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Chunlong Lu and Ye Tian

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Popular Support for Economic Internationalism in Mainland China: A Six-Cities Public Opinion Survey

CHUNLONG LU AND YE TIAN

ABSTRACT. Since the onset of the post-Mao reform, China has become more and more dependent on the world economy. Based on survey data drawn from the Second PEW Global Attitudes Project in 2002, this article finds that a majority of the surveyed respondents, especially in urban China, had “positive” attitudes toward economic internationalism. Moreover, the findings indicate that Chinese people’s subjective orientations (such as the belief in cultural superiority, the sense of modernity, and life satisfaction) significantly influenced their support for economic internationalism; objective socio-demographic attributes (that is, education, age, and contact with overseas friends or relatives) helped shape such support. These findings have important political implications for the future of China’s involvement in the world economy.

Keywords: • Economic internationalism • Mainland China • Economic interdependence • Public opinion

Popular support for economic internationalism is a centerpiece of liberal views on the relationship between economic interdependence and peace, and this support is especially significant when it involves sizable or powerful segments in a society. Liberals believe that because economic interdependence renders private actors in a society dependent on foreign economic interactions, these actors will have interests and motivations that lead them to support economic internationalism and press public officials to avoid military conflicts and to maintain economic ties with foreign countries (Barbieri and Schneider, 1999; Copeland, 1996; McMillan, 1997; Mansfield and Pollins, 2003; Morrow, 1999; Papayoanou, 1996; Polachek et al., 1999; Rosecrance, 1986; Russett and Oneal, 2001). Richard Rosecrance (1986: 40–41), for example, points out:

The amount of interdependence conditions the choice between military-political and trading worlds. If nations have in the past been dependent upon one another, the attempt suddenly to install independence or self-sufficiency works only if populations will accept a more modest level of economic performance. If the economy is already operating at moderate to low levels of capacity, self-sufficiency at those levels can be more easily achieved. Prosperity, on the other hand, brings in vast quantities of goods from overseas which consumers begin to want and expect, and they are less content to sacrifice them and go to a lower level of consumption.

Liberals not only assume the relationship between economic interdependence and peace, but also explore the sources of popular support for economic internationalism. Based on the Stolper-Samuelson theorem, Ronald Rogowski (1989) claims that owners of abundant factors make substantial gains from free trade and therefore tend to pressure policy toward internationalism. Focusing on the levels of factor mobility and education, Michael Hiscox and Jens Hainmueller developed a theoretical explanation of the pattern of popular support for economic internationalism (see Hiscox, 2001; Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2006).

Since the outset of post-Mao reform, Mainland China has been actively integrating into the global economy and so its economy has thus become increasingly dependent on the economies of foreign countries (especially the USA). How much support does economic internationalism enjoy from ordinary Chinese citizens? Why do the Chinese people support or not support economic internationalism? The answers to these questions should help us to understand better the socio-political bases of Mainland China's integration into the world economy and hence predict the future of the integration process. However, while Mainland China's economic connections (for example, trade and investment) with the world have drawn a significant amount of attention from China-watchers and have been studied extensively, no studies have focused on the Chinese people's support for economic internationalism. To fill this gap, therefore, this article examines the level and the sources of the Chinese people's support for economic internationalism.

This article is based on survey data drawn from "The Six-Cities Public Opinion Survey in Mainland China." This survey, which was a part of the Second PEW Global Attitudes Project of the PEW Research Center for the People and the Press (released on June 3, 2003), assessed public views toward globalization and modernization.¹ "The Six-Cities Public Opinion Survey in Mainland China" was conducted by Taylor Nelson Sofres (China Branch) from July 20 to August 18, 2002. The sample sites comprised six cities and their surrounding rural areas: Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Wuhan, and Shenyang. The sample consists of 3000 respondents and is representative of the adult population (18–60 years old) of the six cities (the key socio-demographic attributes of the sample are described in Table 1). Since the socio-demographic attributes in this sample approximate those of the populations of the six cities, the findings may be generalized to those populations. More importantly, these six cities represent two different levels of economic development in Mainland China. Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou represent the most developed urban areas in Mainland China, with a rough per

TABLE 1. *Sociodemographic Attributes of the Surveyed Respondents*

Major sociodemographic attributes		Percentage
Sex	Female	42.5
	Male	57.5
Age	18–29	20.1
	30–39	25.2
	40–49	32.3
	50–60	22.4
Education	Elementary school and below	16.4
	Middle school	33
	High School/Technical School	33
	College/University and above	17.4
Monthly Household Income	999 yuan and below	36.5
	1,000–1,999 yuan	31.3
	2,000–2,999 yuan	16
	3,000–4,999 yuan	9.0
	5,000 yuan and above	5.2

Note: The figures presented in this Table approximate the results from the representative-sample survey of the population in the six cities (that is, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Chengdu, and Shenyang).

Source: China Statistical Yearbook, 2003; Urban Statistical Yearbook of China, 2003.

capita GDP of US\$3000 in 2003. Wuhan, Chengdu, and Shenyang are indicative of the less developed cities, with a rough per capita GDP of US\$1800. Furthermore, these six cities represent four different regional characters: the south, north, middle, and west of the country. Therefore, we expect that the findings from this sample will provide a more complete picture of the support of the Chinese people, particularly residents of urban areas, for economic internationalism.

Like many other public opinion surveys that have been conducted in Mainland China, this six-cities survey produces two kinds of results: descriptive and relational.² These two kinds of results, both of which will be presented in this article, can offer two important insights into the study of Chinese people's support for economic internationalism. First, while the descriptive results from this survey (such as those regarding the extent of support for economic internationalism) may change over time, though in varying degrees, they do help to establish some needed statistical baselines for subsequent studies of popular support for economic internationalism in Mainland China. These baselines are especially useful and important, since representative-sample survey studies of this sort are very scarce. Second, since most, if not all, of these relationships are generic in nature,³ the survey's relational findings regarding the relationships between two sets of variables (first, the respondents' subject orientations and, second, the respondents' key socio-demographic attributes) and popular support for economic internationalism should capture the fundamental sources of people's economic internationalism.

I. China's Integration into the World Economy: Deepening Interdependence

In the field of international relations, "economic interdependence" has two meanings: first, a group of countries is considered interdependent if economic conditions in one are contingent on those found in the others and, second, countries are considered interdependent if it would be costly for them to rupture or forgo their relationship (Keohane and Nye, 1977; see also McMillan, 1997; Mansfield and Pollins, 2003). The first of these is generally referred to as "sensitivity interdependence," whereas the second is typically referred to as "vulnerability interdependence" (Keohane and Nye, 1977).

Economic interdependence has been measured in various ways, with most indicators being closely linked to the flow of foreign trade. In this article, one indicator, openness, will be used to measure the interdependence between Mainland China and the rest of the world. The openness indicator is based in one way or another on the ratio of foreign trade to total domestic output and expresses the fact that there is a direct relationship between the fraction of total output crossing state boundaries and the cost of the interruption of such flows. Since the beginning of the post-Mao era, Mainland China has risen to become a global trading power. From 1979 to 2000, China's foreign trade has maintained a 17 percent annual growth rate. In 2004, the total volume of China's foreign trade exceeded US\$1000 billion, making China the world's third largest trading country. Table 2 shows that the Chinese economy is becoming highly dependent on international trade. In 1977, the year before China's broader political and economic opening to the world, only 9 percent of China's gross domestic production (GDP) came from international trade. However, since 2000, about 50 percent of China's GDP has come from international trade.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is the second indicator that can be used to measure the degree of economic interdependence. Currently, the foreign investment flow into China is soaring. According to the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, FDI in Mainland China is expected to reach US\$100 billion in every year of the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006–10), resulting in China taking the USA's place as the world's largest recipient of foreign direct investment. Table 3 summarizes the inflow of foreign capital to Mainland China from 1999 to 2005, revealing that this inflow of foreign capital to Mainland China has consistently risen during this period.

As Yetiv (1997) points out, there are two principal effects of an inflow of foreign capital. The *supply effect* refers to the economic welfare provided by the foreign investment inflow, which increases the capital formation and technological know-how of the host country. The supply effect of foreign capital in Mainland China can be observed in several areas of the economy (OECD, 2002): first, foreign investment has helped Mainland China expand its international trade, and has also been a decisive factor in China's involvement in the international economic regime; second, foreign investment is an important source of domestic capital formation; third, the most prominent effect of foreign investment is found in the area of job creation and the training of a large population of skilled workers; and fourth, foreign investment has increased the transfer of technology to China and helped China modernize its industrial facilities and improve industrial performance. The *influence effect* refers to the political effect of the inflow of foreign capital: the host country may lose some of its autonomy if it is asymmetrically dependent

TABLE 2. *Mainland China's Trade Dependence on the Rest of the World*

	Export of goods and services (% of GDP) ¹	Imports of goods and services (% of GDP) ²	Trade in goods and services (% of GDP) ³
2004	33.95	31.40	65.35
2003	29.56	27.36	56.91
2002	25.13	22.56	47.70
2001	22.60	20.48	43.08
2000	23.33	20.92	44.24
1999	20.40	17.57	37.97
1998	20.35	16.05	36.39
1997	21.75	17.26	39.01
1996	20.05	18.00	38.06
1995	23.07	20.86	43.94
1994	24.57	22.75	47.31
1993	23.30	25.37	48.68
1992	22.53	20.75	43.27
1991	20.95	17.35	38.30
1990	19.17	15.66	34.83
1989	16.70	17.72	34.42
1988	17.05	18.44	35.49
1987	16.36	16.39	32.74
1986	11.82	14.69	26.51
1985	10.00	14.13	24.13
1984	11.34	11.39	22.73
1983	10.91	9.92	20.82
1982	12.32	10.17	22.50
1981	12.65	12.14	24.79
1980	10.71	11.08	21.79
1979	8.57	9.50	18.07
1978	6.64	7.11	13.75
1977	4.69	4.32	9.01

Notes:

¹ Exports of goods and services as a percent of GDP represents the value of all goods and other market services provided by a country to the rest of the world, as a percentage of its gross domestic product (GDP).

² Imports of goods and services as a percent of GDP represents the value of all goods and other market services received by a country from the rest of the world as a percentage of its GDP.

³ Trade in goods and services as a percent of GDP represents the value of all goods and other market services provided and received by a country from the rest of the world as a percentage of its GDP.

Source: World Development Indicators, 2006.

on the foreign investors. Some have observed the growing influence of foreign investment on Chinese domestic politics, particularly on local political affairs (Gallagher, 2002; Huang, 2003).

Given the fact that China's economy is becoming more interdependent with the world, how do the Chinese people perceive their country's economic

TABLE 3. *Various Measures of Foreign Capital Inflows to Mainland China, 1999–2005*

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 ¹
Number of Contractual Projects	17,101	22,532	26,140	34,171	41,081	43,664	39,679
Amount of Contractual Foreign Capital (billion dollars)	41.538	62.657	60.195	82.768	115.070	153.479	167.212
Actual Foreign Capital Inflows (billion dollars)	40.398	40.772	46.878	52.743	53.505	60.630	53.127

Note: The figures for the year 2005 include only the first 11 months of that year.

Source: Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China, www.mofcom.gov.cn

TABLE 4. *Subjective Perception of China's Economic Interdependence*

Item	1	2	3	4	Total % (N)
	A Lot More % (N)	Somewhat More % (N)	A Little More % (N)	Not More % (N)	
1. Trade and business ties between China and other countries	22.6 (612)	48.1 (1302)	16.9 (458)	12.4 (335)	100.0 (2706)
2. Communication and travel between the people of China and people in other countries	21.4 (596)	45.6 (1267)	21.1 (587)	11.9 (330)	100.0 (2780)
3. Availability of movies, TV and music from different parts of the world	26.6 (751)	42.0 (1186)	20.2 (570)	11.3 (320)	100.0 (2827)
4. Influence of international investors, banks and financial organizations on China's economic policies	17.5 (441)	43.3 (1089)	23.0 (578)	16.2 (408)	100.0 (2516)

interdependence? Do the Chinese people feel that their country's economy is becoming more influenced by the world?

We used the following to assess Chinese citizens' perceptions of their country's economic interdependence with the world: "For each item on this list, tell me if you think it is happening a lot more, somewhat more, only a little more or not more these days than five years ago – (1) Trade and business ties between China and other countries, (2) Communication and travel between the people of China and people in other countries, (3) Availability of movies, TV and music from different parts of the world, and (4) Influence of international investors, banks and financial organizations on China's economic policies." The results are presented in Table 4.

As Table 4 shows, a majority of the surveyed respondents felt that China was more interdependent with the world in 2002 than it had been five years before.

For example, 48.1 percent of the surveyed respondents felt that trade and business ties between China and other countries happened “somewhat more” than they had five years before; 45.6 percent of them believed that communication and travel between the people of China and people in other countries increased “somewhat more” compared with five years before; 42.0 percent of them felt that the availability of movies, TV, and music from different parts of the world in China increased “somewhat more” compared with five years before; and 43.3 percent of them believed that the influence of international investors, banks, and financial organizations on China’s economic policies increased “somewhat more” compared with five years before.

II. Popular Support for Economic Internationalism in Urban China

In order to address the first research question regarding the degree of support for economic internationalism among ordinary Chinese citizens, we will first define economic internationalism according to the general typology of internationalism offered by western literature. Internationalism is an inclusive concept, and refers mainly to a country’s commitment to be actively involved in the international community, to take responsibility for managing international conflict and building international order, and to work multilaterally with other countries in solving “common” transnational issues (Hughes, 1985; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987; Munton, 2003; Pratt, 1989; Wittkopf, 1990). As an analytical concept, internationalism stands opposite to isolationism. Isolationism, which is “defined by a general desire that the government avoid any ties or entanglements with other countries, whatever the nature of the relationship” (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987: 1106), has a long-standing influence in the history of US foreign policy (see, for example, McClosky, 1967; McCormick, 1985; Sniderman and Citrin, 1971).

Moreover, the western conceptualization of internationalism suggests that there are at least three variants of internationalism in terms of “where and how resources should be committed and which common interests should be pursued and in what order” (Munton, 2003: 160): economic internationalism, liberal (or humane) internationalism, and conservative (or militant) internationalism (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987; Munton, 2003; Munton and Keating, 2001; Pratt, 1989; Wittkopf, 1981, 1990). At the core of liberal (or humane) internationalism is the acceptance by a country’s citizens “that they have ethical obligations towards those beyond their borders” (Pratt, 1989: 13). Thus, liberal internationalism is primarily concerned with support for humanitarian causes, “such as development assistance, a reduction in poverty and inequality, and the protection of human rights” (Munton, 2003: 160). Conservative (or militant) internationalism combines two beliefs: the importance of using military force in international affairs and the need for active involvement in the international community. Thus it emphasizes that military strength is the best means for managing international conflict and building international order (Munton, 2003; Munton and Keating, 2001; Wittkopf, 1981, 1990).

At the core of economic internationalism is the strong commitment of a country to an open international (or multilateral) trading system. Therefore, western scholars have operationalized economic internationalism as citizens’ support for international trade, international investment, and closer economic ties with other countries (Munton, 2003; Munton and Keating, 2001; Pratt, 1989; Wittkopf, 1990).

Such support is typically gauged by citizens' evaluations of whether international trade, international investment, and closer economic ties with other countries are actually beneficial for their country and their own daily life (for example, Munton, 2003; Munton and Keating, 2001; Watts, 1985).

Drawing upon this operationalization, we measured Chinese citizens' support for economic internationalism according to their evaluations of the following questions:

1. What do you think about the growing trade and business ties between China and other countries?
2. What do you think about the faster communication and greater travel between the people of China and people in other countries?
3. What do you think about the movies, TV, and music from different parts of the world now available in China? Do you think this is good for China?
4. What do you think about the different products that are now available in China from different parts of the world? Do you think this is good for China?
5. How do you feel about the world becoming more connected through greater economic trade and faster communication? Do you think this is good for China?
6. Do you think the growing trade and business ties between China and other countries are very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad for you and your family?

Respondents were asked to answer these questions on a four-point scale, with "1" indicating "very good," "2" indicating "somewhat good," "3" indicating "somewhat bad," and "4" indicating "very bad." The results are presented in Table 5.

As Table 5 shows, a majority of the surveyed respondents had "positive" attitudes toward the growing trade and business ties between China and other countries (61.9 percent); faster communication and greater travel between the

TABLE 5. *Popular Support for Economic Internationalism in Mainland China*

Item	1	2	3	4	Total
	Very Good % (N)	Somewhat Good % (N)	Somewhat Bad % (N)	Very Bad % (N)	
1. The growing trade and business ties	34.6 (972)	61.9 (1739)	2.5 (71)	1.0 (27)	100.0 (2809)
2. The faster communication and greater travel	34.2 (974)	63.1 (1796)	2.4 (68)	0.3 (10)	100.0 (2848)
3. The movies, TV and music from different parts of the world	32.9 (943)	61.4 (1758)	4.7 (134)	1.0 (30)	100.0 (2865)
4. The different products that are now available in China	31.9 (916)	60.6 (1738)	6.5 (186)	1.1 (30)	100.0 (2870)
5. The world becoming more connected	34.3 (948)	62.7 (1733)	2.7 (75)	0.4 (10)	100.0 (2766)
6. The effect of the growing trade and business ties on you and your family	21.5 (545)	71.8 (1819)	6.2 (156)	0.6 (14)	100.0 (2534)

people of China and people in other countries (63.1 percent); movies, TV, and music from different parts of the world in China (61.4 percent); different products from different parts of the world in China (60.6 percent); the world becoming more connected (62.7 percent); and the effect of growing trade and business ties on themselves and their family (71.8 percent). Moreover, about one-third of the surveyed respondents had “very positive” attitudes toward these six items. These results seem to confirm the argument of interdependence theorists that with the increase of China’s economic interdependence the Chinese people will become more supportive of economic internationalism. The six items used in this study to gauge respondents’ responses toward economic internationalism were then combined to form an additive index of respondents’ support for economic internationalism.⁴

III. Variables Explaining Popular Support for Economic Internationalism

Why do Chinese citizens support or not support economic internationalism? To answer this question, we focus on two sets of independent variables that we believe are important sources of popular support for economic internationalism in the Chinese setting: (1) a set of respondents’ subjective orientations and (2) respondents’ key socio-demographic attributes. In this section, we explain how these two sets of variables are operationalized and examine how each of them may influence the level of support for economic internationalism within Chinese society.

Subjective Orientations

Drawing on earlier studies of western settings (as explained below), we focus in this article on such subjective orientations as cultural superiority, sense of modernity, and life satisfaction, and examine whether the hypothesized relationships between each of these subjective orientations and popular support for economic internationalism are as expected.

As Hurwitz and Peffley (1987: 1106) have pointed out, certain core values and beliefs occupy a central position in people’s belief systems. Moreover, these core values and beliefs tend to have a consistent impact upon people’s responses toward a wide range of social issues (Geertz, 1973; Rokeach, 1973). Moreover, culturalists argue that these core values and beliefs are acquired earlier in the socialization process than particular attitudes toward specific social issues, and that these core values and beliefs, once formed, are resistant to change (Jackman and Miller, 1996; Ross, 1997).

Cultural Superiority

According to western literature, a feeling of cultural superiority is perhaps the most obvious and important independent variable that could significantly influence support for internationalism in general, and economic internationalism in particular (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987; Levinson, 1957). As Levinson (1957: 38–9) argued long ago, “ethnocentric thinking in the sphere of international relations, like other forms of ethnocentrism, is based on a rigid and pervasive distinction between in-groups and out-groups ... Other nations are seen as inferior, envious

and threatening.” If an individual believes that his or her culture and nation is superior to other cultures and nations, then he or she will eventually acquire “a self-centered or parochial view of the world ... [and] the tendency may be to draw inward into an isolationist shell rather than to push outward in the world” (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987: 1108). The findings from some empirical studies of western societies have supported the notion of a significant negative relationship between the ethnocentric feeling and assessments of economic internationalism (for example, Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987). The past 20 years have witnessed the rise of various fundamentalist movements. Samuel Huntington (1996) even predicted the coming of the clash of civilizations in the 21st century. People in the developing countries have often retreated to their traditional culture to regain a feeling of security. Meanwhile, they have tended to blame the outside world, making it the scapegoat for their economic misery (Pye, 2001). Therefore, the feeling of cultural superiority in the developing world has led to a strong tendency against economic internationalism. Similarly, we expect that the surveyed respondents will link their support for economic internationalism to their belief in the superiority of their culture.

We measure Chinese citizens' belief in cultural superiority according to their evaluations of the following two statements: “(1) our people are not perfect, but our culture is superior to others; and (2) our way of life needs to be protected against foreign influence.”⁵ These two items were combined to form an additive index of a respondent's belief in cultural superiority.

Sense of Modernity

According to modernizationists, economic development may change a public's cultural orientations from the parochial and traditional to the cosmopolitan and modern (for example, Inglehart, 1997). Furthermore, they argue that individuals with cosmopolitan and modern orientations feel that they are in command of their own fate, are self-confident, are personally effective in their relationships with others, are supportive of a capitalist market economy, and are informed about political and social affairs. This kind of modern individual is more likely to support internationalism in general and economic internationalism in particular. As McClosky (1967) found, those people who felt in command of themselves, who were informed about political and social affairs, were significantly less isolationist. Similarly, we expect a positive relationship between the sense of modernity and support for economic internationalism among China's citizens.

We used the following to assess Chinese citizens' sense of modernity: “Please tell me which of the following is closest to your own opinion: (1) Most people who do not succeed in life fail because of society's failures or most people who do not succeed fail because of their own individual failures; (2) I do not like the pace of modern life or I like the pace of modern life; and (3) Our traditional way of life remains strong or our traditional way of life is getting lost.” These three items were then combined to form an additive index of a respondent's sense of modernity. Those people who believe that most people who do not succeed in life fail because of their own individual failures, who like the pace of modern life, and who believe that their traditional way of life is getting lost were considered to have a greater sense of modernity.

Life Satisfaction

Many studies of western societies have found that, in general, individuals' satisfaction with their life or overall socioeconomic conditions is positively associated with their support for economic internationalism (Aaronson, 2001; Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1999). From these early findings on the relationship between life satisfaction and support for economic internationalism in western settings, we may infer that such a relationship might be present in the Chinese setting: those who are satisfied with their life may also feel positively about the international economic connections between China and the world, since such international economic connections are very likely to contribute, at least in part, to their life satisfaction. On the other hand, we expect that life dissatisfaction will lead to an economic isolationist orientation, since such an isolationist orientation would "permit them not only to blame others for the bad fate that life has dealt them, but also to satisfy their impulse to punish, reject, and demean others, partly as retribution and partly as a way of bringing others down to an even lower, more miserable level than their own" (McClosky, 1967: 73).

We used the following to assess Chinese citizens' life satisfaction: "(1) please tell me whether you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with your household income, and (2) please tell me whether you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with your family life." These two items were combined to form an additive index of a respondent's overall life satisfaction.

Key Socio-demographic Variables

A large body of literature on public attitudes toward foreign policy in western societies suggests that certain key socio-demographic attributes may influence individuals' attitudes toward internationalism in general and economic internationalism in particular (Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1995, 1999; Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2006; Hiscox, 2001; Maggiotto and Wittkopf, 1981; Munton, 2003; Munton and Keating, 2001; Pratt, 1989; Rogowski, 1989; Wittkopf, 1990). This is mainly because these key socio-demographic attributes tend to play a significant role in shaping the processes of political socialization and the formation of self-interest, which in turn affect people's attitudes toward economic internationalism. Drawing upon these earlier studies, therefore, we include the following key socio-demographic attributes: sex, age, education, income, white-collar occupation, travel abroad, contact with overseas friends or relatives, ownership of a computer, ownership of a cell phone, and regular viewing of international news channels. We suspect that along with the subjective orientations specified earlier, these socio-demographic attributes will also impact on Chinese citizens' support for economic internationalism.

Education

In their seminal work *The Civil Culture*, Almond and Verba (1963: 379) argued that "educational attainment appears to have the most important demographic effect on political attitudes." Similarly, US literature on internationalism has observed that education has been an important predictor of Americans' attitudes toward involvement in world affairs: "the more educated people were, the more

likely they were to support internationalist policies; conversely, the less educated they were, the more likely they were to be isolationists" (Wittkopf, 1990: 37). More importantly, a recent public opinion survey of Americans found that, in 1998, 58 percent of college graduates and 68 percent of individuals with post-graduate education favored globalization, compared with 46 percent of high school graduates (Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1999). The reasons for this are, first, people with higher levels of educational attainment are exposed more to cosmopolitan culture, are more informed about political and social affairs, and are politically and socially efficacious, all of which contribute to support for economic internationalism; and second, people with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to benefit from international economic integration than those with lower education, and are thus more likely to support economic internationalism.

Occupation

Some earlier empirical studies suggest that white-collar workers are more likely to support economic internationalism than blue-collar workers. For example, a recent public opinion survey of Americans found that less-skilled workers were much more likely to oppose free trade than more-skilled workers.⁶ In this study, we include professionals, executives, and civil servants, as well as clerks, salespeople, and teachers, and the self-employed and businessmen as white-collar occupations.⁷ We expect that those Chinese respondents with a white-collar occupation are more likely to support economic internationalism, because they tend to gain more from the integration of the Chinese economy with the world than those with blue-collar occupations (such as workers and peasants).

Income

Earlier studies suggest that the level of people's incomes tends to be related to their attitudes toward internationalism (Hughes, 1978; Wittkopf, 1990). For example, Wittkopf (1990) found that those Americans with the highest levels of income were consistently the strongest supporters of internationalism. Similarly, we expect that those Chinese with higher levels of income will have a positive attitude toward international economic connections between China and the world, since such international economic connections are very likely to contribute, at least in part, to their income.

Age

Age is argued to have an impact on public attitudes toward internationalism. We expect a negative relationship between age and support for economic internationalism among Chinese citizens. This negative relationship between age and support for economic internationalism may be caused by the generational effect. The older generation, especially those generations whose values and beliefs were formed before 1978, when the Chinese economy was isolated from any interaction with the world economy and the Chinese government emphasized the importance of "self-reliance" in economic development, had no experience of economic internationalism in the earlier stages of their socialization.

Gender

An empirical study of the American public found that women tend to be isolationist in their foreign policy beliefs, whereas men tend to be internationalist (Wittkopf, 1990). Similarly, we expect within Chinese society that, first, gender will have an impact on public attitudes toward economic internationalism and that, second, men are more likely to support economic internationalism than women.

Overseas Experience and Communication

Travel abroad, contact with overseas friends or relatives, and viewing international news channels are all expected to contribute to the development of positive attitudes toward economic internationalism. For example, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (1995, 1999) has found that Americans who have traveled or lived in foreign countries are more likely to have positive attitudes toward international economic connections than those who have not traveled or lived in foreign countries. From such findings we may infer that being exposed to the outside world may make people more internationally minded and more likely to hold internationalist sentiments.

Ownership of Modern Technology

We suspect that those people who own a computer, cell phone, or other products that involve modern technology are more likely to show support for economic internationalism, because using these products is likely to expose an individual to modern culture. This, in turn, will lead an individual to appreciate the positive effects of international economic connections.

IV. Multivariate Analysis

Table 6 presents the results of the multiple regression (OLS) model used to capture the impacts of the factors specified above on the Chinese people's support for economic internationalism. Overall, the three attitudinal factors, with 10 socio-demographic attributes, explain 18 percent of the variance in support for economic internationalism (R Square equals .18).

First, respondents' belief in the superiority of their culture significantly affects how they view economic internationalism. Those who strongly believe in the superiority of their culture tend to be more supportive of economic internationalism. This finding is contrary to the expectation expressed in our earlier theoretical discussion, and seems to suggest that the Chinese people can be both proud of their culture and supportive of economic internationalism. This suggestion has important theoretical implications.

Second, the results from the regression model seem to support our expectation about the relationship between a sense of modernity and support for economic internationalism. Those who hold more modern cultural values are more likely to have positive views about economic internationalism.

Third, as we expected, respondents' life satisfaction significantly affects how they view economic internationalism. Those scoring higher in life satisfaction are more likely to have positive views about economic internationalism.

TABLE 6. *Multivariate Models of Subjective Support for Economic Internationalism*

Independent Variables	Support for Economic Internationalism		
	b	s.e.	beta
Sense of Modernity	.214**	.067	.073
Cultural Superiority	.171**	.038	.106
Life Satisfaction	.185**	.049	.093
Age	-.014**	.005	-.072
Gender ¹	-.010	.104	-.002
Income ²	.017	.028	.019
Education ³	.289**	.067	.125
White-Collar Occupation ⁴	.049	.136	.009
Travel Abroad	.439	.276	.038
Contact with Overseas Friends or Relatives	.343*	.169	.049
Viewing of International News Channel	-.059	.183	-.007
Ownership of Computer	-.168	.129	-.035
Ownership of Cell Phone	.227	.122	.050
Constant	15.909**	.580	
R Square	.18		
Adjusted R Square	.16		
N	1818		

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

¹ Male = 1; female = 2.

² Income is measured by Chinese currency, yuan.

³ No formal education = 1, Primary school = 2, Junior middle = 3, Senior middle/technical school = 4, College/university = 5, Graduate or above = 6.

⁴ White-collar occupation (including professional/executive/civil servant, clerk/salesman/teacher, and self-employed/businessman) = 1; non-white-collar occupation = 0.

Finally, of all the socio-demographic attributes, only education, age, and contact with overseas friends or relatives have a significant effect on an individual's support for economic internationalism. Specifically, the results indicate, first, that those who are well educated are more likely to have positive views about economic internationalism; second, that young people are more likely to support economic internationalism than the older generations; and, third, that those who have had frequent contact with overseas friends or relatives are more likely to support economic internationalism because they have been more exposed to the outside world.

V. Discussion and Conclusion

Since the findings presented above are based on a survey of six cities, we do not intend to generalize these findings to the rest of the country. Nonetheless, we do believe that the findings from this study are theoretically and empirically heuristic for analysis of both the level and sources of support for economic internationalism in Mainland China. Given the scarcity of representative-sample survey studies of this sort, the findings from our study are very useful for establishing some conceptual and empirical baselines for subsequent studies of the Chinese people's

support for economic internationalism. These baselines will be especially instructive for future studies conducted in urban China with socioeconomic characteristics similar to those of our sample sites. Here we highlight some important findings and implications.

First, we can draw an important inference from people's overall assessment of economic internationalism. It is clear that a majority of the surveyed respondents, especially in urban China, had "positive" attitudes toward economic internationalism. This result seems to confirm the liberal view of interdependence theory that with the increase of China's economic interdependence, the Chinese have become more supportive of economic internationalism. Meanwhile, our findings also indicate that, within Chinese society, economic internationalism draws support mainly from such relatively subjective considerations as belief in cultural superiority, a sense of modernity, and life satisfaction (see Table 6). These findings seem to suggest that economic internationalism has a firm foundation in Chinese society. With continued economic development and the resulting growth of support for modern ideas and values among the Chinese people, they will become increasingly supportive of economic internationalism. Moreover, unlike in western societies, the belief in cultural superiority tends to reinforce economic internationalist sentiments within Chinese society. That may suggest that, since the adoption of the "open and reform" policy in 1978, Chinese people are becoming more confident about participating in international economic activities.

On the other hand, since 1990, nationalism has become increasingly popular within the Chinese population; indeed, some empirical studies report that the Chinese people have recently demonstrated strong nationalist sentiments (for example, Chen, 2001; Gries, 2004). The extreme variant of this new nationalism can be labeled "anti-foreignism" (*paiwai zhuyi*) or "isolationism" (*biguan suoguo*). This extreme nationalism views Chinese culture as a symbol of a struggle against western cultural hegemony and colonialism and suggests that Chinese values (Confucian values) are superior to their western counterparts (for example, Sheng, 1996; Zhao, 2000). For example, a 1996 Chinese non-fiction bestseller (Qiang et al., 1996) criticized American culture and suggested that China should oppose US economic imperialism and boycott US goods. Wang Xiaodong, a vocal advocate of Chinese nationalism, is also suspicious of economic internationalism and globalization. He argues that the Chinese government should pursue a more selective and protectionist approach toward globalization in order to prevent China from becoming permanently trapped at the lower end of the global division of labor (Wang, 2000). These extreme views have received considerable attention from the western media and academics and have dominated their perception of Chinese nationalism, tending to create the impression that the rise of Chinese nationalism is likely to lead to economic isolationism.

However, our findings indicate that the belief in cultural superiority coexists with popular support for economic internationalism in Chinese society. These findings refute the arguments made by the extreme nationalists, and imply that the dominant stream of Chinese nationalism is still moderate and pragmatic, rather than radical and irrational.⁸ As long as Chinese people see the benefits of economic interactions with the outside world, they will continue supporting economic internationalism. Therefore, the rise of nationalism will not drive the Chinese people into the camp of economic anti-foreignism.

Second, our findings indicate that some objective socio-demographic attributes (education, age, and contact with overseas friends or relatives) have a significant effect on popular support for economic internationalism. As mentioned earlier, education is one of the most important “modern forces”; it has exposed people to cosmopolitan culture and empowered people with a feeling of social effectiveness, which in turn, has led to support for economic internationalism. Older generations tend to have a negative attitude toward economic internationalism, mainly because they came of age and were educated before 1978, when the Chinese economy was isolated from interaction with the world economy; consequently, they had no experience of economic internationalism in their earlier socialization. Lastly, those who have had frequent contact with overseas friends or relatives are more likely to support economic internationalism because they have been more exposed to foreign influences. All of these objective factors point optimistically to a future in which the Chinese people will become increasingly supportive of economic internationalism.

Notes

1. Care was taken to minimize linguistic misinterpretations and respondent effects in the survey implementation. Respondents were offered confidentiality and encouraged to provide answers that best captured their true feelings. The survey questionnaire cautiously avoided sensitive issues. In addition, circumstantial evidence and evidence from other public opinion surveys suggest that residents of the six cities felt free to express their views in this survey.
2. For a detailed discussion on the distinction between these two kinds of survey results, see Manion (1994). See also Chen (2004).
3. For more discussion on the generalizability of findings about relationships between variables in the study of contemporary China, see Manion (1994) and Walder (1998).
4. The reliability analysis for these six items shows that the inter-item correlations are moderate, ranging from 0.27 to 0.49. This set of six items yields a reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.77.
5. Respondents were asked to evaluate these two statements on a four-point scale, with “1” indicating “completely agree,” “2” indicating “mostly agree,” “3” indicating “mostly disagree,” and “4” indicating “completely disagree.”
6. NBC News–Wall Street Journal Poll, April 4, 2001.
7. For further discussion of the composition of white-collar occupations in contemporary China, see Lu (2004) and Zhou (2005).
8. For discussion of the defensive and pragmatic nature of Chinese nationalism, see Shen (1998), Xiao (1996), and Zhao (2000).

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Biographical Notes

CHUNLONG LU is Associate Professor of Political Science at the China University of Political Science and Law, Beijing, People's Republic of China. His research interests include Chinese politics, particularly the middle class, political participation, as well as Chinese foreign policy. He has recently published articles in peer-reviewed journals such as *Modern China*, the *Middle East Journal*, *Social Science Quarterly*, and the *International Review of Modern Sociology*. ADDRESS: School of Politics and Public Administration, China University of Political Science and Law, Fuxue Street 27, Changping, Beijing, 102249, PRC [email: chunlonglu@hotmail.com].

YE TIAN is Associate Professor of International Relations at Renmin University of China, Beijing, People's Republic of China. His writings have dealt primarily with international political economy, international institutions, and international cooperation. He has published articles in some of the leading journals in China, such as the *Economic Research Journal*, *World Economics and Politics*, and the *Chinese Journal of European Studies*. His major books include *Institutional Choice in International Relations* (2006) and *An Introduction to International Political Economy* (forthcoming). ADDRESS: School of International Studies, Renmin University of China, Beijing 100872, PRC [email: tianye@ruc.edu.cn].

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