ACTIVATING INTOLERANCE
How Rising Levels of Authoritarianism and the Threat of War Affect Foreign Policy Attitudes in China *

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Abstract

Despite growing attention to authoritarianism as a psychological predisposition affecting political preferences in the West, little research has been done to determine the effects of this trait in East Asian societies. This paper applies the authoritarian dynamic theory (Stenner, 2005) to Chinese perceptions of international organizations. The paper shows that authoritarianism, a trait more likely to be found in less educated, lower income, and older citizens in inland provinces, has been on the rise since the early 2000s in China. It uses World Values Survey data and finds that authoritarian foreign policy dispositions—namely, lower trust in the United Nations (UN) and the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)—can be activated via high levels of war threat in China. Authoritarianism, when activated by threat of war, has the opposite effect on confidence in international organizations that nationalism does. Distrustful attitudes towards the United Nations and APEC in the context of increasing regional tensions may be explained by this phenomenon.

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1 Introduction

In attempting to explain a number of recent political events, including the election of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States and Brexit, the referendum-based decision of British citizens to leave the European Union, journalists and political pundits alike have given audience to a profusion of political science and political psychology literature explaining authoritarianism (Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer, 1981, 1988, 1996; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005, 2009). According to this literature, authoritarian personalities indicate a tendency towards collectivism and ideological rigidity, as well as a predisposition for intolerance towards racial/ethnic, moral, religious, or political out-groups. Both the Trump candidacy and the success of Brexit demonstrate that vocal factions of authoritarians can have significant impact upon the direction of a country’s foreign policy and its diplomatic relations with other nations.1

“Why now?” one might ask. Why do authoritarians, an ever-present faction of citizens in every country, manifest their intolerant attitudes more or less at any given time? Karen Stenner (2005) posits that environmental conditions of “normative threat” activate authoritarian intolerance through a process that she calls “the authoritarian dynamic.” According to her theory, current movements towards isolationism and nativism in the US and the UK can be seen as the reactions of authoritarians with otherwise dormant tendencies towards intolerance to events threatening their self-defined values and norms.

It appears that the authoritarian dynamic has had great impact upon foreign policy debates and everyday realities in the US and the UK in recent years. But is this effect limited to the West? Could something similar happen in other regions? The vast majority of studies on authoritarianism and its political implications have been focused on the United States and other Western, liberal democracies. To date, little work has been done to expand the purview of the authoritarian dynamic to East Asian contexts. In an effort to complement

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1For recent academic scholarship about authoritarianism and Trump/Brexit, see Inglehart & Norris (2016) and MacWilliams (2016).
the currently available literature, this paper will investigate what an “authoritarian dynamic”
might look like in China. It will examine how intolerance of difference and perceived threat
affect citizens’ policy preferences, especially given that the Chinese public may be more
culturally prone to authoritarian tendencies due to Confucian values of filial piety (孝) and
loyalty (忠) (Ma & Yang, 2014).

This study will seek specifically to determine whether the threat of war activates the
intolerance of Chinese authoritarians towards the United Nations and the Asian-Pacific Eco-

nomic Cooperation (APEC). Why this research question? As evinced by online discussions
of international organizations by Chinese netizens, some Chinese citizens perceive interna-
tional organizations, especially the United Nations, as “puppets of America (美国的傀儡).”
Moreover, previous scholarship has revealed substantial levels of “othering” in Chinese per-
ceptions of Americans and other foreigners. In contexts where groups assign high salience
to the differences between their confederates and the members of an out-group, beliefs and
actions that are prejudiced against the out-group are likely to follow (Turner et al., 1987).
(In the “puppet” narrative described above, foreign powers represent an abstract out-group
to be derogated via the othering process.) Given that 1) authoritarian personality types
are particularly prone to developing biased views against out-group members and 2) signifi-
cant numbers of mainland Chinese people exhibit the authoritarian personality type (Liu et
al., 2008), it seems highly likely that authoritarianism should affect Chinese views towards
international organizations.

This paper uses OLS regression analysis of data from the World Values Survey (WVS)
to demonstrate that high authoritarian predispositions and high levels of perceived war
threat interact to predict lower levels of trust in both the United Nations and APEC in
China. The results indicate that threat of war mediates Chinese authoritarians’ levels of

2See, for example, here, here, and here.
3“Othering” refers to a process described by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al.,
1987; Abrams & Hogg, 1988) through which individuals create a familiar and favored “in-group” identity by
differentiating one or several derogated “out-groups.” For more on social identity theory and “othering” in
confidence in international organizations. These results speak to the larger question of the role of psychology in foreign policy preference development at the individual level, and ultimately, to the role of group psychology in creating factional political interests at the mass public-level. Even though China is not a democracy, recent scholarship has identified several mechanisms through which political discontent can affect foreign policy decision-making. If this is the case, then the rising threat of war catalyzed by current events, such as the East and South China Sea conflicts, may have important implications for China’s future international cooperation.

At this point, it should be useful to present a roadmap of what lies ahead. Section 2 gives an overview of authoritarianism according to the political psychology literature and explains the measurement scale used for this paper. Section 3 explains trends in authoritarianism in China and other East Asian nations over the past three decades. Section 4 examines China’s participation in international organizations and how socio-political trends may affect such participation. Section 5 describes the methodology used herein. Section 6 presents results, and Section 7 discusses these findings. Section 8 concludes.

2 Authoritarianism, Threat, and Political Preferences

2.1 A Brief Literature Review

Before delving into the study below, it is worthwhile to briefly summarize the authoritarianism literature. The Authoritarian Personality (Adorno et al., 1950) marked the first serious academic investigation of authoritarianism as a personal characteristic affecting social and political preferences. The book was the result of a research project on religious and racial prejudice— and in particular, anti-Semitism— organized by the American Jewish Committee in the immediate aftermath of World War II. It described authoritarianism as a personality syndrome caused by a “hierarchical, authoritarian, exploitive parent-child relationship” that led to “a dichotomous handling of social relations as manifested especially in
the formation of stereotypes and of ingroup-outgroup cleavages” later in life (972). Altemeyer re-envisioned authoritarianism thirty years later, describing it as a right-wing characteristic produced through social learning (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988). Altemeyer replaced Adorno et al.’s F-scale (F stood for fascism), which measured attitudes based on a set of nine categories, with the more psychometrically attuned Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) scale. Around the same time, Duckitt (1989) identified conformity with in-group norms, emphasis upon respect and obedience to leaders, and intolerance towards people not conforming to the in-group’s norms as three identifying characteristics of authoritarianism.

Drawing upon the work of Altemeyer and other scholars in the intervening decade, Feldman & Stenner (1997) contributed to the field by acknowledging the role of perceived threat in activating authoritarian intolerance. Their 1997 article found an interaction between threat and authoritarianism, indicating that authoritarians are more likely to express political views that are intolerant of others when triggered by threat to the political or social order. Stenner (2005) elaborated upon this theory in The Authoritarian Dynamic, providing extensive proof for the impact of threat perception upon the expression of authoritarian preferences.

While many experimental studies on authoritarian views and political preferences focus exclusively on intra-societal political issues, there is a growing body of literature exploring how perceived threat affects authoritarian foreign policy preferences. Shortly after the release of The Authoritarian Personality, Levinson (1957) cautioned that a trend towards authoritarianism in American politics during the 1950s had “intensified our nationalistic-chauvanistic [sic] potentialities,” thus threatening the nation’s ability to “constitute a democratic force in the world and... reduce international tensions” (46-47). In more recent years, experimental studies have revealed the impact of authoritarianism and perceived threat upon a range of foreign policy issues. Feldman & Stenner (1997) determined that threat activated greater levels of authoritarian support for defense spending and the Gulf War; meanwhile, M. J. Het-
Hetherington & Weiler (2009) found that authoritarianism and threat led to stronger support for the Iraq war, prioritizing the national interest over cooperating with allies, and preferring the use American military strength to diplomacy. M. Hetherington & Suhay (2011) linked authoritarianism and threat of terrorism to support for the War on Terror. Furthermore, Craig & Richeson (2014) provided evidence of authoritarian preferences for stricter immigration policies when faced with cultural threat.

Very little work has been produced regarding the effect of authoritarianism upon political preference in East Asia. That which exists focuses almost exclusively upon the impact of authoritarianism upon domestic political trust. Shi (2001) explored determinants of political trust in Taiwan and mainland China. The paper found that political trust is based on government performance in Taiwan, whereas political trust is produced via authoritarian values encouraged by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in mainland China. Liu et al. (2008) used longitudinal data spanning the periods before and after the 2004 presidential elections in Taiwan to discern the effect of the Democratic Progressive Party’s (DPP) consolidation of power upon personal levels of authoritarianism. The authors argued that the second victory of the DPP indicated to many that Taiwan would not soon return to Kuomintang (KMT) party rule, leading to an increase in levels of authoritarianism for DPP supporters post-election, despite the party’s proclaimed “image of being pro-democracy and against oppression and discrimination” (124). Wong et al. (2011) studied the determinants of political trust in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. The article concluded that in many of these nations, political and economic performance trumps cultural factors such as authoritarianism in determining political trust. However, Ma & Yang (2014) critique the measurement of authoritarianism used in this paper, which gauged authoritarianism by asking respondents whether it is good to respect traditional authority, as overly simplistic. Using a more complex measure of authoritarianism in a sample of 13 Asian nations, Ma and Yang find that “authoritarian orientations are an independent cultural source of political trust in these societies” (1).
Despite an extensive search by the author, only one article regarding authoritarianism and foreign policy preferences in East Asia could be identified. Liu et al. (2009) administered surveys to undergraduate psychology majors in United States, New Zealand, Taiwan, Japan, and China to measure psychological predispositions and levels of militarism. The authors were surprised to find that Chinese respondents who were high in authoritarianism and social dominance orientation (SDO) were not only more likely to support Chinese military intervention in Taiwan, but also US military intervention in Iraq. Liu et. al.’s article serves as a compelling entrée into the study of Asian authoritarianism and foreign policy preferences. Yet the paucity of scholarship linking authoritarianism and threat to foreign policy preferences in East Asia signals that the time is ripe for a deeper look into these issues.

2.2 Measuring Authoritarianism

This paper will employ longitudinal, aggregate data from Waves 2 through 6 (1990-2014) of the World Values Survey (WVS). The WVS dataset includes samples from 61 nations, and features respondents’ viewpoints on politics, religion and morality, economic preferences, gender roles, and societal values.

To measure levels of personal authoritarianism, I will use a scale borrowed from Stenner (2005). The scale relies on a set of questions about child-rearing values, based on the argument that a person’s beliefs about child-rearing inherently reflect psychological levels of intolerance and ethnocentrism (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Martin, 1964). In the WVS,

5The article found complementary results for Americans exhibiting high levels of authoritarianism and SDO, who showed greater support for the US involvement in Iraq and for Chinese intervention in Taiwan. The authors postulated that authoritarians in China and the US took an interest in the military might of both countries “due to power relations, as both China and the United States aspire to world leadership, including the projection of their might overseas in a ‘just’ cause” (158).

6Though the child-rearing scale has been used in myriad cross-national studies, some scholars have questioned the cross-cultural validity of using child-rearing measures. For example, Perez & Hetherington (2014) argue that Blacks and Whites in the United States view authoritarian child-rearing measures in different ways, leading Blacks to appear more authoritarian that Whites on the whole. Moreover, Lieber et al. (2006) point out that China and other East Asian societies differ significantly from Western societies with regard to child-rearing practices. The article notes that the implications of child-rearing beliefs should
respondents are provided with a list of 11 “qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home,” and asked to list up to five “especially important” qualities. The authoritarianism scale introduced by Stenner gives respondents a +1 if they mention obedience (服从) and a +1 for not mentioning independence (独立性), imagination (有想象力), and tolerance and respect for other people (对别人宽容和尊重), respectively. Thus, the scale ranges from zero to four.

3 Authoritarianism in China: Culture and Trends

3.1 East Asian Values, Collectivism, and Authoritarianism

As noted by Ma & Yang (2014), values of filial piety and loyalty originating from Confucianism promote “deference to authority, worship, and dependence” (326) in East Asian political cultures—all characteristics of authoritarianism. The Chinese society, in particular, places heavy emphasis on the threefold roles of the “benevolent patriarch” as father, husband, and ruler (Liu et al., 2010; Liu & Liu, 2003). Due to their Confucian roots, East Asian societies tend to exhibit higher levels of authoritarianism than societies in the West. In fact, Liu et al. (2008)’s cross-national study found that survey respondents in China, Taiwan, and Japan scored highest, respondents in the US scored slightly below them, and respondents in New Zealand scored significantly lower on the RWA scale measure of authoritarianism.

Beyond scoring high in authoritarianism, Chinese citizens also demonstrate especially high levels of collectivism and in-group favoritism. In one study, Americans, Koreans, and

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7 The full list of qualities includes: independence (独立性), hard work (勤奋), feeling of responsibility (责任感), imagination (有想象力), tolerance and respect for other people (对别人宽容和尊重), thrift/saving money and things (节俭), determination/perseverance (坚韧), religious faith (虔诚的宗教信仰), unselfishness (不自私), obedience(服从), and self-expression (自我表达).

8 Stenner’s original scale used a fifth measure of “good manners,” but this variable was removed from later waves of the WVS.

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Japanese all scored at comparable levels of collectivism, while citizens of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) were found to be significantly less individualistic and more collectivistic (Oyserman et al., 2002). Another study compared the primacy of collectivism in determining in-group favoritism using samples from the US and China, and ultimately concluded that Chinese respondents were more likely to show in-group favoritism, especially when primed with information that the out-group had performed better than the in-group (Chen et al., 2002). This finding suggests that threat may exacerbate Chinese levels of out-group discrimination.

It is important, though, to consider the cultural context of Chinese authoritarianism, collectivism, and in-group favoritism. Several scholars defend these cultural trends, urging observers to understand the unique cultural history, social support structure, and political rationale behind them. Pye (1993), for example, posits that years of foreign aggression made creating a salient Chinese social identity a political necessity. On the other hand, Liu et al. (2010) emphasize the “the balance between harmony and hierarchy-enhancing orientations” (591), lamenting that Western social psychologists tend to portray East Asian authoritarian dispositions in an overly negative manner. Nisbett et al. (2001) appear to agree, attributing Chinese in-group favoritism to the Confucian values of reciprocative social obligation and in-group harmony, rather than a focus on diminishing any particular out-group.

### 3.2 Rising Levels of Authoritarianism in East Asia

According to M. J. Hetherington & Weiler (2009), “the level of authoritarianism in a population generally stays the same over time” (109). Yet levels of authoritarianism in China have fluctuated significantly. Figure 1 shows trends in authoritarianism, according to the authoritarianism scale outlined above, for China and several other East Asian nations. The three most powerful countries in the region all exhibit similar trajectories between 1990 and 2012, with authoritarianism levels falling most significantly after the 1994-1996 wave and rising gradually since 2001. Authoritarianism levels in the West— included for reference
Average Levels of Authoritarianism in East Asia
1990 – 2013

Figure 1: Average authoritarianism levels for East Asian countries according to World Values Survey Waves 2-6. (Wave 1 did not include most of these nations.) Time periods designated on the X-axis represent the range of survey years for countries in the plot— actual WVS survey periods were longer. Y-axis is truncated to focus on the data range— the full authoritarianism scale varies from 0 to 4. The index for Western countries is included for reference and includes an average of authoritarian scores from Western countries for which WVS data was available: the US, Australia, Germany, Sweden, and Spain. Insufficient data was available for Western countries during Wave 2 and 4, so those points are left off of the plot. Data was also unavailable for Taiwan during Waves 3 and 4.

since most literature on the subject is based on data from Western countries— follow a comparable, but less extreme, path.

Average levels of authoritarianism have been increasing steadily in the East Asian region since 2001. Figure 2 reveals that the increasing average authoritarianism score comes as a result of decreasing low scores (0, 1) on the authoritarianism scale and an increasing number of mid-high scores (2, 3). In other words, it is not that those already predisposed to intolerance are becoming more rigid, but rather that more and more Chinese are predisposed to intolerance since the millennium. Determining the reason for this trend in Chinese authoritarianism is beyond the scope of this paper; instead, in the next sections, I will explore the
implications of authoritarianism for foreign policy preferences of the Chinese public.

4 Chinese Foreign Policy, International Organizations, and the Role of the Chinese Public

4.1 China’s Multilateral Cooperation and Objections from the Public

China’s involvement in international organizations has increased exponentially since the 1960s: the country widened its membership from one intergovernmental organization (IGO) and 58 international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) in 1966 to 46 intergovernmental organizations and 1,568 international nongovernmental organizations in 2003 (Kent, 2007; Union of International Associations, 2004). By the mid-1990s, China’s participation in international organizations had surpassed the level of participation of about 80 percent of comparable industrialized nations (Johnston, 2003). As China has become more globally involved, its level of compliance with the international norms and treaties created by these bodies has also increased (Kent, 2007). Johnston (2008) posits that China’s turn towards greater compliance received a boost in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when Chinese officials realized that in order to fulfill China’s role as an emergent “responsible major power,” the country’s government must seek a more active, constructive role in international or-
ganizations. Furthermore, Johnston asserts that with increasing exposure to international norms through participation in international organizations, Chinese diplomats progressively conformed to these norms through a process of socialization.

Nevertheless, there are some areas of multilateral cooperation where China still tends not to comply. The Chinese government has proven to be particularly sensitive to compliance with international norms and treaties that threaten its sovereignty or its ability to maintain firm control over its more politically resistant regions (Tao, 2015). Within international organizations, China’s position often differs from Western nations—most notably the United States, which plays a tremendous role in multilateral relations worldwide. Wuthnow (2011) argues that strategic and political circumstances dictate when China will cooperate with the US in the United Nations Security Council. Through a number of case studies, Wuthnow shows that China is especially capable of influencing UN decision-making in a direction away from US preferences when there are legitimate alternatives to the US position and other member states’ stances on the issue are divided.

Attempts to resist Western dominance in international organizations have been strongly encouraged by some Chinese citizens. Y. Wang (2015) provides insight into their point of view. He says:

“One frequently-seen type of viewpoint is, ‘The current international system is dominated by Western countries, reflecting the capitalist interests of a minority upper class. China’s participation in [global] governance has greater harms than benefits.’ According to this argument... rules and arrangements are more often than not established by Western, powerful nations such as [those in] Europe, the US, Japan, etc. When implementing international resolutions and handling legal cases, these few countries with actual power always operate by a double standard. They vigorously advance all agendas that are beneficial to them, no matter whether other countries are willing or satisfied. They powerfully obstruct all agendas that are not beneficial to them, even if the majority of members in
the international community put forward contrary views and recommendations.

This type of criticism serves as the starting point of how [certain people] regard
global governance, incessantly criticizing and calling into question the necessity
and possibility of China’s participation. Moreover, they believe that China, as
a Communist party-dominated, socialist country, must clearly project a Third
World attitude that is different from that of Western, capitalist countries. [They
say that] forcing China to unworthily join the ‘global governance’ camp of a small
number of capitalist, Western countries is tantamount to helping a villain do evil,
to humiliating oneself. Ultimately, it will do damage to the fundamental interests
of China and a vast number of weak, small countries” (59).9

This view does not represent the sentiments of all Chinese citizens. Indeed, many Chinese
citizens have a direct interest in China’s cooperation with international organizations. For
eexample, the United Nations has provided financial and informational support to women’s
groups in China for more than twenty years (Unger, 2008; Howell & Mulligan, 2004). In ad-
dition, environment-focused Chinese civil society groups participate regularly in UN-hosted
conferences and informational exchange networks (Lo, 2010). Citizens with strong ties to
international organizations like the UN seem less likely to harbor the type of views against
international cooperation expressed above.

More generally, some Chinese citizens express an especially high level of admiration of
the Western world. For instance, Fong (2004)’s anthropological study of Chinese teenagers
in northeastern China depicts a subpopulation enamored with rich, Western countries and
disparaging of China’s comparative deficiencies. These youth express loyalty to China in an
almost filial manner, but they definitely do not disdain the international prominence of the
West in the ways described by Y. Wang (2015).

9Selection translated by the present author from its original Chinese. For the source text, see 王逸舟
“如何以负责任大国身份积极参与全球治理”《中国外交十难题》（江苏人民出版社2015）
Nevertheless, J. Wang (2011) argues that even a vocal subpopulation within the Chinese society—specifically, fervent netizens—can have a real impact upon Chinese diplomatic behavior by expressing their foreign policy views in public fora. Wang observes that intensely pro-China sentiments, when channeled to government elites via media attention, affect China’s official foreign policy behavior. Similarly, Weiss (2014) argues that Chinese government officials have used nationalist sentiment, as expressed via anti-Japanese protests, as a means to demonstrate that their hands were tied in negotiations and, thus, gain leverage in international bargaining. In other words, the Chinese government sometimes uses public sentiments to justify noncooperative behavior in the international realm. If this is the case, then anti-cooperation sentiments expressed by the Chinese public may also have the potential to affect future Chinese involvement in international organizations.

4.2 War Threat and Public Trust in International Organizations

Given that foreign policy decisions are inextricable from the people making such decisions, politico-psychological traits and trends in Chinese intergroup relations must impact China’s international behavior to some degree. This proposition has been tested previously. In an experiment comparing trust and cooperation levels within and between citizens of mainland China and Hong Kong, Weng & Yang (2014) found that Chinese subjects were significantly more likely to show social identity-based favoritism while playing a profit-driven trust game. On the other hand, Hong Kong-based players did not change their levels of trust or trustworthiness in response to differences in social identity. Moreover, Takahashi et al. (2008)’s online trust game experiment between Chinese, Taiwanese, and Japanese players yielded similar results: Chinese and Taiwanese players exhibited higher levels of in-group favoritism when it came to both trust and trustworthiness. As suggested by Weng and Yang, findings of in-group favoritism in international trust games suggest that “mistrust may limit the effectiveness of China’s policy of promoting international cooperation” (1).

In this paper, I will test the effect of the interaction between threat of war and authori-
tarianism on Chinese citizens’ level of confidence in international organizations. As such, I will examine the impact of individual-level psychological traits on trends in behavior within the Chinese public.

The literature on authoritarianism suggests that a relationship between authoritarian personalities, threat of war, and sentiments about the UN and APEC should exist. Crowson (2009) tested American views of the United Nations as they related to levels of authoritarianism. He concluded that authoritarianism was negatively correlated to internationalism, and that lower levels of internationalism, in turn, served as a moderator of UN irrelevance. Moreover, the choice of threat of war as an activator of authoritarian political preferences is well-defended by the extant literature. Feldman & Stenner (1997) used “threat of nuclear war” as one of nine potential types of threat that might activate authoritarian manifestations and found mixed results. War threat had less impact in their analysis than others, such as the threat of a highly divergent political atmosphere or the threat of politicians with different views; nonetheless, war threat activated greater intolerance among authoritarians in three of nine experimental conditions. Alternatively, M. J. Hetherington & Weiler (2009) and M. Hetherington & Suhay (2011) use perceived threat of terrorism as a measure of threat. In fact, (Stenner, 2005) indicates that numerous types of “normative threat” may activate authoritarian intolerance, so long as it threatens “some system of oneness and sameness that makes ‘us’ an ‘us’: some demarcation of people, authorities, institutions, values, and norms that for some folks at some point defines who ‘we’ are, and what ‘we’ believe in” (17).

Many scholars agree that the interaction between perceived threat and authoritarianism should lead to more intensely intolerant views from authoritarians (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005). Indeed, a great number of studies to date have corroborated the theory of a positive relationship between intolerance and the interaction of authoritarianism and war threat.10

In China, perceptions of international organizations as representations of foreign (usually

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10See Feldman (2003); Stenner (2005); Lavine et al. (2005); Stevens et al. (2006); McCann (2008); Cohrs & Ibler (2009); Fritsche et al. (2012).
Western) influence should provide a ready example of the type of “difference” that authoritarians so despise. This difference might be described as ideologically, nationally, or politically based. Regardless, given the tendency for authoritarians to be intolerant of difference, it makes sense that the threat of war will interact positively with authoritarianism in predicting Chinese views on international organizations. As such, I anticipate a negative interaction term for authoritarianism and war threat for both UN and APEC trust.

**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** High levels of authoritarianism and higher perceived levels of threat from war will interact to predict lower levels of confidence in the United Nations (UN) for citizens in China.

**Hypothesis 2 (H2):** High levels of authoritarianism and higher perceived levels of threat from war will interact to predict lower levels of confidence in the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) for citizens in China.

5 **Methodology**

As mentioned above, this paper uses data from the World Values Survey. The dataset used for analysis will be the Wave 6 mainland China sample taken between November 2012 and March 2013, as this was the first and only version to date to offer a variable measuring threat of war. The survey project, led by Principal Investigator Shen Mingming, was administered by the Research Center for Contemporary China (RCCC) at Peking University. The final dataset includes 2,300 responses spanning 40 cities in 24 Chinese provinces.¹¹

This paper uses OLS regression analysis, including an interaction term between authoritarianism scale score and perceived level of war threat. Authoritarianism is measured using the authoritarianism scale detailed previously. War threat is measured according to answers to the question, “To what degree are you worried about the following situations — A war

¹¹The seven mainland China provinces not included in the sample were: Tianjin, Inner Mongolia (Nei Menggu), Hainan, Yunnan, Tibet (Xizang), Ningxia, and Xinjiang. As they are not considered parts of mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau, are excluded from the sample.
involve my country?” Survey respondents ranked levels of worry from “very worried” (1) to “not worried at all” (4), but responses are reversed in this paper so as to reflect a rising scale of war threat and recoded from 0 to 3.12 Confidence in the UN and APEC is measured via answers to the question, “I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all — The United Nations/APEC?”13 Because the scale runs from 1— “a great deal of confidence”— to 4— “not very much or none at all”— numbers in this analysis were reversed to create an increasing scale of confidence from 1 to 4. Regressions are presented showing just the effects of control demographics, effects of demographics plus authoritarianism and war threat without an interaction, effects of demographics plus authoritarianism and war threat with an interaction, and in a final model with a few added political characteristics to strengthen power and correct for omitted variable bias.14 Because the WVS separates some important values into multiple questions, the regressions in this paper include two other constructed variables: news consumption15 and a capitalism scale.16 For all variables in the survey data, missing responses and responses

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12 The Chinese translation of the war threat question, V183 in the survey, is: 对于以下状况，您是非常担心、担心、不太担心，还是非常不担心 —— 自己的国家卷入战争？

13 Chinese translation, as presented in the survey: 您对下面这些组织的信任程度如何？是很信任、信任、不太信任，还是根本不信任 —— 联合国 / APEC 亚太经济合作组织？

14 The ideological variables included to strengthen the model were selected based on information available in the WVS Wave 6 survey and relevance of the various ideologies to support for international organizations as discussed in the international cooperation and international organizations literature.

15 The WVS asks separate questions about frequency of news consumption (daily/weekly/monthly/etc.) via newspaper, magazines, TV news, radio news, mobile phone, email, internet, and talking with friends. The news consumption measure used in this paper designates whichever is the highest frequency of news consumption from either newspapers, magazines, TV news, radio news, or the internet.

16 The capitalism scale is an average of answers to three questions about capitalist views from the WVS. The questions ask respondents to place themselves on a spectrum from one to ten spanning two opposite beliefs. The three questions used are: 1) “Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas. (竞争是有利的，它刺激人们努力工作和创新.)” vs. “Competition is harmful. It brings out the worst in people. (竞争是有害的，它引发人性中坏的一面.)” 2) “In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life. (长远看来，努力工作通常能够带来更好的生活.)” vs. “Hard work doesn’t generally bring success — it’s more a matter of luck and connections. (努力工作并不总能带来成功，更多的是靠运气和关系.)” and 3) “People can only get rich at the expense of others. (财富总量是一定的，人们只能靠挤占别人的利益而致富.)” vs. “Wealth can grow so there’s enough for everyone. (财富总量是增长的，不必挤占别人的利益也可以使每个人都致富.)” Responses to the first and second questions are reversed before taking the average so that they match the last question in ranging from negative to positive views of capitalist ideals. Overall, the scale presents a value between one and ten, with lower values representing more negative views towards capitalism.
of “I don’t know” were coded as NAs, and they were ultimately dropped from the regression results.

6 Results

6.1 The Authoritarian Dynamic Diminishes Chinese Public Trust in the United Nations and APEC

Results from Tables 1 and 2 support the claim that the authoritarian dynamic affects Chinese views towards international organizations negatively. In each of these two tables, the interaction term between authoritarianism and war threat remains significant in the four models that feature it, lending support to the claim that that greater distrust of international organizations among authoritarians is activated by the threat of war.

The four models used in Tables 1 and 2 reveal the strength of war threat as a mediator in the authoritarian dynamic. The demographic variables in Model I explain a small amount of the variation in Chinese views towards the UN and APEC ($R^2 = 0.047$ and 0.088, respectively). Model II in Table 1 shows that increasing levels of authoritarianism correlate with less confidence in the UN, while the same model in Table 2 shows no evidence of correlation between authoritarianism and confidence in APEC. However, it is Model III that clarifies the relationship between authoritarianism and confidence in international organizations: the interaction term in this model reveals a highly significant, more strongly negative effect than is captured in Model II for both UN and APEC trust. The interaction cancels out the significance of authoritarianism on its own in Model II of Table 1, marking war threat as a mediator of the decrease in UN support for Chinese authoritarians. In Table 2 Models III, not only the interaction term, but also the war threat term, is significant. This result holds through Model IV, where war threat remains significant at the $\alpha = 0.1$ level, indicating that non-authoritarian Chinese citizens trust in APEC more when threatened by war.

Model IV includes a number of added ideological features to remove omitted variable bias.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model I</th>
<th>Model II</th>
<th>Model III</th>
<th>Model IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1586***</td>
<td>1516**</td>
<td>1901***</td>
<td>1835**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(652.9)</td>
<td>(659.6)</td>
<td>(670.7)</td>
<td>(719.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>0.038 (0.065)</td>
<td>0.036 (0.066)</td>
<td>0.029 (0.066)</td>
<td>0.018 (0.072)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>0.007*** (0.003)</td>
<td>0.009*** (0.003)</td>
<td>0.009*** (0.003)</td>
<td>0.004 (0.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general happiness</td>
<td>0.232*** (0.057)</td>
<td>0.232*** (0.058)</td>
<td>0.232*** (0.058)</td>
<td>0.118* (0.065)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>party membership</td>
<td>−0.129* (0.072)</td>
<td>−0.148** (0.073)</td>
<td>−0.152** (0.072)</td>
<td>−0.135* (0.079)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>news consumption</td>
<td>0.030 (0.059)</td>
<td>0.027 (0.059)</td>
<td>0.032 (0.059)</td>
<td>0.085 (0.068)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>income</td>
<td>0.003 (0.018)</td>
<td>0.006 (0.018)</td>
<td>0.001 (0.018)</td>
<td>−0.003 (0.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>0.005 (0.018)</td>
<td>0.002 (0.019)</td>
<td>0.006 (0.019)</td>
<td>0.012 (0.021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interview city</td>
<td>−0.010** (0.004)</td>
<td>−0.010** (0.004)</td>
<td>−0.012*** (0.004)</td>
<td>−0.012** (0.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marital status</td>
<td>0.007 (0.022)</td>
<td>0.003 (0.022)</td>
<td>0.009 (0.022)</td>
<td>0.025 (0.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no. of children</td>
<td>−0.069 (0.050)</td>
<td>−0.078 (0.050)</td>
<td>−0.081 (0.050)</td>
<td>−0.040 (0.055)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occupation</td>
<td>0.059** (0.030)</td>
<td>0.070** (0.030)</td>
<td>0.068** (0.030)</td>
<td>0.038 (0.033)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authoritarianism</td>
<td>−0.066* (0.037)</td>
<td>0.110 (0.074)</td>
<td>0.033 (0.087)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>war threat</td>
<td>−0.058 (0.036)</td>
<td>0.113 (0.072)</td>
<td>0.117 (0.080)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction Term</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authoritarianism × war threat</td>
<td>−0.108*** (0.039)</td>
<td>−0.093** (0.045)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideological Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nationalism</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.114* (0.065)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>view of capitalism</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.016 (0.010)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>world citizen</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.037 (0.054)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>autonomous individual</td>
<td></td>
<td>−0.008 (0.063)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust in media</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.281*** (0.054)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust in religious orgs</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.110** (0.045)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.0723</td>
<td>0.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Std. Error</td>
<td>0.779</td>
<td>0.773</td>
<td>0.768</td>
<td>0.720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(df = 579)</td>
<td>(df = 554)</td>
<td>(df = 553)</td>
<td>(df = 406)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic</td>
<td>3.672***</td>
<td>3.855***</td>
<td>4.157***</td>
<td>5.116***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(df = 11; 579)</td>
<td>(df = 13; 554)</td>
<td>(df = 14; 553)</td>
<td>(df = 20; 406)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ 0.1; **p ≤ 0.05; ***p ≤ 0.01
Table 2: Effects of Chinese Authoritarianism and War Threat on APEC Confidence (H2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLS Regressions:</th>
<th>Model I</th>
<th>Model II</th>
<th>Model III</th>
<th>Model IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1947*** (738.6)</td>
<td>1957*** (741.1)</td>
<td>2125*** (739.9)</td>
<td>1482* (784.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>-0.003 (0.071)</td>
<td>-0.004 (0.072)</td>
<td>-0.004 (0.071)</td>
<td>0.025 (0.078)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>0.006* (0.004)</td>
<td>0.008** (0.004)</td>
<td>0.008** (0.004)</td>
<td>0.060 (0.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general happiness</td>
<td>0.330*** (0.060)</td>
<td>0.319*** (0.061)</td>
<td>0.321*** (0.061)</td>
<td>0.177*** (0.067)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>party membership</td>
<td>0.029 (0.079)</td>
<td>0.006 (0.080)</td>
<td>0.006** (0.080)</td>
<td>0.033 (0.085)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>news consumption</td>
<td>0.040 (0.071)</td>
<td>0.041 (0.071)</td>
<td>0.051 (0.071)</td>
<td>0.049 (0.087)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>income</td>
<td>-0.027 (0.020)</td>
<td>-0.021 (0.020)</td>
<td>-0.024 (0.020)</td>
<td>-0.020 (0.021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>-0.004 (0.020)</td>
<td>-0.010 (0.021)</td>
<td>-0.006 (0.021)</td>
<td>0.001 (0.023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interview city</td>
<td>-0.012*** (0.005)</td>
<td>-0.013*** (0.005)</td>
<td>-0.014*** (0.005)</td>
<td>-0.010* (0.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marital status</td>
<td>-0.004 (0.023)</td>
<td>-0.012 (0.023)</td>
<td>-0.006 (0.023)</td>
<td>0.010 (0.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no. of children</td>
<td>-0.065 (0.051)</td>
<td>-0.072 (0.052)</td>
<td>-0.081 (0.052)</td>
<td>-0.072 (0.057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occupation</td>
<td>0.065** (0.032)</td>
<td>0.069** (0.032)</td>
<td>0.067** (0.032)</td>
<td>0.029 (0.035)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authoritarianism</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.062 (0.041)</td>
<td>0.131 (0.089)</td>
<td>0.134 (0.099)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>war threat</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.002 (0.041)</td>
<td>0.160** (0.078)</td>
<td>0.157* (0.085)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Term</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authoritarianism × war threat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.108** (0.044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nationalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.194*** (0.069)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>view of capitalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.005 (0.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>world citizen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.024 (0.059)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>autonomous individual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.061 (0.069)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust in media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.234*** (0.057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust in religious orgs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.124** (0.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Std. Error</td>
<td>0.738</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>0.726</td>
<td>0.692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic</td>
<td>4.93***</td>
<td>4.409***</td>
<td>4.565***</td>
<td>4.667***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p ≤ 0.1; ** p ≤ 0.05; *** p ≤ 0.01
Table 3: Variation in Perceived War Threat for Respondents Scoring High on the Authoritarianism Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auth Scale</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War Threat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Respondents</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and strengthen the regression results presented herein. Despite these added independent variables, the interaction between authoritarianism and war threat remains significant for both UN and APEC trust. These results confirm Hypotheses 1 and 2, and suggest that the authoritarian dynamic is at work.

Some might argue that the model used in this paper is badly constructed because authoritarians are, by nature, more likely to perceive threat in any situation. While the latter part of this argument is true, it is important to note that there is variation in perceived war threat for the authoritarians in this sample. Table 3 demonstrates this variation for respondents scoring the highest in authoritarianism. As may be observed, the majority of highly authoritarian respondents rated war threat at the mid-level, indicating that their threat perception could still go up or down. Hence, even for authoritarians, various external factors can lead to greater or lesser perceived war threat. For instance, one of the most plausible scenarios that might increase an authoritarian’s (or any person’s) perceived threat of war would be escalated tensions with another country. As such, this model looks beyond the fact that authoritarians are more likely to see threat in the international realm, and examines instead the impact of increasing threat perception for authoritarians upon trust in international organizations.

17 For example, M. J. Hetherington & Weiler (2009) posit that authoritarians are ideologically extreme individuals, so their views cannot become any more intense regarding policies or groups that they consider distasteful.
6.2 Political and Demographic Factors Impact Chinese Views towards International Organizations

Across all four models presented above, several demographic and political features display a constant impact upon Chinese views of international organizations. Party membership is negatively correlated with UN trust, although it does not exhibit the same relationship to trust in APEC (save for just one of the four models in Table 2).\textsuperscript{18} The occupation variable, which specifically measures whether respondents work for a public, semi-private, or private institution\textsuperscript{19}, shows significant, positive effects in Tables 1 and 2, indicating greater trust in international organizations for those working in institutions that are not operated by the state. However, this effect is lost in Model IV for both regressions, meaning that a more powerful ideological variable, such as nationalism or views of capitalism, may account for this occupational effect. The city where respondents were interviewed has a constant effect on views towards both the UN and APEC, though it is difficult to interpret the full effects of this categorical variable in an OLS regression.

Nationalism, trust in the media, and trust in religious organizations have significant correlations to UN and APEC trust, as well. The results indicate that greater national pride, greater trust in the Chinese media, and greater confidence in religious institutions are positively associated with trust in international organizations. These findings make the coefficients on the authoritarianism and war threat interaction term even more interesting. Because authoritarians tend to exhibit conservative political views, many assume that they will be more nationalist and more supportive of their government than others. However, as noted by Stenner (2005), if authoritarians feel that the government is not doing a good job of protecting them from a normative threat, they will express discontent with the government.

\textsuperscript{18}Notably, this variable depends on a question in WVS that asks whether respondents are a member of any political party. In a one-party country such as China, the results should capture CCP party membership fairly well. The question measures party activity, as well, designating 0 for non-members, 1 for inactive members, and 2 for active members.

\textsuperscript{19}For more information and a full list of WVS questions used as variables in this paper, see the Appendix (Section 9).
This appears to be what is happening in the results here: authoritarianism activated by war threat has the opposite effect of nationalism and trust in domestic institutions. In other words, greater cooperation in international organizations by the Chinese government since the 1960s have translated to greater trust in these organizations for Chinese citizens that adhere most strongly to the CCP’s political vision. However, a sense of threat leads authoritarians to diverge from nationalists and express less support for international organizations.

6.3 Many Chinese Respondents Express No Opinion on International Organizations

The original Wave 6 World Values Survey in China included 2,300 respondents. However, many observations in the regressions above were dropped due to missingness, leading to much smaller N’s in the tables displayed. In fact, there was a noticeably high number of “I don’t know” responses to the WVS questions about levels of confidence in the UN and APEC: 47% and 57%, respectively. (NAs for other variables drove the number of observations for the regressions in Tables 1 and 2 down further.) Such a high number of “I don’t know” responses indicates that much of the Chinese population may be either unconcerned with international organizations or unwilling to express opinions about them publicly— an important piece of information to keep in mind when considering the results of this study. Even so, the trends found among the remaining respondents suggest that other authoritarians in China may be less likely to support international organizations as they become more informed about and/or more willing to express opinions of these organizations.

7 Discussion

The results of these regressions make clear that authoritarianism and war threat in China interact to affect personal trust of international organizations. In order to understand the full significance of these effects, it is necessary to address a number of subsequent questions.
Namely, which members of China’s society are most likely to demonstrate authoritarian tendencies? Is this phenomenon exclusive to China? And furthermore, what implications does this manifestation of the authoritarian dynamic have for Chinese foreign policy in the future?

### 7.1 Who are China’s Authoritarians?

While it is compelling to learn that authoritarianism and war threat directly mediate foreign policy views in China, an important question lingers: *which members* of the Chinese public are more likely to exhibit authoritarian predispositions? Through careful examination of the data available through the WVS, a number of identifying characteristics emerge.

Several demographic features predict higher levels of authoritarianism. Chinese authoritarians are less likely to be highly educated (corr = -0.195), likely to make lower incomes (corr = -0.074), and more likely to be older in age (corr = 0.119). Higher authoritarian predispositions also correlate with less news consumption (corr = -0.183), less general satisfaction in life (corr = -0.100) and with working in private or non-profit jobs instead of in the public sector (corr = 0.052). Gender and party membership do not appear to be significantly correlated with authoritarianism.

As seen in Figure 3, geographic location also helps explain high levels of authoritarianism.
Figure 3: Correlations between authoritarianism and location in China, 2012. *p ≤ 0.1; **p ≤ 0.05; ***p ≤ 0.01 (Free map image provided by d-maps.com, edited by the author.)
in China. Residence in Guangxi (corr = 0.211), Sichuan (corr = 0.160), and Shanxi (corr = 0.134) have particularly high correlations with authoritarianism, while residence in Guangdong (corr = -0.119) and Shandong (corr = -0.109) yield the strongest negative correlations with authoritarianism. Generally speaking, residence in coastal Chinese cities is negatively correlated with higher levels of authoritarianism.

Moreover, there is an interesting relationship between religion and authoritarianism in China. East Asian religions, including Taoism (corr = -0.051) and Buddhism (corr = -0.042), have negative correlations with authoritarianism. In contrast, Protestant Christianity (corr = 0.080) has a strong, positive correlation with authoritarianism. Meanwhile, Islam, Hinduism, and “no religion”— the religious description fitting the vast majority of the Chinese citizenry— have no statistically significant correlation to authoritarianism whatsoever.

These traits paint a clearer picture of the population for which war threat activates lower levels of trust in international organizations. On the whole, they are poorer, less educated, and older Chinese citizens. They tend to live in inland, landlocked cities. Moreover, they are less likely to hold Buddhist or Taoist religious beliefs and slightly more likely to practice Christianity.

Table 5: Correlations between religious affiliation and authoritarianism in China, 2012. *p ≤ 0.1; **p ≤ 0.05; ***p ≤ 0.01

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Background</th>
<th>Correlation with Authoritarianism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taoism</td>
<td>-0.051**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>-0.042*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no religion</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>0.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>0.080***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: The Authoritarian Dynamic and UN Trust - Affected Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLS Regressions:</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>5,671* (3,138)</td>
<td>-1,661 (2,326)</td>
<td>1,835** (719.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demographics**
- male: -0.094* (0.049) -0.067 (0.050) 0.018 (0.072)
- age: -0.001 (0.002) 0.007*** (0.003) 0.004 (0.004)
- general happiness: 0.082 (0.040)** 0.014 (0.048) 0.118* (0.065)
- party membership: 0.028 (0.076) 0.158** (0.078) -0.135* (0.079)
- news consumption: -0.074 (0.122) 0.144*** (0.055) 0.085 (0.068)
- income: 0.007 (0.009) -0.002 (0.015) -0.003 (0.020)
- education: 0.037** (0.015) 0.072*** (0.020) 0.012 (0.021)
- interview city: -0.014* (0.008) 0.004 (0.006) -0.012** (0.005)
- marital status: 0.004 (0.016) 0.015 (0.014) 0.025 (0.024)
- no. of children: -0.012 (0.027) -0.019 (0.032) -0.040 (0.055)
- occupation: 0.026 (0.056) -0.055 (0.043) 0.043 (0.033)

**Key Variables**
- authoritarianism: -0.161 (0.103) 0.084 (0.076) 0.033 (0.087)
- war threat: -0.024 (0.062) 0.133* (0.079) 0.117 (0.080)

**Interaction Term**
- authoritarianism × war threat: 0.070* (0.040) -0.071* (0.039) -0.093** (0.045)

**Ideological Variables**
- nationalism: -0.021 (0.034) 0.089** (0.044) 0.114* (0.065)
- view of capitalism: -0.001 (0.007) -0.001 (0.007) 0.016 (0.010)
- world citizen: 0.066 (0.056) 0.080* (0.043) 0.037 (0.054)
- autonomous individual: 0.016 (0.045) -0.015 (0.032) -0.008 (0.063)
- trust in media: 0.262*** (0.041) 0.177*** (0.035) 0.281*** (0.054)
- trust in religious orgs: 0.105*** (0.036) 0.091*** (0.029) 0.110** (0.045)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>780</th>
<th>816</th>
<th>427</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>0.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Std. Error</td>
<td>0.650</td>
<td>0.684</td>
<td>0.720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(df = 759)</td>
<td>(df = 759)</td>
<td>(df = 406)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic</td>
<td>4.563***</td>
<td>6.273***</td>
<td>5.116***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(df = 20; 759)</td>
<td>(df = 20; 795)</td>
<td>(df = 20; 406)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ 0.1; **p ≤ 0.05; ***p ≤ 0.01
Table 7: The Authoritarian Dynamic and Trust of Regional Institutions - Affected Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Germany (EU Trust)</th>
<th>South Korea (APEC Trust)</th>
<th>China (APEC Trust)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OLS Regressions:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1180 (1248)</td>
<td>−2442 (2229)</td>
<td>1482* (727.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>−0.099*** (0.038)</td>
<td>−0.027 (0.048)</td>
<td>0.025 (0.078)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>−0.002 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.007*** (0.003)</td>
<td>0.060 (0.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general happiness</td>
<td>−0.016 (0.032)</td>
<td>0.035 (0.047)</td>
<td>0.177*** (0.067)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>party membership</td>
<td>0.048 (0.049)</td>
<td>0.125* (0.074)</td>
<td>0.033 (0.085)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>news consumption</td>
<td>0.341*** (0.102)</td>
<td>0.084 (0.052)</td>
<td>0.049 (0.087)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>income</td>
<td>0.006 (0.012)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.014)</td>
<td>−0.020 (0.021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>0.026*** (0.010)</td>
<td>0.093*** (0.019)</td>
<td>0.001 (0.023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interview city</td>
<td>−0.004 (0.005)</td>
<td>0.006 (0.005)</td>
<td>−0.010* (0.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marital status</td>
<td>−0.004 (0.011)</td>
<td>0.005 (0.014)</td>
<td>0.010 (0.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no. of children</td>
<td>−0.013 (0.019)</td>
<td>−0.019 (0.031)</td>
<td>−0.072 (0.057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occupation</td>
<td>0.010 (0.027)</td>
<td>−0.015 (0.041)</td>
<td>0.029 (0.035)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authoritarianism</td>
<td>0.069** (0.032)</td>
<td>0.095 (0.073)</td>
<td>0.134 (0.099)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>war threat</td>
<td>0.033 (0.036)</td>
<td>0.188*** (0.075)</td>
<td>0.157* (0.085)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction Term</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authoritarianism × war threat</td>
<td>−0.046** (0.021)</td>
<td>−0.091** (0.037)</td>
<td>−0.109** (0.049)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideological Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nationalism</td>
<td>0.019 (0.025)</td>
<td>0.043 (0.042)</td>
<td>0.194*** (0.069)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>view of capitalism</td>
<td>0.005 (0.006)</td>
<td>−0.003 (0.007)</td>
<td>0.005 (0.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>world citizen</td>
<td>0.079*** (0.022)</td>
<td>0.052 (0.041)</td>
<td>0.024 (0.059)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>autonomous individual</td>
<td>−0.012 (0.022)</td>
<td>−0.037 (0.031)</td>
<td>0.061 (0.069)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust in media</td>
<td>0.214*** (0.026)</td>
<td>0.212*** (0.033)</td>
<td>0.234*** (0.057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust in religious orgs</td>
<td>0.133*** (0.023)</td>
<td>0.082*** (0.028)</td>
<td>0.124** (0.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>1512</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>0.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Std. Error</td>
<td>0.717</td>
<td>0.655</td>
<td>0.692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(df = 1491)</td>
<td>(df = 794)</td>
<td>(df = 318)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic</td>
<td>10.44***</td>
<td>6.709***</td>
<td>4.667***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(df = 20; 1491)</td>
<td>(df = 20; 794)</td>
<td>(df = 20; 318)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ 0.1; **p ≤ 0.05; ***p ≤ 0.01
7.2 Is Chinese Authoritarianism Unique?

The results of this study beg the question: is the effect of war threat and authoritarianism on views of international organizations unique to China? The global WVS data, which covers a total of 61 nations, presents a unique opportunity to simultaneously test this effect in other countries. To narrow the scope of this question slightly, I applied Model IV of the OLS regressions for UN trust and regional organization trust presented in Section 6 to the 25 countries with the largest gross domestic products (GDPs) in 2014. Data from Wave 6 of the WVS was available for 17 of these 25 nations. Upon a summary investigation of the regressions, a regional pattern appeared.

For the regression of UN trust on war threat, authoritarianism, and the other Model IV independent variables, the interaction between war threat and authoritarianism was only significant for the three countries: China, Japan, and South Korea. Notably, the interaction term is positive in the case of Japan, indicating that war threat activates greater trust in the United Nations for Japanese authoritarians. Table 6 displays results for these regressions.

Of the 17 countries in the top 25 in terms of GDP, China, South Korea, and Germany were the only ones to exhibit an authoritarian dynamic when it came to trust in regional organizations. War threat activates less trust in APEC for both Chinese and South Korean authoritarians. This time, war threat also activated less trust in the European Union (EU) for Germans. Results for this second set of regressions can be found in Table 7.

The regional pattern appearing in China, Japan, and South Korea makes sense given the three countries share Confucian backgrounds. In fact, in a book chapter on social psychology and international relations in East Asia, Liu et al. (2010) suggest that socio-psychological cues motivate how Chinese, and other East Asians, manage their international relations

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20 WVS teams adjust regional organizations used in each survey according to country.
21 2014 is the last year included in the WVS Wave 6 data.
22 The 17 countries for which the model was tested include: the US, China, Japan, Germany, Brazil, India, Russia, Australia, Korea, Spain, Mexico, the Netherlands, Turkey, Nigeria, Sweden, Poland, and Argentina. The eight missing countries from the top 25 are: the UK, France, Italy, Canada, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, and Belgium. The ranking of countries with the highest GDPs in 2014 was obtained from the International Monetary Fund’s April 2015 World Economic Outlook.
behavior. Under high threat conditions, they argue, “a defensive reaction in the form of nationalism fueled by a narrative of great civilization versus recent historical victimization is activated” (580). However, the results of this study show clearly that nationalism and authoritarianism have opposite effects upon trust in the UN and APEC. Rather than nationalism, the “defensive reaction” of Chinese citizens to threat appears to be an activated form of authoritarianism, which might also be fueled by narratives emphasizing in-group superiority and the historical threats of victimization. (Confucian values cannot predict the behavior of German authoritarians, though in this case, authoritarian identities may be reinforced by another legitimizing ideology.) While Liu et. al’s general story of threat and defensive reactions in the East Asian context may be true, this study identifies the authoritarian dynamic as the mechanism behind the story.

7.3 Why China’s Authoritarian Dynamic Matters

Data from the Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes survey indicates that Chinese perceptions of the United Nations decreased by 13 percentage points between 2007 and 2013 (see Figure 4). It is plausible that a substantial increase in the threat of war in China, compounded by the continual rise of authoritarianism, accounted for at least some of the declining favor towards the United Nations during this period.

Chinese levels of authoritarianism and the threat of war both increased during years between 2007 and 2013. Figure 1 indicates that the average authoritarianism score in China rose from 1.63 to 1.68 between 2007 and 2012. Furthermore, the timeline of threat escalation in the East and South China Seas coincides with the dips in favorability of the United Nations outlined above. Escalating tensions surrounding China’s claims in the South China Sea culminated in a number of threatening military exercises in late 2010— at this point, Chinese perceptions of the United Nations decreased to their nadir (between 2009 and 2011). After a brief uptick in perceptions of the United Nations in Spring 2012, where the inter-

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23For an in-depth explanation of these rising tensions, see Fravel (2016), Swaine & Fravel (2011), and Cheng (2013).
national organization gained back a third of the points lost in 2011, perceptions of the UN hit another low point in 2013. The Spring 2013 Pew survey was administered just after the outbreak of anti-Japanese protests across China in late 2012, sparked by Japan’s bid to purchase three islands\textsuperscript{24} of disputed ownership in the East China Sea.\textsuperscript{25} The nationalist protests that broke out in China against Japanese actions in the East China Sea, as well as evidence of an increased threat perception of the Chinese Navy due to actions in the South China Sea (Goldstein, 2011), indicate that the threat of war in 2012 and 2013 was 1) very real and 2) higher than it had been in previous years. The results from this study, which reveal that the threat of war activated an anti-UN and anti-APEC stance among Chinese authoritarians, may help to explain the decrease in confidence in the United Nations between 2007 and 2013.

If authoritarianism levels continue to rise in China— and they are activated by these war threats— we may expect to see an increased level of disapproval of the United Nations and other international organizations with escalating tensions in the East China Sea and South China Sea. For an explanation of the events surrounding these protests, see Wallace & Weiss (2015).

\textsuperscript{24}These islands are part of a chain called the “Senkaku Islands” by the Japanese and the “Diaoyu Islands (钓鱼岛)” by the Chinese.

\textsuperscript{25}For an explanation of the events surrounding these protests, see Wallace & Weiss (2015).
China Sea, or with rising tensions related to North Korean missile deployments.

As mentioned above, rising levels of threat and authoritarian dominance have had major foreign policy implications for the United States and the United Kingdom in 2016. China differs from the US and the UK in that presidential elections and referenda do not factor into the CCP’s brand of government. Nevertheless, recent scholarship indicates that 1) the Chinese government may be influenced by public opinion on foreign policy matters (J. Wang, 2011) and/or 2) the Chinese government may use growing public discontent as a bargaining chip in future international disputes (Weiss, 2014). While the activation of the authoritarian dynamic is compelling across East Asia, it is particularly important in the Chinese context. Given China’s unique position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and as the most economically prosperous country in the region, its participation in international organizations is paramount to international security and cooperation. Hence, scholars and policy experts alike should pay special attention to potential threats to Chinese international cooperation, including the potential manifestation of an anti-international organization movement sparked via the authoritarian dynamic.

8 Conclusion

This article explains how the authoritarian disposition to be intolerant of outsiders—in this case, international organizations—can be activated in China and other East Asian nations via increased levels of war threat. In doing so, it sheds light on the origins of authoritarianism in China: Confucian filial values. Analysis of the World Values Survey data indicates that authoritarianism is strongest in inland China, and that authoritarians are more likely to be poorer, less educated, and older Chinese citizens. Moreover, levels of Chinese authoritarianism have been on the rise since 2001. Under the right circumstances, pressure resulting from the type of “authoritarian dynamic” detected in this paper may lead Chinese policymakers to be less willing to cooperate in international organizations in the
future.

Little work has been done on the nature and impacts of authoritarianism outside of the West. In the future, further inquiry into how authoritarian dispositions affect political participation and foreign affairs in East Asia may build upon the insights developed through this study. Nevertheless, this article serves as an initial foray into the topic of authoritarianism, war threat, and their effect on foreign policy preferences in China and the surrounding region.
9 Appendix

9.1 WVS Survey Questions used for Variables in the Study

Authoritarianism Scale: In the WVS, respondents are provided with a list of 11 “qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home,” and asked to list up to five “especially important” qualities (WVS questions V12-22). The authoritarianism scale gives respondents a +1 if they mention obedience （服从） and a +1 for *not mentioning* independence （独立性），imagination （有想象力），and tolerance and respect for other people （对别人宽容和尊重），respectively. Thus, the scale ranges from 0 to 4.

War Threat Scale: War threat is measured according to answers to the question (V183), “To what degree are you worried about the following situations — A war involving my country?” Survey respondents ranked levels of worry from “very worried” (1) to “not worried at all” (4), but responses are reversed in this paper so as to reflect a rising scale of war threat and recoded from 0 to 3. The Chinese translation of the war threat question is: 对于以下状况，您是非常担心、担心、不太担心，还是非常不担心 — 自己的国家卷入战争？

UN/APEC Trust: Confidence in the UN and APEC is measured via answers to the questions (V125-126), “I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all — The United Nations/APEC?” The Chinese translation of this question, as presented in the survey, is: 您对下面这些组织的信任程度如何？是很信任、信任、不太信任，还是根本不信任 — 联合国 / APEC 亚太经济合作组织? Because the scale runs from 1— “a great deal of confidence”— to 4— “not very much or none at all”— numbers in this analysis were reversed to create an increasing scale of confidence from 1 to 4.

Gender: Gender is measured via question V240. 1 indicates male, and 0 indicates female. Gender is designated according to the judgement of the interviewer.

Age: Age is measured via question V242, in which the interviewer asks the age of the
respondent.

**General Happiness:** Levels of happiness are measured via question V10: “Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy (1), rather happy (2), not very happy (3) or not happy at all (4).” The Chinese translation of this question is: “将所有的情况都考虑进来，目前您生活得愉快吗？**读出选项**：1) 很愉快2) 愉快3) 不太愉快4) 一点都不愉快.” Responses were reversed to construct a rising scale of happiness for this study.

**Party Membership:** The party membership variable depends on WVS question V29: “Now I am going to read off a list of voluntary organizations. For each organization, could you tell me whether you are an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization — political party?” In a one-party country such as China, the results should capture CCP party membership fairly well. The question measures party activity, as well, designating 0 for non-members, 1 for inactive members, and 2 for active members. Chinese: “下面我将列举一些组织，请问，您是这个组织的成员吗？您是积极参加组织活动的成员，还是一般成员— 政治党派/团体？” (0—不是；1—一般成员，2—积极成员)

**News Consumption:** The WVS asks separate questions (V217-224) about frequency of news consumption (daily/weekly/monthly/etc.) via newspaper, magazines, TV news, radio news, mobile phone, email, internet, and talking with friends. The news consumption measure used in this paper designates whichever is the highest frequency of news consumption from either newspapers, magazines, TV news, radio news, or the internet. Responses for consumption of news span from 1) never to 5) daily.

**Income:** Income is measured via question V239, which presents an income scale dividing incomes into a range of ten levels and asks respondents to place themselves within the appropriate level.

**Education:** Education is measured via question V248, which asks respondents about the highest level of education that they have attained.

**Interview City:** Interview city was recorded by the interviewer at the beginning of each interview.
Marital Status: Marital status is measured in WVS question V57: “Are you currently: 1 – Married (已婚), 2 – Living together as married (同居), 3 – Divorced (离婚), 4 – Separated (分居), 5 – Widowed (丧偶), 6 – Single (从未结过婚)?” Responses were reversed to construct a rising scale of relationship commitment for this study.

No. of Children: Number of children is measured via question V58: “Have you had any children? 0 – No children (没有), 1 – One child (一个), 2 – Two children (二个), ..., 8 – Eight or more children (八个以上).” Answers in China ranged from 1 to 7.

Occupation: Occupation is measured via question V230, which asks respondents: “Are you working for the government or [a] public institution, for private business or industry, or for a private non-profit organization? If you do not work currently, characterize your major work in the past! Do you or did you work for [a]: (1) Government or public institution, (2) Private business or industry, (3) Private non-profit organization.” The Chinese version of the survey reads: “您是在政府或国有企业事业单位工作，还是在私营企业事业单位工作？(1) 政府和国有企业事业单位, (2) 私营企业事业单位, (3) 民间非营利组织, (4) 都不是.”

Nationalism: Nationalism was measured by a question about national pride (V211): “How proud are you to be Chinese? 1 – Very proud, 2 – Proud, 3 – Not very proud, 4 – Not at all proud.” In Chinese, the question reads: “作为一个中国人，您在多大程度上感到骄傲？1 – 非常骄傲, 2 – 骄傲, 3 – 不太骄傲, 4 – 根本不骄傲.” Responses were reversed to construct a rising scale of nationalism for this study.

Capitalism Scale: The capitalism scale is an average of answers to three questions (V99-101) about capitalist views from the WVS. The questions ask respondents to place themselves on a spectrum from one to ten spanning two opposite beliefs. The three questions used are: 1) “Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas. (竞争是有利的，它刺激人们努力工作和创新,)” vs. “Competition is harmful. It brings out the worst in people. (竞争是有害的，它引发人性中坏的一面,)” 2) “In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life. (长远看来，努力工作通常能够带来更好的生活,)” vs. “Hard work doesn’t generally bring success — it’s more a matter of luck and connections. (
努力工作并不总能带来成功，更多的是靠运气和关系。” and 3) “People can only get rich at the expense of others. (财富总量是一定的，人们只能靠挤占别人的利益而致富.)” vs. “Wealth can grow so there’s enough for everyone. (财富总量是增长的，不必挤占别人的利益也可以使每个人都致富.)” Responses to the first and second questions are reversed before taking the average so that they match the last question in ranging from negative to positive views of capitalist ideals. Overall, the scale presents a value between 1 and 10, with lower values representing more negative views towards capitalism.

**World Citizen:** Identification as a world citizen is measured by question V212: “People have different views about themselves and how they relate to the world. Using this card, would you tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about how you see yourself? – ‘I see myself as a world citizen.’ 1 – Strongly agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Disagree, 4 – Strongly disagree.” In Chinese, the question reads: “人们的自我归属感各异不同，请看这张卡片上的描述，对于您个人而言，您是非常同意、同意、不同意，还是非常不同意这些描述？– ‘我把自己看作是一个世界公民.’” Responses were reversed to construct a rising scale of world citizenship for this study.

**Autonomous Individual:** Identification as an autonomous individual is measured by question V216: “People have different views about themselves and how they relate to the world. Using this card, would you tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about how you see yourself? – ‘I see myself as an autonomous individual.’ 1 – Strongly agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Disagree, 4 – Strongly disagree.” In Chinese, the question reads: “人们的自我归属感各异不同，请看这张卡片上的描述，对于您个人而言，您是非常同意、同意、不同意，还是非常不同意这些描述？– ‘我把自己看作是一个自主的个人.’” Responses were reversed to construct a rising scale of autonomy for this study.

**Trust in Media:** Trust in the media is measured by question V110: “I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all — news media?” The Chinese survey version reads: “您对下面这些组织的
Trust in Religious Organizations: Trust in religious organizations is measured by question V108: “I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all — news media?” The Chinese survey version reads: “您对下面这些组织的信任程度如何?是很信任、信任、不太信任,还是根本不信任—宗教团体?” Responses were reversed to construct a rising scale of trust in religious organizations for this study.
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