widest range of views about the opportunities and risks in different fields and suggestions about how best to move forward. A straightforward interpretation of the contributions suggests that progress has varied across fields, a pattern that may continue. However, there is an opportunity for more uniform progress if best practices are shared across disciplines.

The final contribution to the volume attempts to bring the various strands of the analysis together. Although unconditional and fully open scholarly ties between the two countries are unlikely for the foreseeable future, outright scholarly decoupling is also improbable, in part because it would be highly detrimental and unnecessary. The essay considers proposals for how to most effectively calibrate the extent of scholarly ties to maximize their benefits to the two societies while also minimizing the attendant risks.

between the two countries are imperiling this enterprise. The "securitization of everything" is the dominant obstacle to sustained scholarly ties. Although there were a wide range of judgments about the value of exchanges in the current environment, from confident to skeptical, everyone realized that no matter one's evaluation of the present, it would still take a great deal of effort on the part of scholars, universities, think tanks, foundations, scholarly

Section I

Justifying Scholarly Collaboration

Scholarly Exchange between the United States and China

The Benefits of Collaboration and the Costs of Disruption

Scott Rozelle³

International collaboration drives advancements in scholarly research for all fields, from the hard sciences to the social sciences and humanities. The rise in the number of internationally coauthored papers in recent years highlights the importance of international collaboration and the role of cross-border research networks in creating new knowledge within and across various fields.⁴ International collaboration aims to facilitate progress and solve problems that cannot be solved with domestic resources alone.⁵

Studies have also shown the effectiveness of international collaboration in increasing the impact, quality, and citation rates of academic publications.⁶ Among the most productive research collaborations in all of academia—

3 The author wishes to acknowledge Stanford University intern Sophia Liu for her contributions to this chapter.

4 Isabel Gomez, María Teresa Fernández, and Jesús Sebastián, “Analysis of the Structure of International Scientific Cooperation Networks through Bibliometric Indicators,” *Scientometrics* 44, no. 3 (March 1999): 441-57, doi:10.1007/BF02458489.

5 Anthony F.J. Van Raan, “The Influence of International Collaboration on the Impact of Research Results: Some Simple Mathematical Considerations Concerning the Role of Self-Citations,” *Scientometrics* 42 (October 1998): 423-28, doi:10.1007/bf02458380; and Jakob Edler, “The Role of International Collaboration in the Framework Programme: Expert Analysis in Support of the Ex Post Evaluation of FP6,” Manchester Institute of Innovation Research, 2008.

6 Fereshteh Didegah and Mike Thelwall, “Which Factors Help Authors Produce the Highest Impact Research? Collaboration, Journal and Document Properties,” *Journal of Informetrics* 7, no. 4 (October 2013): 861-73, doi:10.1016/j.joi.2013.08.006; Vincent P. Guerrero Bote, Carlos Olmeda-Gómez, and Félix de Moya-Anegón, “Quantifying the Benefits of International Scientific Collaboration,” *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 64, no. 2 (February 2013): 392-404, doi:10.1002/asi.22754; and Barbara S. Lancho Barrantes et al., “Citation Flows in the Zones of Influence of Scientific Collaborations,” *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 63, no. 3 (March 2012): 481-89, doi:10.1002/asi.21682.

including those in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields as well as in the social sciences and humanities—is between scholars in the United States and China. Many studies have documented the benefits of this collaboration as well as the costs of recent disruptions caused by the declining political relationship between the two countries. Although national security concerns should not be disregarded, it is equally important to ascertain the costs associated with a potential decline in academic collaboration with China.

This chapter, drawing on reviews of English- and Chinese-language scholarly research contributions, provides empirical evidence for the benefits of U.S.-China academic collaboration and the costs of disrupting this relationship.

The Benefits of Collaboration

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATION PRODUCTIVITY

English-Language Academic Literature

- Lee and Haupt found that the annual number of science and engineering bilateral publications between the United States and China increased by 10,811 between 2014 and 2018, an average annual rise of 52.5 percent.⁷ U.S.-China bilateral collaborations far outweigh the number of U.S. academic collaborations with any other country.
- According to the National Science Foundation’s biannual report *Science and Engineering Indicators*, the U.S. share of internationally coauthored papers increased from 12 percent to 29 percent between 1990 and 2007, mirroring China’s share of 25 percent in 2007.⁸ Furthermore, U.S.-China collaborations have not only boosted the quantity of publications but have also improved the quality of research as measured by the rising citation rate of U.S.-China coauthored papers.
- Tang and Shapira also found an increase in the quality of publications that were produced by U.S.-China coauthored publications.⁹
- Jia et al. show that China has been the most important collaborator for U.S. scholars in the life sciences since 2013, as measured by both publication rates and paper citations.¹⁰

Chinese-Language Academic Literature

- Yang and Li found that the United States participated in 49 percent of highly cited papers globally between 2008 and 2017. Sixty-two percent of all highly cited papers have either U.S. or Chinese authorship.¹¹

7 Jenny J. Lee and John P. Haupt, “Winners and Losers in US-China Scientific Research Collaborations,” *Higher Education* 80 (July 2020): 57-74, doi:10.1007/s10734-019-00464-7.

8 National Science Board, *Science and Engineering Indicators 2010* (Arlington, VA: U.S. National Science Foundation, 2010), NSB 10-01, <https://www.heri.ucla.edu/PDFs/NSB.pdf>.

9 Li Tang, and Philip Shapira, “China-US Scientific Collaboration in Nanotechnology: Patterns and Dynamics,” *Scientometrics* 88, no. 1 (July 2011): 1-16, doi:10.1007/s11192-011-0376-z.

10 Ruixue Jia et al., “The Impact of US-China Tensions on US Science,” National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2022, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w29941>.

11 Yang Yang and Li Zhe, “40 Years of U.S.-China R&D Cooperation, Development and Evolution - An International Papers Perspective,” *Science and Technology China* [杨洋 李哲, 中美研发合作四十年: 发展与演, 科技中国], no. 11 (November 2019): 1-17, <http://www.casted.org.cn/channel/newsinfo/7556>.

- Yang and Li also show that U.S.-China collaboration comprises the largest international scientific partnership.¹² The number of papers coauthored and published by the United States and China has increased from 17 in 1979 to 56,171 in 2018, a more than 3,300-fold increase. By 2018, China and the United States had become each other’s largest international collaborators, accounting for 8 percent of all U.S. publications and nearly 12 percent of all Chinese publications.
- Currently, 23 percent of the scientific and technological papers in the United States are produced in collaboration with China, which is much higher than U.S. collaborations with either the United Kingdom (14 percent) or Germany (11 percent). Additionally, 35 percent of U.S. science and engineering students come from China. According to a U.S. National Science Foundation survey of Chinese students, as many as 87 percent of Chinese students pursuing doctoral degrees in science and engineering in the United States want to stay in the United States after receiving their doctoral degrees.¹³
- Huo et al., from the Ministry of Science and Technology, showed that the number of joint academic publications between 2000 and 2010 by Chinese and U.S. scientists reached 80,000, far exceeding the number of joint publications by Chinese and Japanese scientists (30,000), which ranked second.¹⁴ In 2011, 19,480 papers were jointly published by Chinese and U.S. scholars, accounting for 48 percent of the total number of papers coauthored by Chinese scholars with scholars from foreign countries.

STUDENT EXCHANGE

English-Language Academic Literature

- International students from China—including those studying STEM as well as the social sciences and humanities—drive research productivity in the United States. In 2011, 88,492 Chinese graduate students came to the United States; this number increased to 137,096 between 2019 and 2020, cementing China as the top country of origin for international students inside the United States.¹⁵
- Between 2005 and 2015, 87.2 percent of Chinese doctorate recipients at U.S. universities intended to stay in the United States after completing their degree.¹⁶
- Not only do doctorate recipients at U.S. universities produce research while they are students, but many of them continue to conduct research in the U.S. private sector or stay in faculty positions in the United States and are highly productive.¹⁷

Chinese-Language Academic Literature

- According to Yue, students studying in the United States make up one of the largest groups of Chinese

12 Ibid.

13 “International Students Who Intend to Stay in the United States: What Are the Overall Trends,” U.S. National Science Foundation, 2017, <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2017/nsf17306/report/international-students-staying-overall-trends/stay-rates-country-of-origin.cfm>.

14 Huo Hongmei et al., “Situation Analysis and Countermeasures of S&T Talent Exchange between China and the U.S.,” *Science & Technology Progress and Policy* 31, no. 10 (2014): 143-48.

15 “Academic Level and Places of Origin,” Open Doors, <https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-students/academic-level-and-places-of-origin/>.

16 Ibid.

17 Patrick Gaule and Mario Piacentini, “Chinese Graduate Students and US Scientific Productivity,” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 95, no. 2 (May 2013): 698-701, doi:10.1162/REST_a_00283.

students studying abroad—and this includes STEM students as well as those studying the social sciences and humanities.¹⁸ Most students that are studying abroad are in graduate school (either in master’s or doctoral programs).

- Yue also concluded that about 90 percent of Chinese doctoral students choose to stay in the United States after graduation, thus becoming an important force in the U.S. academic and scientific community.¹⁹
- Song and Shi show that undergraduate and master’s degree students are an important source of income for U.S. universities. In 2018 alone, Chinese students contributed more than \$14 billion in tuition and other fees to U.S. universities.²⁰
- Song and Shi have likewise demonstrated that a high percentage of Chinese students who have earned doctoral degrees in science and engineering are staying in the United States. In 2015, 70 percent of science and engineering doctoral degree recipients from all countries remained in the United States five years after graduation, compared to 85 percent of Chinese recipients. Additionally, of the 31,600 Chinese temporary visa holders who earned doctoral degrees in science and engineering in the United States from 2004 to 2006, as many as 90 percent remained in the United States after 10 years, according to 2015 statistics.²¹

The Costs of Disruption

Just as important as looking at the benefits, some studies have shown the negative impacts caused by the disruption of U.S.-China collaboration.

PUBLICATIONS

English-Language Academic Literature

- Lee and Haupt found that if this collaboration were disrupted or discontinued, for whatever reason, between the years 2014 and 2018, U.S. publications would have declined by 6,405 articles in Science and Engineering Indicators.²²
- Analysis of scientific papers in the database PubMed reveals that National Institutes of Health (NIH) investigations into hundreds of U.S. scientists since 2018 have brought about a 1.9 percent decline in the publication rate and a 7.1 percent decline in the citation rate of U.S. scientists with collaborators in China, compared with U.S. scientists who had collaborated with scientists in other countries.²³
- In fields more affected by the NIH investigations, the United States and China both produced fewer publications during 2019 and 2020 compared to the rest of the world, suggesting that U.S.-China political tensions affect overall scientific progress.²⁴

18 Yue Tingting, “A Forty-Year Overview of Chinese Students Studying in the United States since the Reform and Opening,” *Journal of Jiangxi Normal University of Science and Technology*, no. 2 (2018): 102-28.

19 Ibid.

20 Song Yajing and Shi Changhui, “A Study on the Current Situation and Trend of Scientific and Technological Talent Exchange between China and the United States,” *Global Science, Technology and Economy Outlook* 36 (2021): 46-52.

21 Ibid.

22 Lee and Haupt, “Winners and Losers in US-China Scientific Research Collaborations.”

23 Jia et al., “The Impact of US-China Tensions on US Science.”

24 Ibid.

Chinese-Language Academic Literature

- Lee and Haupt also found that from 2019 to 2021, the number of research publications in the natural sciences by authors from multiple countries declined from 12,992 to about 8,000. The number of such papers with authors from the United States and China also dropped from more than 20,000 to roughly 10,000. In 2021, the number of papers by such researchers from multiple different countries fell by more than 30 percent.²⁵

STUDENT EXCHANGE

English-Language Academic Literature

- By 2020, 17 percent of all science and engineering doctoral degrees went to foreign students with temporary visas from China.²⁶ However, policies such as the U.S. government’s China Initiative, which ran from 2018 to 2022, led to a decline in the migration of scholars from China to the United States. Though the China Initiative formally ended in early 2022, lingering political tensions continue to negatively impact scientific collaborations.
- Although the full impact of such policies is unknown, the disruption caused by political tension between the United States and China could cost the United States if scholars trained at U.S. universities choose to return to China.²⁷ In fact, research is already showing that scholars who have returned to China because of the hostile political environment in the United States make up a large share of China’s top 10 percent of most highly cited publications.

TECHNOLOGICAL COMPETITION

English-Language Academic Literature

- In terms of technological advancements, restrictive policies against China enacted by the United States may challenge the United States’ leading position in certain technological areas because it may induce China to launch its own independent efforts. For example, the Wolf Amendment, passed by the U.S. Congress in 2011, has restricted the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s bilateral cooperation with China. Ronci found that the Wolf Amendment drove a number of U.S.-China engineering and technological relationships to be primarily competitive rather than cooperative.²⁸ As a result, China began testing its own technologies and has independently made breakthroughs in a number of areas.

China-European Union Scholarly Cooperation

Given the current political climate, it is also important to observe the approach of key U.S. partner countries, as it will help identify some of the costs of limiting scholarly exchange. Despite labeling China as a rival, competitor, and threat to strategic autonomy, the European Union has identified the importance of

25 Lee and Haupt, “Winners and Losers in US-China Scientific Research Collaborations.”

26 Xie Yu et al., “Caught in the Crossfire: Fears of Chinese-American Scientists,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 120, no. 27 (June 2023), doi:10.1073/pnas.2216248120.

27 Sylvia Schwaag Serger et al., “What Do China’s Scientific Ambitions Mean for Science—and the World?,” *Issues in Science and Technology* (April 2021), <https://issues.org/what-do-chinas-scientific-ambitions-mean-for-science-and-the-world/>.

28 Robert Jay Ronci, “Dividing Heaven: Investigating the Influence of the US Ban on Cooperation with China on the Development of Global Outer Space Governance,” Master’s thesis, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås, 2018.

research collaboration with China.²⁹ The European Union’s recent policy of “de-risking,” instead of complete decoupling, shows that while they are reducing over-dependency on China, they are willing to continue working with China to take on global challenges.³⁰ The European Union’s caution toward international collaboration with China allows them to reap the benefits while still playing defensively, a tactic from which the United States may draw inspiration.

Unofficial data (collected by the author by calling colleagues at a number of universities) suggest that science and engineering doctoral students from China who attended the top universities as undergraduates are now going to Germany and other European universities for graduate school instead of the United States.

Conclusion

Although there are valid national security concerns related to U.S.-China scholarly exchange, the literature cited here indicates that the U.S.-China scholarly exchange has produced a tremendous amount of positive research, human capital, and technological advancements that have greatly benefited the United States.³¹ Therefore, when deliberating to what extent scholarly exchange should be restricted, the U.S. government should balance national security issues with the costs of disruption.

29 European Commission, *EU-China—A Strategic Outlook: European Commission and HR/VP Contribution to the European Council* (Brussels: European Commission, March 2019), <https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2019-03/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf>.

30 “European Council Conclusions on China,” European Council, June 2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/06/30/european-council-conclusions-on-china-30-june-2023/>; and Areense Huld, “The EU’s China Strategy - How to Understand Its ‘De-Risking’ Approach?,” China Briefing, July 13, 2023, <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/the-eus-china-strategy-understanding-the-concept-of-de-risking/>.

31 Jeffrey Stoff and Glenn Tiffert, *Eyes Wide Open: Ethical Risks In Research Collaboration with China* (Washington, DC: Hoover Institution, 2021), <https://www.hoover.org/press-releases/eyes-wide-open-ethical-risks-research-collaboration-china>; Margaret K. Lewis, “Criminalizing China,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* (1973-) 111, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 145-225, <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc/vol111/iss1/3/>; and Aruna Viswanatha and Kate O’Keefe, “China’s Funding of U.S. Researchers Raises Red Flags,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 30, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-funding-of-u-s-researchers-raises-red-flags-11580428915>.

The National Security Case for China-U.S. Scholarly Exchange

Jie Dalei

Against the background of intensifying China-U.S. strategic competition and the growing national security concerns in traditionally non-security-related domains (e.g., economics, technology, and academia), the relationship between national security and bilateral scholarly exchange is often portrayed as involving a range of trade-offs. While in some cases both governments do need to strike a balance between these two competing objectives, this is not always an either-or situation. Indeed, bilateral scholarly exchange can be invaluable for the sake of one's own national security interests.

Few would dispute the proposition that whatever one's strategy is vis-à-vis another state (barring the rare circumstance in which one relies solely on brute force), a deep and sound understanding of the other side is indispensable. Better yet, "strategic empathy" is believed to be an effective tool for sound policy and decisionmaking in national security affairs.³² The current state of China-U.S. relations has made mutual understanding even more imperative and simultaneously more challenging. Mutual understanding is more imperative because the margin of error for misunderstanding and miscalculation is so much smaller compared to the previous era of engagement. At the same time, mutual understanding is more challenging because a dominant view of each other's strategic intentions as utterly hostile is taking shape, or even ossifying, in both countries without much regard to policy nuances or different interpretations. In addition, in the era of strategic competition, the tendency to inflate threats and demonize rivals can easily distort understanding of each other's policies and strategies.

32 Claire Yorke, "Is Empathy a Strategic Imperative? A Review Essay," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 46, no. 5 (2023): 1082-102, doi:10.1080/01402390.2022.2152800.

Indeed, worrying misinterpretations and misunderstandings are already happening. For example, Chinese president Xi Jinping mentioned in October 2013 that the long-standing “political differences” across the Taiwan Strait cannot be “passed down from generation to generation.”³³ Yet often times, this passage has been interpreted by U.S. analysts as Xi saying that the Taiwan question cannot be passed to the next generation. The latter would imply a clearer timetable for national reunification, while the former is simply a reformulation of past policies that the Taiwan question must eventually be solved.

Another example is about the supposed spread of the “China model.” Many U.S. observers have taken one passage from Xi Jinping’s report at the Chinese Communist Party’s 19th National Congress in 2017 as evidence that China intends to spread its model of development. In his speech, Xi proclaimed that China’s development “offers a new option for other countries and nations who want to speed up their development while preserving their independence; and it offers Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving the problems facing mankind.”³⁴ The message it was meant to convey was that China can walk a different path, not that others should follow in China’s path. It is about exploration and sharing instead of exporting or spreading.³⁵

One last example is about the interpretation of *gan yu douzheng* (敢于斗争) in Chinese official discourse. It often has been translated as “dare to fight” and was perceived as evidence that China is “preparing for war.” Yet as China experts Todd Hall and Xiaoyu Pu note, *douzheng* is a multifaceted and malleable concept and can be translated as to “struggle,” “fight,” “campaign,” “battle,” or “strive for.”³⁶ In the current context, it is best understood as “making determined efforts in the face of adversity to overcome obstacles and opposition.” Indeed, as Tsinghua University scholar Da Wei writes, “there are a variety of forms of struggle depending on different issues.”³⁷ It may include fierce confrontation as well as detour, compromise, moving to the outer line, and even cooperation. In the context of the United States’ assertive strategy vis-à-vis China, tit-for-tat pushback is struggle, negotiation and dialogue are struggle, and not responding temporarily and creating a new “battleground” in the outer line is also struggle. In short, struggle can almost be anything that can be of help to achieve the ultimate strategic objective, not just the threat or use of military force.

On the other hand, the combination of differences in cultural traditions, value systems, and political processes, information overload and the spread of misinformation on social media, and the unpredictability of the Trump years have made it a daunting task for many Chinese to understand the current state of affairs in the United States. Scholarly exchange will not solve all of the problems facing building mutual understanding

33 Teddy Ng, “Xi Jinping Says Efforts Must Be Made to Close the China-Taiwan Political Divide,” *South China Morning Post*, October 6, 2013, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1325761/xi-jinping-says-political-solution-taiwan-cant-wait-forever>.

34 Daniel Tobin, “How Xi Jinping’s ‘New Era’ Should Have Ended U.S. Debate on Beijing’s Ambitions,” CSIS, May 8, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-xi-jinpings-new-era-should-have-ended-us-debate-beijings-ambitions>.

35 Jie Dalei, “The Emerging Ideological Security Dilemma between China and the U.S.,” *China International Strategy Review* 2 (December 2020): 184-96, doi:10.1007/s42533-020-00059-3.

36 Todd Hall and Xiaoyu Pu, “Dare to Fight or Dare to Struggle? Translation of a Chinese Political Concept,” *Interpret: China*, CSIS, May 8, 2023, <https://interpret.csis.org/dare-to-fight-or-dare-to-struggle-translation-of-a-chinese-political-concept/>.

37 Da Wei, “Adhering to a Systematic Approach and Taking a Chinese Path of Modernization Featuring Peaceful Development” [以系统观念推进中国式现代化的和平发展之路], *Contemporary China and World* [当代中国与世界] 4 (2022): 15-22, https://ciss.tsinghua.edu.cn/upload_files/atta/1672393363351_B0.pdf.

between the two countries, but exchanges such as Track-2 and Track-1.5 dialogues can go a long way in offering a strong dose of objectivity and accuracy and clarifying nuances to both sides' policymakers.

In addition, China-U.S. scholarly exchange can further both sides' national security interests through addressing intractable problems, emerging issues, and transnational challenges. Compared to formal official channels, scholarly dialogues have more leeway to be flexible and innovative. A project jointly led by Michael Swaine and Zhang Tuosheng on China-U.S. crisis management may be the best case in demonstrating the value of bringing together a group of Chinese and U.S. experts to tackle difficult and sensitive issues in China-U.S. relations.³⁸ Another example is a joint project on China-Japanese historical studies initiated by the Institute of International and Strategic Studies at Peking University and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.³⁹ Given that historical issues constitute one of the major obstacles for better China-Japanese relations and deeper reconciliation, such a joint scholarly project is a major step in the right direction. Although this project is not about China-U.S. relations, it highlights the value of scholarly exchanges on contentious bilateral issues.

In the domain of emerging issues such as the governance of artificial intelligence (AI) and transnational challenges such as climate change, scholarly exchanges are also instrumental in identifying mutual concerns, creating a common language, sharing best practices, and proposing feasible solutions. A joint project on AI and international security started by the Center for International Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University and the Brookings Institution discusses conceptual terminology, military applications of AI, and international AI governance.⁴⁰ A piece of great news about climate change is that six leading universities from China and the United States (Peking University, Tsinghua University, the University of Hong Kong, Stanford University, Berkeley, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) are in the process of initiating a collaborative coalition for climate change research.

In conclusion, when China and the United States try to balance between national security and scholarly exchange, the national security benefits of scholarly exchange should be taken into consideration. The national security consequences resulting from miscommunication and miscalculation or from failure in addressing common challenges are otherwise potentially too catastrophic.

38 Michael D. Swaine and Zhang Tuosheng, eds., with Danielle F.S. Cohen, *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), <https://carnegieendowment.org/2006/12/04/managing-sino-american-crises-case-studies-and-analysis-pub-18899>.

39 Wang Chaoguang [汪朝光] and Yu Tiejun [于铁军], eds., *Joint Research Report on Sino-Japanese Historical Understanding (Pre-War Period): Why the Sino-Japanese War Broke Out* [中日历史认识共同研究报告(战前篇):中日战争何以爆发] (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2020) [北京:社会科学文献出版社, 2020年], <http://www.iiss.pku.edu.cn/info/1024/1175.htm>.

40 "CISS Organizes the 8th Round of 'U.S.-China Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence and International Security,'" Center for International Security and Strategy, Tsinghua University, October 3, 2023, <https://ciss.tsinghua.edu.cn/info/event/6523>.

U.S.-China Academic and Scientific Exchange Is in the National Interest

Jessica Chen Weiss

On both sides of the Pacific, efforts to protect against risks to national security and intellectual property theft have led to heightened scrutiny and restrictions over academic exchange and collaborative research between the United States and China. Efforts to manage such risks are appropriate, as a Massachusetts Institute of Technology report noted, but must be balanced with a clear-eyed recognition of the benefits that may be forgone by overly expansive restrictions.⁴¹ Legitimate safeguards against espionage and the transfer of sensitive technologies must avoid discouraging the vast majority of commercial and scientific activity and people-to-people ties that enhance rather than detract from national security. And nongovernmental Track-2 discussions between experts on both sides of the Pacific are more essential than ever to understanding each other’s concerns, red lines, and room for negotiation, especially as a complement to official channels of communication, which can often be stilted or more intermittent.

Academic experts in both China and the United States have taken the lead in warning against the perils of over-securitization and the collateral damage that overly expansive restrictions can have for beneficial ties.⁴² An approach that fails to take stock of the benefits and only seeks to minimize the risks of interaction and integration will jeopardize not only shared interests but also each country’s respective national interests.

41 Richard Lester et al., *University Engagement with China: An MIT Approach* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, November 2022), https://global.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/FINALUniversity-Engagement-with-China_An-MIT-Approach-Nov2022.pdf.

42 For example, see, Zhang Chao [张超] and Wu Baiyi [吴白乙], “On Overcoming the ‘Oversecuritization Trap’” [泛安全化陷阱 及其跨越], *International Outlook* [国际展望] 14, no. 2 (March/April 2022).

In China, leading experts recognize that China remains far behind the United States in many important dimensions and that sealing China off from the world will hinder its future development. As Tsinghua University's Da Wei notes, "There is still a big gap between China's development level and that of the United States. China's foreign strategy is not to compete with the United States and win or lose, but to ensure that the country can continue to develop."⁴³

Similarly, there are many areas of science and technology where Americans have a lot to gain from working with their Chinese counterparts. The world cannot keep the global warming associated with climate change under 2 degrees Celsius without the green technologies that Chinese companies lead in manufacturing and deploying.⁴⁴ And if they want to catch up, U.S. companies and industries will need to license and learn from their Chinese counterparts that currently lead in lithium-ion batteries, solar, and offshore wind technologies, rather than treating any Chinese company as tainted by association.⁴⁵ Protectionism risks isolating and weakening the United States' long-term economic and scientific competitiveness. Trump-era tariffs on China have largely hurt small U.S. businesses and consumers while providing little leverage over Chinese policies.⁴⁶

Leaders in both countries have underscored that the two countries must preserve space to work together rather than simply seeking to harden their societies for potential conflict. As Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen has written, "We should not make the mistake of becoming so consumed with our competition with China that we become defined by it."⁴⁷ From climate change to fentanyl to artificial intelligence, China has contributed to many of the United States' most vexing problems—but China is equally critical to solving them. Ties with China have not just brought economic opportunities and losses, they have also scored major wins for humanity. Joint research on folic acid has prevented millions of stillbirths and lifelong birth defects.⁴⁸ Mammograms are standard practice today thanks to a collaborative study in China that showed that self-exams are ineffective, enabling American women to receive better treatment for breast cancer.⁴⁹ Currently, 61 percent of American cancer patients say they have difficulty paying for their care, with 25 percent unable to afford

43 Da Wei [达巍], "The 'New Normal' for China-U.S. Relations: Trends and Lessons" [中美关系'新常态': 动向与启示] 澎湃新闻新闻, The Paper, November 28, 2023, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/zQaX_aOeuYPHyPEMYJIDQQ?utm_source=stack&utm_medium=email. Translated by author.

44 John Helveston and Jonas Nahm, "China's Key Role in Scaling Low-Carbon Energy Technologies," *Science* 366, no. 6467 (November 2019): 794-96, doi:10.1126/science.aaz1014. See also Jeremy Wallace, "More Clean Energy Is Good, Even If It Comes From China," *Heatmap News*, January 29, 2024, <https://heatmap.news/economy/more-clean-energy-china-us-europe>.

45 Robinson Meyer, "America Can't Build a Green Economy without China," *New York Times*, July 17, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/17/opinion/america-china-clean-energy.html>.

46 Jiakun Jack Zhang and Samantha A. Vortherms, "U.S. Tariffs on Chinese Goods Didn't Bring Companies Back to the U.S., New Research Finds," *Washington Post*, September 22, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/09/22/us-tariffs-chinese-goods-didnt-bring-companies-back-us-new-research-finds/>; and Christopher West Davis, "Here's What Small Businesses, Slammed by China Tariffs, Are Doing to Minimize the Impact of the Trade War," *CNBC*, October 5, 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/10/05/us-china-trade-war-causing-small-biz-to-reinvent-customer-retention.html>.

47 Janet L. Yellen, "There's a Way for the U.S. to Compete with China - and to Work with China," *Washington Post*, November 6, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/11/06/china-relationship-good-american-economy/>.

48 Deborah Seligsohn, "The Case for Renewing the U.S.-China S&T Cooperation Agreement," *CSIS, Commentary*, August 4, 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/case-renewing-us-china-st-cooperation-agreement>.

49 David B. Thomas et al., "Randomized Trial of Breast Self-Examination in Shanghai: Final Results," *JNCI: Journal of the National Cancer Institute* 94, no. 19 (October 2002): 1445-57, doi:10.1093/jnci/94.19.1445.

cancer-fighting drugs.⁵⁰ Looking forward, greater international collaboration on testing and approving cancer treatments could bring new drugs to market more quickly and cheaply, saving as many as 2 million lives each year, according to the Asia Society’s Cure4Cancer program.⁵¹

Working together on shared challenges will also require continuing to build a stable floor for the U.S.-China relationship and reducing the risk of an avoidable crisis or conflict. Even as each government invests in offering a more attractive value proposition to its citizens and the world, leaders on both sides are coming to recognize that no decisive victory or defeat lies ahead. Whether the Chinese economy stalls or continues to grow, U.S. leaders acknowledge that China will remain a formidable power.⁵² And Chinese experts recognize that for the foreseeable future, China will remain far weaker than the United States in many respects, even as it excels in others.⁵³ Regardless, both countries will remain powerful enough to damage—and enhance—the other’s well-being.

In setting the goalposts for success, both the United States and China must avoid implying that the other side must lose, remain behind, or be overtaken. A zero-sum rivalry, even if it technically remains “cold,” will too readily become lose-lose, casting a chill over even mutually beneficial collaboration. The risk is that both countries and societies focus too much on potential harms to right-size the benefits and risks of potential partnerships, including those covered by the U.S.-China Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement. The trajectory of these ties provides a bulwark and deterrent against escalation. The more they are severed, the less incentive there is for mutual restraint.

Critics have argued that now is not the time to de-escalate tensions and that doing so risks exploitation or aggression.⁵⁴ Such arguments seem to imagine that there will come such a time when one side will achieve such a degree of overmatch that the other will capitulate. That is fanciful. An aggressive, confrontational foreign policy will not serve U.S. or Chinese interests; nor is it what a majority of U.S. voters want, a recent survey found.⁵⁵

For the first time, more than 70 percent of Americans expect their children’s lives to be worse than theirs.⁵⁶ Likewise, a new generation of underemployed Chinese youth talk of “lying flat” in despair. To

50 Liz Szabo, “As Drug Costs Soar, People Delay or Skip Cancer Treatments,” NPR, March 15, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/03/15/520110742/as-drug-costs-soar-people-delay-or-skip-cancer-treatments>.

51 Bobby Daly et al., “We Need A Global System for Testing and Approving Cancer Treatments,” *Harvard Business Review*, October 18, 2022, <https://hbr.org/2022/10/we-need-a-global-system-for-testing-and-approving-cancer-treatments>; and “New ‘Cure4Cancer’ Hub Launched to Raise Awareness of International Clinical Trials,” Asia Society, March 6, 2023, <https://asiasociety.org/new-cure4cancer-hub-launched-raise-awareness-international-clinical-trials-0>.

52 Jake Sullivan, “The Sources of American Power,” *Foreign Affairs* vol. 102, no. 6 (November/December 2023), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/sources-american-power-biden-jake-sullivan>.

53 Huang Renwei [黄仁伟], “The Strategic Stalemate between China and the United States and the Buttle Buffer” [中美战略相持阶段与战役缓冲], Aisixiang [爱思想], July 7, 2022, <https://www.aisixiang.com/data/135153.html>; and Wang Wen [王文], “Rekindle the Passion for China’s Rise” [重燃中国崛起的激情], Aisixiang [爱思想], August 27, 2023, <https://www.aisixiang.com/data/145695.html>.

54 Michael Beckley, “Delusions of Détente: Why America and China Will be Enduring Rivals,” *Foreign Affairs* 102, no. 5 (September/October 2023), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/china-delusions-detente-rivals>.

55 “American Public Opinion on U.S.-China Policy,” National Security Action and Foreign Policy for America, *Politico*, October 2023, <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=0000018b-4ddf-deb8-ad8b-dfdf3c660000>.

56 Nick Robertson, “Most Americans Don’t Think Their Children’s Lives Will Be Better: Survey,” *The Hill*, March 24, 2023, <https://thehill.com/homenews/3916583-most-americans-dont-think-their-childrens-lives-will-be-better-survey/>.

win a brighter future, both countries must focus as much on advancing what is valuable in U.S.-China economic, scientific, and technological integration as they do on mitigating risks and costs. Turning inward and trying to thwart the other will only darken the horizon further, feeding the domestic malaise and enmity that troubles both countries.

Penny Wise, Pound Foolish

What Is Lost by Downgrading U.S.-China Educational Exchanges

Andrew Mertha

It is difficult to overstate the impact a half-century of engagement has had on the United States and China's ability to learn about one another. In a different era, such a statement would be obvious, so self-evident as to be accepted as inarguable fact. These days, however, this is not merely hotly debated; the view among many is that those who devoted their lives to the study of China got it wrong—that China scholars underestimated China's strategic capabilities and global intent and thus contributed to a United States unprepared for the Chinese threat to the international status quo.

This formulation is not accurate, let alone persuasive. Did China scholars underestimate China's strategic capabilities and global intent? To anybody who has paid any attention to Chinese leaders' worldview in the past century and longer, China has actively and openly sought “wealth and power” (fuqiang) as its inexorable goal since the end of the nineteenth century. When, as President Richard Nixon wrote that “there is no place on this small planet for a billion of its potentially most able citizens to live in angry isolation,” did China scholars think that China would only play a minor, supporting role? When, after years of political setbacks, President Bill Clinton changed course and recognized that the United States and China could better communicate through the language of economic engagement and the transformative power of wealth, did scholars not think about what such economic development would mean for China's investment in its own strategic capabilities?

Then there are those who aver that China specialists promised that increased engagement would transform China into something akin to a U.S.-style democracy. The problem with this formulation is that it simply is not true. No serious China specialist believed this would happen, let alone advocated for it. As David

Lampton put it: “The ask [of engagement] was being supportive of impulses toward more humane governance in China and creating preconditions for peace.”⁵⁷

This focus on the “preconditions for peace” goes back to the very foundations of today’s China scholarship. By 1968, the Vietnam War was polarizing U.S. society, including scholars of Asia. Some of them—many of whom would become leaders in the China field—believed the Vietnam War was a tragic mistake and the result of profound ignorance of Asia; they saw their scholarship as a mission to educate decisionmakers to avoid such monumental errors in the future.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the remarkable rise of research opportunities and the associated access to information that emerged from this deepening of engagement. This allowed the field to become more functionally and spatially specialized, focusing on a wide range of issue areas (e.g., agriculture, health, and education), with certain individuals carving out various parts of China beyond Beijing as their primary field sites and contributing to the United States’ understanding by undertaking more arduous field research in the provinces. While this was going on, universities all over China were seeking to establish programs with their foreign counterparts, sponsoring programs for language study, joint research, and university-to-university exchanges. Some of these operated under the aegis of state-to-state relationships such as that between Ohio and Hubei province, to name just one. These intensified the dense network of professional relationships, which, in turn, blossomed into friendships and has been perhaps the most important single element that has allowed those on the outside access to a window through which to understand the functioning of the Chinese state and the myriad ways in which this has shaped Chinese society.

What have scholars learned about China that they did not know before? The short answer is more than anyone could have possibly imagined. China scholars have made deep dives into examining the makeup of the Chinese state at the national and local levels and into how policy is made and implemented. These insights challenged the conventional wisdom at the time that simplified China into a cartoonish top-down authoritarian regime. One of the biggest problems with today’s China narrative in Washington is that it completely ignores this important work and portrays China as a monolith, rather than a warren of some three dozen provincial-level entities, some 300 prefecture governments, 2,000 county-level units, more than 40,000 township-level units, and a half-million village- and hamlet-level units of political organization, many of which have different priorities, interests, and time horizons than central authorities in Beijing.

There has been an extraordinary amount of research into state-society relations. Understanding how state rule shapes the lives of its citizens and the ways in which all sorts of prosaic features of daily life are negotiated and decided upon, and, most importantly, how this has changed over the past generation, has allowed China scholars to far better understand China more generally because it is now possible to view Chinese citizens as sophisticated agents of their own aspirations and see one’s self in them, and vice versa. This then enables observers to see China as the fully, sometimes impossibly complex place that it is, and it accords state- and non-state actors with the respect and empathy they deserve as agents of change.

By going into the provinces and below, U.S. scholars can begin to understand the extraordinary heterogeneity of China and learn about how national policies were manipulated, twisted, or otherwise undermined in the localities. This reality is central to understanding any complex state, and China is no exception. Moreover, the

57 David M. Lampton, “Engagement with China: A Eulogy and Reflections on a Gathering Storm,” in *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations*, ed., Anne Thurston (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), 394.

differences—as well as the continuities and similarities—among people throughout the country and the local conditions in which their actions are shaped contribute to a deeply rich understanding and appreciation of China, not simply a celebration of variation and diversity, but an understanding of how challenging it is for the government to manage the demands that emerge from such a complex political landscape.

The study of China has also privileged the long view of history. By going back in time, China scholars can see the ways in which cycles of elation, enthusiasm, and subsequent disappointment go back as far as initial contacts themselves between the United States and China. John Pomfret's *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom* underscores the fact that what can be observed in the relationship at any point in time—the euphoria, the subsequent missed opportunities, and the inevitable frustrations—has already occurred, many times, and thus decreases the sense of crisis engendered at that moment.⁵⁸ It also lays bare the important fact that the U.S.-China relationship is one that has endured over time.

Unfortunately, nothing lasts forever. Beginning around 2006, access to people, publications, and data began to constrict, a process that continues up to today. Of course, things have not gone back to the pre-1979 period, let alone the pre-engagement era, but it has become increasingly difficult to undertake the type of research that had been taken for granted just a few years ago.

Some have responded to this narrowing of access to China by adjusting their approach to be more comparative in scope. Others have taken to studying China from the outside, focusing more on China's international impact on other parts of the world, such as Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. But an indirect approach to observing and understanding China is inherently distortionary. China scholars need to be there, and their scholars need to be here. When confronted by calls to “de-risk” by closing off potential areas of high-tech collaboration, the United States must weigh the costs of losing some autonomy and even some security against the far greater risk of delinking and closing off access and, most importantly, knowledge. It cuts both ways.

The political environment emerging in both countries threatens to curtail this important mission. In the United States, there is a tendency to divide people with strong opinions about China into two camps: those who seek engagement and the China hawks. These biases are increasingly being mainstreamed as labels to differentiate one group from the other, with engagement being seen as synonymous with being “weak” on China. This is a dangerous distinction, not simply in terms of marginalizing a group of people whose collective body of work has increased the universe of knowledge about China in a way that would have been unimaginable at the time of Nixon's 1972 visit. It is also dangerous because, even—and especially—in the face of a downturn in relations, a nuanced understanding is necessary in the pursuit of policies that are beneficial to U.S.-China relations, regardless of where one stands on the continuum between pro-engagement on one end and hawkishness on the other. Nobody benefits from curtailing knowledge about the other. Closing off channels of scholarship and mutual understanding can lead to misperceptions and potentially destabilizing political outcomes, the dangers of which far outweigh the shortsighted perceived benefits of micromanaging these nodes of contact in the unwise belief that either side is gaining a tactical advantage over the other.

58 John Pomfret, *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom: America and China, 1776 to the Present* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2016).

Scholarly Exchange Must Not Be Collateral Damage of National Security Impulses

Scott Rozelle

The scholarly conferences and policy community meetings in Beijing and Washington that are the foundation for the current volume yielded several major takeaways. Among the most prominent is a deeply worrying trend: scholarly exchange is still occurring, but at a much lower level compared with 5 to 10 years ago. More limited scholarly exchange appears to be collateral damage from the deteriorating relations between the United States and China. Scholarly exchange is being challenged as a result of national security fears in both countries. It will take actions from top leaders in both countries for many of the elements that are hindering scholarly exchange to be addressed and resolved.

The problem is not between academics from China and the United States. When the small handful of leading academics from the United States got together with academic colleagues from China in July 2023 in Beijing, a sense of camaraderie emerged right away. Almost immediately, participants realized they were facing many of the same challenges on both sides of the Pacific.

The challenges were coming from different places in both countries. During these sessions—both in China and the United States—a list of rules, regulations, actions, and other measures emerged that colleagues on both sides cited as hindering scholarly exchange between the two countries. In the end, 15 different issues stood out that are inhibiting scholarly exchange within China and 10 issues were identified in the United States. Although there are surely more and although some of these are more serious than others, both lists warrant careful consideration.

The hindrances to research and scholarly exchange according to Chinese scholars included:

1. Restrictions on what can be taught (e.g., mandatory teaching materials).

2. Surveillance cameras in classrooms and seminars.
3. Party members inside classrooms and seminars.
4. Requirements for papers to be approved prior to publication.
5. Prevention of data sharing with co-authors.
6. More restrictive privacy laws.
7. Reduced access to public databases.
8. Limited access to archives.
9. Requirements for high-level approval for international workshops and conferences.
10. Requirements for prior approval of visitors' presentation slides at seminars.
11. Unwillingness of local government officials to accept interviews.
12. Wariness of businesspeople and professionals to accept interviews.
13. Reduced access to or increased permission requirements for guests to enter campuses.
14. Unwillingness to approve the collection of health samples (e.g., blood to measure anemia).
15. Restrictions on allowing faculty to travel overseas or extend visits after conferences.

The hindrances to research and scholarly exchange according to U.S.-based scholars included:

1. Failure to issue visas to engineering/biomedicine/science PhD students from China.
2. Failure to issue visas to engineering/biomedicine/science post-docs from China.
3. Hesitancy to invite doctors and other professionals to come as visiting scholars.
4. Hesitancy of the U.S. government to extend the U.S.-China Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement.⁵⁹
5. Threats directed at scholars as they enter the United States, including those who have been issued a visa.
6. Propensity of journals to automatically reject papers from China.
7. Decreased support for research on China from government sources and foundations.
8. Increased restrictions on universities accepting gift donations from Chinese alumni.
9. Difficulty getting approval from institutional review boards for projects in China.
10. Universities closing down teaching and research collaborations with China.

59 The arrangement, which was first adopted in 1979 and scheduled for renewal every five years since, establishes the foundation for scholarly exchange between the two countries. For more information, see Karen M. Sutter and John F. Sargent, Jr., "U.S.-China Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement," Congressional Research Service, updated November 17, 2023, IF12510, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12510>.

These hindrances came up again and again over the course of the conversations. Most of the participants agreed that the source of these obstacles that both sides face is the perception that scholarly exchange may be compromising national security. The emerging collective attitude toward this can be summarized as: “Yes, it is true that some scholarly exchange is related to national security issues. However, the vast share of scholarly exchange is not related to national security.” In fact, scholarly exchange is frequently beneficial and related to positive outcomes in research, technology, and outcomes that can induce economic growth and rising welfare in both countries and around the world. A decline in scholarly exchange is likely to have large negative impacts on growth, equity, and happiness in China, the United States, and the world as a whole. Hence, it could ultimately be harmful to national security.

How can the downward trend in U.S.-China scholarly exchange be reversed? Leaders of both countries have stated that limiting (and, in some cases, prohibiting) scholarly exchange is necessary in cases related to national security. Because these concerns come from the highest levels of government, it is critical for leaders in both countries to define which types of scholarly exchange are a detriment to national security and which types are not. In other words, what is needed are direct, unambiguous public statements clarifying what types of research are not related to national security and declaring that the nation should try to promote scholarly exchange in these areas. While such actions are needed—and the scholars at this dialogue mostly agreed that this would go a long way in reviving scholarly exchange—getting leaders to produce such documents and making them public will not be easy to accomplish.

When trying to determine which areas of scholarly exchange impinge on national security, some areas are black, some are white, and others are gray. Efforts should begin with the “white” areas, that is, the topics that are definitely not related to national security. Research and scholarly exchange that will not have any effect on national security can then get restarted. After that, the governments of the two countries can sort out which types of gray-area research deserve cooperation and which need to be restricted.

To be clear, the immediate challenge is that neither country has offered a definition or clarification of what types of scholarly exchange are sensitive to national security. As a result, lower-level bureaucrats in both the United States and China have taken a risk-averse approach to restricting scholarly exchange, making it difficult to do almost all research. Scholars at the dialogue from China and the United States almost unanimously agreed that what is urgently needed is for higher-level leaders in the two countries to officially define which specific topic areas are national security concerns, and which are not.

The work undertaken for this project in July and October 2023 demonstrated the importance of scholarly exchange and the need to continue to move forward. Chapter 2 of this volume summarizes the findings of scholars in both countries, identifying both the benefits of U.S.-China scholarly exchange as well as the costs of disruption. The benefits of exchange are great across many dimensions, from research findings and publications, to the flow of talent and ideas across borders, to the creation of new technologies and beyond. Meanwhile, the costs of disruption are clearly already very high.

In the end, this chapter conveys the same message as Chapter 2: the United States and China need to admit that there are reasonable national security concerns, but over-securitization of the relationship also comes with big costs. With a bit of effort by the leadership of both countries, the benefits of non-security-related exchange can move forward, and the unneeded costs of disruption can be avoided.

Mass Attitudes toward China and Their Impact on U.S.-China Scholarly Collaboration

Mary Gallagher

Disenchantment with the United States' policy toward China emerged in Washington as early as the Obama administration following its pivot to Asia. By early 2018, former Obama officials Kurt Campbell and Ely Ratner had declared it a failure in the pages of *Foreign Affairs*.⁶⁰ However, mass attitudes toward China lagged this negative downturn among policymakers. In 2017, 44 percent of Americans still had a favorable or “somewhat favorable” view of China. By 2023, this had plummeted to only 14 percent.⁶¹ U.S. public opinion toward China is now at a nadir.⁶² More than half of Americans name China as the most important enemy of the United States, even after Russia's invasion and protracted war in Ukraine. Partisan differences are slight; they reflect differences of intensity, with opinions among left and right voters trending in the same direction. According to open-ended responses in recent Pew Research polls, unfavorable views are motivated by concerns about China's political system as autocratic, repressive, and, most importantly, communist.⁶³

60 Kurt M. Campbell and Ely Ratner, “The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations,” *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 2 (March/April 2018): 60-70, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44822081>.

61 Laura Silver, Christine Huang, and Laura Clancy, *China's Approach to Foreign Policy Gets Largely Negative Reviews in 24-Country Survey* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, July 2023), <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2023/07/27/chinas-approach-to-foreign-policy-gets-largely-negative-reviews-in-24-country-survey/>.

62 Craig Kafura, “American Views of China Remain at Record Lows,” Chicago Council on Global Affairs, *Public Opinion Survey*, October 13, 2022, <https://globalaffairs.org/research/public-opinion-survey/american-views-china-remain-record-lows>.

63 “Americans Have ‘Cold’ Views of China. Here's What They Think about China, in Their Own Words,” Pew Research Center, June 30, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2021/06/30/most-americans-have-cold-views-of-china-heres-what-they-think-about-china-in-their-own-words/>.

What began as a Washington-centric policy shift—from Obama’s “Asia pivot” to Trump’s “trade war” and his Justice Department’s China Initiative—has morphed into a mass- and state-level movement to reduce U.S. dependence on China in every realm, from technology to investment to students. Unfavorable attitudes toward China are also reflected in the sharp decline in Americans studying abroad in China.

Drawing on current research on U.S. attitudes toward China, there is evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic was the catalyst for this sharp and broad drop in public opinion. The pandemic reinforced existing fears and concerns about China, but it made those fears and concerns more connected to Americans’ daily lives than ever before. Covid-19 itself and the consequent supply chain disruptions taught Americans that they are too dependent on China and that economic interdependence does not necessarily produce a more connected and collaborative world.⁶⁴ Instead, many Americans now see U.S.-China economic interdependence as a tool that can be weaponized by Beijing. This fear of dependency on China now permeates every aspect of the relationship, including higher education’s reliance on Chinese students and Chinese-trained scientists. In a word, cooperation itself, even for altruistic ends such as promoting green energy, is viewed as suspect if it possibly makes the United States more reliant on China. These negative views toward economic interdependence with China are not matched by similarly negative views of international trade in general. That is, Americans are specifically worried about interdependence with China.

While U.S.-China academic collaboration has deteriorated alongside the broader bilateral relationship, especially over the last six years, the cratering of U.S. attitudes toward China since the pandemic presents severe problems for U.S.-China scholarly collaboration. Public fears of dependency and of being “held hostage” by Chinese supply chains have turned fundamental beliefs of liberal internationalism on its head. Mending the relationship via more cooperation and exchange, the hallmarks of what universities do, will be difficult as long as policymakers and many citizens believe that further engagement with China increases U.S. dependency on China to the country’s detriment.

However, most scientists, experts on China, and university administrators realize that academic decoupling would be catastrophic for the United States. First, it would undermine the United States’ competitiveness in science and technology. Second, it would undermine the United States’ global reputation as an open society and as a beacon to many who respect and admire those principles.

How can U.S.-China scholarly collaboration survive a period when collaboration itself is vilified? This chapter presents two recommendations.

First, academic institutions need to do more to engage the public and policymakers about the benefits of scholarly collaboration with China to the United States. The case must be made that a complete decoupling of academic collaboration would hurt the United States more than it would hurt China. It risks the isolation of the U.S. system, and it risks long-term negative impacts on technological competition with China. U.S. students should be encouraged to study China and to study in China because knowledge of the competition is necessary to understand China’s challenge to the United States as a peer superpower. The argument must focus on the interests of the United States, not the benefits to other countries or even to the resolution of global problems.

Second, academic institutions need to do more to engage Chinese students and scholars on the difficulties and benefits of studying in the United States at a fraught geopolitical moment. Most Chinese students and

64 Mary Gallagher and Daniela Stockmann, “Admiring Authoritarians: Anti-Chinese Sentiment in the United States and Germany,” American Political Science Association, Annual Meeting Paper, September 2023.

scholars who choose to study in the United States are doing so because they seek a freer, more open academic environment. Recognizing that Chinese students, scholars, and scientists who come to the United States for their education overwhelmingly want to stay in the United States for the long term, academic institutions should ensure that fundamental principles of academic freedom, freedom of expression and association, and restrictions on censorship are widely known and respected. Universities need to do more to ensure that students and scholars from China understand the important institutions and norms that allow this environment to flourish. Efforts at intimidation, encouragement to self-censor, and, worst of all, transnational repression via organizations affiliated with the Chinese government, such as Chinese Student and Scholars Associations (CSSA), should not be tolerated.⁶⁵

The government can also do more to prevent the U.S.-China rivalry from becoming racialized by focusing on the real differences between the two governments, which is a rivalry of political institutions and ideology. Emphasizing ideological and regime differences between a communist dictatorship and a liberal democracy reinforces why the United States continues to attract top students and scientists from China. Initiatives such as the China Initiative, which emphasize racial and ethnic differences, reinforce fears of racial profiling and anti-Asian discrimination, which has an ignominious history in the United States that should be fully repudiated.

Emphasizing democratic values and the benefits of an open society is not the same thing as calling for regime change in China. It is, instead, a desire to protect and preserve the American way of life and make the opportunity of living that life accessible to those in China who also desire it.

65 Mary Gallagher, “Do Confucius Institutes Belong on American Campuses?” in *The China Questions 2: Critical Insights into US-China Relations*, Maria Adele Carrai, Jennifer Rudolph, and Michael Szonyi, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022), 355.

Section II

The Elements of Collaboration

Institutions, Programs, Data, and Publications

The Role of Local Academic Units in Rebuilding U.S.-China Academic Exchange

Ethan Michelson

U.S.-China academic engagement—including student and faculty mobility—has atrophied in recent years. Political headwinds in both countries stymie the mutual eagerness of U.S. and Chinese university administrators to reconnect their students and faculty to their counterparts. U.S. politicians frequently threaten to withhold government funding to universities that they believe run afoul of their ideological beliefs in areas such as diversity, critical race theory, sexuality and reproductive health, and, most recently, the Israel-Hamas war. Such threats have extended to U.S.-China academic engagement and came to fruition when, in 2018, universities were forced to give up federal funding if they chose to host a Confucius Institute and, in 2020, when Fulbright programs with China and Hong Kong were suspended.

In the wake of deteriorating U.S.-China relations, politicians on both sides appear to equate academic exchange and cooperation with support for an enemy regime. Some U.S. politicians seem to view academic engagement with China as tantamount to legitimizing authoritarianism, political repression, a clampdown on academic freedom, espionage, and intellectual property theft—as if student exchange programs and faculty research collaboration are tools for supporting and appeasing dictators. Similarly, on the Chinese side, political rhetoric promoting “core socialist values” and the realization of the “Chinese Dream” discourages and even chastises academic engagement with the United States. In recent months, Xi Jinping has softened the tone with somewhat more conciliatory rhetoric—echoed by other party-state officials, including China’s ambassador to the United States—promoting U.S.-China people-to-people exchange. Understandably, university administrators who fear attracting the attention and arousing the ire of politicians exercise caution.

With sadness and dismay, I have witnessed the decline, and possibly even the collapse, of the field of China studies, which was arguably experiencing its heyday when I entered graduate school three decades ago. The

kinds of study and research opportunities I took for granted have vanished. In 1991, as an undergraduate student, I went to Xiamen University on a Chinese-language study abroad program that changed the course of my life. Language training is the gateway to area studies. Plummeting Chinese-language enrollments at U.S. universities portend a grim future for China studies. U.S. universities that rigidly interpret and apply the U.S. Department of State's Level-3 Travel Advisory (reconsider travel) for China have deprived many students of the opportunity to acquire Chinese linguistic and cultural competence in China. This contrasts with Taiwan, to which some universities, including my own, have diverted their study abroad programs. I spent the 1999-2000 academic year doing fieldwork in China with the support of a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship. I was able not only to do an immense amount of fieldwork, including surveys of Chinese lawyers in 25 cities, but also to insinuate myself in a community of Chinese scholars and build a professional network that helped launch and sustain my academic career. As study abroad and research opportunities disappear, so too does the next generation of China scholars.

Regardless of what they think of each other's governments, Americans and Chinese need to understand each other and work together to tackle common challenges. My university's response to a travel request I submitted in advance of a trip to the Sichuan University School of Law in the spring of 2018 illustrates the extent and nature of external political pressure bearing down on U.S. universities as their faculty and students attempt to engage in normal and healthy academic activities with their Chinese counterparts. Within hours of submitting my request for approval to reimburse travel expenses, I received a phone call from my university's export control officer in the Office of Research Compliance. Both U.S. and Chinese universities must comply with a growing array of rules from their respective governments pertaining to issues such as data security, intellectual property, and export control. Designed to promote national security interests, they also paradoxically undermine national security, international cooperation on global public health and climate challenges, and technological innovation insofar as they stifle basic research and drive away scientific talent.

To be sure, few would oppose protections against intellectual property theft. At the same time, however, some universities' compliance efforts, in some instances, have been comically absurd. For example, a university official questioned the purpose of my visit to Sichuan University by inquiring about the purpose of the visit, asking whether my talk would involve any proprietary data, and further asking whether I may be carrying information or knowledge about particle accelerators.

While export controls should not be criticized per se, mindlessly overzealous, one-size-fits-all compliance approaches such as this should be. Thankfully, I made the trip and successfully exchanged ideas with Chinese faculty and students. Not all university faculty are as fortunate.

Two suggestions stem both from my personal efforts as the chair of an interdisciplinary department as well as from fruitful discussions at three recent conferences devoted to reviving and strengthening U.S.-China academic engagement. First, whenever feasible, agree to host visiting scholars. Neither issuing a letter of invitation nor initiating and processing visa paperwork requires a formal institutional agreement or memorandum of understanding. Visiting scholars, regardless of the auspices under which they are invited and hosted, remain subject to visa background checks and other national security measures. Second, consider inviting faculty from counterpart universities to serve as external members of dissertation committees. By following both suggestions, we can facilitate research and expand the scholarly contacts of counterpart university faculty and graduate students. Both sides should do the utmost to welcome and integrate scholarly contacts into the intellectual life of the community of scholars relevant to their interests.

When higher-level university administrators are hamstrung by external compliance pressures or skittish about erring on the side of permissive interpretations of policies imposed from above, local academic units should step up and do what they can to promote U.S.-China academic exchange and cooperation. If enough department chairs, directors of centers and institutes, and rank-and-file faculty members take even one or two small steps, they can, in the aggregate, reverse some of the damage.

A Bridge and a Symbol

The Fulbright Program and U.S.-China Scholarly Exchange

Zhang Ran

Whereas education is viewed as a priority for social, political, and economic development by virtually every government, international cooperation in education often contributes to another goal: building international relationships. One major endeavor of the U.S. government in this area is the Fulbright Program, which “leverages U.S. leadership in higher education to build relationships and grow networks that strengthen the economy at home and bolster security abroad.”⁶⁶

The Fulbright Program was initiated in 1946 by drawing upon revenues from selling surplus war property from World War II, with only 10 countries participating in the Pacific and European areas by 1948. The scope was expanded in the 1950s and 1960s with more diverse financial resources and international collaboration patterns.⁶⁷ The program was proposed by Senator J. William Fulbright, a former Rhodes scholar who was regarded as an internationalist fighting against McCarthyism and who was supportive of the United Nations in his subsequent political career.⁶⁸

66 United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, *2022 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, December 2022), 32, <https://www.state.gov/2022-comprehensive-annual-report-on-public-diplomacy-and-international-broadcasting-2/>.

67 Molly Lenore Bettie, “The Fulbright Program and American Public Diplomacy,” (PhD dissertation, University of Leeds, May 2014), https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/6889/1/Bettie_ML_Communications_PhD_2014.pdf.

68 J. William Fulbright and Seth P. Tillman, *The Price of Empire* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 208-9; and Charles King, “The Fulbright Paradox: Race and the Road to a New American Internationalism,” *Foreign Affairs* 100 no. 4 (July/August 2021): 92-106, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-06-18/fulbright-paradox>.

The Fulbright Program is widely held as an example of exercising soft power worldwide.⁶⁹ This has been achieved through public, cultural, and exchange diplomacy.⁷⁰ Unlike hard power, which directly draws upon state power and diplomatic or even military efforts, educational exchange achieves its goals more indirectly. It cultivates favorable worldviews, cross-cultural understanding, and, most broadly, world peace through creating a structural opportunity for fostering people-to-people interaction.⁷¹ What is most notable about the Fulbright Program is that besides its foreign relations purpose, it has also developed into “an academically prestigious brand in international education.”⁷²

This chapter briefly traces this process as well as the program’s impact by drawing upon published books and articles by scholars and Fulbright grantees, the program’s annual report, and online alumni data. The findings here are meant to illuminate the changing landscape of U.S.-China scholarly exchange.

The Trajectory of the Fulbright Program with China

China was among the earliest and biggest buyers of the wartime surplus materials and was among the first group of countries that embarked on educational exchange with the United States.⁷³ After the People’s Republic of China was founded, the exchange program came to a halt in 1949.⁷⁴ In the 1970s, universities in Taiwan participated in the program. Scholarly exchange between the United States and China resumed in 1980 but was terminated by the Trump administration in 2020 through an executive order related to Hong Kong.

The Fulbright Scholarly Directory, published online, provides a glimpse into the changing landscape of the program.⁷⁵ According to information from the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program and the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program, a total of 1,804 scholars have participated in these two programs since 1980, with 792 scholars from the United States going to China and 1,012 from China visiting the United States.⁷⁶ As Figure 9.1

69 Richard Garlitz and Lisa Jarvinen, *Teaching America to the World & the World to America: Education and Foreign Relations since 1870*, 1st ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), doi:10.1057/9781137060150; and Christopher Medalis, “The Strength of Soft Power: American Cultural Diplomacy and the Fulbright Program during the 1989-1991 Transition Period in Hungary,” *Audem* 3 (2012): 144-163, <https://go.exlibris.link/8Qfc8pPO>.

70 Antônio F. de Lima, “The role of international educational exchanges in public diplomacy,” *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 3 (July 2007): 234-51, doi:10.1057/palgrave.pb.6000066; Iftikhar H. Malik, “American Public Diplomacy and Pakistan in the 1980s,” *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 14, no. 2 (Winter 1990): 65-90, <https://go.exlibris.link/H7KYCnM8>; Zhu Biyun and Margaret J. Wyszomirski, “Designing cultural diplomacy policy: structuring a flagship mechanism,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 29, no. 5 (2023): 1-18, doi:10.1080/10286632.2022.2092102; and Molly Bettie, “Exchange diplomacy: theory, policy and practice in the Fulbright program,” *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 16, no. 3 (September 2020): 212-23, doi:10.1057/s41254-019-00147-1.

71 Shin Freedman, Pat Munday, and Jeannette W. Cockroft, *Narrative Inquiries from Fulbright Lecturers in China: Cross-cultural Connections in Higher Education*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2019), doi:10.4324/9780429453038.

72 Bettie, *The Fulbright Program and American Public Diplomacy*.

73 Sam Lebovic, “From War Junk to Educational Exchange: The World War II Origins of the Fulbright Program and the Foundations of American Cultural Globalism, 1945-1950,” *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 2 (April 2013): 280-312, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26376447>.

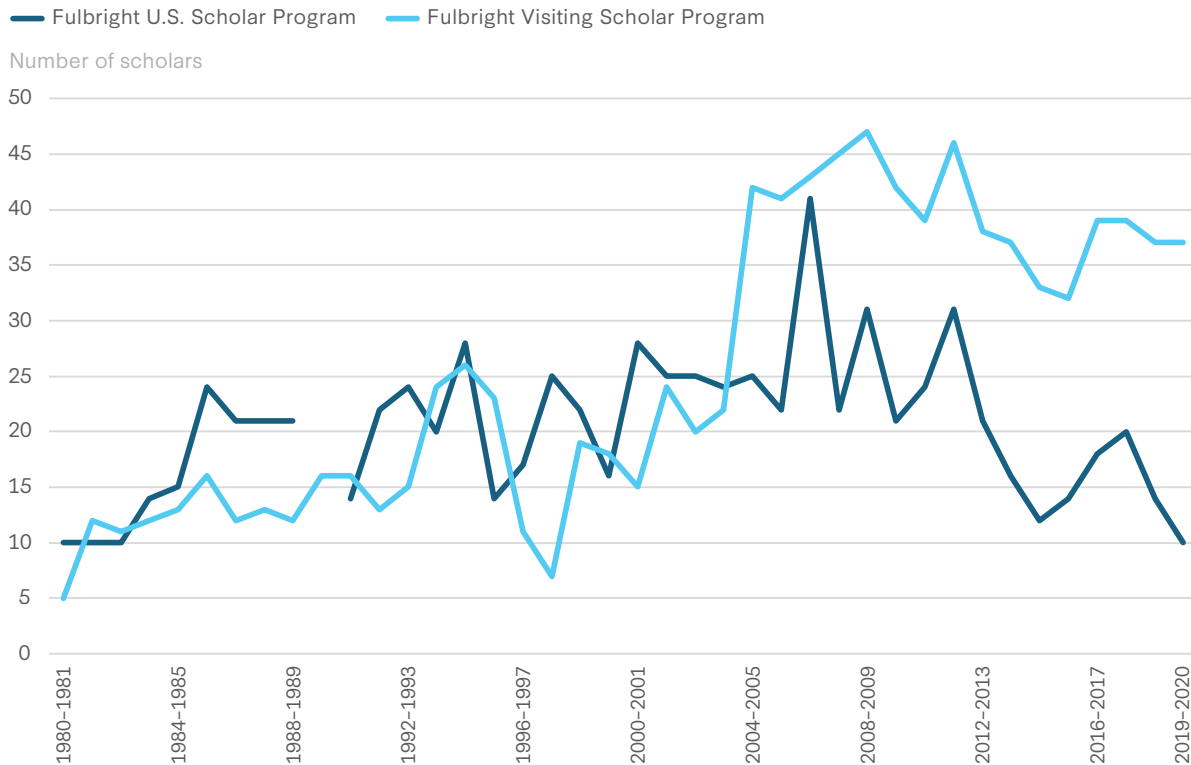
74 Freedman, Munday, and Cockroft, *Narrative Inquiries from Fulbright Lecturers in China*, 2.

75 “Fulbright Scholar Directory,” Fulbright Scholar Program, retrieved July 2023, <https://fulbrightscholars.org/fulbright-scholar-directory>.

76 There was another small scholarly exchange program called the Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program. In this

shows, the number of U.S. scholars slightly surpassed that of Chinese scholars in most earlier years. In 2004, however, the number of Chinese scholars nearly doubled, after the two governments signed an agreement to expand the program and to have China partake in cost sharing.⁷⁷ In 1989, the U.S. Scholar Program briefly stopped for one year. The number of U.S. scholars dropped significantly a few years before its official termination in 2020.

Figure 9.1: The Number of Fulbright Scholars between the United States and China (1980–2020)



Source: Author's calculations based on data retrieved from the Fulbright Scholar Directory, <https://fulbrightscholars.org/fulbright-scholar-directory>.

The data also show that participating scholars have mainly been from the humanities and social sciences. Between 1980 and 2020, there were 252 scholars in literature, 215 in law, 175 in history, and 132 in political science. In contrast, there were a mere two scholars in physical sciences and one in biological sciences, all three of whom were U.S. scholars. In fact, this disciplinary preference was clear ever since the initiation of the

program, foreign scholars teach in U.S. educational institutions. It was excluded from the present analysis due to its small scale. There were altogether 13 scholars from China in the program. The Fulbright student programs were also excluded because this paper focuses on scholarly exchange. There were 9 scholars from universities in Taiwan in the 1983-1984 Visiting Scholar Programs, who were also dropped from the analysis. For the U.S. scholars, some have more than one hosting institution. If at least one hosting institution is located in China, they are included in the analysis.

⁷⁷ Bettie, *The Fulbright Program and American Public Diplomacy*; and Freedman, Munday, and Cockroft, *Narrative inquiries from Fulbright lecturers in China: Cross-Cultural Connections in Higher Education*.

Fulbright Program between the United States and China and may reflect the “total diplomacy” approach of the U.S. government.⁷⁸ At the same time, economics and business are also areas of intensive scholarly exchange, with 225 scholars in economics and 119 in business. This is not surprising given the extensive economic ties between the United States and China during the 40 years of China’s Reform and Opening Era and the fact that economics and business have turned into the most popular disciplines in China.

A Bridge and a Symbol

The impacts of the Fulbright Program have been well documented by both U.S. and Chinese scholars.⁷⁹ In the early 1980s, U.S. scholars provided much-needed English instruction and became the first foreign scholars that introduced Western political science, literary theory, and quantitative research methods directly to Chinese teachers and students on Chinese campuses.⁸⁰ Enhanced by the Fulbright experience, many Chinese grantees developed expertise in American studies and directly supported American study centers in Chinese universities. Some exchange scholars also help to foster institutional collaboration between hosting and sending institutions. By directly interacting with people in another culture, Fulbright experiences help break stereotypes on both sides, ranging from beliefs about how people live (for example, a hedonistic lifestyle) to the demonization of capitalism or communism common in the political propaganda of both governments.⁸¹

The Fulbright Program functions like a bridge. It provides a structural opportunity for U.S. and Chinese scholars to see each other’s perspectives. In the words of Senator Fulbright himself, “The essence of intercultural education is the acquisition of empathy—the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may see something that we have failed to see, or may see it more accurately.”⁸² This capacity of empathy can help leaders, diplomats, and citizens to stay away from “the abstraction that seems to dehumanize us” and to better comprehend and tackle tensions and conflicts.⁸³

Against the backdrop of the U.S.-China scholarly exchange, the two Fulbright scholar programs are a tiny initiative involving no more than 100 grantees annually even at its peak.⁸⁴ In contrast, there were nearly 19,391

78 Lynn Noah, “Report on the Fulbright Program for China,” in *American Studies in China: Report of a Delegation Visit: October 1984* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 1985), 33–36, doi:10.17226/19297; and Bu Liping, “Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War,” *Journal of American Studies* 33, no. 3 (December 1999): 393–415, doi:10.1017/S0021875899006167.

79 Freedman, Munday, and Cockroft, *Narrative Inquiries from Fulbright Lecturers in China*; Zhou Zeng and Stephen T. Peverly, “Introduction to the Special Issue on Culture and Psychology: Fulbright Psychologists and Educators in China,” *Psychology in the Schools* 42, no. 3 (March 2005): 229–231, doi:10.1002/pits.20073; and *Conference Proceedings of the China Fulbright Alumni Association* [中国富布赖特校友会论文集] Beijing: Renmin University Press [中国人民大学出版社], 2013).

80 Noah, “Report on the Fulbright Program for China”; and Xu Guangqiu, “The Fulbright Program in China,” in *The Legacy of J. William Fulbright*, Alessandro Brogi, Giles Scott-Smith, and David J. Snyder, eds. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2019), 261–82.

81 Xu, “The Fulbright Program in China.”

82 Fulbright and Tillman, *The Price of Empire*, 217.

83 Ibid., 196.

84 The total number of U.S. and Chinese grantees under all types of Fulbright programs was about 200 annually before its termination.

Chinese scholars in the United States during the 2021-22 academic year, the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.⁸⁵ Yet the Fulbright Program is not only a valuable bridge between the two countries; it is also a symbol of U.S.-China relations. Such a symbol attests to whether the two countries are still committed to people-to-people interaction despite ongoing tensions and conflicts.

It is probably naive to think that the Fulbright Program is an apolitical project. Nor does it take place in an apolitical environment. The Fulbright Program has been criticized for being overly dominated by the U.S. government since its beginning.⁸⁶ It has also been accused of ideological infiltration and being used for intelligence-gathering purposes.⁸⁷ To what extent Fulbright scholars can generate a constructive ripple effect on international understanding depends on the institutional, sociocultural, and political environments in which the scholars are situated.⁸⁸ As Wu Di rightly points out, however, the Fulbright Program can have different meanings to different stakeholders.⁸⁹ Whether it is for developing international expertise for national interests, “for the survival and future progress of humanity,” or for building a sustainable common world, restoring the Fulbright exchange with China is a crucial step to maintain a window of dialogue and understanding.⁹⁰

85 “Leading Places of Origin of International Scholars, 2000/01-2021/22,” Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange, Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange, 2022, <https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-scholars/leading-places-of-origin/>.

86 Michael L. Krenn, *The History of United States Cultural Diplomacy: 1770 to the Present Day*, 1st ed. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 81, doi:10.5040/9781474205474; and Lebovic, “From War Junk to Educational Exchange,” 299.

87 Xu Guangqiu, “The Ideological and Political Impact of U.S. Fulbrighters on Chinese Students: 1979-1989,” *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 26, no. 3 (1999): 139-57, doi:10.1080/00927679909598823; Xu, “The Fulbright Program in China”; and Krenn, *The History of United States Cultural Diplomacy*, 81.

88 Fu Meirong and Zhao Xin, “Utilizing the Effects of the Fulbright Program in Contemporary China: Motivational Elements in Chinese Scholars’ Post-Fulbright Life,” *Cambridge Journal of China Studies* 12, no. 3 (2017), doi:10.17863/CAM.21528.

89 Wu Di, *U.S. Public Diplomacy towards China: Exercising Discretion in Educational and Exchange Programs* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), doi:10.1007/978-3-030-95644-8.

90 “Larsen, Beyer and Chu Reintroduce Legislation to Restore Fulbright Exchanges with China,” Representative Rick Larsen, March 30, 2023, <https://larsen.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2741>; Colleen O’Connor and Elizabeth Lynch, “Want to Reset China-US Relations? Bring Back Fulbright China,” *The Diplomat*, November 29, 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/11/want-to-reset-china-us-relations-bring-back-fulbright-china/>; and Fulbright and Tillman, *The Price of Empire*, 219.

Collecting and Disseminating Data on China

Challenges from China's Legal Environment

Meg Rithmire

The negative turn in U.S.-China relations over the last six years or so has involved a “securitization” of elements of the relationship that were previously not imagined to be part of national security concerns for either country. Historically, scholars of China have carefully navigated their research agendas when analyzing topics considered sensitive to the Chinese government. Those have traditionally included issues related to China’s border regions, the history of the Tiananmen incident in 1989, and other topics that are perceived as threatening to the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) conception of China’s national sovereignty or challenging to the CCP’s monopoly on political power. By contrast, scholars of China’s foreign policy and international relations have enjoyed collaborative relationships with their Chinese counterparts; political economy scholarship has been quite open, including work on corruption, inequality, and the challenges of economic reforms, on which global and China-based scholars have productively carried out original survey research and fieldwork for decades.

Under Xi Jinping and in the context of a U.S.-China competition in which economic interdependence is seen as a national security threat on both sides, however, the scope of “sensitive” topics has expanded to become essentially all-encompassing.⁹¹ The change is especially striking in political economy. Whereas U.S.-based scholars could previously access data on the Chinese economy and firms and conduct intensive interview-based fieldwork with market participants and state regulators, both qualitative and quantitative data collection is now inhibited by formal laws and regulations from the Chinese government, making data sharing and dissemination prohibitively difficult or even criminalized.

91 Margaret Pearson, Meg Rithmire, and Kellee S. Tsai, “China’s Party-State Capitalism and International Backlash: From Interdependence to Insecurity,” *International Security* 47, no. 2 (Fall 2022): 135-76, doi:10.1162/isec_a_00447.

Two laws in particular have generated uncertainty about whether academic research might be possible in China. The 2021 Data Security Law (中华人民共和国数据安全法) prohibits the export of data on Chinese individuals or entities without a cybersecurity review undertaken by the Cyberspace Administration of China. News coverage has focused on the effects of the law on Chinese technology firms, for example, in the context of a probe following ride-hailing firm Didi's initial public offering in New York, but universities globally are also wrestling with what implications the law holds for academic work in the social, hard, and medical sciences. In 2023, the Counterespionage Law (中华人民共和国反间谍法) criminalized the collection or sharing of information that may broadly compromise national security. The ambiguity about what is and is not related to China's national security, combined with raids on several domestic and international firms in the spring of 2023, has raised concerns for everyone, from foreign firms conducting due diligence in China to journalists and academics collecting information for research and publications. The main concern is the broad remit the Ministry of State Security may have in prosecuting violations of the law. These two laws are critical to understanding the new environment, but they are also part of a suite of new laws and policy measures that have created a broad securitization of Chinese society, particularly as it applies to firms, data, and research activities.

How should scholars understand and navigate a new era of securitization for their research subjects (e.g., firms, individuals, and state agencies) and for their own activities potentially being viewed as espionage?

First, academic communities should understand the context of the securitization of data and the relationship between research on firms and national security. One trend of particular importance is the role of firms in national security efforts, including the blurring of boundaries between private firms from China and the state. Some research has been written about this phenomenon, arguing that China's political economic transformation, manifest in the suite of laws above and in efforts such as Made in China 2025 to reduce China's dependence on foreign technology and accelerate industrial upgrading and military modernization, has brought firms of all kinds out of the realm of peace and prosperity-building interdependence and into the realm of national security competition.⁹² As such, knowledge about these firms is also part of the security relationship between China and the United States.

In addition to the legal challenges, U.S. institutions have lost access, unevenly, to several sources of data on China's economy that were previously very valuable to academic research. The China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database, which hosts academic research in China as well as national statistics, has become inaccessible to various U.S. institutions in a selective and uneven fashion, and most U.S. institutions are now unable to get a license for the Wind database, which provides comprehensive data on Chinese firms and markets (similar to Bloomberg). Based on conversations with Chinese academic colleagues and officials, access losses are a result of China's concerns that think tanks and open-source intelligence efforts, some based at universities (such as the Center for Strategic and Emerging Technologies at Georgetown), have allowed data collection to be "weaponized" against China in U.S. policy, including by identifying firms in critical supply chains that were subsequently blocked from doing business with U.S. firms.

Realistically, China scholars in the United States should understand that research on Chinese firms, especially industrial upgrading and in high-tech sectors, is now considered research on national security and that any line between basic research on China's political economy and applied research that affects policymaking in the United States and beyond no longer exists in the minds of Chinese policymakers.

92 Ibid.

Second, researchers should understand that ambiguity of enforcement is a feature of China's system, and they must be prepared to operate in a research environment in which discerning acceptable and unacceptable practices in advance with a high degree of certitude is not possible. In Beijing in July 2023, as part of the CSIS-organized scholarly exchange program, several U.S.-based scholars communicated concerns about the law and ambiguity in its implementation. These concerns were heard, but officials were, predictably, unable to reassure that academic activities are safeguarded or clarify how the law might apply to research. Requests for clarification are useful and necessary, but scholars also should be mindful that ambiguity—what legal scholar Rachel Stern calls “mixed signals and political ambivalence”—is a critical means through which the CCP exercises power, and that, therefore, the ambiguous and chilled environment is not likely to be resolved in the short term.⁹³

Nonetheless, scholarly researchers should proceed with academic work on China, but with the utmost attention to their own safety and the safety of their Chinese interlocutors. Below are several ideas for “best practices” and a few provocations for collective problem solving among the scholars of China in the United States, China, and beyond.

First, those traveling to China for research should do so on appropriate visas. While a letter of invitation from an academic institution and an “F” visa or “X” visa (the latter for students, including graduate students) has always been required for academic researchers, it became common for academics to travel to China for research on tourist visas in the 2000s and 2010s. At the current moment, this practice seems dangerous for academic travelers and might lead to collective repercussions for the academic community at a moment of rebuilding scholarly exchange.

Second, scholars of China based at academic institutions should take advantage of legal counsel and library infrastructure to construct data-use agreements, which are quite common among international collaborators when researchers access data from firms, scientific institutes, hospitals, and elsewhere. Chinese institutions are able to initiate processes of review under the Data Security Law, for example, and U.S. researchers should engage university personnel for assistance in enabling data export and proper usage. The worst results could come from activities that proceed without undergoing review, and so scholars should be proactive in seeking approvals before collaboration so as not to close doors for others.

There are two provocations regarding collective problem-solving. First, U.S.-based scholars of China should be vocal with the U.S. federal government in advocating for a longer-term extension of the U.S.-China Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement and similar scaffolding for academic research and collaboration. Second, as data access has become uneven and as scholars have found more creative paths for data collection, including web-scraping techniques, the community of China researchers might consider a collective data repository that could universalize access and distance collection from analysis so as to reduce the potential for harm to researchers. The field is not presently organized to do this, but several working groups on China and U.S.-China relations may be poised to push in this direction. In the field of political science, construction of original datasets is rewarded with recognition by groups such as the American Political Science Association. Therefore, communities such as the Association for Asian Studies or perhaps a new professional association dedicated to the work of research on China might incentivize this work in similar ways.

93 Rachel Stern, *Environmental Litigation in China: A Study in Political Ambivalence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Navigating Data Sharing with Chinese Colleagues

Jessica C. Teets

Since 2020, China has revised existing laws and passed new legislation concerning the transfer or sharing of information that could negatively impact international scholarly collaboration. In this environment of uncertainty and high potential costs, how should scholars adapt to these legal challenges? This chapter examines two primary issues that have emerged since 2020 and then discusses the implications of this adaptation.

New Legal Restrictions

In 2021, China adopted a data security law on the protection of “important data” and “core data,” including information involving national and economic security, people’s welfare, and issues of important public interest. By 2023, this law evolved into China’s Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) administered by the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC).⁹⁴ In April 2023, China passed a wide-ranging revision to anti-espionage legislation, banning the transfer of information related to national security and broadening the definition of spying. This revised Counter-Espionage Law states that all “documents, data, materials, and items related to national security and interests” are under the same protection as state secrets.⁹⁵ This was followed by a revision to the State Secrets Law in October 2023,

94 “Personal Information Protection Law of the People’s Republic of China” [中华人民共和国个人信息保护法], Government of China, last modified December 29, 2021, http://en.npc.gov.cn.cdurl.cn/2021-12/29/c_694559.htm.

95 “Counter-Espionage Law of the People’s Republic of China” [中华人民共和国反间谍法], National Laws and Regulation Database, April 26, 2023, <https://flk.npc.gov.cn/detail2>.

which requires national education and cadre-training campaigns to inculcate a sense of responsibility for national security in the Chinese population.⁹⁶ Article 10 encourages confidentiality in scientific and technological research and applications, such as in core technologies.⁹⁷

Thus far, legal action seems to be focused on companies, such as regulators restricting one of the biggest financial data providers, the Wind Information Company, from providing data to certain customers outside of China and the arrest or questioning of employees from the firms Mintz Group and Bain & Company. The only explicit academic application so far has been the suspension of foreign access to the Chinese academic data platform China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) to comply with data laws. However, these legal changes create a climate of uncertainty around what information is acceptable to obtain and share when scholars are collaborating across borders.

Data Practices during Collaboration

When Chinese and U.S. scholars collaborate on a research project, they will collect and analyze data together, but because that information relates to Chinese citizens, it is unclear how much and what kind of data can be shared across borders without running afoul of these new laws. Any academic collaboration must follow research ethics, such as “do no harm,” which leads to the following recommendations:

- Ask colleagues in China to check in with their dean (or other supervisor) to clarify the university’s data protection practices.
- When sharing data, upload all files directly to the cloud with password protection.⁹⁸
- Depending on university policy, a colleague in China might need to withhold the raw data and instead share edited data files, so make sure to discuss what information or amount of information can be shared at one time.
- Often Chinese colleagues can run models based on a partner’s desired specifications and share the results even if they cannot share the raw data, so make sure to budget for research assistants who might help with this extra work that normally would be shared.
- Defer to Chinese colleagues once an analysis has been completed, as they might be required to share these findings with their university prior to publication.

Data Transparency during Peer Review

Once a scholar is ready to submit an article or book manuscript for review, most journals and publishers

html?ZmY4MDgxODE4N2FhMzJmOTAxODdiZDlINDQwYjA1MmE=.

96 “Law on Guarding State Secrets” [中华人民共和国保守国家秘密法], cited in Phoebe Zhang, “China to Tighten Its State Secrets Law in Biggest Revision in a Decade,” *South China Morning Post*, October 27, 2023, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3239340/china-tighten-its-state-secrets-law-biggest-revision-decade>. For English translation, see, “PRC Law on Protecting State Secrets (Draft Revisions),” China Law Translate, October 10, 2023, <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/state-secrets-law-draft-revisions/>.

97 Ibid.

98 OneDrive is available in China, but to access Google Drive requires having a VPN, which is currently illegal, although widely used.

increasingly require that the author also share data as part of data-transparency initiatives in the United States and the United Kingdom. This presents a difficult challenge for Chinese authors and coauthors, because, again, it is unclear if this data can be shared widely.

Many Chinese colleagues are receiving recommendations from their universities to not provide the data and instead include this message in the “author’s note”: “Data will be available under restrictions to protect the safety of our China-based coauthors. Because the data contains individual and district information from Mainland China, data availability will be subject to restrictions under China’s Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL), which came into effect in November 2021. Individuals or organizations who seek to obtain the data will need to undergo security clearance from the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC).”

At this point, publishers and editors are uncertain how much to push for data access, which presents a large challenge given the data-transparency initiatives that most have signed. The intermediate solution might be to allow limited sharing of data underlying the main claims of the article with only the peer reviewers and perhaps only on request by the peer reviewers. Unfortunately, this challenge compounds the one already present in China of not sharing data, or even analysis, with colleagues for peer review. Currently, many scholars in China are encouraged to join study teams that collect data for the government to evaluate policies or practices and then submit data and subsequent analysis directly to the government for internal review. This information is “internal” (neibu) and treated as confidential information only available to officials and is not shared with other colleagues, even in China. As such, it raises concerns about the quality of policy evaluation and the ability to sustain an academic community more broadly.

Implications

In this environment of uncertainty, how should U.S. scholars adapt to these legal challenges? The Sino-U.S. academic collaboration is vitally important now more than ever, and scholars must adapt to these legal challenges in ways that protect and preserve academic relationships in China. This will require that scholars understand the challenging environment faced by academic colleagues in China and factor these issues into budgets, work processes, and how work is shared during publication. Scholars must work with their Chinese colleagues to ensure that they have considered (and consulted on) how best to share data with each other and then with peer reviewers and develop proactive technology and other solutions. This is a challenging time for collaboration, and scholars on both sides must collectively decide how best to maintain academic collaboration and dialogue in order to facilitate a better future.

Managing the Chilling Effects of Data Regulations on China Studies

Dai Xin

China researchers operating from outside of the country have long raised concerns about a variety of barriers to data access. In recent years, the adoption by Chinese authorities of a series of new and amended legal regulations on the collection, processing, and cross-border transmission of data has caused further concerns and anxieties among the scholarly community. By far, the latest amended Anti-Espionage Law (AEL), effective from July 2023, appears to have caused the most significant anxiety. As widely noted, Article 4 of the amended AEL defines espionage activities to include the illicit procurement of not only state secrets and state intelligence but also “other documents, data, materials, or items related to national security and interests.” Many worry that this revised provision is so vague that it is creating a chilling effect, thereby casting too broad a net that could capture regular information processing activities in the context of scholarly research, such as collecting data through surveys, interviews, and archival research. In light of such seemingly grave legal risks, should scholars continue to go to China to conduct data-based projects, either independently or in collaboration with local counterparts? Anecdotal evidence indicates that institutional review boards inside U.S. and European universities are asking exactly such questions and that many are skeptical about the viability of research trips to China—or even China projects in general.

Such concerns, of course, cannot be simply brushed aside as an overreaction. In China and other countries, vague provisions in counter-espionage laws, or national security laws in general, are well known for their potential to be misused. Or, more precisely, vagueness is better understood as not a flaw but a design feature for national security laws because authorities, as they draft these provisions, have often made a deliberate trade-off in favor of false positives over false negatives. Thus, a chilling effect is intentional. And for that very reason, one may also not realistically expect that clarification of such provisions will, as in other areas of law, eventually come through agency rule-making or judicial interpretations.

That said, taking the AEL's vagueness as a given, it is still important for the research community to make efforts to practically assess and manage the actual risk facing scholars, as opposed to the theoretically highest possible risk. Much greater attention needs to be paid to circumstantial considerations beyond a typical statutory interpretation. Not surprisingly, for anyone interested in determining whether or not the AEL applies to their project, common-sense starting points include drawing on one's own knowledge as a China expert about the relevant topic's political sensitivity and, as Jessica Teets suggests in Chapter 11, turning to Chinese colleagues on the ground for help with staying current on data protection practices.

The next step for gauging the risks of the AEL's potentially excessive prosecution, as typically recommended, is to consult broader background dynamics. Although the amended AEL has gotten the most media attention, it is merely one part of China's comprehensive effort to secure the flow of data, especially outbound flows of personal data and other important data. Together with a suite of laws and regulations—the Data Security Law and the Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL), both effective since 2021—there now is a stringent data protection and security regime for all data processors, including academics.⁹⁹ In particular, for those interested in moving data out of China, the legal regime presumably subjects them to a formal security assessment requirement. According to rules adopted in 2022 by the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), any transmission of “important data,” of personal data of over 100,000 individuals within a year, or of sensitive personal data of over 10,000 individuals within a year, must first clear the CAC's security evaluation.¹⁰⁰

Although these rules may not be familiar to non-legal professionals, they actually may have a much greater impact on the work of scholars of China than the AEL. Obviously, “important data,” defined as data “that once tampered, destroyed, leaked, or illegally acquired or used may possibly damage national security, economic operations, social stability, and public health and safety,” is just another vague term.¹⁰¹ The thresholds of information concerning 100,000 individuals or sensitive information concerning 10,000 individuals are not high for those engaging in large-N studies. For those working with smaller samples, meanwhile, the rules could make it harder to hire a proper commercial survey provider, since they may be concerned about their own compliance. Even for scrapers of Chinese websites from an offshore location, the CAC's rules offer no assurance that scraping involves no “cross-border transmission.”

For scholars of China who plan to bring whatever they discovered in China back home, they have good reason to worry about these seemingly banal and technical rules. Surprisingly, though, many with whom the author has spoken are not familiar with or even aware of these rules. It is also almost unheard of that humanities or social science scholars have ever attempted to comply with the assessment requirement. But such “neglect,” whether deliberate or unwitting, turns out to make a good deal of pragmatic sense. Although China's latest seriousness about data protection and security is genuine, a cross-border regime with a single-minded mission for security is doomed for any country that is not interested in disconnecting from other parts of the world. In reaction to this regime, a number of international firms are reported to have restructured or

99 For example, unlike the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, which includes exemptions for academic research from some of its data-processing rules, Chinese lawmakers explicitly rejected a proposed academic exemption from the stringent notice and consent requirements for collaborative data processing, citing the concern that such exemption may be abused.

100 “Security Assessment Provisions for Outbound Data Transmission” [数据出境安全评估办法], Cyberspace Administration of China, effective September 1, 2022, Article 4, <https://rb.gy/75qynt>.

101 *Ibid.*, article 19.

divested their China operations.¹⁰² Chinese firms doing outbound business and trade, meanwhile, have vocally complained about such self-inflicted hardship on their already struggling businesses. And even for the CAC, the sheer number of applications for security assessments has quickly overwhelmed its staff, resulting in a significant backlog.

That is why the CAC, on September 30, 2023, magically pulled out of its hat a new set of draft rules that, when eventually adopted, would provide much more generous exemptions for cross-border data transmission than the CAC previously indicated.¹⁰³ The new set of rules starts with an exemption provision that cross-border data transmissions are not subject to the security assessment requirement if there is no personal data or important data involved. Data processors, under the new draft rules, are explicitly allowed to assume that data are not “important” unless there is express government designation. Collecting information from outside of China, such as scraping the web, is clearly exempted, too. While transmitting personal information concerning over 10,000 individuals within one year is still not exempted from all regulatory impositions, for those who plan to transmit information of fewer than 1 million people, a standard contract rather than the much more burdensome security assessment will be sufficient for compliance purposes. That should offer straightforward guidance for both individual scholars and survey companies in formulating their respective compliance strategies.

While these draft rules still need to run their course to become formally adopted, their release is itself a remarkably positive development. Besides the specific assurance these rules could offer to scholars, the fact that the regulatory approach took a significant shift in such a short period of time also signals that China may have gradually come to more pragmatic terms on issues about data. Skeptics could rightly point out that since the AEL and the cross-border data rules are interpreted and enforced by different agencies, the positive turn for the latter does not imply the same for the former. But it is not baseless speculation to think that China has no interest in prosecuting the AEL in an overly broad way because that would simply undermine the cross-border data flows it now clearly wants to promote. Most tellingly, at the Central Economic Work Conference in December 2023, China’s most significant annual event for economic policymaking, the leadership even made an explicit mention of “seriously resolving the cross-border data flow problem” as among the top policy items in 2024 for improving the country’s business environment for foreigners.¹⁰⁴ All of this is certainly not to say that legal risks to China scholars, posed by either the AEL or the data laws, have now been eliminated. But with these background changes in sight, there seems to be greater reasons at this point for a smaller chilling effect and for scholars not to avoid pursuing independent or collaborative projects.

102 Or at least use regulatory reasons as a cover. See Jessica Seah, “The Unraveling of Dentons Dacheng: Was it the Law or the Love that Frayed?,” *Law.com*, August 17, 2023, <https://www.law.com/international-edition/2023/08/17/the-unraveling-of-dentons-dacheng-was-it-the-law-or-the-love-that-frayed/>.

103 “Rules on Regulating and Promoting Cross-Border Data Flow (Draft for Public Comments),” *Cyberspace Administration of China*, released September 28, 2023.

104 “Central Economic Affairs Conference Held in Beijing,” *Caijing*, December 13, 2023, <http://m.caijing.com.cn/article/318683>.

Chinese Scholars' Publications in English-Language Academic Journals

Suisheng Zhao

The publication and dissemination of scholarly research findings by Chinese scholars in English-language journals based in the United States is one of the critical dimensions of scholarly exchange between the two countries. As the editor of a U.S.-based international academic journal, the *Journal of Contemporary China* (JCC), the author has personally witnessed the increase of Chinese scholars' publications in U.S.-based academic journals over the past 30 years and their contribution to scholarly exchanges between the two countries. Although there are some concerns due to the change in China's political environment in recent years, there are still reasons to be optimistic about the prospect of dissemination of Chinese scholars' contributions to contemporary China studies through their publication in U.S.-based international academic journals.

The JCC was founded in the early 1990s to fill a void in Western studies of contemporary China. Edited from the Center for China-U.S. Cooperation at the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies in the United States, one of the primary objectives of the JCC is to build a bridge between Western studies of China and the increasingly sophisticated and rich research of China by non-Western scholars, particularly in China.

Before the 1990s, very few Chinese scholars were able to make serious contributions to Western scholarly studies of contemporary China due to the limits in their academic training as well as political and ideological constraints. This situation began to change around the time of the founding of the JCC, as China increasingly opened its doors and integrated into international communities, including the academic community. More Chinese scholars of social sciences and humanities were trained in leading U.S. universities and began to return to China. Many of them took up teaching positions in China's elite universities and played a crucial

leadership role in providing an increasing number of Chinese scholars with rigorous academic training. These returned scholars and Chinese students in elite universities have produced sophisticated research in dialogue with their counterparts in the United States.

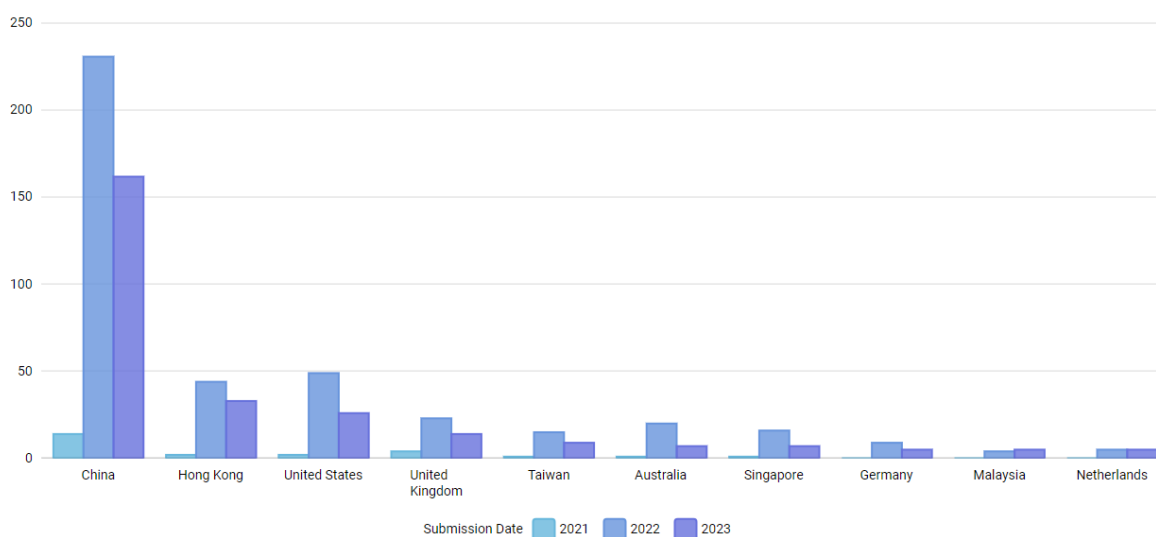
More importantly, an increasing number of Chinese scholars began to use critical thinking to explore a variety of research subjects with increasingly fewer political and ideological restraints. This development not only led to the gradual integration of Chinese scholarship into international scholarship of contemporary China studies but also enriched the U.S. study of China with unique Chinese perspectives. An increasingly large number of Chinese scholars were able to publish their research or collaborate on research with U.S. scholars in U.S.-based international journals.

This development of scholarly exchanges has, unfortunately, changed in the last decade, particularly in the last few years as the Chinese authorities have tightened administrative, political, and ideological control to restrict Western academic influence in Chinese academia, particularly Chinese higher education institutions. As a result, Chinese scholars have struggled to cope with two contradictory developments in their academic careers.

On the one hand, Chinese scholars, including those in the social sciences and humanities, are still under heavy pressure to publish their work in top refereed academic journals, including English-language journals, for their employment and promotion. They have, therefore, continued to submit and try to publish their research work in top journals in both the Chinese and English languages. Their universities have encouraged and given monetary rewards for publishing articles in journals highly ranked in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), particularly Q1 journals with a high-impact factor.

The JCC is highly ranked in the SSCI. As a result, submissions of Chinese scholars to the JCC have continued to rise and have remained very high even in recent years despite the change in China’s political environment. As Figure 13.1 shows, submissions from China were low during the pandemic, but they then jumped in 2022 and 2023 and over the last two years, far surpassing the number of submissions from authors in other countries and regions.

Figure 13.1: Author Submissions by Country/Region to the JCC, 2021–2023



Source: Author’s compilation.

Chinese scholars have also continued to find ways to obtain access to read and download academic articles in U.S.-based international journals, including the JCC, to conduct their research, despite the Chinese authorities' crackdown on Western influence and using the Great Firewall to restrict access to the internet and overseas information. As Figure 13.2 shows, readership and downloads from China-based scholars have remained high, ranking third, only behind those in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Figure 13.2: The JCC's Top Downloading Regions, 2022–2023

Country/Territory	2022	2023
United Kingdom	60,897	40,032
United States	67,345	37,978
Mainland China	28,031	17,046
Australia	25,166	14,630
Hong Kong	23,961	12,558

Source: Author's compilation.

In the meantime, Chinese scholars have struggled with another development. Although Chinese scholars have continued under heavy pressure to publish in and get access to U.S.-based international academic journals, they have been censored by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) authorities and must conduct self-censorship in their research to avoid sanctions from their home institutions if they publish critical articles on politically sensitive subjects. Reportedly, some Chinese universities and think tanks have required scholars to obtain approval from CCP authorities before they can submit their articles to U.S.-based journals and engage with Western scholars in collaborative research. Chinese scholars could face severe sanctions if their publications cross red lines set by party authorities. Some authors have suffered from or are concerned about the administrative and political consequences of publishing in U.S.-based journals. For example, one Chinese scholar was subjected to administrative punishment and lost her job after her article on a politically sensitive subject was published in the JCC and quoted by the *New York Times*. Another Chinese author who co-authored an article with an overseas scholar requested to withdraw her authorship because she was concerned about political consequences after their article on a politically sensitive subject was published in the JCC.

As a result, although the quantity of submissions to the JCC has continued to rise, the percentage of publishable articles has declined because an increasing number of submissions is no longer a good fit for U.S.-based academic journals. Many of the submissions have followed the CCP party line without any critical analysis. Some of them simply present the official views of the Chinese government on the subject matter or try to make policy recommendations to the Chinese government rather than make academic contributions.

But there is a caveat. The CCP's censorship and ideological control have been particularly effective in second-tier (and lower-ranked) Chinese universities and institutions. The submissions from these universities have overwhelmingly followed party lines and avoided critical analysis on sensitive political subjects. However, some of the submissions from top universities, such as Peking University and Tsinghua University, continue to make excellent critical analyses. Surprisingly, these submissions have used sensitive terms such as "authoritarian system" to refer to the Chinese regime and its analysis of the country's "zero-Covid" policy based on political rather than scientific and medical considerations. As a result, while the overall publication of Chinese social sciences and humanities scholars in the JCC has fallen, Chinese scholars in elite universities have continued to publish high-quality articles in U.S.-based academic journals, including the JCC.

Section III

**Challenges and
Opportunities of
Cooperation in Scholarly
Disciplines**

The Reshaping of China's Ideology and Its Implications for International Studies

Wang Jisi

The international scholarly literature on China's ideology abounds. In their book chapter "Ideology and Chinese Foreign Policy," Eun A. Jo and Jessica Chen Weiss state that "geostrategic competition between China and the United States has been cast in increasingly ideological terms," and that "many U.S. policymakers also acknowledge China's growing ideological appeal."¹⁰⁵ However, not many U.S. officials and observers have taken enough notice of changes in China's ideological propaganda and the implications for its foreign policy and international studies.

The most noticeable change in China's ideological work is its emphasis and extolling of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, which has been replete in Chinese official discourse. In the newest version of the constitution of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Xi Jinping Thought is placed parallel to Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the "Three Represents Important Thought," and the "Scientific Concept of Development" in the chain of leading ideological principles. As compared with the theories of other Chinese leaders listed above, Xi Jinping Thought is uniquely praised as "contemporary Chinese Marxism, Marxism in the 21st century, and the essence of the times of Chinese culture and Chinese spirit." Plainly speaking, it is now no longer sufficient to proclaim that the CPC's ideology is Marxism without referring to Xi Jinping Thought.

Another significant change is the absence of Leninism in most CPC official narratives except for its constitution and very few other cases where Marxism-Leninism continues to appear. In his numerous speeches and writings,

¹⁰⁵ Eun A. Jo and Jessica Chen Weiss, "Ideology and Chinese Foreign Policy" in *The Routledge Handbook of Ideology and International Relations*, eds., Jonathan Leader Maynard and Mark L. Haas (London: Routledge, 2023), 343-58.

Xi rarely refers to Marxism-Leninism. No official interpretation has been publicized to give an explanation for this modification. It likely has something to do with the Leninist assertion of a violent proletarian revolution and other radical ideas that the CPC no longer holds, although the Leninist theory of “dictatorship of the proletariat” is still very much alive in China today, which is practiced as the “people’s democratic dictatorship.”

Interestingly, the lack of reference to Leninism seems to be controversial among senior CPC theorists. Wang Weiguang, a former president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), the largest and arguably most influential think tank in China, contends emphatically in a lengthy article that Leninism must not be separated from Marxism and must not be discarded as a guiding principle. He states that:

Influenced by those who demonize Lenin and negate Leninism in international spheres, there have been similar erroneous thoughts in China. Some people only refer to Marxism without mentioning Leninism and, by doing that, attempt to . . . call off the leading role of Marxism, deny the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and sabotage the socialist system.¹⁰⁶

Wang’s remarks are obviously targeted at some people with political weight in the CPC.

A third change in the CPC’s ideological work is its emphasis of China’s civilizational heritage and cultural traits. Xi expounds that “peace, concord, and harmony are ideas the Chinese nation has pursued and carried forward for more than 5,000 years. The Chinese nation does not carry aggressive or hegemonic traits in its genes.”¹⁰⁷ These are concepts not often found in Marxist doctrine.

In recent years, Xi has developed an extraordinary interest in archeology. On September 28, 2020, he called for a group study session of the Politburo of the CPC Central Committee. Xi announced at the session that “archaeological findings reveal the origin and evolution of the Chinese civilization, its glorious achievements and great contributions to the world civilization.” He further proclaimed that “China is the homeland of human beings in the East, and it is the earliest place of human origin along with Africa.” “Through exchanges with other civilizations,” Xi continued, “the Chinese civilization has contributed to the world a profound system of thoughts, a wide range of technological, cultural and artistic achievements, and unique institutional creations, thereby deeply influencing the development of the world’s civilizations.”¹⁰⁸ Noting that there is still a long way to go to unveil ancient Chinese history, he called on archaeologists to continue forging ahead,

106 Wang Weiguang [王伟光], “Marxism-Leninism Is Our Party’s Theoretical Foundation: Absolutely Cannot Throw Away Leninism” [马克思列宁主义是我们党的理论基础, 绝不能丢掉列宁主义], *Chinese Academy of Social Sciences University Journal* [中国社会科学院研究生院学报], no. 6 (2020), http://my.cass.cn/mkszyjbyl/202102/t20210201_5309236.shtml.

107 Xi Jinping, “Speech at a Ceremony Marking the Centenary of the Communist Party of China,” *China Daily*, July 1, 2021, <https://language.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202107/02/WS60de676ca310efa1bd65f4fe.html>; and “How did Confucianism Win Back the Chinese Communist Party? A Two-Millenia-Old Sage Proves His Worth to Xi Jinping,” *The Economist*, June 23, 2021, <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2021/06/23/how-did-confucianism-win-back-the-chinese-communist-party>.

108 Huaxia, “Xi Stresses Better Understanding Chinese Civilization through Archaeology,” Xinhuanet, September 29, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-09/29/c_139407207.htm; Massimo Introvigne, “While the World Confronts China, Xi Jinping Calls a Meeting of the Politburo—on Archeology,” *Bitter Winter*, September 30, 2020, <https://bitterwinter.org/while-the-world-confronts-china-xi-jinping-calls-a-meeting-of-the-politburo-on-archeology/>; and Xi Jinping [习近平], “Building an Archeology with Chinese Characteristics and Chinese Style” [建设中国特色中国风格中国气派的考古学 更好认识源远流长博大精深的中华文明], *Seeking Truth* [求是], November 30, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2020-11/30/c_1126803588.htm.

explore the unknown, and reveal more about the origins of Chinese civilization.¹⁰⁹ He stressed focusing on major archaeological research programs and concentrating resources to achieve new breakthroughs. The funding, according to some informed people, is astronomical.

The advantage of these research programs is to mobilize Chinese nationalism—essentially Han nationalism—as a powerful resource in the service of the CPC’s campaign of “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.” In addition to showing the uniqueness and merits of Chinese civilization, these programs are meant to find evidence that Tibet, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and other national minority regions have been part of China since time immemorial. The New Qing History, a historiographical school that gained prominence in the United States about two decades ago by offering a wide-ranging revision of the history of the Manchu-led Qing dynasty, has met with a great deal of antipathy among mainland Chinese scholars. Qin Shi Huang, China’s first emperor, is viewed by mainstream Chinese thinkers as an “outstanding statesman, strategist, and reformer” who unified the whole country, rather than as a merciless tyrant ruling a short-lived dynasty.

The CPC propaganda organs have made great efforts to combine Marxism with Chinese cultural tradition. A new television series produced in China, *When Marx Met Confucius*, was released online in October 2023.¹¹⁰ This is not another blockbuster drama of the sort China has been adept at producing in recent years, but a propaganda film aimed at popularizing the latest version of what is known as “Xi Jinping Thought on Culture.” Its aim is to reconcile the leadership’s official Marxist underpinnings with an appeal to a more specifically Chinese cultural heritage. As some scholars remarked, Marx was interpreted by Chinese thinkers and substantively involved in Chinese historical course; in that sense, he changed China. Meanwhile, China actually changed Marx’s image as well. In this interaction, Confucianism has played an important and constructive role. Meanwhile, some Maoist websites vehemently accused this film series of disparaging Marx and betraying Marxist historical materialism.¹¹¹

All of these changes in China’s ideology described above are meaningful to observers of Chinese politics and foreign relations. To be sure, Marxism nominally remains the official ideology. In practical terms, however, Xi Jinping Thought is serving as the actual overarching, defining ideology.

This makes a striking contrast with the ideology that the Soviet Union maintained in the Cold War years when the Soviets wanted to establish Marxist-Leninist regimes in many countries and to wipe out imperialist powers led by the United States. China’s current political and ideological debates with the United States are essentially defined in China along nationalist, cultural, and civilizational lines—“the East versus the West”—not between socialism and capitalism, between proletariat and bourgeoisie, or between worldwide proletariat revolution and imperialism in the traditional Marxist-Leninist conceptual framework. While Marxism in its original sense was regarded as a universally applicable value system about social classes and their contradictions, the leading

109 Ibid.

110 “Xi Jinping Is Trying to Fuse the Ideologies of Marx and Confucius: A New Television Show Places Them at the Centre of Chinese Culture,” *The Economist*, November 2, 2023, <https://www.economist.com/china/2023/11/02/xi-jinping-is-trying-to-fuse-the-ideologies-of-marx-and-confucius>.

111 Tao Zhang, “When Marx Met Confucius: Xi Jinping’s Attempt to Influence China’s Intellectual Loyalties Has Met with a Mixed Reception at Home and Abroad,” *The Conversation*, November 9, 2023, <https://theconversation.com/when-marx-met-confucius-xi-jinpings-attempt-to-influence-chinas-intellectual-loyalties-has-met-with-a-mixed-reception-at-home-and-abroad-216568>; and Liu Liuqiu [刘溜球], “Review of New Historical Drama, ‘When Marx Met Confucius’” [评新编历史剧《当马克思遇见孔夫子》], *Minzu Fuxingwang* [民族复兴网], October 19, 2023, <https://www.mzfxw.com/e/action/ShowInfo.php?classid=12&id=179480>.

Chinese ideology today is seen as reflecting China's peculiar national conditions, interests, and values. Issues such as the geographic origins of the earliest human beings are not important to traditional Marxists, but they are touchy and essential to China's ideological workers. If an individual is a disciple of Karl Marx, they should pay homage to Confucius and Qin Shi Huang as well.

As a result, the bar is higher today for scholars of China in the West to collaborate with their Chinese counterparts, and vice versa. There are increased sensitivities with regard to China studies in areas such as ancient and modern history, CPC history, ethnic relations, religion, social welfare, demography, and culture, not to mention the current political and economic transformation. Foreign scholars' publications in China are meticulously scrutinized. Mainland Chinese scholars of social sciences and humanities are very careful about what they may want to publish abroad or in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

For international relations specialists in China, the reshaping of China's ideology may restrain the scope of evaluating Beijing's foreign policy, especially deliberations regarding its approach to the United States. On the other hand, China's international relations scholars are reminded that they have to widen their horizons to look at China itself beyond the conventional space of international affairs. Moreover, studies of comparative politics, economics, and culture are gaining more relevance than the "three isms" (realism, liberalism, and constructivism) in international relations theory.

National Security Studies in the Shadow of the Over-Securitization of China-U.S. Relations

Yu Tiejun

In the pair of conferences dedicated to rebuilding China-U.S. scholarly exchange co-organized by CSIS and Peking University's Institute of International and Strategic Studies, “national security” became a key issue throughout the whole discussion. With the intensifying strategic competition between China and the United States, bilateral relations are growing increasingly “securitized,” with economic issues, science and technology cooperation, and even research and educational collaboration, traditionally beyond the scope of national security, all falling victim to “over-securitization.” Concepts such as economic security, decoupling, de-risking, and “small yard, high fences” have become buzzwords in China-U.S. relations. Even serious scholars and experts whose professional careers and businesses rely on fieldwork feel somewhat stressed and reluctant to travel to the other side. With this trend ongoing, the future does not bode well for China studies in the United States and American studies in China.

This kind of over-securitization of bilateral relations has resulted from the spiraling of domestic security concerns, negative interactions between the two countries, and the increasingly unstable and uncertain world that has emerged over the past decade. As a response to all sorts of security challenges, China established the Central National Security Commission and its standing office in 2014. China subsequently issued the National Security Law in 2015, defining “national security” as “a status in which the regime, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, welfare of the people, sustainable economic and social development, and other major interests of the state are relatively not faced with any danger and not threatened internally or externally and the capacity to maintain a sustainable security status.”¹¹² With regard to protecting vital national interests from

112 “National Security Law of the People’s Republic of China” [中华人民共和国国家安全法], State Council of the People’s

danger and threats, it seems there are no major differences between the definition of national security in China and in the United States.

During the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), held in October 2022, national security was further elevated to a distinctive status as “the bedrock of national rejuvenation.” An unprecedented separate chapter of the CPC congress report was given to national security issues, and it was placed before the chapters on national defense and foreign affairs. General Secretary Xi Jinping reiterated in the report, “We must resolutely pursue a holistic approach to national security and promote national security in all areas and stages of the work of the Party and the country, so as to ensure national security and social stability.”¹¹³ The term “national security” was mentioned 29 times in the report, and now there are 20 areas that fit under the overall scope of national security, including political, military, homeland, economic, financial, cultural, social, science and technology, cyber, food, ecology, resource, nuclear, overseas interests, space, deep sea, polar areas, biological, artificial intelligence, and data security. The scope of Chinese national security is wide-ranging and cross-domain, but political or regime security still holds the utmost importance.

Corresponding to the elevation of national security in policymaking, national security studies and education have also gained momentum in Chinese universities. In 2020, the Ministry of Education elevated national security to the first tier of disciplines, on the same footing with other big traditional disciplines such as mathematics, physics, politics, and economics. Consequently, this has led to the creation of a number of national security studies programs, the recruitment of many PhD students to specialize in national security, the creation of new syllabi, and a new series of textbooks. In the near or intermediate term, the situation will not change very much.

As a professor who has taught international history, national security, and East Asian international relations for more than 20 years at Peking University, the author’s feelings about the booming of national security studies in China are quite complex. It is positive to see more importance attached to national security, but there is also a danger of the idea becoming over-stretched. If everything is national security, then national security as an academic field will go nowhere. And if national security was only understood narrowly as state security, China would not need to establish its own version of the National Security Council to begin with. Security studies need to focus on the real “national level” in order to develop a national security studies discipline that is open, academic, and international. In that sense, the experience and lessons of security studies in the United States, which originated on the eve of World War II and were greatly facilitated by the National Security Act of 1947, may shed some light on China’s national security studies.

In the eyes of some Americans, this new surge in attention on national security in China may be viewed as ominous and counter-productive to China-U.S. relations in general and on bilateral scholarly exchange in particular. Similar concerns with the over-securitization of U.S. policy toward China also exist on the Chinese side. Lacking mutual trust, national security regulations from both countries are likely to bring about more limits on peer-to-peer research collaboration and more restrictions on data availability and transfer, even for academic purposes. Both countries should keep this in mind and work together to reduce such possible negative effects.

At the same time, scholarly exchange and cooperation in national security studies can also contribute to better China-U.S. relations. As a scholar specializing in security studies, the author has benefited tremendously from

Republic of China, July 1, 2015, Article 2, https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2015-07/01/content_2893902.htm.

113 “Full Text of the Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” *China Daily*, October 25, 2022, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202210/25/WS6357e484a310fd2b29e7e7de.html>.

research in Stanford's Center for International Security and Cooperation, Columbia's Summer Workshop on the Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy program, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's security studies program in 2005, 2008, and 2018-19, respectively, with the Chinese government, Columbia University, and the Fulbright Program all serving as sponsors. The author also learned a lot through in-person communication with U.S. counterparts in the pair of conferences on rebuilding China-U.S. scholarly exchange sponsored by the Luce Foundation and the China-U.S. Exchange Foundation. Security studies as an academic field can provide scholars with a tool kit to understand the rise and fall of great powers, the discord and collaboration among different countries, and how to manage difficult relationships.

In the case of China-U.S. relations, concepts and theories such as balance of power, power shifts, perception and misperception, the security dilemma, deterrence, crisis management, the Thucydides Trap, and the Cold War analogy, despite their potential weaknesses, all contribute to some extent to understanding and diagnosing the current situation. For security experts, if the securitization of bilateral relations is inevitable, then scholars need to use their expertise to keep it under control and overcome the over-securitization of the relationship. For that purpose, both sides need to nurture allies among like-minded scholars, joint ventures at universities and think tanks, and the intellectual community of security studies.

Over-Securitization and Potential Obstacles to Research on China's International Relations

Alastair Iain Johnston¹¹⁴

In the present decade, the academic study of China's international relations and foreign policy is arguably flourishing in the United States compared to previous decades. Research is becoming increasingly integrated into the general field of international relations and related theory development. Younger generations of scholars are drawing on a wide range of theories from fields such as sociology, psychology and the social neurosciences, economics, and comparative politics. They are employing more diverse methodologies, such as survey experiments, quantitative text analysis, observational data analysis, and events data, along with traditional "Pekingology" tools. And they are accessing an increasingly rich store of data produced by China's growing economic, political, and social footprint in the outside world—China's businesses, diplomats, and the military are interacting more deeply with a wider range of countries and international institutions. This footprint generates more granular data for analysis (e.g., investment, aid, trade, verbal, and behavioral "events"). And it creates more human sources outside of China—from ordinary publics to elites in foreign governments—with important observations about China's activities. Much of the research on China's foreign relations does not require going to China.

That said, answering some important research questions does require access to China. These mostly revolve around policymaking—analyzing the intentions, values, attitudes, emotions, biases, and personalities of policy elites, the impact of interest groups (and public opinion), and the role of history (including historical memory) in China's foreign relations. Researching these topics requires interviewing decisionmakers, accessing archives,

114 The author thanks Andrew Chubb, Taylor Fravel, Courtney Fung, Nancy Hearst, Scott Kennedy, Joshua Seufert, Joseph Torigian, and Jessica Chen Weiss for comments and criticisms.

and acquiring research materials related to policy process from libraries and bookstores. Often, scholarly analysis of policy processes has led to more nuanced and less hyperbolic characterizations of China's interaction with the rest of the world. In addition, many research questions that could still be investigated from outside China would no doubt benefit from collaborative projects with the growing community of well-trained China scholars whose research agendas overlap with some of the cutting-edge questions in U.S. international relations.¹¹⁵

This chapter looks at five potential obstacles to doing in-country or collaborative research on China's international relations. All of them relate to the constraining effects of over-securitization on academic research. This over-securitization mostly, but not entirely, comes from Chinese leaders' overwhelming focus on "political security" (政治安全).

One potential obstacle is the vagueness of China's newly revised anti-espionage law. The revised definition of espionage essentially turns any acquisition of information the authorities do not want foreigners to have into a potential act of espionage, whether or not the information is formally classified or restricted. The revised law defines espionage as: "Activities conducted by foreign institutions, organizations, or individuals other than spy organizations and their agents . . . which involve theft, probing, bribery, illegal provision of state secrets, intelligence, and other information related to national security and interests."¹¹⁶ In essence any and all

115 For example, the study of audience costs. See Cao Dejun [曹德军], "An Analysis of the Context of Signaling Theory in International Politics" [国际政治的信号理论脉络评析], *Quarterly Journal of International Politics* [国际政治科学] 7, no. 3 (2022): 138-75, <http://qjip.tsinghuajournals.com/article/2022/2096-1545/101393D-2022-3-106.shtml>. On feminist IR theory, see Sun Ziyao [孙子尧] and Miao Ju [苗菊], "Dialogues between the Margins and the Mainstream - Dilemmas in the Development of Feminist Theory" [边缘与主流的对话——女性主义理论发展之困境], *Journal of Tianjin Foreign Studies University* [天津外国语学院学报] 26, no. 2 (January 2019): 133-75, <https://m.fx361.com/news/2019/0113/14762881.html>; Li Yingtao [李英桃] and Shi Zhiyu [石之瑜], "Outlook and Review of Chinese Feminist International Relations - A Dialogue Between Two International Relations Scholars from Beijing and Taiwan" [中国女性主义国际关系研究的回顾与展望—北京、台湾两位国际关系学者的对话], *International Observer* [国际观察] 2 (2022): 128-56, <http://gjgc.qkku.net/sell/itemid-183405.shtml>. On racism and IR, see Wang Wei, "On the Influence of White Supremacist Factors on the International Order," *Ethno-national Studies* [王伟. "论白人至上种族主义因素对国际秩序的影响" 民族研究] 5 (2021): 10-23, http://www.mzyj.net.cn/Admin/UploadFile/Issue/201707310001/2021/12//20211229095451WU_FILE_0.pdf. On psychology and decisionmaking, see Su Ruolin, "Risk Preferences in Diplomatic Decision-making: Concepts and Formation," *Quarterly Journal of International Politics* [苏若林. "外交决策中的风险偏好:概念与形成" 国际政治科学] 6, no. 3 (April 2021): 77-105, <http://qjip.tsinghuajournals.com/article/2021/2096-1545/101393D-2021-4-104.shtml>. On the nature of security dilemmas, see Xiao He [肖河] and Meng Ke [蒙克], "Asymmetric Competitive Strategies in the 'Thucydides Trap'" [《修昔底德陷阱》中的不对称竞争战略], *Quarterly Journal of International Politics* [国际政治科学] 4, no. 1 (April 2019): 19-52, <http://qjip.tsinghuajournals.com/CN/Y2019/V04/I01/19>. On over-securitization, see Zhang Chao and Wu Baiyi, "The 'Over-securitization Trap' and How to Overcome it," *International Outlook* [张超, 吴白乙. "泛安全化陷阱"及其跨越]. 国际展望] 14, no. 2 (May 2022): 19-35, http://ies.cass.cn/cn/creativity/202203/t20220320_5399630.shtml.

116 Emphasis added. See "Activities carried out, instigated or funded by *foreign institutions, organizations, and individuals other than espionage organizations and their representatives*, or in which domestic institutions, organizations or *individuals collude*, to steal, pry into, purchase or illegally provide state secrets, intelligence, *and other documents, data, materials, or items related to national security*, or in which state employees are incited, enticed, coerced, or bought over to turn traitor" [间谍组织及其代理人以外的其他境外机构、组织、个人实施或者指使、资助他人实施, 或者境内机构、组织、个人与其相勾结实施的窃取、刺探、收买、非法提供国家秘密、情报以及其他关系国家安全和利益的文件、数据]. Also see "Anti-Espionage Law of the People's Republic of China" [中华人民共和国反间谍法], Government of China, April 27, 2023, https://www.gov.cn/yaowen/2023-04/27/content_5753385.htm. For an English translation, see "Counter-Espionage Law of the P.R.C. (2023 ed.)," China Law Translate, April 26, 2023, <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/counter-espionage-law-2023/>.

scholarly information could be arbitrarily (and retroactively) made off-limits, endangering the scholar.¹¹⁷ This over-securitization of what, in many countries, would be standard scholarly information and sources could dissuade foreign scholars from pursuing any research related to China's foreign policy when inside (or even when outside) China.

Another obstacle is access to archives. For foreign specialists in China's international relations, this means restoring access to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) archives and to provincial archives that have retained MFA documents sent to provincial governments over the years. For a time in the 2000s, the MFA archives were open to foreigners. The time period covered was limited to the 1950s and 1960s, and many documents were still off limits, but access was nonetheless useful for researching China's diplomacy in those two decades. Relatedly, scholars of China's foreign policy history are concerned that compilations of historical materials by Chinese Communist Party or military publishing houses that were open in the past are being recategorized as internal circulation materials. By further limiting legitimate scholarly access to research materials, China's dictum to "tell China's story well" has the counterproductive effect of raising doubts about the credibility of the "stories" that can be told with the remaining materials. It is worth noting the dramatic inequality between U.S. scholars' access to archives related to decisionmaking in China and Chinese scholars' access to U.S. presidential libraries, archives at the Library of Congress, and the National Archives, among other sources.

A third obstacle is access to the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database. In April 2023, foreign subscribers to the CNKI were notified that downloading access would be suspended while the CNKI checked to make sure that journals, dissertations, and statistical yearbooks electronically archived met new requirements for "data security."¹¹⁸ Different institutional subscribers faced different levels of suspension of access. Various subscribers were able to find work-arounds, but their functionality is inferior, and some resources are unavailable even with these work-arounds. The CNKI has also made a number of formerly available journals relevant to studying China's international relations off limits. The CNKI has been an invaluable source for foreign scholars. It allows for the systematic analysis of ideas, arguments, terminology, and evidence about China's international relations across time. The lack of transparency as to why there was a suspension and when fully functional access will return to normal is also a problem.

A fourth obstacle may be interviewing Chinese officials about policy process. This issue remains a tentative one because it is still relatively early on in the post-Covid period. Foreign scholars are just beginning to return to China for research. And there is some preliminary evidence that access to some officials is still possible. But as of this moment, before there is more evidence from attempts to set up interviews, most foreign international relations

117 Also relevant in this regard are trial regulations for industrial and information data security released in 2022. These require central government approval before the transfer outside of China of any "vital" or "core" data related to "political, territorial, military, economic, scientific, technological, cyber, ecological, resource, and nuclear security, and anything that might impact China's overseas interests and national security." See "Measures for Data Security Management in Industrial and Information Fields (Trial)" [工业和信息化部关于印发《工业和信息化领域数据安全管理办法(试行)》的通知], Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, December 13, 2022, https://wap.miit.gov.cn/zwgk/zcwj/wjfb/tz/art/2022/art_e0f06662e37140808d43d7735e9d9fd3.html. These regulations could also be used arbitrarily to constrain foreigners' academic research.

118 "Joint Statement by the Committee of Chinese Materials of the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL CCM), the European Association of Sinological Librarians (EASL), the UK China Library Group, and the Society for Chinese Studies Librarians (SCSL) Regarding the Recent Suspension of Access to Certain CNKI Digital Resources from the People's Republic of China," East View Information Services, May, 2023, <https://www.eastasianlib.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/The-Joint-Statement-on-CNKI-Suspension.pdf>. Author thanks Joshua Seufert for noting this statement release.

scholars would likely predict that even with access to officials or think tank analysts connected to policymaking, the value of these interviews will be lower due to the over-securitized political atmosphere in China.

A final potential obstacle pertains to the evolving political atmosphere in the United States, namely, the optics of academic collaboration with Chinese scholars and institutions. As the U.S.-China security dilemma intensifies, scholars should anticipate more political attention to the alleged national security downsides of academic collaboration writ large. The over-securitization of academic contacts will likely increase if the authoritarian-leaning white nationalist wing of the Republican Party controls the presidency and Congress after 2024. Although science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) collaboration has been the main (and legitimate) area of concern, there likely will be more attention to and investigation of collaboration on foreign policy and international security research.

There are a couple of projects outside of universities to develop tools for estimating the level of “risk” from collaboration—that is, risk that collaboration with Chinese universities helps the military in China (e.g., “The Chinese Defense Universities Tracker” and the Center for Research Security and Integrity).¹¹⁹ However, the methodologies used in operationalizing levels of risk are not highly transparent, and the ratings are insufficiently granular to be of use to scholars outside of STEM (for example, when a “high-risk” university has many “low-risk” academic units with which one could collaborate). The use of these kinds of tools by U.S. politicians, counter-intelligence, or university administrators could end up needlessly restricting non-STEM collaboration, discounting or ignoring the legitimate academic benefits of collaboration, or leading to unfounded criticisms of U.S. scholars’ collaboration with particular Chinese scholars from “high-risk” academic institutions in China. For example, the risk assessment developed for the Center for Research Security and Integrity declares that “academic and private sector institutions are also ill-equipped to identify, assess, or mitigate risks to research and innovation.”¹²⁰ This may be true for some less well-resourced academic institutions or within some specializations, but it is almost certainly not accurate when it comes to major research universities or to U.S. academics who specialize in China’s international relations and foreign policy, including security policy. If such risk assessment tools are needed, they should be developed by academics who understand the granularity of social-science-related research domains in U.S. and Chinese universities.

In short, over-securitization in China, and to a lesser extent in the United States, could reduce incentives for U.S. scholars of international relations to engage in legitimate academic research and collaboration with Chinese scholars. When it comes to the generation of new knowledge—the primary goal of scholarly research—both countries will lose.

119 “China Defence Universities Tracker,” Australian Strategic Policy Institute, <https://unitracker.aspi.org.au/>; and Jeffrey Stoff, *Should Democracies Draw Redlines around Research Collaborations with China - A Case Study of Germany* (Herndon, VA: Center for Research Security & Integrity, January 2023), <https://researchsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Click-here-to-download-the-full-publication.-Stoff-DrawingRedlinesFINAL.pdf>.

120 “How We Got Here,” Center for Research Security & Integrity, <https://researchsecurity.org/about-us/>.

China-U.S. Scholarly Arms Control Dialogue

Status, Challenges, and Recommendations

Wu Chunsi

Arms control used to be an important area of cooperation in China-U.S. relations. In the 1990s, among other things, China and the United States gradually cultivated common understandings on nuclear nonproliferation and supported the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In the twenty-first century, China and the United States have continued cooperation on nuclear hotspot issues by maintaining the international nuclear nonproliferation regime on the basis of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as well as promoting nuclear security. During the Trump administration, however, China-U.S. exchanges cooled down, including those related to nuclear arms control and nonproliferation.

Reasons for the Lack of Exchange

The Covid-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions partly explain the reduction in scholarly exchange, but certainly is not the fundamental reason. The complete end of the Covid-19 pandemic did not swiftly rekindle scholarly exchange on arms control between the two countries, nor exchange in many other areas. Since the Trump administration, strategic trust between China and the United States has consistently fallen. The United States has publicly defined China as a “strategic competitor,” and the two countries’ scholars and think tank researchers in security studies are concerned about their personal security when visiting the other side.

Arms control is a topic directly related to national security and even military affairs. Scholars in the area are particularly sensitive to the environment for visits and exchanges. However, the external environment is still just one of the reasons dampening enthusiasm for scholarly exchange on arms control. More importantly, the gloomy prospects of arms control dialogue to achieve any substantial progress make scholars even less willing to invest more time and energy on the subject.

Ironically, the lack of scholarly exchange, in turn, has further weakened the knowledge and trust foundation for the two countries' official dialogues on arms control. How to rebuild a sustainable and effective arms control dialogue process has become a key question for the two sides to consider.

Opportunities from the San Francisco Summit

The San Francisco summit in November 2023 between Presidents Xi Jinping and Joe Biden provided an opportunity to resume China-U.S. scholarly exchange on arms control. In the process of preparing the summit, the two countries' foreign ministries held director-general-level (assistant-secretary-level) consultations on arms control. During the summit, and on the basis of equality and respect, the two presidents announced the two sides would resume high-level military-to-military communication, the China-U.S. Defense Policy Coordination Talks, and the China-U.S. Military Maritime Consultative Agreement meetings, as well as conduct telephone conversations between theater commanders. In addition, the two sides committed to work toward a significant further increase in scheduled passenger flights in 2024, and they said they would expand scholarly, student, youth, cultural, sports, and business exchanges.

Despite all of these positive and enthusiastic plans, summit observers nevertheless generally took a cautious attitude to the practical implementation of such efforts for China-U.S. relations in 2024. Everyone knows that strategic suspicions between China and the United States remain. There are many tests ahead for the fragile stability achieved by the summit. Arms control engagement only resumed to the level of consultation at the director-general/assistant secretary level within China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Department of State, respectively. It is still unclear when and how the two militaries and other relevant parties will carry out their plans.

The risks and difficulties faced by the China-U.S. scholarly exchanges did not, could not, and will not totally disappear after one summit. However, the summit could increase the possibility for the two sides to re-engage on the issue of arms control.

Why Are Scholarly Exchanges Important?

The role of scholarly exchange is usually marginalized when governmental officials can easily work together directly and effectively. This might be another reason, but a positive one, for why China-U.S. scholarly exchanges on arms control might be reduced and become less visible for some time, which would help to explain why the two sides were not very concerned. However, today's situation is far different. Progress in official engagement on arms control strongly needs scholarly support for three reasons.

First, both sides need to identify areas where official engagement on arms control can find consensus or where work can be accomplished together. The purpose of re-engagement is not to provide another medium through which to quarrel. It would be totally counter-productive and a wasted opportunity if the two sides just met to repeat their own positions or, even worse, to just criticize the other side. The deliberate design of topics for discussion and prior communication are necessary to sustain the dialogue and to ensure progress. In this regard, scholarly exchange and Track-2 meetings can help.

Second, scholarly exchanges are urgently required to win public support for arms control dialogue writ large. It is worth noting that the Chinese public's response to the November 6 China-U.S. consultation on arms control was not very encouraging. There were quite loud voices in Chinese society questioning the necessity of

dialogue with the United States on nuclear arms control; as a result, some Chinese arms control scholars had to publish a commentary in the *Global Times* emphasizing that the planned meeting was only a consultation, not a negotiation on nuclear disarmament. Scholarly exchanges are urgently needed to create a more positive environment for future China-U.S. engagement on arms control.

Third, scholarly exchanges are crucial to nurturing a younger generation of arms control researchers and practitioners. When tracing the history of China-U.S. cooperation on arms control, the 1990s was a “golden age.” At that time, arms control was a new and emerging subject in Chinese universities. Chinese scholars and students were eager to learn from and have exchanges with the world on the topic. At that time in the United States, the government and society, for various reasons, invested mountains of enthusiasm, energy, and resources in arms control and connections with China on the subject. The current foundation of China-U.S. understandings on arms control, to a large degree, was built during this period of time. That generation is now entering their fifties, and their shared knowledge, expertise, and sense of community need to be passed down to the next generation.

How Can Scholarly Exchange Be Promoted?

To resume and promote scholarly exchange, government support is crucial. One of the most important reasons scholars are concerned about visiting the other side is the insecurity caused by the worsening of bilateral relations. The two governments can show their support by sending public or private messages of encouragement for scholarly exchanges and by making travel more convenient. In this regard, the increase of direct passenger flights between China and the United States is a good start. Scholars hope that some unreasonable measures imposed on academic exchanges can also be abandoned as early as possible.

Governments can also send representatives to attend arms control meetings organized by scholars. Scholarly exchanges are not simply for academic purposes but also provide occasions for the two governments to reduce suspicion and identify potential areas of common ground. With improving basic understandings of each other through Track-2 interactions, the opportunity for effective engagement on arms control between the two governments will increase.

During the initial phase of Track-2 dialogue, the two sides might firstly review the strategic environment of past years from different perspectives and then introduce new developments about their respective policies. Such face-to-face meetings can also identify additional topics that can be the subject of future exchanges.

To be fair, arms control between China and the United States has not gone completely dark. China and the United States have maintained cooperation under the framework of the five permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council. In early 2022, the P5 published a joint statement about the need to avoid nuclear war. At the San Francisco summit, Biden and Xi agreed to establish an intergovernmental dialogue on artificial intelligence, partly in reaction to concerns raised by the international community. Those facts suggest that China and the United States have the potential to identify additional topics for cooperation in the current atmosphere.

In conclusion, arms control is an important area of China-U.S. relations and receives a lot of attention because of its strategic importance. Currently, despite the recent progress seen at the summit in San Francisco, low strategic trust has created substantial obstacles for the two countries to carry out effective dialogue on the subject. Scholarly exchange can help to cultivate a better environment and a conducive foundation for dialogue. It is the hope of both countries’ scholars that the two governments will take more steps to resume and promote scholarly exchange on arms control.

Approaches to Climate Change Research in China

Collaboration and Field Work

Deborah Seligsohn

As relations between the United States and China have soured and as Xi Jinping's political control in China has solidified, many question what kinds of on-the-ground research can still be done in China. This question was exacerbated by the near-total cutoff in access to China during the “zero-Covid” period from early 2020 through January 2023. The lack of access during this period gave many the impression that there was no longer room for meaningful research. The author spent five months on the ground in China in 2022 and 2023, both before and after the end of zero-Covid and found that there are still opportunities for field work and collaborative research in China. As was the case even before Covid-19 and the recent deterioration in the political climate, these opportunities are more plentiful in topics where there is active research in China and in policy areas that are Chinese government priorities. Research in China has never been easy and has always required some serendipity. Thus, the comparison made here is not to some imagined golden period, but to what existed prior to the closed period during zero-Covid. Now that travel itself has become easier, how does one conduct research in China?

My experience is based on research on climate change and air pollution, areas where there is both Chinese government interest and a wealth of Chinese colleagues and potential collaborators. My conclusions may not be the same as those in other communities, as working on a topic that is recognized as a domestic priority helps open doors with both collaborators and interview subjects.

Beyond the topic, I have found that even more so than in the past it is critical to have a local partner. I was affiliated with a research institute and traveled under a research visa they sponsored. While a decade ago it was possible, especially for short-term research, to travel to and around China without such a host, that would be inadvisable today. Not only is the Chinese government more concerned generally with visitors using the

appropriate visa category, but interview subjects want to know who research sponsors are before agreeing to meet. With research sponsorship with a known and prominent partner, I found that interviews continued to be a fruitful form of data gathering. My own research involves speaking to businesses and academics as well as with government officials, when possible. For several years now, government access has been more difficult than in the past. I did not find the situation in 2023, when I was able to meet in-person after the end of zero-Covid, to be different from 2018. I was able to interview some government officials, but those visits required some luck and good connections.

In general, I find the only way to gain access for interviews is a snowball approach, and this has not changed since I began my PhD research in 2013. I start by meeting with people in my network, including both my official research sponsors and others in the environmental community. I discuss my topic and research needs with them and ask for their help in introducing me to potential interview subjects and site visit opportunities. Often, contacts will then need to introduce me to other contacts that can help arrange the actual interviews or visits. The process is time consuming and somewhat haphazard. I never know which contacts are going to be able to help me set up meetings. Over the years, I have been surprised in both directions—with those that delivered far richer meetings than I expected and with those who were unable to help me. I have also found that who can help me in any given year varies. Sometimes, I can ask those I interview to introduce me onward to other experts in their field. Relying on a network does not lead to a perfect research design. I have not found that I can select companies or locales for interviews based on some predetermined set of research criteria because personal contacts are so important to gaining access. Last year, for example, I visited a third-tier city that I had not considered in advance because I happened to have a contact who was willing to help arrange a visit. This resulted in a particularly rich set of interviews with companies and government officials.

Ample time is important for this snowball strategy. I could fly into Beijing for a week or 10 days of meetings, but that would not give me the time necessary to let contacts know that I would absolutely go to a third-tier city if they could arrange meetings. I have found that there is both too much and too little time for this strategy, and one to two months is ideal. When I have had more than two months, contacts do not feel the urgency, and all the visits have wound up toward the end of my trip in any case. Thus, last summer, I had precisely two months with prearranged conference attendance bookending the trip. As a result, I could spend the first couple weeks both working with my research colleagues in Beijing and visiting contacts to start arranging site visits for later in the summer.

One note on visits is that while I did actually visit a number of companies and saw their facilities, many contacts who I used to meet in their offices now prefer to meet in local coffee shops or other public venues. University access has become more difficult, with security and ID checks at the entry gates. While this dramatically improved after zero-Covid ended, when approvals commonly did not go through and required multiple attempts at registration, many still view the access formalities as much more of a bother than simply meeting off campus at the nearest Starbucks or Luckin Coffee. As for government research institutes, where even five or six years ago I was able to walk in without much in the way of a check at the gate, these contacts now much prefer not to register foreign visitors and to meet outside of the office.

Beyond conducting interviews, joint research is still an excellent way to approach research in China. Finding partners depends primarily on being able to bring something of value to the table. Many in the social sciences have brought new methods to partners, and I have found that this continues to be a possibility; these methods do not need to be sparkingly new but can be ideas of how to apply methods that are new to a potential

partner. For topics related to international relations, what scholars often bring are insights into how policy and political processes work in the United States. In this context, it is worth reaching beyond the narrowness of U.S.-recognized academic subfields. While one might be recognized as specializing in Chinese politics within the United States, to Chinese partners one can often bring insights into the U.S. system.

One can work with partners using a variety of methods, from surveys to analysis of observational data. Surveys are more difficult to conduct than was the case a decade ago, but it is still possible if one identifies a topic of interest to both parties. I am involved in such a study at the moment. Observational data is also useful, and Chinese scholars actually have access to more data on the environment than was the case a decade or two ago. There definitely are limitations to data access due to the 2018 Data Security Law, but the recent clarifications for academic research should reassure those involved in these types of collaborations, which have been ongoing for decades. While I am not currently working on such a study, I saw a number of papers involving joint research on environmental health between U.S. and Chinese scholars presented at a national environmental economics conference during my time in Beijing in the summer of 2023 that involved far more detail than was even imaginable a decade ago.

In some ways, I have found the interest among Chinese scholars in doing joint research today greater than in the few years prior to Covid-19. Having been cut off from much interaction with outside academics, they have been eager to meet and share ideas. There absolutely are political constraints on the types of topics that are conducive to joint work, but in my own experience working on pollution and climate change, and even some discussions more broadly of scientific relations, I have found very receptive partners.

Area Studies

A New Venue for U.S.-China Scholarly Exchange

Xie Tao

In September 2022, the Chinese Ministry of Education released the “2022 Catalogue of Disciplines and Concentrations for Graduate Education,” and for the first time, area studies was listed as an interdisciplinary field of study, enjoying the same status as established disciplines such as political science and sociology.¹²¹ The only difference is that area studies still cannot confer a distinct degree but must do so within one of four categories, namely law, liberal arts, history, and economics.

Area studies is not new in China. Prior to September 2022, it was carried out primarily in two disciplines: (1) political science; and (2) foreign language and literature. But elevating area studies to its own separate discipline is certainly new, not just in China but in other countries as well. This long-anticipated decision by the Ministry of Education is the culmination of years of lobbying by concerned Chinese policymakers and academics. In their view, as China’s global presence and influence grows so does its demand for knowledge about the outside world. In a word, global power entails area studies. But this growing demand for area-specific knowledge cannot be adequately met, they contend, unless area studies is recognized as a separate but inherently interdisciplinary intellectual pursuit.

As a result, area studies has become one of the most discussed topics in Chinese academia since the end of 2022. Hundreds of journal articles, dozens of books, and countless commentaries have been published, and a large number of conferences have been held, generating an unprecedented and lively debate about how to conduct teaching and research in this new discipline. Meanwhile, universities across the country have rushed

¹²¹ “2022 Catalogue of Disciplines and Concentrations for Graduate Education,” Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, September 2022, http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A22/moe_833/202209/W020220914572994461110.pdf.

to establish institutes, schools, or centers for area studies, and a handful of them began to offer graduate programs in areas studies in the fall of 2023.

The birth of area studies as a new discipline in China is a typical example of “organized research” (you zuzhi keyan), whereby government agencies and university administrators not only set the agenda for researchers but also organize and fund research teams and institutions. Organized research may sound like another slogan with quintessential Chinese characteristics, but it is in fact a universal practice that can be found, in varying degrees, in every discipline and in every country. The history of area studies in the United States, as it turns out, is an excellent case of organized research. Therefore, area studies presents exciting opportunities to both broaden and deepen exchanges between Chinese and U.S. scholars and administrators.

Area studies was of marginal interest to most U.S. scholars prior to World War II. The sudden and enormous demand for knowledge about U.S. wartime enemies forced the U.S. government to carry out large-scale organized research on foreign countries and regions. As the United States emerged out of the war as a superpower, its demand for expertise about the rest of the world only increased further, thus ushering in the golden era of area studies in the United States. Through the various Fulbright programs—the first of which launched in 1946—and the National Defense Act of 1958, the U.S. federal government took the lead in organized research. The Ford Foundation, however, played the most critical role in fostering area studies. From 1951 to 1966, through the Foreign Area Fellowship Program and the various area studies committees jointly administered by the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, the Ford Foundation provided over \$270 million to fund area-studies-related dissertation research, curricular development, seminars and conferences, and institutes and centers.¹²² In retrospect, the foundation was the single most important driving force behind the dramatic growth of area studies in post-World War II United States.

Today area studies is firmly institutionalized in U.S. universities through various programs, centers, associations, and scholarly publications, producing cutting-edge research, training future experts, and setting the agenda for the international scholarly community. But even with its stunning success, area studies remains an interdisciplinary program, not a separate discipline. In fact, the University of Chicago and Princeton University set up a separate area studies department in the 1950s, only to be gradually closed for various reasons.¹²³ Regardless, as an emerging power in area studies, China has much to learn from the United States, the undisputed leader in the field. Meanwhile, U.S. scholars of area studies could also benefit from the teaching, research, and organizational practices of their Chinese counterparts.

The first step to enhance China-U.S. scholarly exchanges in area studies should begin with promoting the scholarly study of each other. American studies, as understood and practiced in China, is certainly the biggest subfield of area studies, at least in terms of journal papers, media commentaries, conferences, research centers, and funding. China studies is also one of the biggest subfields in area studies in the United States, as measured by similar indicators. This should come as no surprise because each country features prominently in the foreign policy—and, to a lesser extent, in the domestic politics—of the other. In light of intensifying strategic competition between Washington and Beijing, there is an urgent need for in-depth knowledge and analysis of nearly every aspect of one another.

122 David Szanton, “Introduction, The Origin, Nature, and Challenges of Area Studies in the United States,” in *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, ed., David Szanton (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 11.

123 *Ibid.*, 8.

But there is a conspicuous asymmetry between China studies in the United States and America studies in China. There are more U.S. specialists of Chinese domestic politics than vice versa. Indeed, most America experts in China focus on U.S.-China relations and U.S. foreign policy, with only a few specializing in U.S. politics. The primary cause of this academic imbalance apparently lies in the Chinese government's emphasis on policy-oriented research that can be used in formulating its U.S. policy. But this emphasis comes at the cost of sacrificing rigorous research on U.S. domestic politics and society that appears to have no clear and immediate implications for China's U.S. policy or for its understanding of China-U.S. relations.

As a result, the Chinese community of American studies has extensive networks with U.S. experts of China-U.S. relations in universities and think tanks, but they hardly know any specialists in U.S. politics. Yet foreign policy is usually and primarily driven by domestic considerations, and as a result, China's lack of knowledge about U.S. internal politics could seriously hinder its ability to make informed decisions and predictions about the United States. That most Chinese analysts predicted a Hilary Clinton victory in the 2016 election—and a better U.S.-China relationship under Donald Trump—highlights the danger of paying insufficient attention to the United States' changing domestic political landscape. In a word, there should be more Chinese scholars of U.S. politics and more outreach by them to their U.S. counterparts. Of course, that requires a willing partner, so U.S. scholars should actively respond to and collaborate with their Chinese counterparts, facilitating their research on U.S. politics.

Moving forward, both governments should relax travel restrictions on those who carry out scholarly study of the other country. One can hardly become an area specialist unless one meets two prerequisites—foreign language training and extensive field research. A person can be fluent in a foreign language without ever visiting the country where the language is spoken, but field research requires frequent travel to and extended stay in the target country. Yet due to various considerations, Washington has put in place various travel restrictions on China's America experts, while Beijing has reciprocated with similar restrictions on the United States' China hands. Quite a few Chinese scholars' visas have been revoked, and some Chinese scholars (the author of this chapter included) have been subjected to long hours of questioning by U.S. immigration officials. These cases certainly have had a chilling effect on Chinese scholars who otherwise are committed to pursuing America studies while contributing to a better bilateral relationship. By contrast, there have been far fewer reported cases of similar treatment of U.S. scholars by Chinese officials. Regardless of which side has had more cases, it is imperative that both governments take immediate steps to reduce—and eliminate, if possible—barriers to the United States' China studies and China's America studies.

The United States' China hands and China's America experts have played an indispensable role in the bilateral relationship. Their expertise has not only informed their respective government's policies toward the other but also shaped domestic opinions and perceptions about the other. The two governments absolutely need many more of these area specialists in navigating an increasingly complex and competitive relationship. Beijing should attach greater importance to the training of Chinese experts on U.S. politics. Additionally, both governments should facilitate the study of the other by relaxing travel restrictions on those who carry out such studies on the ground.

With the establishment of area studies as a separate discipline and in the wake of the San Francisco Summit between Presidents Xi Jinping and Joe Biden, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic that the United States' China studies and China's America studies may enter a period of extraordinary growth and extensive exchange.

U.S.-China Scholarly Exchanges in Economics

Challenges and Prospects

Shanjun Li

The Development of the Economics Discipline in China

Until the early 2000s, Marxist interpretations dominated teaching and research in the field of economics in China. The mainstream economics taught and practiced in developed countries gradually made its way into China's research community in large part due to scholarly exchanges. Returnees—individuals who earned their doctorates in economics from Western institutions and then returned to China full-time for research and teaching—played a crucial role in facilitating these scholarly exchanges.

Justin Yifu Lin returned to China in 1987 after obtaining his PhD in economics from the University of Chicago. Along with five other returnees, he established the China Center for Economic Research (CCER) in 1994, now the School of National Development, at Peking University. This center was the first of its kind in modern China, emphasizing the application of mainstream economics in both research and teaching to contribute to and foster China's economic growth. Subsequently, the center attracted several dozen returnees to work there and sent many students abroad to pursue graduate studies in economics.

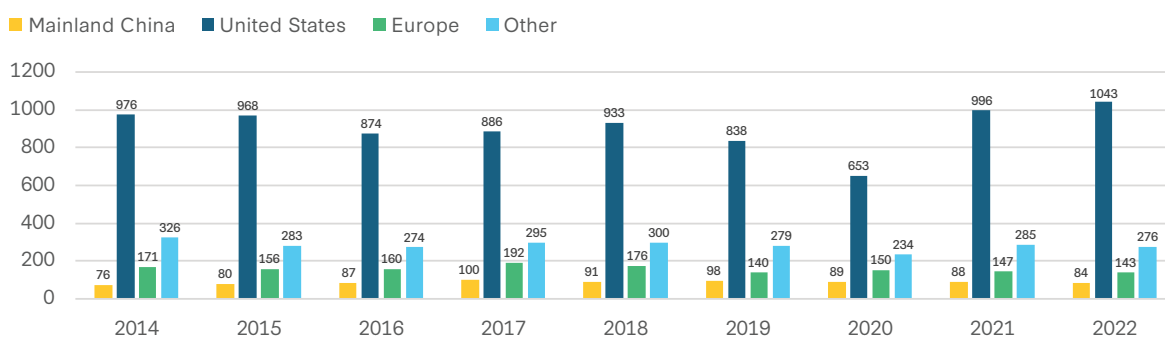
Inspired by the success of the CCER, similar centers and institutes emerged as part of an effort to modernize economics and finance research and education in China. These institutions exclusively recruited PhD economists from overseas and implemented a tenure and promotion process akin to that in U.S. academic institutions.¹²⁴ In addition, many leading universities in China have been recruiting PhD graduates from the

124 Notable examples include the Wang Yanan Institute for Studies in Economics (WISE), founded in 2005 at Xiamen University; the Institute for Advanced Research (IAR), founded in 2006 at Shanghai University of Finance and

West for their colleges of economics and management, utilizing the well-organized academic market for economics facilitated by the American Economic Association (AEA). By 2019, 36 percent of the 779 faculty in the 46 economics departments in leading universities in China were returnees.¹²⁵

Figure 20.1 depicts the number of job postings originating from mainland China, the United States, Europe, and the rest of the world. These positions are specifically targeted at job candidates holding a doctorate in economics and related fields from universities in the United States and other developed countries. Two noteworthy patterns emerge. First, the number of positions from mainland China increased steadily year by year, starting at 76 in 2014 and peaking at 100 in 2017. It is important to note that although the graph only displays data from 2014, Chinese universities began systematically recruiting from the AEA job market in 2005. Second, a subsequent downturn in the number of postings from mainland China began before the onset of the pandemic, the impact of which was initially reflected in the 2020 numbers. The decline in 2018 was particularly significant, especially considering the previous upward trend.

Figure 20.1: Academic Job Postings on the AEA Website



Note: Author's analysis based on data retrieved from job posting archives from www.aeaweb.org/joe. The x-axis corresponds to the job market season rather than the calendar year. The number of job postings in a given year includes the postings from August of that year to July next year. The academic jobs shown include both full-time and part-time positions.

Returnees have made substantial contributions to economics education and research in China by introducing new schools of economic thought and state-of-the-art teaching methods, influencing academic research, and shaping public policy. Upon returning, they continue to leverage academic networks and collaborate with their advisers and other researchers abroad, resulting in publications in leading international journals. This collaboration is reciprocal: these partners gain access to data and policy-rich contexts for research, develop a more informed and nuanced understanding of China's growing economy and influence public policy discourse in their respective countries through evidence-based research. The critical role of returnees has been documented by Xie Qingnan and Richard B. Freeman in the context of broad U.S.-China academic collaboration.¹²⁶

Economics; and the Institute for Economic and Social Research (IESR), founded in 2015 at Jinan University.

125 Wei Huang et al., "The Tenure-Track System and Academic Research Productivity: Evidence from Reforms in Chinese Universities," SSRN, last revised January 9, 2023, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3672830>.

126 Xie Qingnan and Richard B. Freeman, "Measuring Academic Productivity of Chinese-American Collaboration," National Bureau of Economic Research, *Working Paper* 31306, June 2023, doi:10.3386/w31306.

Recent Challenges

However, this collaboration has been hindered in recent years due to heightened political tensions between the United States and China, as well as increased concerns regarding national security and data security on both sides. The U.S. Department of Justice's China Initiative and the expansion of export controls and sanctions against Chinese entities have made researchers more cautious, even in the field of economics, where the focus is on academic research for publication. On the other hand, China's Data Security Law, passed in 2021, adopted restrictions on outbound data transfer. While the data export approval process is still evolving, the new procedures are also likely to impede international collaboration.

In recent years, there has been an increased demand from the academic community for data sharing and the ability to replicate research findings. For instance, the Data and Code Availability Policy of the AEA states, "It is the policy of the Association to publish papers only if the data and code used in the analysis are clearly and precisely documented, and access to the data and code is non-exclusive to the authors." In January 2023, the AEA adopted the Data Legality Policy, which mandates that all data used in papers published in AEA journals should be legally acquired.¹²⁷ When a U.S.-based researcher purchases data sourced in China from a third party, it becomes the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the third party acquired the data legally and that the transfer of the data complies with the Data Security Law. These requirements impose additional constraints on international collaboration.

Going forward, researchers intending to engage in U.S.-China academic collaboration will need to navigate continued uncertainties arising from shifting international relations and government regulations. As a result, there will be some degree of de-linking in the academic sphere. Returnees and China-based researchers in general may increasingly rely on fellow returnees and other locally trained researchers in China for collaborative opportunities, especially considering the large and strong pool of academic talent accumulated during the past two decades within China. U.S.-based researchers may find themselves in a similar situation, opting for domestic collaborators or shifting their research focus to other regions of the world, thus avoiding the complexities associated with collaboration in China. This de-linking will lead to losses for both sides and, in the long run, could further strain the U.S.-China economic and political relationship due to weakened trust and reduced mutual understanding.

127 See "AEA Data Legality Policy and Explanations," American Economic Association, <https://www.aeaweb.org/journals/data/data-legality-policy>.

Scholarly Economic Think Tank Collaboration and the Problem of Asymmetric Missions

Daniel H. Rosen

The escalation of U.S.-China economic tensions since 2017 has fueled discussion about what institutions and individuals in the think tank space can do to restore a more constructive trend. From the early days of modern U.S.-China rapprochement in the early 1970s, think tanks played an important role in promoting engagement; therefore, it is natural to ask whether they can do so again today. Perhaps it is just a matter of finding the courage to speak up in the face of more hostile views from other sectors, mobilizing more resources, or prioritizing this goal in think tanks' agenda-setting.

Investing in reciprocal travel to engage in scholarly exchange indeed has a crucial part to play in stabilizing the bilateral relationship; and yet realizing that potential is more difficult than just finding resources or getting the agenda right. The challenge lies in uncomfortable frankness about the asymmetric nature of the two countries' respective think tank sectors. Selecting topics for engagement, and formats that respect those asymmetries, can improve the odds that engagements among U.S. and Chinese think tanks are productive.

Expanding Asymmetries

To assess the potential for scholarly think tank exchanges on economic issues to improve the bilateral relationship in economics, it is necessary to consider several trends in recent decades.

First, policy questions have outpaced the ability of economic think tanks to remain in the driver's seat. Through the formative years of the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, the economic policy issues at the heart of the U.S.-China relationship were conventional questions of development economics that had been viewed and reviewed by practitioners throughout the postwar period. China had its idiosyncrasies as a polity, but the

fundamental structural adjustment at work—gradual marketization, hedging back the role of the state, and globalization—were understood by experienced policy economists who populated Western think tanks. They were, therefore, able to play a meaningful, often leading advisory role in official policy councils in those years. And if the views of these Western economists were flawed, the consequences were not felt at home, or felt mostly by less politically powerful segments of society, since the consequences of policy outcomes in China mostly just affected China and did not spill out internationally.

This has changed over the past decade. China is now a systemically important share of the global economy. It is dominant in many industries and has not been averse to using that dominance coercively for political ends, such as with rare-earth elements with Japan in 2010, and numerous other cases. From 2017, economic think tanks found themselves scrambling to play catch up as the Trump administration barreled ahead with new theories of the U.S. interest. This started with general trade balance concerns but quickly gravitated to new national security-economic linkages that challenged the traditional boundaries of national security exceptions to free trade and investment. Products and services that were not previously seen to present security risks—such as social media accounts—were suddenly and starkly shown to present risks. Many products could be “weaponized” more easily than realized. The focus on this new reality came not from think tanks but from government. This changing competence landscape disrupted the previous model of civil society collaboration as a precursor to policymaking and put think tanks on their back foot.

Over time, more technology- and economic security-oriented think tanks emerged, both in the United States and China, with better skills to evaluate these novel challenges. But a second phenomenon has unfolded over the past several decades that presents a more fundamental problem. Through the 1990s and early 2000s, the Western concept of a think tank remained a novelty in China, something that was studied and considered. Government-based institutes were common, but organizations truly built on non-government footings—as U.S. think tanks traditionally are—were rare. In the American tradition, think tanks are places for independent policy assessment, contemplation, debate, and critical thinking. They set their own agendas and do not take instructions from government. If they do take their marching orders from officialdom, or for that matter, if they reveal that for-profit commercial backers set their agendas, they are tarnished and lose their credibility. In the Chinese tradition, this did not (and could not) exist. By the 1990s, however, this model had attracted start-ups in China, and entities were attempting to sustain the research objectivity and independence from the government and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) dictates that stultified government-organized nongovernment organizations (GONGOs).

The potential for U.S.-China scholarly economic think tank collaboration is typically seen today through this lens: Chinese and U.S. economists with shared tool boxes and assumptions about economic welfare and goals—each able to seek truth through facts and think freely based on transparent evidence, and each expecting frankness and reproducible results from one another—could collaborate productively.

This assumption of symmetric priorities for individual economists or institutions has also changed over the past decades, especially during the last 10 years. The nascent presence of truly independent think tanks that demonstrate an adversarial stance toward submission to authorities has been virtually eliminated in China today. In all cases where there were independent think tank counterparts for Western economic think tanks to partner with, those have been replaced with organizations that are subject to government control. Importantly, at the same time, the primacy of political orthodoxy over economic utility has been made abundantly clear at the highest levels in Beijing.

Implications

The ramifications of this change in China—from a gradual development of independent economic think tanks to those subservient to the mutable political priorities of the CCP (ostensibly on behalf of the people of China, but subject only to party review and assertion)—are a fundamental asymmetry in the missions of U.S. and Chinese economic think tanks. U.S. think tankers, seeking a universal set of insights about what is more accretive to economic efficiency over time, are compelled to be fact- and evidence-based and not concordant with their own government. Does today’s crop of Chinese economic think tankers hold similar priorities? While some may harbor conviction about the merit of the international science- and evidence-based liberal economic tradition, *prima facie*, they are constrained by powerful strictures about the primacy of China’s narrow interests as laid out by CCP leaders, strictures that demote economics and elevate struggle and politics.

Are these two deeply embedded trends—(1) the rise of security dilemmas that dilute the competence of economic think tanks and (2) the replacement of Western-style independent think tanks with government-controlled alternatives—irreversible? Probably not, but they are here to stay for the time being.

Are they fatal to the premise of value in U.S.-China economic think tank collaboration? No, but only as long as these asymmetries are acknowledged and understood clearly by both sides. They do limit and alter the value of exchanges. Rather than foster hope of engagement through convergence based on a shared set of economic facts and analysis, exchanges can be valuable in fostering a “no surprises” relationship, where each side gives the other notice of policy changes and explains their side’s intentions. And, of course, there remains a large set of economic topics on which the asymmetry of missions is not an impediment. For example, most U.S.-China two-way trade presents neither security dilemmas nor economic dislocation risk. Scholarly exchange can play a meaningful role in identifying these “no regrets” areas for protecting engagement or in proposing straightforward mitigation of security or dislocation concerns where they do exist but are manageable.

The Road Ahead for Historical Nihilists

Stephen R. Platt

In Beijing last summer on my first trip to China since Covid, it was hard to escape the feeling that I was witnessing the last gasps of the Nixon era. There were almost no foreigners visible. I had to show my passport to get onto Chang’an Avenue, and then was turned away from Tiananmen Square for not having a WeChat reservation made 24 hours in advance. Long sidewalks near Peking University and Tsinghua were empty except for political placards on core socialist values. The security state was omnipresent—in the facial-recognition cameras, the paramilitary police on major streetcorners, the sidewalk checkpoints, and police substations every few blocks. The city seemed less welcoming to foreigners than I can ever remember it being since my first trip to China in 1993.

The conference, co-organized by CSIS and Peking University’s Institute of International and Strategic Studies (IISS), was delightful, though. The scholars, mostly from Peking University and Tsinghua, were brilliant, outgoing, and welcoming. It was clear that everyone around the conference table wanted closer relations, easier travel, and a reopening of opportunities to collaborate. Yet it was also clear that it had taken months of behind-the-scenes work to get the clearance just to bring together these two groups of scholars to discuss the relatively innocuous topic of academic exchange. What everyone at the conference wanted was not necessarily what the higher-ups wanted, and the up-close friendliness of U.S. academic counterparts was shadowed by the scowling faces of the border guards and checkpoint police we also interacted with on our trip.

Things are hopefully getting better, especially after Xi Jinping’s meeting with President Joe Biden in San Francisco in November 2023; but when I say that it felt like the end of the Nixon era, what I mean is that it felt like the end of the illusion that U.S.-China relations are founded on people-to-people relations. The oft-touted claim that the peoples of the United States and China are “friends”—whatever that really means—rings

hollow in a time of rising anti-Chinese xenophobia in the United States and murmurings of a “Cold War 2.0.” As much as individual academics may desire closer contact and collaboration with their counterparts in China (as do Americans in many other fields of endeavor), there is only so much we can do in the face of governments that view each other as security threats.

In its geopolitical context, then, the conference was a reminder that “ping-pong diplomacy” was at its heart a public relations campaign. The ping-pong teams did not reopen relations between the United States and China; Nixon and Mao did, and the role of the ping-pong teams was largely cosmetic. Xi Jinping’s claims notwithstanding, the foundation of the U.S.-China relationship is not in the people but in the two countries’ governments. Only when they get along can people-to-people relations flourish. It has long been an article of faith for U.S.-based China scholars that our work helps shape the wider relationship between the two countries, but how much effect do we really have on policymakers and the general public during hostile times like these?

If the influence of academic research on the course of bilateral relations is difficult to gauge right now, it is easier to imagine how the opposite will play out, that is, how geopolitical challenges may shape academic research in the near future. In my own field of history, I expect a good number of scholars will simply pursue topics that do not require access to archives and libraries in mainland China, either because they feel unsafe traveling there or they expect to be denied access. Many do this already, and there are many lifetimes of Chinese history projects that can be written using sources in Taiwan or at major U.S. research libraries. But a shift away from mainland archives—especially by graduate students—will change the nature of the field in the future and diminish the sense of engagement with China itself. For U.S. institutions, research in mainland China may become largely the domain of graduate students and faculty who hold Chinese passports, and thus, have easier access. It will not be a wholesale change—there are plenty of hardy souls with U.S. passports who will feel no threat to their work or judge the risks to be minimal—but I do think the general assumptions for engagement and archival research will diminish nonetheless. The Chinese government will surely be unbothered by this, insofar as most U.S.-based historians are not pursuing research that directly supports the inevitable rise of the Chinese Communist Party’s leadership of China and, therefore, in Xi Jinping’s terms, are “historical nihilists.”

For U.S. historians, it used to be fairly simple to know which topics might get you into trouble with the Chinese government: Xinjiang, Tiananmen, Tibet, and so on. Scholars who studied these topics did so with full knowledge of the risks they were taking. Under Xi Jinping, however, things are far more complicated. The scope of sensitive topics has expanded to the point where nobody knows what might get a researcher in trouble—indeed, under the new anti-espionage law, virtually any kind of research could be classified as spying. When the U.S. delegation, following the conference at Peking University, tried at both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Communist Party Liaison Department to find out where the line was between basic research and espionage, none of the officials we met with would (or could?) give us a clear answer. Furthermore, in the past, a foreign scholar trying to conduct research on a sensitive topic in China might, at worst, be deported or denied a visa. Today, there are the much more menacing prospects of detention or exit bans. And even if no U.S. researchers are actually detained for trying to do their work in China, as long as the risk exists and there is no guarantee otherwise from the Chinese government, many will still decide to stay away and do their work in places where they feel safer and more secure. The result, again, will be less engagement, less exchange, and a greater sense of estrangement between the academic communities of the two countries.

What can be done? I will not pretend that U.S. academics have any leverage with the Chinese government, but we can at least try to influence our own. Chinese counterparts in these conferences have their own set of

concerns about the future of doing research in the United States, chief among which is widespread harassment at border control and by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The United States should set a model for the protection and toleration of basic academic research by guaranteeing protections for Chinese scholars on valid visas conducting ordinary research and attending conferences in the humanities and social sciences in the United States. It seems a small enough gesture to at least assure Chinese scholars that as long as they are approved for a visa, they will be welcomed to the United States without any risk of interrogation or detention. Until conditions improve for U.S. scholars in China, much of the in-person engagement between our two academic communities will likely take place in the United States rather than in China. The least we can do is provide a protected space for it to thrive here, even as we hope for a renewed openness in China in the future.

Using Historical Nostalgia to Rebuild Scholarly Ties

Niu Ke¹²⁸

Recent geopolitical tensions between China and the United States, along with challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, have resulted in tremendous disruptions to long-established extensive academic exchanges across the Pacific. While the history discipline in each country may not be the most visible victim among various academic branches, historians who study the other country nevertheless are still suffering considerably. Not only have the conditions and opportunities in the target country for research and exchanges deteriorated, but the domestic atmospheres for historians—both American historians in China and China historians in the United States—have undergone drastic changes. Furthermore, in terms of the role of history in policy thinking and public awareness, it has either been sidelined by “presentism” stemming from the immediacy of current turmoil or is being misused and abused in the service of nationalist or even xenophobic demagoguery.

Nevertheless, while general geopolitical trends and domestic moods are beyond the control of the scholarly community, there is still valuable space for historians from both countries to renew and expand mutual exchanges and cooperation. They can also find ways to honor their responsibility to enhance the historical awareness, epistemological prudence and sophistication of policymakers and the general public of both societies by more effectively addressing historical issues of contemporary relevance. Historians may not be able to alter today’s reality, but they can make historical knowledge help inform contemporary debates.

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Nostalgia-Oriented Historiography

Contemporary trans-Pacific relations have long-standing historical origins, are affected by spiritual and cultural traditions, and have evolved over time, collectively shaping modern China, the United States, and the world. Although this historical legacy is mixed, certain aspects can undoubtedly be legitimately viewed as bright and nostalgic. When people recognize that positive historical legacies have contemporary implications and begin to draw lessons from them, nostalgia becomes healthy and constructive. Amid the current bitter situation, nostalgia serves to soothe and counteract a “historical nihilism” toward China-U.S. relations widespread in both societies, where theories of conspiracy, distorted perceptions, and fatalism about the future all feed on each other. Therefore, historians should use nostalgia in a proper and restrained way to foster the right kinds of policy thinking and public international awareness. Furthermore, this nostalgia-laden approach to historical scholarship is not necessarily intrinsically weak in its real value for scholarly research and academic quality. On the contrary, it holds the potential to rejuvenate old interests, stimulate new interests and topics, inspire reimagination and reconfiguration, and instill a sense of nuance and texture to historical work.

Consistent with a nostalgia-oriented approach to China-U.S. history and with the awareness of the bias and limits of a Chinese Americanist, this chapter proposes six interconnected or overlapping themes that could motivate the collective participation of historians from both countries:

1. The historical origins of China’s Reform and Opening Era and the United States role in it, as well as U.S. interests and participation in China’s modernization drive from a historical perspective.
2. The role of private individuals and nongovernmental organization (NGO) actors in China-U.S. relations in the late 19th and 20th century, including missionaries, philanthropic foundations, journalists, academics and educators, and businessmen.
3. Trans-Pacific intellectual and cultural exchanges in the nineteenth and twentieth century, including the transnational histories of U.S. and Chinese higher education in the Republican Era (1911-1949) and Reform and Opening Era (since 1978).
4. Emotional and sentimental factors influencing the United States’ China studies and China watching, and those of their Chinese counterparts, as part of an effort to revisit the theme of a “special relationship” between the United States and China.
5. The evolution of knowledge production, in both the professional and nonprofessional as well as academic and nonacademic communities, of China and the United States about each other, and the mutual influence between scholars, policymakers, and public opinion.
6. The trans-Pacific social history of the United States and China, including the U.S. adoption of Chinese children, U.S. volunteers in China, and the evolution of Chinatowns.

Some of these themes already have rich existing bodies of scholarship but are in need of rejuvenation, refreshment, and expansion. Others are on the verge of emerging, holding untold stories waiting to be unearthed, and their implications waiting to be demonstrated and explored. These nostalgia-informed themes can effectively highlight episodes, subject matter, and issues that have long been insufficiently attended. For one example, the role of generations of ethnic Chinese scholars in developing China studies in the twentieth-century United States is underestimated and understudied. Another is the enthusiastic drive of U.S. science organizations and higher education institutions to carry out exchanges with China in the 1970s and 1980s, including the efforts of American China scholars to help rebuild American studies in China.

The former can be positioned in the first and second themes above, and the latter can be positioned under any of the first four.

Similar to those two examples, many other topics can also be placed within the cross-cutting context of multiple themes and problems. By addressing the multiple and multidimensional factors and the ever-changing and complicated dynamics of historical interaction between two countries, the interdependence of the two countries and the internationalization of their past experiences could be researched and understood more comprehensively and deeply. With a keener sense of epochal shifts and long-durée trends, the nostalgia approach also tends to make the historical components as a whole more interactive and reciprocal.

Utilizing History for the Present and Creating Opportunities for Exchange and Research

These themes, along with many others of a similar tone, represent shared interests among Chinese and U.S. historians across various quarters of the historical profession. Given that these themes extend beyond geopolitics and government-to-government diplomacy, they are both “friendship-nurturing” and not politically sensitive, potentially reducing the likelihood of political censorship.

The recent positive developments in China-U.S. relations of the past year, culminating in the Xi-Biden summit alongside the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum meeting in San Francisco, may provide opportunities and space, especially on the China side, where the top leader’s oft-quoted statement, “the foundation of China-U.S. relations lies in the people,” is now being translated into policy measures which are more relaxed and may even be encouraging to the China-U.S. cultural and educational exchange. To seize the opportunity, well-designed and coordinated efforts from various sectors and organizations of both countries will be needed. However, considering the differences in the relationship between government and academia in the two countries, the institutions and organizations on the U.S. side may have more action space and capabilities, and may need to take initiative in most cases. With all of this in mind, there are several ways to move forward.

First, exchange and cooperation initiatives can take various forms, including workshops, conferences, faculty and student exchanges, fieldwork travel, and even joint research projects. As a more specific response to the difficulties U.S. scholars face in accessing China’s archives and materials, a joint project of archival and material collection and publication under specific themes and topics should be explored. The availability of archival resources in China is a challenge for both U.S. and Chinese scholars and may not be solved in the foreseeable future, but the umbrella of a joint project can create more opportunities, including those enabling greater assistance from Chinese to U.S. scholarly colleagues through transnational collaborations.

Second, while exchanges, cooperation, and joint programs can occur at various levels and among various types of Chinese and U.S. organizations and institutions, building formal and long-term connections between four academic communities would be prudent, namely between Chinese historians and U.S. historians in the United States and U.S. historians and Chinese historians in China. The reasons are twofold. First, the potential intellectual and cultural benefits of the exchanges between the specific sectors and fields of the two countries have not been fully realized. Second, professional organizations of both sides can provide established, convenient platforms for such initiatives and programs. For example, from 2013 to 2019, the American History Research Association of China (AHRAC) and the Organization of American Historians (OAH) jointly held annual summer seminars aimed at bringing U.S. scholars to train Chinese junior scholars and graduates about

U.S. history. This example could be replicated and expanded in various dimensions, including between the historians of Chinese history in China and those in the United States.

Third, beyond the level of professional organizations, a higher-level framework is indispensable to build and expand connections for scholarly exchange between the two countries. On this point, the initiatives from the U.S. side are critical - a lesson drawn from the experiences of China-U.S. exchanges in the 1970s and 1980s. U.S. national research and education organizations and learned societies, such as the Social Science Research Council, American Council of Learned Societies, East-West Center, National Committee on United States-China Relations, and influential philanthropic and think tank organizations, may be invited to play the role of launching such initiatives and communicating with Chinese government organs as their counterparts. On the China side, understanding, approval, and support from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Education, and Culture and Tourism, as well as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, would be valuable. The symbolic role of the “old friends of the Chinese people” should be employed when possible. Bearing in mind the subtleties of Chinese political discourse and its policy process, careful and nuanced descriptions for project statements would be highly advisable. With government approval and support already in hand, the scholarly communities can then take their own initiative to pursue meaningful projects.

And finally, in San Francisco, President Xi Jinping proposed a goal of having 50,000 U.S. students study in China in the next five years. This presents an additional opportunity for the Sino-U.S. scholarly community to engage, with young Chinese historians in the United States included. Inclusion of U.S. graduate students in China studies can be sought in this project to meet their requirements for access to the archival resources and fieldwork. Higher education institutions and scholar organizations in both countries need to cooperate to provide advice, assistance, and coordination for this project.

Closing the Knowledge Gap in AI Governance

Matt Sheehan

Artificial intelligence (AI) and its governance dominated headlines and policymaker attention in 2023. This has been true within leading countries, including China and the United States, and also at the international level. Safely developing and deploying powerful AI will require a sophisticated interplay between governance at both the domestic and international levels. Binding domestic regulations within the two countries will shape and reflect each country's reality and will make international governance of AI to prevent catastrophes that cross borders possible. Ensuring safe development of powerful AI systems is a genuinely unsolved technical and regulatory problem, and international commitments to do so will be meaningless without the domestic regulatory structures and technical interventions to make those promises real.

Nowhere is this dynamic more critical—and more fraught—than in the relationship between the United States and China. With the world's two superpowers fiercely competing for geopolitical and technological dominance, any attempts to collaborate—or even coordinate—on the governance of a powerful dual-use technology will face enormous hurdles. This is why direct dialogue between scholars and scientists in both countries is indispensable. These exchanges are the connective tissue that both enables productive government engagement and practically facilitates safe development of the technology in the AI ecosystems of both countries.

Government-to-government negotiations on AI will only be productive if they are built on a foundation of understanding of what each country is doing domestically on AI governance. That foundation is built through research and direct scholarly exchange. Why does the recent White House executive order on AI require companies to disclose large AI training runs? How will pre-deployment testing demanded by China's generative AI regulation work in practice? Understanding the nuances of these domestic measures, and the corporate, bureaucratic, or electoral politics driving those decisions, will be essential to any productive dialogue.

Some of this understanding can be gained through methodical, granular research by scholars in each country. Much of the AI governance debate in these countries plays out in public across research papers, opinion pieces, and livestreamed conferences. These resources, along with careful study of the regulations themselves, can give the attuned observer a good sense of the overall structure and trajectory of governance in the other country.

Going a layer deeper requires speaking with the players in that system. Public documents can help illuminate the structures of governance, but they often fail to reveal the texture of things, such as the underlying cultural currents or the blunt political realities that “everybody knows” but no one ever puts in writing. This is exactly the kind of context that is best conveyed through direct conversation between scholars and scientists in both countries.

This type of exchange improves policy-relevant research in both countries. What to a Chinese scholar looks like a highly coordinated and sinister plan executed by the United States is often revealed through conversation to actually be a haphazard or even accidental outcome of U.S. domestic political dysfunction. Or the misperception that an organization in China plays a key role in deciding a given policy is corrected by a Chinese scholar who knows that said organization is merely the best at marketing the decisions made by an entirely different group.

These types of insights are absolutely critical for successful engagement at an international level. Without them, diplomats can spend years engaged in fierce negotiations with a partner who simply does not have the domestic political muscle that they appear to have on paper. Or apparent agreements can unravel over subtle misunderstandings of the meanings of key terms (e.g., what does “controllable AI” mean in each country?). Preparing for these conversations requires an enormous amount of intellectual foundation building by the scholarly and policy communities in both countries.

Importantly, the success of government-level engagement at this stage does not depend on an amorphous sense of “trust” between the two countries. Trust between leaders is a major bonus, and something that can help push negotiations through thorny patches. But at this stage of international AI governance, establishing “trust” between the superpowers is unrealistic and unnecessary. Many of the key decisions on AI governance today are domestic, with China imposing binding regulations on its companies and the United States moving toward doing the same. There is some indirect interplay between regulation in the two countries; both fear that overly cumbersome regulation at home will allow their competitor to surge ahead. But these regulations are largely being implemented because the governments deem them necessary on their own—not because they “trust” the other side.

As a first step, analysts and policymakers in both countries should focus on understanding the motivation and implementation of these regulations in the other country. With those things brought into clearer focus, the two sides can begin to identify areas of overlap in their goals. These are most likely to focus on transnational threats common to both countries, such as the proliferation of powerful AI systems to malicious non-state actors or the potential for loss of control over civilian AI systems.

Throughout this process, representatives on both sides will engage in perhaps the most promising form of international engagement: exchanging best practices on the concrete regulatory and technical interventions needed for safe AI development. How to guarantee safety of AI systems remains an unsolved problem in both countries, and the current approaches—whether through AI interpretability or alignment—are often not state or corporate secrets. They are ongoing experiments that are being run across dozens of AI labs and debated

in academic papers. Direct conversation on how these experiments are going, and what the thinking is behind different approaches, can encourage and accelerate this work in both countries. One day, some of this technical work may move back behind closed doors, particularly if the line between techniques to advance AI capabilities and techniques to ensure the safety of those systems begins to blur. But for now, exchanges of best practices at both regulatory and technical levels remain one of the best tools these countries and communities have to encourage safe development.

Ultimately, the governments of the two superpowers may or may not come to an agreement over how to ensure safe development of powerful AI systems. Whether or not that agreement comes to fruition, these direct exchanges between scientists and analysts can plant the seeds of safety that will grow and evolve within each country.

In decades past, much of this exchange flowed naturally as scholars from both countries co-authored papers, attended conferences, and studied or conducted research abroad. But the events of the past five years have taken an enormous toll on these exchanges. Scholars and scientists from both China and the United States have reasonable concerns about their career prospects and personal safety while doing this work in the other country. Recent steps by both governments have begun to alleviate some of these concerns, but far more work and reassurance is needed for these exchanges to ramp back up. If they do, these two communities will play an indispensable role in advancing the safe development of this decade's most powerful technology.

Building a Secure Future

A Call for Sino-U.S. Academic Collaboration on AI Governance

Lei Shaohua

In recent years, no field has attracted as much widespread attention and discussion as artificial intelligence (AI). From the White House to Zhongnanhai, and from Wall Street to Silicon Valley to Shenzhen, AI has become an inescapable topic. Every international conference and forum on global governance includes panels on AI.

Starting with AlphaGo, AI has made ordinary people realize that scenes from science fiction movies may come to the real world sooner than expected. The shock that ChatGPT brings to the world continues with each iteration of its technology. More importantly, the integration of drones and AI technology on the battlefield in the Russia-Ukraine conflict has almost subverted traditional battlefield tactics. This presents a chilling parallel to the World War I era, where traditional tactical formations faced the destructive onslaught of machine guns.

Views on the impact of AI can be roughly divided into two camps: optimists and pessimists. While optimists believe AI will be a significant step forward for science and technology, pessimists worry about its unpredictable risks. Regardless of personal perspectives, AI has become an unavoidable technological frontier that major countries are striving to dominate.

Growing AI Capabilities

This is certainly true for China and the United States. Traditional Western manufacturing powers such as the European Union and Japan have fallen behind in AI, while most developing countries are not yet ready to compete. China and the United States have become two lonely athletes, running on a track that other countries cannot yet reach. This leaves China and the United States as the world's two leading players. China's

Report to the 20th National Congress and the United States' National Strategy for Advanced Manufacturing 2022 both identify AI and future smart manufacturing as key mid- and long-term goals.¹²⁹ This situation inevitably leads to two possible outcomes: competition or cooperation.

Although China has significant potential for AI development, it must acknowledge the United States' dominance in advanced hardware and AI algorithms, including Nvidia's graphics processing unit (GPU) chips, Xilinx's field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), and Open AI's machine-learning algorithms. This dominance has led to the U.S. government's relentless and comprehensive technological blockade against China, from the Trump administration's "decoupling" strategy to the Biden administration's "small yard, high fence" strategy. The United States views AI as crucial to maintaining its absolute leadership in digital technology and industry and considers AI a vital part of national security.

AI as a Source of Tension in Sino-U.S. Relations

The U.S. government will not stand idly by and watch China catch up in AI, especially if China utilizes U.S. technologies and talent. Despite the positive communications between Presidents Xi Jinping and Joe Biden during the November 2023 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco, there is no doubt that high technology is a non-negotiable area. As U.S. secretary of commerce Gina Raimondo declared in a recent statement, "We cannot let China get these chips. We're going to deny them our most cutting-edge technology. Communication with China can help stabilize ties between the two countries, but on matters of national security, we've got to be eyes wide open about the threat."¹³⁰

While the restrictions imposed by the United States' CHIPS Act may create bottlenecks for China's high-end AI chip production, Stanley Chao, former executive vice president of Kingston Technology, aptly stated, "U.S. sanctions will not halt the rise of China's chip industry."¹³¹ Despite the gap with the United States in advanced AI chips and algorithms, China remains ahead of all other countries in AI development. This is due in part to China's unique advantage: it has the world's most complete industrial system and produces over 6 million hard-science graduates annually.

China's approach to AI differs fundamentally from the United States. While the United States prioritizes maintaining technological dominance by pursuing the most advanced technology, China focuses on the rapid utilization of existing technology for maximum integration with its manufacturing sector. In other words, research and development (R&D) in AI in the United States aims to maintain the country's cutting-edge status, while China views AI as a tool to empower its digital industries. This translates to a U.S. focus on R&D and a Chinese focus on applications.

129 "Full Text of the Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, October 25, 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202210/t20221025_10791908.html; and National Science Technology Council Subcommittee on Advanced Manufacturing of the Committee on Technology, *National Strategy for Advanced Manufacturing 2022* (Washington, DC: National Science Technology Council Subcommittee on Advanced Manufacturing of the Committee on Technology, October 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/National-Strategy-for-Advanced-Manufacturing-10072022.pdf>.

130 Peter Martin, "Commerce Needs More Money to Halt China Chip Drive," *Bloomberg*, December 2, 2023, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-12-02/raimondo-says-commerce-needs-more-money-to-halt-china-chip-drive>.

131 Stanley Chao, "U.S. Sanctions Will Not Halt Rise of China's Chip Industry," *Nikkei Asia*, April 20, 2023, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/U.S.-sanctions-will-not-halt-rise-of-china-s-chip-industry>.

Contrary to what many U.S. observers claim, the Chinese government is not preoccupied with catching up to the United States in cutting-edge AI technology. Recognizing the short-term impracticality of this goal, China is prioritizing the overall quality and optimization of its industrial structure based on current technological capabilities. This approach is evident in the government's focus on digital infrastructure development, such as 5G mobile base stations.

China's remarkable success lies in its rapid application and widespread implementation of AI across various industries. This includes the world's largest smart grid, high-speed rail and highway networks, public safety systems, autonomous driving initiatives, mobile payment solutions, and the ever-expanding Internet of Things (IoT). While these applications may not be the most advanced, the speed of their implementation and widespread adoption are unmatched globally. A prominent example is the Shanghai Yangshan Port, which has been transformed into the world's largest automated container terminal through AI and 5G technology. This port can unload a 20,000-standard container ship in just 45 minutes, compared to the 48 hours required by traditional manual operations.

A disturbing prospect looms large: the potential divergence of China and the United States in AI development if dialogue and cooperation are absent. This could lead to the creation of two distinct digital ecosystems centered around AI, essentially splitting the world into two separate structures. Facing the unpredictable security, technological, legal, ethical, and other risks associated with AI, both China and the United States recognize the crucial need for open communication channels and robust risk-control mechanisms, even with the United States maintaining its comprehensive restrictions on Chinese AI development. This logic mirrors the realities of geopolitics: while the U.S. government may deploy warships to East Asia as a show of force against China, it also recognizes the vital importance of maintaining an effective hotline to prevent accidental escalation and unintended conflict.

Developing Mechanisms to Promote Scholarly Exchange and Cooperation

In this area, Chinese and U.S. universities, think tanks, government research institutions, and AI companies should strengthen scholarly exchange and cooperation. What follows is a description of the feasibility, basic principles, and potential implementation plans for exchange and cooperation mechanisms centered on AI.

Feasibility

Global AI governance is a common issue facing humanity. Compared to geopolitics, its political and military sensitivity is relatively low. This makes it an ideal area for cooperation between experts and scholars in academia and serves as an effective working mechanism to prevent a decoupling of higher education between China and the United States.

The leaders of China and the United States have reached a consensus on establishing a dialogue mechanism. During the November 2023 summit in San Francisco, Xi and Biden agreed on the need to establish common basic principles for global AI governance in terms of security, law, ethics, and industry standards. They also agreed to establish an AI working group to facilitate regular dialogue between the two countries. This provides timely and effective institutional guarantees for both countries to manage the potential risks of AI and avoid a world split between divergent AI ecosystems. This institutional guarantee ensures that universities, think

tanks, government research institutions, and AI giants in both countries can obtain the necessary political endorsement, security guarantees, and financial support.

Basic Principles of AI Governance

The basic principles of global AI governance include transparency, responsibility, privacy, integrity, peaceful use, and human control. These principles can guide the development and application of AI, ensuring its security, trustworthiness, integrity, peaceful utilization, and sustainable development.

- **Transparency:** The design and use of AI must be transparent, meaning the functions, data, algorithms, and decisionmaking processes of AI systems must be open and understandable. This would help prevent unpredictable behavior in AI systems while promoting their credibility and impartiality.
- **Responsibility:** Developers and users should be responsible for their actions and bear any losses caused by AI. The complexity and uncertainty of AI necessitate clear responsibilities to avoid abuse and misuse.
- **Privacy:** Personal privacy and data security need to be fully protected. This includes transparency in the collection, storage, and use of personal information, as well as taking necessary security measures to protect data from unauthorized access and exploitation.
- **Integrity:** The development and application of AI should seek to avoid discrimination and reduce inequality. The design and use of AI systems should not make unfair decisions based on race, gender, social status, or other factors.
- **Peaceful Uses:** AI should be a tool for promoting human welfare, not a weapon for destruction. While it is impossible to completely prevent the militarization of AI, an effective restriction mechanism should be established to prevent the use of AI as a weapon to destroy civilian infrastructure or interfere in other countries' internal affairs.
- **Human Control:** Humans should maintain control and oversight over AI. This means that the design and use of AI systems should be consistent with human values and ethical standards, and measures should be taken to ensure that AI does not have a negative impact on human society.

IMPLEMENTING AI DIALOGUE MECHANISMS

The following steps should be taken to encourage dialogue among AI scholars:

- **Build Track-2 Dialogue Platforms:** Within the framework of an official government dialogue mechanism, scholars should establish Track-2 dialogue platforms. These platforms will allow for deeper discussion and collaboration among scholars from both countries. Relatedly, there should be a joint AI research center with Chinese and U.S. researchers working together on collaborative projects.
- **Secure Government Commitments:** Both governments need to make concrete commitments in terms of policy support, security protection, visa facilitation, freedom of travel, and freedom of speech. These commitments will help prevent the use of procedures to restrict, harass, or coerce scholars from both sides.
- **Step-by-Step Agenda Setting:** Agenda setting should follow a “step-by-step” sequence, progressing from non-sensitive to sensitive topics. This can begin with consensus on the principles of AI governance, followed by discussions on legal and ethical provisions and written agreements on AI. Technical and industrial standards for enterprises of both countries can be addressed in subsequent phases.

- **Data Collaboration:** Promote conversation and consultation mechanisms on the protection, availability, exchange, and trade of data. This will facilitate collaboration among researchers and ensure responsible use of data.
- **Encourage Shared Communication:** Universities, think tanks, government research institutions, and companies from both countries should hold bilateral or multilateral forums and seminars and co-author joint reports. They should organize regular academic conferences and workshops to facilitate the exchange of ideas and information. This will foster communication on general technology and security policy on AI and help avoid a schism in the world of AI.
- **Respectful Collaboration:** A key underlying principle for scholarly exchange will be building respect and care for each other's core national interests, as well as seeking common ground while respecting differences. This will create a foundation for productive and constructive dialogue.

China-U.S. Academic and Policy Networks for Building Collaboration on AI Governance

Qi Haotian

The global landscape of artificial intelligence (AI) has begun to crystallize.¹³² The technology has the potential to upend traditional notions of power, cooperation, resilience, and stability in various domains. Its widespread use in existing and emerging applications has led to civilian, commercial, and military implications. With governance agendas embedded in national and regional AI strategies, international coalitions cooperating on emerging technology, and initiatives and organizations linking academia and industry, there is no shortage of stakeholders actively engaged on the diplomatic, technical, business, and military issues of AI. The diverse global AI governance landscape reflects very different agendas for ethics, safety, and security, including standards and interoperability, data governance frameworks, lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), trustworthiness, and the embedding of core societal values into technology at large.

As the leading countries in AI development and governance, China and the United States share a common goal to act cooperatively. The research and policy communities in both countries share a common obligation to be proactive. This chapter aims to explain the landscape of existing bilateral dialogue, people-to-people exchanges, projects, and other types of academic and policy cooperation initiatives between the research and policy communities of the two countries. In doing so, this chapter will identify key components of AI policy networks, including the participants, the primary forms of collaboration, the most significant projects, the specifics of the U.S.-China network of AI collaboration, and the roles of various institutions within it.

¹³² The data collection and analysis of this study benefited from the collaboration and support of the members of the author's research team, in particular, research assistants Li Sining, Chen Fangfang, and Shi Huafei from Peking University.

The Status of U.S.-China AI Collaboration

This section traces the academic and policy exchanges between China and the United States from 2013 to 2023. Overall, there has been promising cooperation among the think tanks and academic communities of the two countries. Collaboration between Chinese and U.S. think tanks and academic institutions has taken place through various forms of cooperation. This collaboration can be categorized between seven distinct types on a spectrum to capture different levels of cooperation (see Figure 26.1).

Figure 26.1: Directness and Depth of Collaboration



Source: Author's creation.

From low to high, these categories include: (1) general forums with AI topics and involvement of Chinese and U.S. representatives; (2) multilateral AI conferences with Chinese and U.S. participants; (3) bilateral direct events on AI; (4) conference series between the two communities; (5) joint initiatives with public-policy products (e.g., reports and guidelines); (6) long-term collaborative projects; and (7) Track-1.5 dialogues.

Among these activities, the second and fourth types—multilateral conferences and conference series—are particularly common. Important multilateral events include the Beijing Xiangshan Forum and the International Forum on Artificial Intelligence Cooperation and Governance, organized by the Tsinghua University Institute for AI International Governance. Another noteworthy event was the Global AI Safety Summit held in the United Kingdom in early November 2023. This summit stands apart from most initiatives because it was an official multilateral diplomatic event. That said, the research and policy communities from both countries played prominent roles in the event. The Chinese delegation included a deputy minister of the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Alibaba, and Tencent. On the U.S. side, Vice President Kamala Harris led a team consisting of the secretary of commerce and leaders from many top universities, research organizations, and high-technology companies. China, the United States, and European countries signed the Bletchley Declaration, which aims to strengthen international cooperation to control the risks of AI applications. The declaration also supports the involvement of non-governmental organizations in defining AI governance mechanisms to ensure the transparency and accountability of relevant stakeholders.

While there has been criticism suggesting that the outcome of this summit was relatively hollow and that it overlooked the impact of AI technology on labor, the common ground agreed upon by the participants, particularly between China and the United States, reflects the values upheld by bilateral engagement, dialogues, exchanges, and cooperation on related topics over the past decade between the academic and policy communities of the two countries.

As for cooperation related to conference series, a typical example is the Artificial Intelligence and International Security project, a series of forums co-organized by Tsinghua University's Center for International Security and Strategy and the Brookings Institution. Since 2018, they have held eight sessions. Experts from Tsinghua University, Peking University, the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, the National University of Defense Technology, the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, the Brookings Institution, and the Center for a New American Security have participated. They have discussed issues such as AI terminology, the military application of AI technology, LAWS, military AI simulation scenarios, and international law.

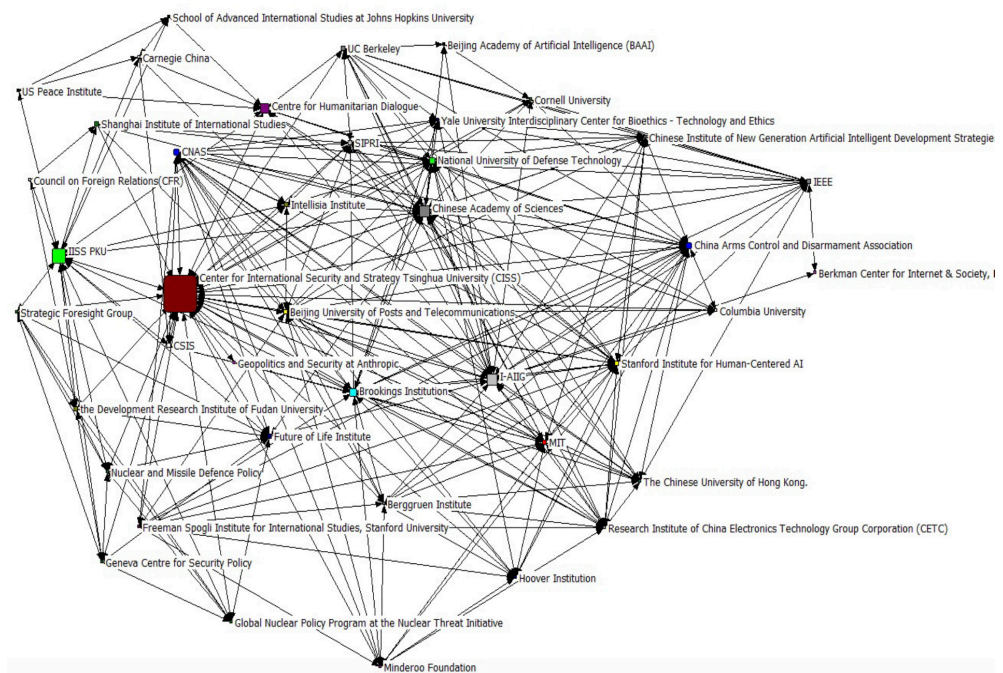
Tsinghua University’s two institutes, the Center for International Security and Strategy and the Institute for AI International Governance, have played a primary role on the Chinese side in promoting bilateral cooperation, engaging in numerous dialogues and joint initiatives with counterparts in the United States.

While there have been fewer instances of bilateral conferences, long-term collaboration, and Track-1.5 diplomacy, the agreement reached between China and the United States to establish a government-to-government dialogue mechanism on AI safety following the November 2023 summit between Presidents Xi Jinping and Joe Biden demonstrates the positive prospects for bilateral cooperation on AI governance.

The U.S.-China AI Governance Collaboration Network

This chapter uses social network analysis (SNA) to identify the relative positions of different actors in the collaborative network between China and the United States on AI governance.¹³³ Specifically, the analysis seeks to know and show the network’s “degree centrality” (who has the best connections), “closeness centrality” (who channels the cooperation), and “betweenness centrality” (who determines what happens). According to the findings of this analysis, some institutions have gradually become the backbone of the collaborative network and exhibit clear driving effects. Understanding their position and role in the network is crucial for furthering and promoting future bilateral collaboration.

Figure 26.2: Overall Social Network Analysis Results



Source: Author’s creation with his research team.

133 The following kinds of data were collected: various types of initiatives documented in Figure 26.1, the entities and institutions engaged, and the outcomes of these initiatives. This data was collected from the following sources (considering the extensiveness and the volume of the data, this is only a partial list): institutions including AIIG, Atlantic Council, Bookings, Carnegie, CFR, CISS, CICAI, CPIFA, CSIS, HAI, RAND, RSIS, and USIP, among others; events such as Xiangshan Forum, World Peace Forum, P5 Initiative, and the China-U.S. Track 2 AI Governance Dialogue, among others; and academic publications, including Nature and IEEE among others.

Who Has the Best Connections?

“Degree centrality” refers to the centrality of a node in a network, meaning the node that is connected to most other nodes. In other words, it is the node with the highest number of connections. In this analysis, it was observed that the Center for International Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University has the most network relationships or connections in the scholarly exchange or cooperation between Chinese and U.S. think tanks.

Furthermore, as Figure 26.3 shows, the degree centrality of institutions such as the Institute for AI International Governance at Tsinghua University, the Brookings Institution, the Institute of Automation at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence is relatively high compared to other institutions. It is therefore safe to assume that these institutions will continue serving as the most active and “social” entities in bilateral academic and policy cooperation on AI governance for the foreseeable future.

Figure 26.3: Ranking of Institutions’ Sociability

行标签	求和项:Degree	求和项:Closeness	求和项:Betweenness
Center for International Security and Strategy Tsinghua University (CISS)	33	47	29.53
Chinese Academy of Sciences	22	58	7.694
I-AIG	22	60	7.819
Brookings Institution	21	59	4.485
CNAS	20	63	2.645
Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI	19	63	1.539
China Arms Control and Disarmament Association	19	64	2.378
Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications	17	66	1.57
IISS PKU	17	64	13.194
National University of Defense Technology	15	67	1.915
Research Institute of China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC)	15	70	0.34
MIT	15	69	0.967
SIPRI	13	70	2.142
Chinese Institute of New Generation Artificial Intelligent Development Strategies	13	71	0.446
Berggruen Institute	13	72	0.238
Minderoo Foundation	11	76	0.026
UC Berkeley	11	71	0.666
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University	11	76	0.026
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	10	74	0.211
Future of Life Institute	10	70	1.062
Hoover Institution	10	77	0.096
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue	9	71	5.21
IEEE	9	75	1.471
Yale University Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics - Technology and Ethics	8	76	0.083
Intellisia Institute	8	73	1.447
The Development Research Institute of Fudan University	7	75	0.382
Cornell University	7	78	0.353
Nuclear and Missile Defence Policy	7	75	0.01
Strategic Foresight Group	7	75	0.01
Geneva Centre for Security Policy	7	75	0.01

Source: Author’s creation with his research team.

Who Channels the Connections?

“Closeness centrality” refers to the nodes that are relatively close to the “center” of the network. In other words, nodes with a high closeness centrality value but low degree centrality—that is, not many direct connections—would still enable other nodes to reach high degree centrality nodes of the network once they are connected. As Figure 26.4 shows, Harvard University’s Berkman Center for Internet and Society and the Council on Foreign Relations top the list, followed by Johns Hopkins-SAIS and the U.S. Institute of Peace. They are followed by the Beijing Academy of AI, which is the Chinese institution with highest closeness centrality.

Neither the Berkman Center nor the Council on Foreign Relations has a high degree centrality, but they appear to have important connections with the organizations that do. In other words, they are closely associated with the organization that they have the most connections. Another interesting finding is that the India-based Strategic Foresight Group was actually an active player in providing opportunities for U.S. and Chinese communities to engage.

Figure 26.4: Ranking of the Institutions’ Closeness to the Center

行标签	求和项:Degree	求和项:Closeness	求和项:Betweenness
Berkman Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University	2	98	0
Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)	3	98	0
School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University	4	95	0
U.S. Institute of Peace	4	95	0.082
Beijing Academy of Artificial Intelligence (BAAI)	4	91	0.039
Carnegie China	6	89	0.457
Geopolitics and Security at Anthropic	2	85	0
Shanghai Institute of International Studies	5	80	0.865
Columbia University	6	79	0
Cornell University	7	78	0.353
Hoover Institution	10	77	0.096
CSIS	5	77	0.522
Minderoo Foundation	11	76	0.026
Yale University Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics - Technology and Ethics	8	76	0.083
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University	11	76	0.026
Global Nuclear Policy Program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative	6	76	0
Nuclear and Missile Defence Policy	7	75	0.01
The Development Research Institute of Fudan University	7	75	0.382
Strategic Foresight Group	7	75	0.01
Geneva Centre for Security Policy	7	75	0.01
IEEE	9	75	1.471
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	10	74	0.211
Intellisia Institute	8	73	1.447
Berggruen Institute	13	72	0.238
Chinese Institute of New Generation Artificial Intelligent Development Strategies	13	71	0.446
UC Berkeley	11	71	0.666
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue	9	71	5.21

Source: Author’s creation with his research team.

Who Determines the Connections?

“Betweenness centrality” refers to the degree to which a node controls “resources” across the entire social network. In other words, entities or intermediaries (brokers/connectors) with high betweenness centrality have a certain number of connections, allowing them to control resources and distribute them to other nodes while also being able to obtain resources from other nodes.

Figure 26.5: Ranking of the Institutions’ “Resources”

行标签	求和项:Degree	求和项:Closeness	求和项:Betweenness
Center for International Security and Strategy Tsinghua University (CISS)	33	47	29.53
IISS PKU	17	64	13.194
I-AIIG	22	60	7.819
Chinese Academy of Sciences	22	58	7.694
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue	9	71	5.21
Brookings Institution	21	59	4.485
CNAS	20	63	2.645
China Arms Control and Disarmament Association	19	64	2.378
SIPRI	13	70	2.142
National University of Defense Technology	15	67	1.915
Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications	17	66	1.57
Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI	19	63	1.539
IEEE	9	75	1.471
Intellisia Institute	8	73	1.447
Future of Life Institute	10	70	1.062
MIT	15	69	0.967
Shanghai Institute of International Studies	5	80	0.865
UC Berkeley	11	71	0.666
CSIS	5	77	0.522
Carnegie China	6	89	0.457
Chinese Institute of New Generation Artificial Intelligent Development Strategies	13	71	0.446
The Development Research Institute of Fudan University	7	75	0.382
Cornell University	7	78	0.353
Research Institute of China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC)	15	70	0.34
Berggruen Institute	13	72	0.238
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	10	74	0.211
Hoover Institution	10	77	0.096
Yale University Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics - Technology and Ethics	8	76	0.083
U.S. Institute of Peace	4	95	0.082
Beijing Academy of Artificial Intelligence (BAAI)	4	91	0.039
Minderoo Foundation	11	76	0.026
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University	11	76	0.026
Nuclear and Missile Defence Policy	7	75	0.01
Geneva Centre for Security Policy	7	75	0.01
Strategic Foresight Group	7	75	0.01

Source: Author’s creation with his research team.

In this analysis, the Center for International Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University had the highest betweenness centrality. It was followed by Peking University’s Institute for International and Strategic Studies,

Tsinghua's Institute for International AI Governance, the Institute of Automation at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, and the Brookings Institution, which all possess relatively high social and network resources in the bilateral cooperation on AI governance. They are connected with numerous relevant institutions, and other institutions can gain more connections by linking with them. In essence, they have the most abundant resources.

Conclusion

In general, the distribution of labor, activity, and influence in the network among major institutions has been relatively stable. Although the results measured by the three centrality indicators differ, it is possible to forecast the future development direction of the collaborative network. The question today is not how to create entirely new AI governance frameworks from scratch, but how to effectively navigate and coordinate between the various existing actors with a hand in bilateral and global AI governance and cooperation.

In addition to better understanding the current status of engagement and cooperation, this chapter also attempts to set a foundation for future development and the evolution of the bilateral community. This effort seeks to help examine and manage the cross-domain effects of AI, operationalize principles that embrace respective views on technological development, and shape the future of particular applications. Collaboration among the bilateral academic and policy communities has started to yield a wide range of results and products. Analyzing these outcomes will be the focus of subsequent follow-up research.

Conclusion

A Roadmap Forward

An Argument for Calibrated Scholarly Recoupling

Scott Kennedy

Over the last two years, there has been a concerted effort by scholars from both China and the United States to stem the tide of scholarly decoupling. Their efforts have borne some fruit, aided substantially by a recognition by the two governments that ties of all sorts - diplomatic, commercial, cultural, family, and scholarly - are valuable to both China and the United States and the world more broadly. Maintaining and expanding connectivity was endorsed by Presidents Biden and Xi at their 2022 summit in Bali and the 2023 summit near San Francisco.

Although the two sides have pulled back from the brink and there has been a resumption of two-way travel by experts and students, scholarly ties are still far from healthy and are short of what they need to be to serve the interests of both countries and the rest of the world. As the contributions to this volume demonstrate, the scholarly community resides in the awkward murky middle, with a recognition of substantial benefits that come from such ties but also an anxiety about the growing risks and, to some, the limited value of communication in an era of intense geostrategic competition. Charting a pathway forward that would garner sufficient support so a healthy scholarly exchange would be sustainable requires taking three steps: providing a holistic rationale for connectivity, identifying the likely benefits from ties, and developing robust mechanisms to manage the various risks. This chapter sketches out a vision for each of these three elements by drawing on the contributions to this volume and the efforts of others working on these issues.

Redefining a Conditional Relationship

The alternatives to a conditional relationship are not realistic or appealing. There is little chance the United States and China will soon return to a period of unconditional scholarly engagement; there are genuine risks

to each side, and there is no consensus within the scholarly and policy communities of either country to adopt a posture of unfettered openness. Conversely, as long as the United States and China are not at war with each other, even with the significant differences in the systems of governance of the countries and their national interests, there will remain a wide range of benefits from scholarly ties to students, scholars, and the broader societies that make outright cutting off such interaction highly counterproductive and, in fact, damaging to the national interest of both countries.

Although either of those extremes would be impractical or problematic, the current dominant framing of the intermediate position is also far from satisfying because it does not provide a stable foundation for setting the parameters upon which ties would be maintained. The underlying assumption of mainstream analyses is that engagements of all sorts—scholarly, commercial, medical, cultural, etc.—are acceptable so long as they do not put at risk national security. These domains are seen as distinct from and ultimately less paramount than national security. Hence, the purpose of “de-risking” is to impose restrictions and limits on these other domains in order to reduce the threats to national security that unimpeded activity could create.¹³⁴

Such an analysis may make sense when viewed within the most narrow definition of national security related to achieving success in an ongoing conflict on the battlefield or with regard to gathering intelligence; but as soon as one expands the definition of national security, this framework overlooks the reality that while scholarly ties and other kinds of interactions may create potential national security risks, they also can provide benefits and are more integral to national security than is often recognized.

Although scholarly exchanges amongst students, faculty, and programs are usually not designed with national security in mind and generate a wide range of societal benefits—academic, intellectual, cultural, and economic—that justifiably stand on their own, they nevertheless can yield national security benefits over an extended period, among them:

1. Improving capabilities in basic sciences, medicine, and technology innovation more generally, all of which strengthens the economy’s basic foundations, addresses a range of human security challenges, and provides a greater basis for military preparedness and intelligence gathering and analysis.
2. Increasing understanding about the societies, political systems, and policy processes of the other, thereby reducing misunderstanding about capabilities and foreign policy intentions.
3. Developing standards and codes of conduct about emerging areas of science and technology early in their development so they are more likely to be beneficial to all societies (and become “public goods” for China, the U.S. and the world) and reduce the chances of their being abused in ways harmful to societies.
4. Increasing cross-national interdependence, which raises the costs to all sides of engaging in conflict.
5. Fostering networks of experts and communities that provide in-depth understanding of the other side, reducing the likelihood of conflict, providing avenues for communication and diplomacy to avoid crises and conflicts, managing crises and conflicts should they occur, and resolving them and rebuilding an environment for peaceful relations.

134 For the most recent authoritative U.S. policy statement, see “Remarks and Q&A by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on the Future of U.S.-China Relations,” White House, January 30, 2024, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2024/01/30/remarks-and-qa-by-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-on-the-future-of-u-s-china-relations/>.

Seen in this light, there is much that scholarly exchanges can offer to support national security. A comprehensive effort to de-risk should not only avoid “errors of commission,” that is, scholarly activity that could weaken national security; it should also reduce “errors of omission,” that is, not hinder scholarly activities that very well could enhance national security. Given that scholarly ties can both provide benefits and create risks, the most prudent strategy is not to pursue outright decoupling or even managed decoupling, but instead, a strategy of “calibrated coupling” that inherently takes into account the complex nature of connectivity. Putting the focus on the connectivity highlights the inherent value of those ties, as opposed to strategies that begin with the prefix “de-,” all of which convey that such ties are primarily characterized by their inherent risks, which must be circumscribed.

For policymakers and the scholarly community, the issue is how to calibrate U.S.-China scholarly “recoupling” to establish the appropriate balance between yielding the greatest potential of connectivity while also simultaneously minimizing any downside dangers. To do so requires a combination of identifying the value of ties, clarifying the principles and standards for their effective and safe operation, and adopting risk-management mechanisms to ensure they serve those positive purposes.

The Actual Benefits of U.S.-China Scholarly Ties

The contributors to this volume are leading scholars from a wide range of disciplines in the United States and China. They each have extensive experience with scholarly exchange between the two countries: they have all traveled and carried out fieldwork, co-written papers with experts from the other country, supervised students who have studied in the other country, hosted international conferences, and been involved in institutional collaborations of one sort or another.

There is both surprising unanimity and diversity of opinion among this group. On the one hand, there is universal concern and frustration expressed by everyone involved in this initiative about the chilling effect on scholarly exchange due to “over-securitization”—defined as the imposition of restrictions on scholarly ties due to a heightened fear of national security threats—by both the U.S. and Chinese governments. These include:

1. Restrictions on travel to the other country (visa denials) and travel within the other country.
2. Threats to physical safety as a result of the possibility of facing interrogation, detention, expropriation of property, or expulsion.
3. Reduced research access during travel, including for interviews, acquiring written materials, and visiting archives.
4. Regulations and practices making it more difficult to obtain, possess, transfer and use quantitative and qualitative data from a range of sources.
5. Difficulty holding conferences on certain topics or more constrained discussion on such topics.
6. Less space to publish independent perspectives.
7. Difficulties in concluding contracts between U.S. and Chinese universities and research institutes to fund joint research projects and fieldwork.

On the other hand, there is also a wide range of opinions from the contributors about the value of U.S.-China scholarly exchange today. The variation in opinion does not divide along national or disciplinary lines.

Scholars from both countries and from multiple fields, including international relations (Chapters 14 and 15), economics (Chapter 21), and history (Chapter 22), emphasize the constraints of the current environment and, as a consequence, the limited value of scholarly exchanges for the time being. Some not only worry about the limits of what could be learned but that the emphasis on maintaining ties and access is leading to self-censorship or other kinds of limitations on academic freedom on university campuses more generally.

Other contributors note the existence of sufficient restrictions, yet, by contrast, they still see a high value in scholarly exchanges for scholars, students, and institutions. Rozelle (Chapter 2) provides the most thorough documentation of the value of research productivity and student exchanges as well as the costs to both through the reduction in ties across all fields, including STEM, social sciences, and the humanities.¹³⁵ Other contributors note the benefits to specific disciplines and fields of study, including comparative politics (Teets, Chapter 11), national security studies (Yu, Chapter 15), arms control (Wu, Chapter 17), climate policy (Seligsohn, Chapter 18), area studies (Xie, Chapter 19), economics (Li, Chapter 20), and history (Niu, Chapter 23). Three contributors (Chapters 24, 25, and 26) identify the benefits of collaboration for making progress on the international governance of artificial intelligence contributors. Sheehan (Chapter 24) stresses that contrary to popular belief, progress on AI does not require deep levels of U.S.-China trust; rather, because most regulations are domestic, “the most promising form of international engagement [are] exchanging best practices on the concrete regulatory and technical interventions needed for safe AI development.”

The primary emphasis of most contributors is on the scholarly value of these ties in and of themselves. Yet the value of scholarly exchanges to national security broadly conceived also stands out, as many of this volume’s contributors identify points that align with the potential national security benefits of the connectivity outlined above. In particular, Jie (Chapter 3) emphasizes how scholarly exchanges and dialogue have reduced misperceptions about policy intentions. Weiss (Chapter 4) explains how scholarly ties have contributed to addressing common challenges across a wide range of areas and building areas of common interest, as well as increasing mutual understanding that has served to reduce tensions and reduce the likelihood of escalation of potential hotspots. And Mertha (Chapter 5) explains how scholarly ties over decades have led to a far deeper understanding of each other’s societies, which has provided a central foundation for stable relations.

Speaking as an expert in a public policy think tank in Washington dedicated to understanding China and addressing practical problems, travel to China and direct engagement with Chinese continues to be a critical avenue for systematic research and understanding diverse Chinese points of view on a wide range of issues. This applies across individual research and travel, scholarly conferences, and more formal Track-2 dialogues.¹³⁶ Even with current constraints, the value of such interactions cannot be underestimated, as they complement information obtained through other methods. Sharing views with Chinese counterparts through discussions also appears to be more helpful in reducing Chinese misunderstandings about U.S. policies and broader developments in the United States and elsewhere than is achieved through Chinese analysts’ exposure to Western written materials. The value of such research and exchanges, whether individual-based interactions

135 Also see Ilaria Mazzocco and Qin (Maya) Mei, “How U.S.-China Tensions Have Hurt American Science,” *Big Data China*, CSIS, December 9, 2022, <https://bigdatachina.csis.org/how-u-s-china-tensions-have-hurt-american-science/>; and Caroline S. Wagner and Xiaojing Cai, “Drop in China-USA International Collaboration,” *ISSI Newsletter*, no. 69 (ISSI, March 2022), <https://www.issi-society.org/media/1434/newsletter69.pdf>.

136 By one count, there are over 40 ongoing Track-2 dialogues. Bob Davis, “Back on Track?,” *The Wire China*, January 14, 2024, <https://www.thewirechina.com/2024/01/14/back-on-track-two-dialogues-u-s-china/>.

or more formal conferences and Track-2 dialogues, may be quite limited on any single occasion but increases exponentially over time through repetition and reinforcement.

Calibrating the Recoupling: A Joint Responsibility

Having redefined the conditionality of the relationship as well as identified the benefits and risks of U.S.-China scholarly exchange, the ultimate task of this initiative is to outline proposals for effectively managing recoupling in a way that accentuates its value and minimizes its downsides. Central to this effort is having such exchanges align with principles of intellectual independence, which is valuable not only to the promotion of scholarly goals but also makes scholarly exchanges more likely to be supportive of the national interests of both countries as well.

The discussions held during this initiative's conferences from 2023 and the contributions to this volume all highlight that the responsibility for crafting and implementing appropriate standards and practices is shared across the societies of both countries and requires efforts from governments, universities, think tanks, disciplinary associations, publishers, funders, and scholars alike. Some of the most important elements identified by the participants include:

Governments. The United States and Chinese governments have expressed support for scholarly exchange, and this initiative in particular, but both could do much more. Both have increased the speed in which visa applications are considered and the number which have been issued. Although official data on visa denials by the United States has not risen, extensive anecdotal evidence from individual applicants and reporting from U.S. universities show that due to delays or requests for additional information, in practice, a high percentage of Chinese applicants in STEM fields are effectively being denied visas to study in the United States. The United States needs to shift away from categorical denials for visa applicants in STEM fields and reduce delays even in complex cases.

Both governments need to do more to ensure the safety of visiting scholars and students. Chinese scholars and students have been repeatedly interrogated upon arrival at U.S. airports. U.S. scholars and students are concerned about their own personal safety due to the detention or imposition of exit bans by Chinese authorities on overseas scholars, students, and businesspeople. They also are worried about the continuing ambiguous legality of collecting, using, and transmitting research data. As of early 2024, the United States Department of State still set its travel advisory for China at Level 3, or "Reconsider Travel."¹³⁷ The two sides should accelerate discussions so that the Chinese government can take steps to address these concerns, which would then allow the United States to appropriately adjust its guidance.

Contributors identified two other important signals the governments should take. Zhang (Chapter 9) highlights the long-term value of the Fulbright Program in expanding U.S.-China scholarly ties in both directions. The United States suspended the China components of the program in 2020 in response to the Chinese government's actions in Hong Kong, but the only tangible result was to weaken an element of ties beneficial to both countries.¹³⁸ And Rozelle (Chapter 6) notes the importance of the United States-China Science & Technology Cooperation Agreement (STA), which was first signed in 1979 and has served as an umbrella

137 "China Travel Advisory," U.S. Department of State, updated on June 30, 2023, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/china-travel-advisory.html>.

138 Also see Colleen O'Connor and Elizabeth M. Lynch, "Want to Reset China-US Relations? Bring Back Fulbright China," *The Diplomat*, November 29, 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/11/want-to-reset-china-us-relations-bring-back-fulbright-china/>.

agreement to support government-funded research and scholarly exchange across a wide range of disciplines since then. The two sides should commit to renewing the STA, including addressing any weaknesses in the existing agreement, as soon as possible.¹³⁹

Universities and Think Tanks. Institutions of higher learning and research need to set standards that govern their collaborations between the United States and China that uphold their basic values and protect their communities. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has charted the way forward with its strategy for how to manage research collaborations, institutional partnerships, and student learning opportunities in ways that align with its overall values and mission.¹⁴⁰ Important steps noted by MIT, and those in this initiative, include making agreements between U.S. and Chinese institutions public and available to outside regulators, providing logistical and legal support to faculty and students, and ensuring Chinese students face no restrictions to their academic freedom and organization when on U.S. campuses. Michelson (Chapter 8) explains that in a general environment of fear in which a university's top leadership is fixated on risk mitigation, university departments can still take the initiative to promote scholarly exchange by hosting visiting scholars and even inviting scholars from the other country to serve on dissertation committees. Universities and think tanks (and sub-units within both) need to develop comprehensive policies and, where possible, coordinate their activities through organizations such as the Association of American Universities and the National Academies of Sciences.¹⁴¹

Scholarly Disciplines. Disciplines and scholarly journals can play a central role in setting standards for managing U.S.-China scholarly ties. Li (Chapter 20) notes that the American Economic Association (AEA) requires that data published in AEA journals are legally obtained, well documented, and available to other scholars.¹⁴² There is no reason why associations that govern political science, sociology, anthropology, and other fields cannot have similar policies and highlight their application to U.S. and Chinese scholars.

Journals. Zhao (Chapter 13) highlights how journal editors such as himself can play a central role in maintaining high standards in U.S.-China scholarly ties. Trends in submissions from Chinese scholars

139 Also see Deborah Seligsohn, "The Case for Renewing the U.S.-China S&T Cooperation Agreement," CSIS, *Commentary*, August 4, 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/case-renewing-us-china-st-cooperation-agreement>; KC Cole, "Broken U.S.-China Science Cooperation Needs Repair, Not Persecution," *Scientific American*, October 10, 2023, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/broken-u-s-china-science-cooperation-needs-repair-not-persecution/>; and Steven A. Kivelson and Peter F. Michelson, "The High Price of Overzealously Defending the U.S. Research Enterprise Against Theft by China," *PNAS*, November 22, 2023, <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2314168120>.

140 "[F]ederal policy, no matter how well-crafted, cannot be a substitute for effective actions taken at the university level. MIT and other universities must draw on their more detailed knowledge of educational and research practices and principles to develop effective risk management processes of their own." Richard Lester et al., *University Engagement with China: An MIT Approach* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, November 2022), https://global.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/FINALUniversity-Engagement-with-China_An-MIT-Approach-Nov2022.pdf. Also see Richard Lester et al, "Managing United States-China University Relations and Risks," *Science* 380, no. 6642 (April 21, 2023): 246-48, <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.adg5619>.

141 For additional insightful analysis and constructive suggestions, see the contributions dedicated to the topic, "China and the Campus," in *PS: Political Science and Politics* 57, no. 1 (January 2024), which begin with an overview by Sara A. Newland, "Introduction to the Symposium: China and the Campus," 119-21, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ps-political-science-and-politics/article/abs/introduction-to-the-symposium-china-and-the-campus/76D921FB3749DA0725C9404E240A6B56>.

142 For additional information, see "Best Practices for Economists," American Economic Association, <https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/best-practices>.

alerted him to changing pressures within Chinese universities. By engaging with potential contributors and emphasizing the importance of high standards, his journal signaled its continued openness to PRC scholars but, at the same time, signaled they would still need to abide by top international standards.

Faculty and Scholars. At the end of the day, the ultimate responsibility for effectively managing the balance between opportunities and risks lies with university faculty and scholars themselves. Those who travel and engage in cooperative activities need to “proceed with care.” They need to ensure they are traveling on the appropriate visas and are in compliance with the laws of both countries and the policies of their universities and professions. However, it appears that for the foreseeable future, there will be areas of ambiguity that create risks and doubts about how to proceed. This is particularly true with regard to data. Teets (Chapter 11), Rithmire (Chapter 12), and Dai (Chapter 13) all suggest paying careful attention to the relevant regulations, yet at the same time, U.S. and Chinese scholars may need to fashion ad hoc solutions based on their real-life situations that address both their practical needs and commitment to broader principles. U.S. and Chinese scholars can share best practices about not only how to follow university and disciplinary guidelines but also confer about other potential options when formal institutions prove to be inadequate guides in complex circumstances.

Conclusion

The scholars who contributed to this volume are dedicated to expanding understanding and bettering society. Far from idealistic, they are amazingly realistic. They believe that if properly managed, U.S.-China scholarly exchange can be deeply beneficial to the overall scholarly enterprise, to the two societies, and to the world. But they also are keenly aware of the obstacles and risks, none of which will disappear soon and none of which can be ignored. The two governments must play a central role in creating a stronger foundation for U.S.-China relations in general and scholarly ties in particular. At the end of the day, however, it will be up to the scholarly community itself - professors, researchers, administrators, editors, funders, and students - to ensure that their principles are protected and their mission furthered. This will require continued adaptability, coordination, and persistence by everyone.

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