Transnational Loyalty:
Autocrats' Invocation of Diasporic Nationalism During Diplomatic Crises

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I . Introduction

During the lead up to the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, the Chinese state press frequently publicized pro-China rallies that occurred overseas to help sustain its domestic legitimacy and international reputation amidst pro-Tibetan independence movements abroad and foreign criticisms of the Chinese regime, while simultaneously suppressing domestic nationalist protests. It is puzzling that as a single-party authoritarian regime that tightly regulates and often bans protests at home, the Chinese state would contradictorily choose to selectively disclose reports of protests waged by nationalist Chinese diasporas to their domestic and foreign audiences, as if to give Chinese nationals a glimpse into the democratic freedom they do not enjoy. This paradox is compounded by the fact that diasporic populations of many autocratic states, especially those who hold foreign citizenship and reside abroad long-term, often have less political influence on their home state than their domestic counterparts. Nevertheless, autocracies such as China, Russia, and Turkey have publicly acknowledged nationalist activism among their diasporas during certain diplomatic crises. How do states portray and view their diasporas and emigres? When, how, and why do states invoke their patriotic diasporas in the context of foreign affairs, and to what objective and for what benefit? What is the logic behind an autocratic state's reporting of nationalist protests by its diaspora? These are the fundamental inquiries I seek to address in this thesis, driven by the puzzle that states, especially autocratic ones, publicly report on diasporic activism while often prohibiting protests of the same kind at home, and seem to take into account (at least nominally) the political activism of people who often could not yield the most direct influence on their tenure.

In this thesis, I attempt to address these research questions using the People's Republic of China (thereafter referred to as China) as a case study, with broader significance that could speak to the topics of autocratic legitimacy and diplomatic bargaining. China is a case of an autocratic state that has frequently invoked the patriotic political activism of its diaspora in past diplomatic deadlocks and crises. However, to my knowledge, there have not been inquiries into the possible logics and rationale behind this observation. Moreover, there has not been a systematic study of the patterns behind an autocratic state's official public reporting of diasporic activism, protests, and public opinion on a diverse array of diplomatic issues that examines the potential motivations behind the selective recognition. My thesis fills in this literature gap by adopting a relatively instrumental view of how the state utilizes its diaspora and by presenting a set of hypotheses to delineate the mechanisms and to discern the domestic and diplomatic incentives behind a state's invocation of diasporas during diplomatic negotiations and crises. My original database on the Chinese official state press' coverage of diasporic nationalist protests between 2008 - 2018, interviews with Chinese journalists, and select case studies provide the preliminary argument that during diplomatic crises and negotiations, a state's diaspora population may become a valuable political instrument for their home state in three ways. The state press' reporting on diasporic protests may follow three lines of logic. First, China can invoke overseas nationalist protests on issues that are too politically-sensitive for domestic protests (e.g. Tibetan and Taiwan independence) to signal strong public sentiment and international support for China's policies, while still suppressing protests at home (here termed the "ersatz" logic). Second, nationalist activism and protests among diasporas can potentially serve as a credible signal of resolve to foreign states. Through recognizing overseas protests, China is able to demonstrate that it is not simply its domestic audiences that are being mobilized (which the state

can control), but also those abroad outside of its control. This amplifies the signal of resolve China wishes to convey, as it more credibly reveals extreme public opinion as a genuine constraint on the regime. Moreover, it creates dangers that the diasporic communities will pressure their respective host governments on said issue (here termed the "amplification/credibility proof" logic). Third, China may recognize and publicize overseas protests for its domestic audience to demonstrate that its policies have wide international support, which helps the state to amass domestic legitimacy (here termed the "cheerleading/audience benefits" logic). Lastly, my analysis also offers support for the conclusion that the Chinese state tends to invoke diasporic nationalism on specific issue areas—important symbolic matters as well as certain high-salience territorial disputes, but not trade-related conflicts.

My immediate research questions contribute to scholarship of broader significance in a few directions. First, while existing scholarship on the domestic politics of foreign policy tends to focus on the relationship between the preferences of a state's domestic audience and the state's policy outcomes, my research sheds light on the relationship between the policy preferences of a state's diaspora and the state's foreign policy, challenging the assumption that a state's national interests, audience, and identity are necessarily congruent with its physical borders and structural components. Relatedly, a better understanding of which policy issues constitute an exclusively domestic concern and which ones pertain to both the domestic audience and the diaspora may allow us to discern nuances in the possible interpretations of "sovereignty" and "constituencies" by different states. An examination into the ways through which a state attempts to utilize populations that exist outside of its borders as a potential political resource allows us to regard sovereignty as a political project and practice. As William Callahan argues, "the concept of

sovereignty . . . is not universal, but is bound up in knowledge practices in both the West and China." (Callahan 2001, 75).

Moreover, the findings of this thesis may also contribute to our understandings of autocratic signaling and international security studies in general. Given the limited scope of an M.Phil. dissertation, this thesis will focus mainly on the diplomatic and domestic strategic thinking behind the Chinese state's invocation of overseas nationalist mobilization. By extension and with further research, if autocratic states could utilize extreme political mobilization and public opinion as credible diplomatic signals as could democracies, then democracies may not hold an advantage in using public opinion and domestic politics to convey and justify diplomatic intentions. If both general regime types can use expressions of public opinion to reveal credible intent and information, other factors may better explain the observed democratic peace. Lastly, my research analyzes Chinese behavior over the course of the most recent decade in which China has accumulated power at an astonishing pace and acquired the status of the emerging hegemon. My findings may help shed light on future Chinese behavior in certain conflict hotspots, such as the South China Sea and the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands.

This thesis will unfold as follows. First, I will provide a literature review of existing relevant scholarship followed by an outline of my thesis' broader scholarly contribution. After contextualizing the history of the Chinese diaspora and China's current policies towards the overseas Chinese, I will explicate my theories and hypotheses. Then, I will explain and justify my methodology and source selection, followed by a detailed examination of my empirical findings paired with three case studies. Finally, I will discuss the possible counterarguments and

weaknesses of my thesis to suggest further avenues of research and to summarize the implications of my findings for the field of International Relations.

II. Literature Review

My thesis integrates two strands of scholarship in an innovative manner: one pertaining to globalization and migration, the other regarding autocratic durability and diplomatic bargaining. This allows International Relations scholars to better understand the "black box" of authoritarian politics and the growing political potential of transnational actors, especially their (conscious or otherwise) contribution to their home state's diplomatic bargaining and domestic legitimacy.

In the recent few decades, the field of International Relations has produced burgeoning literature on the political consequences of migration and globalization. Specifically, constructivist scholars such as Fiona Adamson have advocated for the concept of diasporas to be considered as an analytical unit for understanding changes in the relationship between states, "domestic" constituents, and collective identities under the contemporary conditions of globalization. Using the case studies of the Greek-Cypriot diaspora in the United Kingdom and the Kurdish diaspora in Germany, Adamson traced the processes through which state elites have turned to the organizational form of "diaspora" as a means of capturing resources and loyalties abroad, leading anthropologists to coin the expression "deterritorialized nation-states" (Adamson 2007, 500 - 504). Along a similar line, in his seminal work *Global Diasporas,* Robin Cohen details the ways through which the diaspora identity may be mobilized by their home state. Home states may

engage with the political interests of diaspora populations through economic and civil linkages (Cohen 2008, 8).

Understanding the policies states implement to engage with their diasporas is important in its own right. However, such inquiry also leads to questions of broader significance: What are the strategic goals, both domestic and diplomatic, that drive a state's attitude towards its diaspora? What motivates states to recognize and politically engage with their diasporas, given the potential costs and benefits? Conventional wisdom asserts that dictators can curate foreign and domestic policies with relative autonomy, insulated from the public pressure that plagues democratic leaders. If autocrats often do not need to consider the sentiments of their domestic public, why would they, at selective times, bother to acknowledge the political attitudes of their diaspora, who hold even less direct political influence than their domestic counterparts?

My research also builds on existing literature pertaining to the domestic politics of foreign policy, as well as autocratic signaling and diplomatic bargaining. Until recently, the relationship between a state's domestic politics and foreign policy has been studied largely in the context of democracies. Scholars such as Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003), Leeds and Mattes (2017) postulate that democratically-elected leaders tend to pursue foreign policies that align with the preferences and interests of the societal groups that voted them into power, as these leaders would feel particularly accountable to the groups that determine their political survival and popularity. By extension, scholars such as James Fearon (1997) and Michael Tomz (2007) have argued that democratic leaders can cite the public opinion of their domestic constituents to convey and justify the state's foreign policy interests and intentions to negotiating parties, both

for grand strategy and in times of diplomatic crises. This is because democratic leaders can credibly create audience costs from which they will suffer ex post, such as the risk of being voted out of office or not being re-elected, if they do not follow through on the commitment announced to their domestic audience (Fearon 1997).

By contrast, the relationship between domestic public opinion and state foreign policy has not been studied as extensively in autocracies because autocracies have relatively opaque domestic processes. There are debates in the field of International Relations over whether autocratic regimes can generate audience costs as effectively and credibly as democracies. Because autocratic leaders have more control over public opinion (e.g. media fabrication, "hire-a-crowd," and elaborate propaganda) and are not directly elected by the general public, some scholars believe that autocratic leaders encounter credibility problems when they cite public opinion as a constraint on their policy behavior. However, there has been some recent pushback against this notion. The domestic politics of foreign policy, especially in the context of non-democracies, has become an area of burgeoning research. Recent scholarship has demonstrated the causal mechanisms behind the ways through which autocratic leaders may generate audience costs and ascertain domestic legitimacy. Scholars such as Jessica Weeks (2012) have argued that some autocrats, particularly those of single-party civilian regimes, are actually more accountable to their domestic audience than conventional wisdom asserts. Regime insiders, especially those of single-party civilian regimes, may in the right circumstances be able and willing to vote or remove the reigning leader from power, especially if they believe the leader's policies are not aligned with their own preferences. Moreover, scholars such as Alexander Downes (2008) argue that the consequences of ousters are often far more severe for autocrats than for democrats, as

autocrats often meet violent ends once they are removed from power. In other words, recent research has demonstrated that certain autocrats may be accountable to a section of their domestic audience, which means that they are concerned with maintaining a degree of domestic legitimacy and may be able to generate audience costs using public opinion.

Relatedly, scholars such as Jessica Weiss (2014) have theorized the strategies through which autocrats may utilize or even manipulate domestic protests to convey foreign policy intentions. Weiss argues that autocrats may leverage extreme expressions of domestic public opinion (i.e. mass protests) to signal resolve or flexibility at times of diplomatic deadlocks. Specifically, by allowing domestic anti-foreign nationalist protests and mobilization to occur, an autocrat could generate audience costs and signal resolve in diplomatic negotiations, as these protests may "leave something to chance" and spiral out of control. Moreover, domestic protests also serve as a covert economic sanction, as protests may threaten foreign states' assets and citizens in China. As a consequence, the leader would need to appease their domestic audience in order to avoid the risk of domestic chaos. By contrast, if an autocrat chooses to suppress nationalist protests, they are signaling flexibility in diplomatic negotiations, as it is costly for the leader to betray nationalist myths and hinder patriotism, in addition to spending resources to dispel agitated crowds (Weiss 2014, 16 – 27).

However, this body of literature focuses on public opinion and nationalism contained within nation-states and still does not really resolve the ongoing debate over the credibility (or the lack thereof) of public opinion as a diplomatic signal for autocratic states. There still remains considerable skepticism over the extent to which autocratic leaders may be able to convincingly

demonstrate to foreign audiences their accountability to their domestic audience, as well as the sincerity of the domestic opinion expressed. The reasoning behind such skepticism is two-fold. Owing to their extensive control over their domestic population and the lack of a transparent electoral process, autocratic leaders may mould domestic public opinion through long-term conditioning such as propaganda and state education. Moreover, they may also fabricate domestic public opinion in the short-run through manipulating public opinion surveys and hiring citizens to shore up nationalist sentiments. As Jessica Weiss writes, "the grassroots content of Chinese nationalism is often eclipsed by foreign accusations that the Chinese government has 'brainwashed' citizens through patriotic education . . . the government has fueled suspicions that the apparent chorus of nationalist outrage is more orchestrated than genuine." (Weiss 2014, 224). Foreign pundits often disagree over the degree of sincerity of extreme expressions of political opinion in autocracies (Weiss 2014, 222), which produces diverging predictions on how foreign states should perceive and respond to this diplomatic signal. The more extreme expressions of public opinion appear manufactured and fabricated, the more likely it is that foreign governments will accuse the government of "crying wolf" about the difficulty of defying nationalist sentiment (Weiss 2013, 223). Therefore, it is logical to infer that, if autocracies intend to utilize public opinion to generate audience costs, it would be in their best interest to ensure that the public opinion in question appears credible.

III. Contribution

My research intends to fill the aforementioned gaps in literature and demonstrate the ways through which autocrats may invoke their diasporas in order to better achieve diplomatic bargains and domestic legitimacy. The fact that diasporas reside outside of the borders of their

home state and are therefore not directly controlled by the autocratic regime may prove to be advantageous in a few respects. First, their protests and nationalist political activism may act as a "credibility check" and source of external support for the home state's foreign policy and diplomatic signals. Second, because their patriotic activities occur outside of Chinese territory, the Chinese regime may refer to them to strengthen their regime legitimacy while not necessarily needing to bear the risk of domestic chaos and protests.

In addition to using the state as the main unit of analysis, this thesis also employs diasporas as a meaningful analytical category. This unpacks a long-held assumption in International Relations that regards national identity and patriotism to be congruent and coterminous with state borders. It also highlights the political potential transnational actors may hold against the backdrop of increasing international connectedness (Adamson 2007, 489). My thesis, through investigating the interactions between domestic politics, regime type, and foreign policy, hopes to combine theories and ideas from both Comparative Politics and International Relations.

Moreover, through examining the ways through which the Chinese state could invoke overseas patriotism to demonstrate to their domestic constituents international support for China's policies, we could better understand the potential mechanisms that contribute to the cheerleading or "rally 'round the flag" effect, and the extent to which an autocratic state attempts to elicit domestic legitimacy. Conventional wisdom asserts that autocrats tend not to show much concern for domestic opinion. As Alastair Iain Johnston states, "in a political system where there are no electoral costs to ignoring public opinion, it is unclear why China's authoritarian leaders would care much about public views." (Johnston 2013, 27). However, if there is indeed evidence that

the Chinese state press broadcasts overseas nationalism during certain diplomatic crises for their domestic audience, we need to consider the possible motivations behind such disclosure and re-evaluate the existing conventional wisdom.

Lastly, if the Chinese state, through its official media channels, is conveying information about its diplomatic intent to both domestic and international audiences, this may help scholars and policymakers to better apprehend the circumstances under which China is flexible to negotiations and the context under which it is less likely to do so. This allows us to better understand Chinese conduct as an emerging hegemon. Greater information and effective signaling are generally understood to improve the prospects for peace, enabling states to determine each other's resolve and locate bargains preferable to war. (Debs and Weiss 2016, 404). Scholars have long debated whether democracies hold advantages over non-democracies in the conduct of international relations. Many scholars have argued that democracies are better able to signal diplomatic intent and more convincingly generate audience costs, owing to their relatively transparent political processes. However, if there is indeed supporting evidence that non-democracies also have ways to credibly signal diplomatic intent and utilize public opinion as diplomatic leverage, then scholars would need to re-assess the comparative advantage democracies may hold in diplomatic communication. This thesis investigates the possible logics and signals revealed by the state when its press discloses diasporic protests. However, if further avenues of research demonstrate that both democracies and non-democracies alike can *credibly* and *effectively* reveal information and communicate intent, then perhaps there are other factors that explain the observed democratic peace. Relatedly, because most contemporary interstate conflicts occur between autocratic or mixed dyads (Weiss 2014, 246), understanding the patterns and processes of

autocratic foreign policymaking may allow us to better apprehend factors driving interstate conflict.

The concept of dual national loyalty as a feasible reality has long been subject to much speculation. On one end of the spectrum of this debate, certain politicians and scholars have tried to establish links, circumstantial or fabricated, between certain groups of diasporas and their home state.[1] Their claim tends to be especially pronounced when the diasporas appears visibly different, ethnically and/or religiously, from the host state. At worst, suspicions of and gross generalizations about the political intentions of diasporas have manifested in the internment of Japanese-Americans in the United States during World War II, as well as anti-Semitic globalist conspiracies. This thesis makes no overriding claims about the actual experiences of ethnic Chinese living outside of China; these latter are extraordinarily diverse, varying greatly by geography, class, generation, and a wide range of other factors. I acknowledge that there exists no uniform "overseas Chinese" political view, and have conducted interviews with members of the Chinese diaspora to illustrate such diversity. This thesis in no way suggests unfounded links between a home state and their diasporas, nor does it discuss an autocratic state's ex ante attempt to manipulate the political orientations of their diasporas. My thesis simply studies how an autocratic home state reports on existing nationalist sentiments of a narrow portion of their diasporas, and presents evidence that help support or disprove the possible motives that undergird such reporting. It is also outside the scope of this thesis to evaluate the *effectiveness* of diasporic nationalism as diplomatic and domestic signals, although that topic can certainly be a fruitful avenue of further research.

[1] Examples include the internment of Japanese-Americans and Japanese-Canadians in North America during World War II.

IV. Historical Background on the Chinese Diaspora

Some background information on the Chinese diaspora, as well as the Chinese government's existing policies and attitudes towards the overseas Chinese, is helpful to contextualize the Chinese state press' coverage of nationalist protests among Chinese emigres. By 2014, there were an estimated 60 million ethnic Chinese residing outside of China, with Malaysia, the United States, Canada, Indonesia, and Australia being the host states with the largest number of ethnic Chinese population (Liu and van Dogen 2016, 806). The Chinese diaspora does not exist and act as an unitary group. In their 2014 article in *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* Gregor Benton and Edmund Gomez aptly outline the generational, class, and geographical cleavages that contribute to whether or not a Chinese diaspora identifies with and assimilates into their host state. They argue, "as the country studies indicate, institutions established by migrants are less relevant for new generations than for their parents . . . Among new generations, mutually supportive institutions of a different kind are taking shape, including gangs, indicating the emergence of new identities." (Benton and Gomez 2014, 1168 - 1169).

The relationship between China and the Chinese diaspora had its ebbs and flows throughout the years. A home state's utilization of and engagement with their diaspora is not a novel phenomenon. After the Chinese Civil War in 1949 that resulted in the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese mainland and the relocation of the Chinese Nationalist party to Taiwan, both governments sought to elicit the support of Chinese-Americans. During the Cold War (before the U.S.-China normalization of 1972), those among the Chinese-American community who supported the Chinese Nationalist Party took advantage of prevailing anti-Communist sentiments in America to lobby for the United States to establish favorable relations

with Taiwan (Koehn and Yin 2002, xiii - xvi). After 1955, Beijing renounced jus sanguinis and urged overseas Chinese to take local nationality, which most did. After Mao Zedong's death, however, Beijing reverted to the view that "overseas Chinese belong to China." During the early reform era (1976 – the early 1990s), China's policies towards its diaspora were influenced heavily by economic modernization. The Chinese government since then has dedicated a considerable amount of effort into establishing institutional and non-institutional channels to engage with their diasporas (Barabantseva 2005, 10).

The inaugural All Nations Overseas Chinese Conference was held in December 1977 under the slogan "all patriots are one family," indicating the government's explicit desire to use the Chinese diaspora to serve their motherland. This conference was followed by two more national conferences in 1978: the All Overseas Chinese Affairs Conference and the Second All National Conference of Returnee Delegates as a part of the socialist construction project (Barabantseva 2005, 9). The Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO) was consequently established in the same year under the Chinese State Council. The inclusion of the OCAO under the State Council was an indication that diasporic affairs have become a dimension of China's national interest. As Barabantseva argues, "the overseas Chinese are treated as a characteristic of China's 'unique national condition,' which puts China in a superior position in comparison to other countries and also grants China legitimacy to incorporate the overseas Chinese into its modernization construction and other national endeavors." (Barabantseva 2005, 10).

Following a hiatus during the Cultural Revolution (1967 – 1977), the All-China's Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese (ACFROC) was rehabilitated under the mission of "building up a

bridge out of overseas Chinese connections" (Barabantseva 2005, 11). By the mid-1990s, policies towards the Chinese diaspora have expanded to include social, political, and economic privileges for diasporas who return to China, in order to attract overseas talent (Liu and van Dogen, 2016, 810). Beijing also attempts to compete with Taipei to win the favor and loyalty of the Taiwanese diaspora (Barabantseva 2005, 25).

There currently exist five interrelated governmental and semi-governmental institutions operating in China on several levels, from the national to the local. Often referred to as the "five overseas Chinese structures," these institutions coordinate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to implement policies towards overseas Chinese. The five institutions are: the State Council Overseas Chinese Affairs Office; the China Zhigong Party; the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress; the Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan Compatriots and Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the Chinese Communist Party; and the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese (Liu and van Dogen 2016, 809).

V. Theories and Hypotheses

In this thesis, I adopt a relatively instrumental view of how the state utilizes the nationalist political activism of its diaspora to achieve domestic and diplomatic objectives, through an analysis of the way it reports on overseas nationalist protests. Because the Chinese state press is controlled by the regime, the information the press discloses should consist of what the state wants its audience to know. Therefore, what are the underlying patterns behind what it chooses to show its audience? Several logics are conceivable.

First, referencing diasporic attitudes that corroborate with the state's domestic public opinion could allow the state to bolster the credibility of its claim about being tied down by domestic constraint. Specifically, if a state's diasporas express strong political sentiments in favor of their home state (and those sentiments are cited in conjunction with similar domestic public opinion), they could help their autocratic home state send a more credible diplomatic signal of resolve. Relatedly, disclosing overseas support for the home state to a foreign audience may more convincingly showcase the magnitude of external support a home state enjoys on a particular issue. This is because diasporic populations, residing outside the borders of their home state, are not directly controlled by the autocratic regime and therefore not subject to long-term propaganda and public opinion fabrication by the regime. This could potentially strengthen claims about the sincerity of public opinion as an independent influence on the autocrat.

Second, protests abroad in favor of the home state may propel foreign states to make diplomatic concessions due to the threat of instability and/or potential lobbying efforts. At times when a home state encounters diplomatic crises or deadlocks with a state that contains a significant diasporic population from the home state, a part of that population may choose to mobilize and express opinions in favor of the home state. An example of such phenomenon would be the activities of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which has been labeled (rightfully or wrongly) by the U.S. Congress in 1982 as "the most effective ethnic/foreign policy lobby on Capitol Hill" (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007, 95). While AIPAC certainly does not represent the political views of all Jewish Americans towards U.S.-Israeli relations and/or Israel, the organization contains a number of individuals who actively work to direct American foreign policy towards a pro-Israel position (Mearsheimer and Walt 2017, 95). Democratic host states

that allow for members from certain interest groups to collectively bargain and lobby for policy changes may hence need to take the opinions of diasporas into account when devising their foreign policy. Nationalist fervor and mobilization among diasporas pose different consequences for the host state and the home state, which may force both states to act more decisively. This could lead to the acquiescence of the host state to the demands of the home state in order to prevent further instability in the host state. Alternatively, a host state could decide that a certain diasporic group is not powerful enough to affect policy change and hence refuse to make concessions. Doing so could exacerbate tensions, trapping diplomatic relations between the home state and the host state in an antagonistic cycle.

Third, reporting on diasporic patriotism for the domestic audience could also contribute to China's regime stability, and placate nationalist sentiments espoused by Chinese nationals in mainland China. Through carefully reporting on diasporic patriotism over contentious issues, the home state may be able to signal to their domestic public that they have overseas support and are making progress on these issues internationally. At times, China could possibly even report on overseas protests to encourage domestic nationalism and mobilization.

In line with my theories, I have generated four specific hypotheses to be evaluated against empirical data.

Hypothesis I: Ersatz

A few issues, such as Tibetan independence and the One China Policy/Taiwan independence, have historically been too politically-sensitive and volatile for domestic protests. However, these

topics are extremely salient and constitute China's core national interests (Swaine 2010, 2-6). Therefore, the Chinese state may choose to recognize and report on diasporic protests centered around these issues to a foreign audience. This could serve as a moderate signaling tactic if the Chinese government does not want to allow domestic protests that get their domestic constituents involved, but still wish to convey to the international audience their resolve and public nationalist sentiments around these issues.

Nationalist Han Chinese [2] protests in China over the issue of Tibetan and other ethno-religious independence movements have been extremely rare and could pose tremendous risks to the Chinese regime. For example, domestic nationalist protests staged by the Han Chinese majority may exacerbate existing interethnic tensions and provoke domino separatist violence among ethnic Tibetans, Uighurs, and Mongolians in China. Moreover, ever since the mid-1990s, the Chinese leadership has deemed Taiwan to be too sensitive of a political topic for domestic protests. Since then, China has actively repressed domestic protests on the issue of Taiwan independence. For example, during the 1995 – 1996 Third Taiwan Strait Crisis, while Chinese Communist Party issued threats and condemnations of Taiwanese President Lee Tung-hui through official media outlets, it stopped short of permitting mass public protests on the said issue, the rationale being that mass protests could create fissures among an already fragile Chinese elite and push decision makers to become even more hawkish, risking an escalation to war and American involvement (Shirk 2008, 189 - 190). Rather than allowing domestic protests against Taiwan independence, the Chinese government has adopted other tactics, such as military exercises, that are less volatile and explosive to signal resolve and assuage domestic concerns

[2] Han Chinese is an ethnic group that consists of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese population in China.

over Taiwan. The Chinese government has continued to prevent popular demonstrations over Taiwan despite a series of provocative events, such as the election of the pro-independence presidential candidate Chen Shui-Bian and American-Taiwanese weapon sales (Weiss 2014, 236). So far, the Chinese government appears to have determined that tolerating street protests over Taiwan independence is not worth the risk and potential costs (Weiss 2014, 238).

Observable implications: The state press is likely to report on overseas protests that cover issues too volatile to be targets of domestic protests (*e.g. Tibetan and other ethno-religious separatism, Taiwan independence, the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Chinese political activists*) *in the English (foreign) version of their newspapers. The coverage of diasporic protests and political mobilization against these salient and politically-sensitive issues is the most likely to occur when China is under extreme international pressure and therefore is more incentivized to send a signal of resolve.*

Hypothesis II: Amplification/Credibility Proof

The reasoning behind this hypothesis is two-fold. During times of diplomatic crises, the Chinese regime may signal resolve through citing nationalist pressure. First, according to Jessica Weiss, domestic nationalist protests may allow autocrats to claim that they cannot maintain the status quo or meet existing foreign demands (Weiss 2013, 8). Nationalist protests serve as a commitment device by tying the hands of the leader. However, foreign observers may accuse China, an autocratic state, of fabricating the degree of nationalist protests and sentiments ("hire-a-crowd"). To better establish a proof of credibility, the Chinese regime could first demonstrate that it is not simply its domestic audience that is being mobilized (which it can control), but also

Chinese diasporas outside of its jurisdiction. This amplifies the signal of resolve China wishes to convey. Second, if an overseas protest occurred in a democracy, it could create dangers that diasporic communities will pressure their democratic host state on said issue through lobbying. Overall, for foreign observers, the greater the perceived risk, the stronger the signaled resolve.

As Weiss theorizes, even for autocracies, protests may jeopardize a regime's stability for a few reasons. Because protests pose risks, they may be seen as costly to allow. Although the domestic security apparatus may be powerful enough to suppress large-scale demonstrations, protests push the government to toughen its diplomatic stance and thereby placate patriotic protesters. If the government stands firm, the foreign government bears the costs of escalation, either in lost cooperation (at best) or a spiral of military hostilities (at worst). By increasing the likelihood that the authoritarian government refuses to give way, risking conflict, nationalist protests give foreign governments an incentive to show leniency at the bargaining table. (Weiss 2013, 9). Protests may also lead to a cascading effect in autocracies and democracies alike. They may alleviate the collective action problem, in the sense that more people may join the protests once they realize that protesting is acceptable (Weiss 2013, 4).

Weiss' theorized mechanism becomes even more convincing if these nationalist protests are organic and seen as genuine by international observers. Convincing foreigners of the risk to stability and the cost of repression is a critical task for a government seeking to use nationalist protests for diplomatic advantage. In particular, success depends on foreigners being able to distinguish between "sincere" and "manufactured" protests (Weiss 2013, 10). While Weiss contextualizes her argument in Chinese domestic politics, this thesis extends her argument to

diasporic protests. I argue that one way for autocratic states to signal sincerity would be to demonstrate that these nationalistic feelings fueling the protests come from external, non state-orchestrated factors. China is a relatively strong authoritarian state. As a result, foreign observers may doubt that popular protests pose a sufficient risk to convey resolve or generate sufficient momentum to be costly for the government to repress. Therefore, the Chinese regime's burden of proof would be particularly high, especially after its unilateral and ruthless suppression of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. Through citing diasporic mobilization in conjunction with domestic mobilization, the autocrat may be able to better signal the sincerity of extreme expressions of political opinion, which means that there is indeed something to chance and thus the leader is actually beholden to their domestic audience. Diasporic sentiments may be used to corroborate the authenticity of domestic mobilization, which may incentivize the negotiating state to take that diplomatic signal of resolve or flexibility more seriously and credibly when they formulate their foreign policy response. Essentially, diasporic protests that are centered around similar issues and occur around the same time as domestic protests may signal the spontaneity and sincerity of domestic protests. In addition, I theorize that reports of Chinese diasporic protests may also create fissures among the political elites in the home and host states. Elites may hold differing opinions on the protests and the issue itself, leading to divisions among the state leadership. Therefore, there already may be risks associated with the state just recognizing and acknowledging the diasporic protests.

Moreover, democratic states, particularly those in North America and Western Europe, may have specific representational mechanisms through which diasporic mobilization and ethnic-based influence may be effective enough to trigger a change in the state's foreign policy and diplomatic

response. For diasporas living in powerful states who espouse nationalist and patriotic sentiments for their home state, they may be able to exert political influence through what I term "triangulation" lobbying. Specifically, hegemonic and great powers usually exert some degree of political influence over smaller powers, through various asymmetrical alliances and agreements. An example of this is the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between the United States and Japan (U.S-Japan Security Alliance), established since 1960. If diasporas can successfully lobby great power and hegemonic states to change their policies towards the negotiating state (i.e. Korean-Americans influencing the official U.S. position on the Comfort Women issue vis-a-vis Japan, to the benefit of South Korea), they may register significant enough of a threat for the negotiating state.

As Martin Heisler (1992) argues, the political and social structures of Western Europe and North America allow for diasporas to form cohesive communities, making it possible for them to collectively lobby for their core interests. Thomas Ambrosio defines ethnic lobbies as political organizations established along cultural, religious, or racial lines that seek to directly and indirectly influence a host state's foreign policy in support of the lobby's homeland and/or ethnic kin abroad (Ambrosio 2002, 2). When powerful ethnic groups with shared interests engage in alliance building by forming coalitions or expressing solidarity with each other, they may increase their ability to influence their state's foreign policy. For example, in the past, groups of Taiwanese-Americans, Chinese-Americans, and Korean-Americans have established a lobbying coalition in order to elicit American support on matters related to historical disputes between East Asian states.[3]

[3] Please see my subsequent discussion of the comfort women statue in San Francisco.

Yossi Shain claims that the openness of the American political system to ethnic politics has allowed many newly organized diasporas to acquire a meaningful voice in U.S. foreign policy, especially on issues concerning their countries of origin or symbolic homelands (Shain 1994, 812). The American political and immigration system (at least until the 1990s) is set up in a way that creates pathways for ethnic-based lobbying through democratic representation. The American Congress with democratically-elected representatives and the access of ethnic groups to American and thus global media provide fertile channels for an organized and strongly committed diaspora to transform themselves into a powerful political player with transnational implications. (Shain 1994, 813).

Many studies argue that membership unity and voter participation are key sources of organizational strength because of the electoral implications of these factors. The proposition seems to be that an identity group will be more influential to the extent that it enjoys a sizable and unified base of members who vote in a concentrated bloc. Further, the members need to be assimilated into American society but still retain a significant identification with their ethnic homeland (Haney and Vanderbush 1999, 344).

Observable implications:

It is likely that the Chinese state press would report more frequently on overseas protests that occur in major powers, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, than middle and small powers, because the latter do not have as much international authority and leverage as the major powers.

The more the Chinese government attempts to signal resolve, the more frequently would the state press report on diasporic protests in conjunction with domestic protests to its foreign audience, to indicate both increased risks and more credible sincerity of nationalist public opinion. Conversely, when the Chinese government attempts to signal flexibility, it will report less frequently on diasporic protests to its foreign audience, and domestic protests may be suppressed as well.

Hypothesis III: Cheerleading/Audience Benefits

If a government had already decided to pursue a hawkish policy, it can shore up domestic support afterwards by signaling to their domestic public the government's assertive and nationalist position. Therefore, the Chinese state press' subsequent coverage of diasporic nationalist protests in the Chinese version of their newspapers could provide an opportunity for the state to strengthen its legitimacy. Moreover, for the issues on which the Chinese government forbids domestic protests, the regime may still be able to appease domestic agitation and nationalist sentiments by selectively and carefully referencing protests staged by their compatriots overseas after diplomatic progress has been made, so as to not trigger domestic protests while still claiming diplomatic progress or victory. In doing so, the Chinese government could strengthen their domestic legitimacy through demonstrating to their domestic audience that these controversial issues are being recognized by the state and that there is diasporic support for the official Chinese position.

Susan Shirk argues that China-Taiwan relations is one of the greatest source of potential instability for the Chinese leadership, as conflict over Taiwan could escalate to a military confrontation between the United States and China and produce domino separatist effects in Xinjiang, Tibet, and even Inner Mongolia (Shirk 2008, 181 - 182). The Chinese leadership therefore needs to strike a balance between placating the nationalist Chinese public, the majority of whom wish to see a hawkish stance towards Taiwan, and ensuring that tensions over Taiwan do not escalate to involve American military intervention on the side of Taiwan (Shirk 2008, 182). Therefore, along the lines of this rationale, it is reasonable to expect the Chinese state press to be reasonably transparent about diasporic protests to their domestic audience, in situations where the regime had already decided to pursue a hawkish policy.

This hypothesis also pertains to existing scholarship on the "rally 'round the flag" effect, which posits that the public tends to rally to support state leadership when the state is involved in an international conflict (Reiter and Chapman 2004, 888 - 889). The core of the "rally 'round the flag" hypothesis is that when the nation is involved in an international conflict, the public will support the national leadership. John Mueller proposes that simple patriotism drives this phenomenon (Mueller 1985). Suzanne Parker argues that during crises, domestic constituents tend to overrate their assessment of social institutions, which in turn raises their evaluation of regime leadership (Parker 1995). However, literature on the conditions that render the effect more or less likely is relatively sparse (Reiter and Chapman, 2004, 889). As this hypothesis (cheerleading/audience benefits) posits, perhaps one mechanism for a state to induce and amplify this cheerleading effect is to reveal to their domestic audience the amount of overseas support for the state's official position.

Observable implications:

The Chinese state press will report on overseas protests in the domestic version of its newspapers, most likely after it had already decided on its policy course and achieved some level of progress on obtaining its policy goal. On fraught issues such as Taiwan and Tibetan independence, the Chinese state press would still signal to their domestic audience the amount of overseas support for the official Chinese position to demonstrate that the regime does care about these sensitive issues.

Hypothesis IV: **Cuing**

During certain diplomatic crises, an autocrat may cite diasporic nationalist sentiments as a domestic signal to encourage protests at home. If an autocrat intends to signal resolve during a diplomatic crisis by emphasizing the gravity of domestic populist pressure, they may find reporting on diasporic protests in the domestic version of state newspapers early on in an issue's salience to be an effective method at encouraging their domestic constituents to display similar patriotic sentiments as well.

In their 2015 *American Political Science Review* article, James Hollyer, B. Peter Rosendorff, and James Vreeland argue that greater transparency plays a destabilizing role, as it is associated with an increased risk of regime instability and collapse via increased frequency of mass protests. (Hollyer, Rosendorff, and Vreeland 2015, 765). The authors defined transparency in the economic context with respect to union-related strikes, but a similar logic may apply to the realm of international affairs. Protests are subject to a collective action problem. The willingness of any

given citizen to turn out in the streets is dependent on her beliefs about whether her fellow citizens would similarly mobilize. In such an environment, publicly observable information will play an important role in citizen behavior. Each individual is aware that public information is also available to her fellow citizens, thus such information allows her to better judge others' perceptions of the ruling elite. As citizens become more aware of one another's perceptions, they are better able to judge the willingness of others to mobilize (Hollyer, Rosendorff, and Vreeland 2015, 766).

Observable implications:

When the Chinese regime wants to mobilize domestic actors behind an issue, it could do so through demonstrating that the Chinese diaspora care about the issue in question as well. The Chinese state press will report on overseas protests in the domestic version of its newspapers, and such coverage will happen before domestic protests occur, early on in an issue's salience.

Hypotheses	**Observable Implications**
I. ***Ersatz*** China does not want to risk permitting domestic protests on a politically-sensitive issue (e.g. Tibet and Taiwan), but still wants to signal the degree of public sentiment and support to a foreign audience. Therefore it suppresses protests at home while reporting on diasporic protests in press for foreign audiences.	The Chinese press reports on diasporic protests on politically-sensitive issues (on which there are no domestic protests permitted) for foreign audiences (in English).

II. ***Amplification/Credibility Proof*** China wants to show that it is not simply domestic audiences that are being mobilized (which it can control), but also those abroad outside of its control. This amplifies the signal of resolve China wishes to convey. Moreover, it creates dangers that the diasporic communities will pressure their respective governments on said issue.	It is likely that protests abroad are reported with the occurrence of domestic protests for foreign audiences. It is likely that the Chinese state press would report more frequently on overseas protests that occur in major powers than in middle and small powers, because the latter do not have as much international authority as the former.
III. ***Cheerleading/Audience Benefits***: After having decided to pursue a hawkish agenda on an issue, China wishes to show its domestic audiences that its policies have world-wide support, therefore reports domestically on the solidarity shown by the Chinese diaspora.	The Chinese state press will report on overseas protests in domestic papers, likely after it had already decided to take hawkish policy action and achieved some level of progress on obtaining its policy goal.
IV. ***Cuing***: China wants to mobilize domestic actors behind an issue and encourage domestic protests, and does so by revealing to its domestic audience diasporic mobilization and demonstrating that diasporas care.	The Chinese state press will report on overseas protests in the domestic version of its newspapers and this will happen before domestic protests occur, early on in an issue's salience.

Table 1. Summary of Hypotheses and Observable Implications

Axes of Variation	**Support for Hypothesis**
Coverage of overseas nationalist protests synchronized with the occurrence domestic protests	Hypothesis II: Amplification/Credibility Proof

Types of issues reported diasporic protests focus upon: 1) politically-sensitive issues, such as Tibetan and Taiwan independence 2) diplomatic disagreements on which China sends a signal of resolve to a foreign audience, such as the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute in 2012	 Hypothesis I: Ersatz Hypothesis III: Cheerleading Hypothesis II: Amplification/Credibility Proof Hypothesis IV: Cuing
Geographical distribution of reported diasporic protests: Over-representation of North America and Western Europe	 Hypothesis II: Amplification/Proof of Credibility
Outlet of diasporic protests coverage 1) Chinese/Domestic 2) English/International	 Hypothesis III: Cheerleading Hypothesis IV: Cuing Hypothesis I: Ersatz Hypothesis II: Amplification
Timing of reporting around when an issue has reached the height of tensions 1) Before 2) During 3) After	 Hypothesis IV: Cuing Hypothesis II: Amplification; Hypothesis III: Cheerleading Hypothesis III: Cheerleading

Table 2. Summary of Axes of Variation and Hypotheses

In sum, this thesis postulates four hypotheses that correlate with different empirical evidence and patterns of reporting, as summarized above.

VI. Methodology

This thesis conducts a systematic study of the patterns behind an autocratic state's official public reporting of diasporic activism and protests on a diverse array of diplomatic issues that examines the potential motivations behind the selective recognition. China can be both an easy and difficult case study to address these inquiries. Chinese domestic politics and elite decision-making remain a sensitive topic of research. The challenge in conducting a systematic study is compounded by the general lack of transparency in autocratic governance, which is reflected in the scarcity of sources, such as meeting minutes, that directly detail the Chinese state's deliberations and strategic processes in the contemporary era. Political elites and regime insiders are often reluctant to speak about their experiences and reveal bureaucratic procedures. Certain inquiries and disclosure about Chinese political inner-workings may pose personal and political risks. Ideally, to answer these inquiries, a researcher can benefit from analyzing records of internal deliberations of the Chinese Communist Party Politburo, communication memos between the Publicity (formerly Propaganda) Department and state-controlled press, records of communication between various Chinese embassies and the Chinese government—in essence, primary documents that directly inform us of how the Chinese regime views its diasporas, and when and for what purpose it decides to reference overseas patriotic political mobilization.

However, there is a plethora of state-disseminated public content, based on which one could carefully and with discretion extrapolate potential logics and strategies of the state second-hand. Therefore, given these conditions, I will utilize these sources creatively to approximate "fly on the wall." One way to do so is through a systematic analysis of state-controlled newspapers and media outlets. This methodology allows me to critically discern patterns and variations behind

the information that the state intends to disclose to a foreign and domestic audience, a basis on which I could establish evidence that supports or disproves different strategic logics.

The original dataset I have constructed based on observations found through a bilingual study of three major Chinese state-controlled newspapers—*People's Daily, Global Times,* and *China Daily*, in both Chinese and English, will constitute the main body of empirical evidence in my thesis. These newspapers all have archives of their previous issues. I have carefully browsed through them and collected relevant articles with mentions of diasporic protests, petitions, as well as emotive languages regarding diplomatic crises. I compared and cross-referenced different state-controlled newspapers for nuances in their coverage. I also calibrated state-controlled newspapers with foreign news to detect negative and omitted cases of diasporic protests that went under- or unreported in the Chinese state press. To supplement my database, I conducted anonymous interviews with a journalist and an editor currently working for one of the three newspapers under analysis.

The temporal scope of my research spans from 2008 to 2018. I will be focusing on two distinctive foreign policy issue areas: highly-symbolic events such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics and salient territorial issues such as disputes in the South China Sea. Protests in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau are counted as overseas protests in my database, the rationale being that those three locations enjoy a considerable degree of political and legal autonomy from China, at least nominally.

Because the purpose of this thesis is to identify potential causal chains and mechanisms, I will be utilizing three detailed case studies to further evaluate the validity of my hypotheses and theories: the Beijing Olympics in 2008, China's Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute with Japan in 2012, and China's conduct in the South China Sea between 2012 - 2016. For the latter conflict, I will incorporate data from the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) into my analysis. To extend and evaluate the external validity of my arguments, I will briefly suggest potential ways to evaluate other autocratic states as a part of my conclusion.

For the sake of consistency and accuracy, I operationalized the key variables in my hypotheses. I define protests in this context as an explicit declaration of political opinion, usually of disapproval and objection of an international affairs-related issue, intentionally organized by a collective group of more than 50 people. This explicit form of declaration could range from strongly-worded written petitions to organized, public demonstrations that may or may not be violent. In "sincere" protests, participants are self-motivated, self-chosen, and largely self-organized. They continue to mobilize and demonstrate until there is a change in the status quo and/or response in favor of their demands (Weiss 2013, 10).

The term "diaspora" has historically been used in the context of waves of Jewish and Armenian migration. I adopt Walker Connor's definition of diasporas as people living outside their homeland who have emigrated permanently or at least semi-permanently, either voluntarily or involuntarily, from their homeland (Connor 1986, 16). Home state refers to the state from which a diaspora originates. Host state refers to the state to which a diaspora has immigrated. Diasporas usually constitute a minority in the host states they reside and may often confront systemic,

structural, and/or personal discrimination. Depending on citizenship policies their host state, diasporas may or may not be of a foreign nationality (China currently does not permit dual citizenship). Accordingly, I qualify Chinese diasporas in this context as ethnic Chinese people who have emigrated from China and reside outside of mainland China permanently or at least semi-permanently.

I define nationalism as a political attitude and movement in which individual members give their primary loyalty to their own ethnic community. Such loyalty supersedes their affinity to other groups, e.g., those based on common race, socio-economic class, or political ideology (van Evera 1994, 6). In this context, Chinese nationalism means expressions of support for the Chinese regime and the Chinese state, as well as opposition of movements that violate China's official stance on its sovereignty.

A. Overview and Introduction to Sources

The newspapers I have used in my dataset include *People's Daily, Global Times, and China Daily,* the three most widely-circulated and all-encompassing newspapers under the directives of the Publicity Department of the Chinese Communist Party.

People's Daily has traditionally been the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, and is controlled by the Central Committee's Publicity Department (Wu 1994, 195). Dating back to 1949, *People's Daily* is generally known as China's most influential and authoritative paper. It is considered as a ''generative'' press that sets a frame of reference revered by other media organizations in China, as its editorials and commentaries are

often relayed by all other media across the country. For major and sensitive stories, the newspaper also sets up the tone and the parameter of coverage within which other newspapers from the national to the local level have to respect. Its opinion editorials and commentaries represent loosely the opinions of the Chinese leadership and hence is a good source for the analysis of Chinese elite politics and propaganda policies (Wu 1994, 195). Therefore, in content analyses of the Chinese press, *People's Daily* tends to stand out as researchers' primary choice (Song and Chang 2012, 360).

Global Times, launched in 1993 in Beijing, is a subsidiary under *People's Daily*. With a widespread network of overseas correspondents in over 150 countries, *Global Times* markets itself as a newspaper with an extensive coverage of international news, only having begun to publish news on domestic issues in 2009, the same year that the paper launched its English version. The newspaper has a daily circulation of over 2 million copies. Because *Global Times* is a newspaper branded for its international news reporting, it tends to discuss China as a whole in the international community, focusing on portraying the overall image of the nation and national interests in a manner satisfactory to the regime (Chen 2015, 10). In recent years, its vocal and nationalist editorials over controversial issues both at home and abroad have earned much scrutiny. The *Global Times* media group continues to grow in recent years. (Chen 2015, 5). Moreover, in comparison to *People's Daily, Global Times* has enjoyed more journalistic freedom to report on news and events that may portray China in a less favorable lens, especially in the English/international version of its newspaper. For example, it has reported on the political exile of Liu Xia, the wife of the deceased Nobel Prize nominee and Chinese activist, Liu Xiaobo. Moreover, it has also recently ignored orders from the government to downplay China's tensions

with the United States, and has offered more candid accounts of the government's treatment of its Uighur minority in Xinjiang, despite the official Chinese denial of the existence of "re-education camps" (Chaguan 2018). Nevertheless, *Global Times* remains a newspaper that is nationalist in tone and adopts hawkish positions. Its foreign reports are often done by correspondents from *People's Daily*. Some of its political commentaries are written by military and government officials under pseudonyms (Chaguan 2018).

China Daily, founded in 1980, is an authoritative Chinese newspaper with a focus on China's domestic and international affairs, designed to cater to foreigners, especially those interested in China (Chang 1989). It is only available in English, which means that it is written to cater to an international audience. This English-language newspaper is printed simultaneously in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, New York, San Francisco, and London (Stone 1994). With a daily circulation of 300,000, *China Daily* is well-recognized abroad and at home, and belongs to a group of English-language newspapers that reach an international audience (Stevenson 1994).

Therefore, a combined analysis of these three newspapers could help produce more nuanced conclusions about how, why, and when the Chinese state decides to disseminate information on diasporic nationalism. Overall, there is a degree of general synchronization between the different state-controlled newspapers, albeit with some variations. As *Global Times* focuses more on international news, it could report more on the Chinese diaspora than does *People's Daily*. If there are overlaps among these different newspapers' coverage of diasporic activism, it would indicate that the news in question is a significant one that the state press intends for various audiences to know. If there are overlaps on select issues or issue areas over the ten-year period, it

would indicate that these issue areas may be the foci of the Chinese state press, and by extension the Chinese Publicity Department. I make the reasonable assumption that the Chinese version of these newspapers mostly serves the domestic Chinese audience, whereas the English version of these newspapers mostly serves international readers who cannot read Chinese.

B. Overview of Data Collection Process and Original Dataset

To code the observations for my original dataset, I inputted articles and editorials that fall under four general categories: protests by overseas Chinese, reported in Chinese; protests by overseas Chinese, reported in English; diplomatic events and crises that "hurt the feelings" of Chinese people, overseas Chinese, or both, in English; diplomatic events and crises that "hurt the feelings" of Chinese people, overseas Chinese, or both, in Chinese. This dataset contains more than 500 unique observations of articles, each coded for the date of reporting, issue in question, demographics of protesters, country of reporting, the timing of the protest, and if applicable, any overlap with domestic protests. In addition to constructing this dataset, I have conducted anonymous, on-the-record interviews in both English and Chinese with a current journalist and an editor who work for one of the major newspapers described above. Through these interviews, I was able to receive insider's information on the internal editorial process of a major Chinese state newspaper. Moreover, since all three newspapers under examination are controlled by the state, they are likely to all follow similar journalistic guidelines, and so the responses I have obtained from the interviews are relatively applicable to all three newspapers. However, there is an extent to which editorial staff currently working for the Chinese state press are willing to disclose the political dynamics that undergird the publication of these newspapers, and they are likely to rephrase the official party line to a western outsider. The anonymization of these

interviews may help alleviate this problem, although it is important to recognize the limitations nevertheless.

What kind of information and message is the Chinese state trying to disclose with its reporting of overseas Chinese protests, and what are the potential strategic considerations behind their patterns of revelation? These are the questions that guides my analysis of my findings. Moreover, instead of only collecting data on reports of overseas protests by the Chinese state media, I have also collected observations of reports of diplomatic events that China claims to have "hurt the feelings of Chinese people." This emotive phrase is not an uncommon rhetoric employed by the Chinese media and state officials during diplomatic skirmishes (Weiss 2013, 1). To fine-tune my findings and introduce more nuance, I decided to include observations where the Chinese state press has claimed or portrayed a diplomatic event as "hurting the feelings of Chinese people." From these observations, we may be able to discern the issues that the Chinese state press claims to have emotional salience for the Chinese public. Moreover, with these observations, I may also be able to detect possible variations in when the Chinese state media claims an issue as hurting the feelings of only domestic Chinese people, and when they claim an issue as involving the sentiments of domestic Chinese people as well as Chinese diasporas.

Rhetoric about a crisis triggering nationalist feelings among a state's domestic audience is a very low-cost diplomatic gesture, and such rhetoric could be dismissed as "cheap talk." (Weiss 2014, 2). However, these "hurt feelings" that the Chinese government cites could potentially become a more potent diplomatic signal if combined with actual evidence of protests and political mobilization that manifest from "hurt feelings." Moreover, although emotive rhetoric is a

relatively effortless diplomatic gesture, there are some issues on which Chinese officials and press would not even cite "hurt feelings." For example, in my research, I have come across fewer than five cases between 2008 and 2018 where China's trade disputes with other states have led to "hurt feelings," let alone protests.

The Chinese state press is likely to often cite hurt feelings in conjunction with active mobilizations of nationalist sentiments in order for the rhetoric to be more substantive. The observable implication of this is that the hurt feelings observations should have some overlap with the protest observations. Additionally, emotive language could cover a few more topics than protests. The Chinese state press could potentially use "hurt feelings" to describe issues that it claims may fall in the realm of involving nationalist sentiments and China's core interests even when no current protests exist, although they are more likely to be dismissed as cheap talk on their own.

VII. Presentation of Findings

A. General Findings and Patterns

I have summarized the major patterns behind my findings in the graphs below:

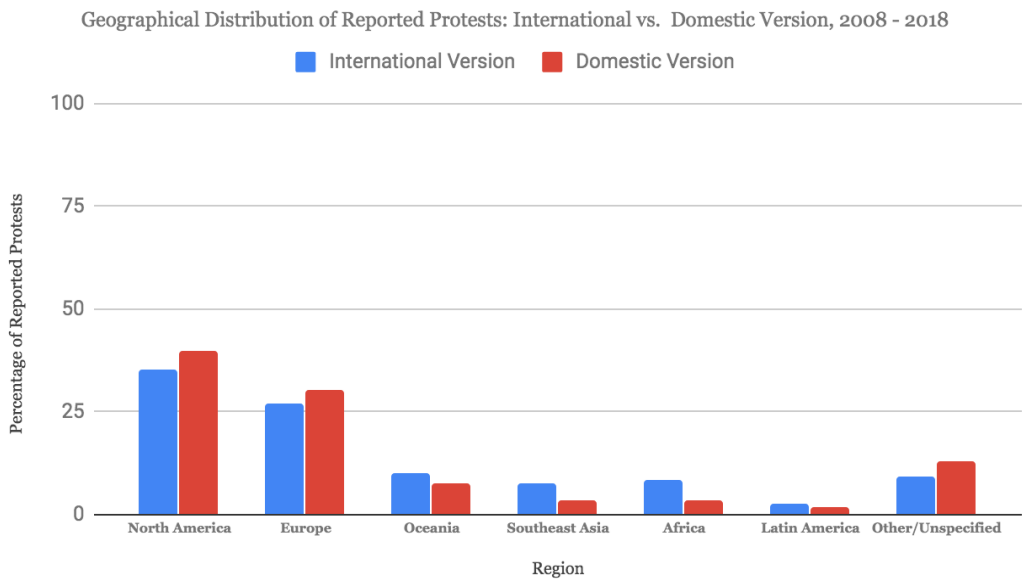


Figure 1. Geographical Distribution of Reported Diasporic Protests, 2008 – 2018

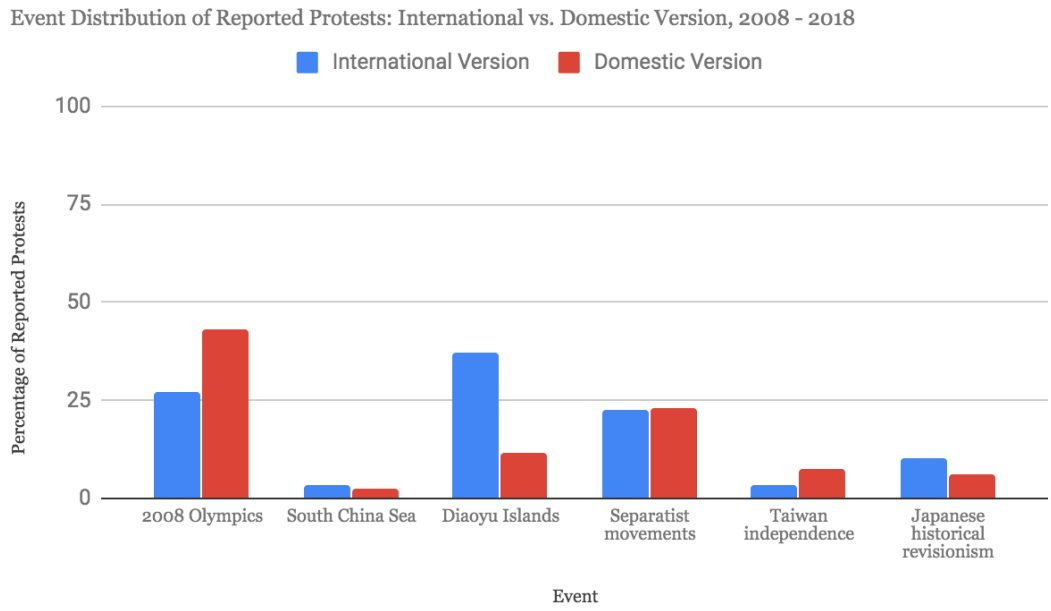


Figure 2. Issue Area Distribution of Reported Overseas Protests, 2008 – 2018

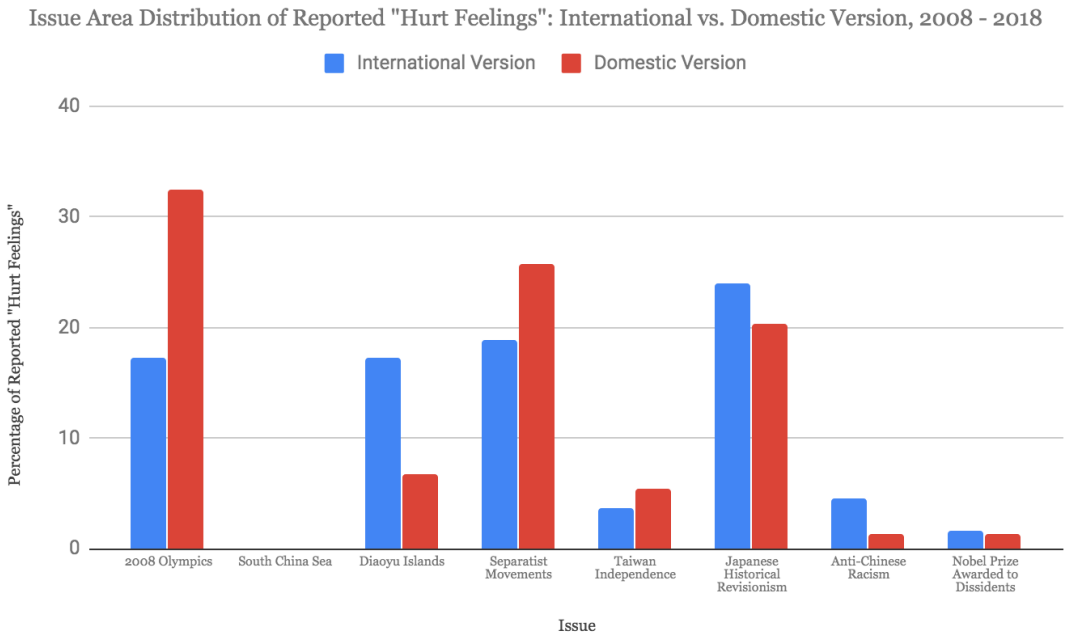


Figure 3. Issue Area Distribution of Reported "Hurt Feelings," 2008 – 2018

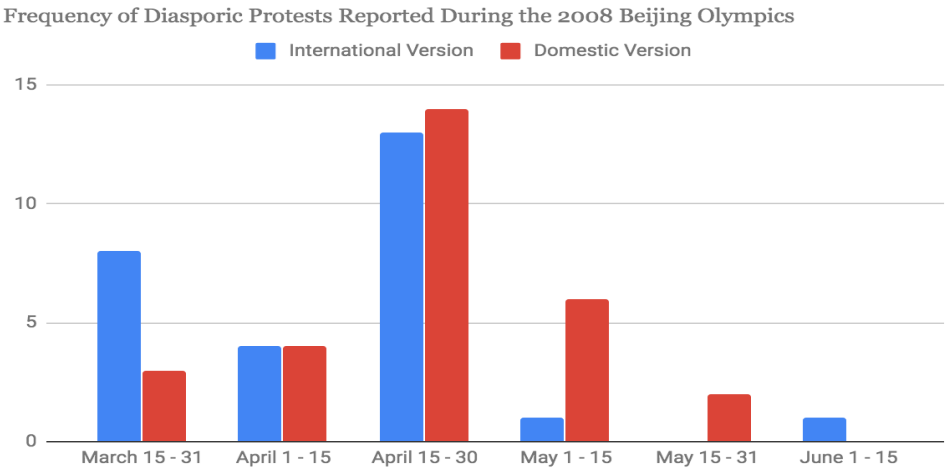


Figure 4. Frequency of Diasporic Protests Reported Leading Up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics (in biweekly segments)

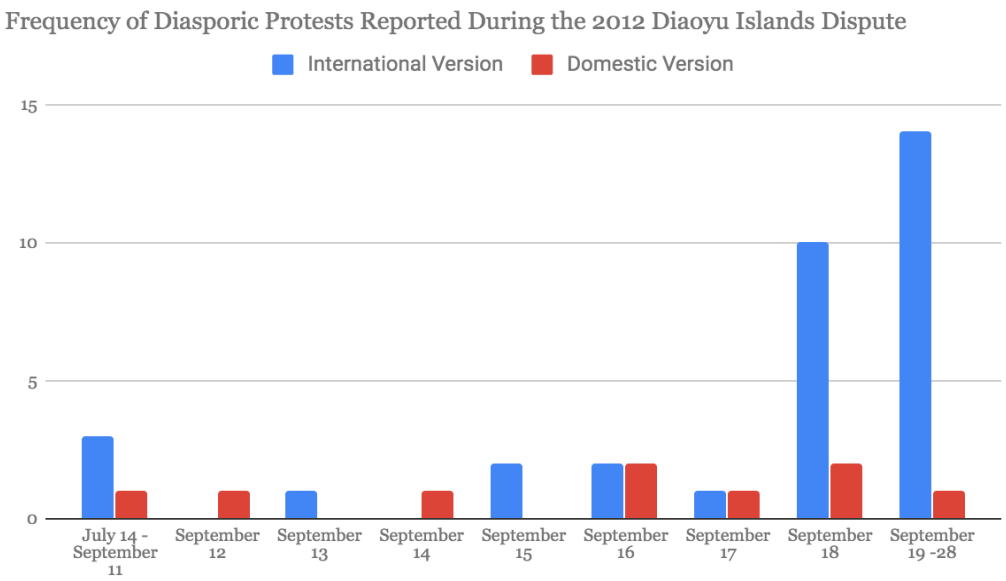


Figure 5. Daily Frequency of Diasporic Protests Reported During the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute

My findings offer circumstantial support for Hypothesis I (ersatz). The Chinese state press does indeed report on diasporic protests that pertain to politically-sensitive issues (on which there are no domestic protests permitted) for its foreign audience (in English). In the English/international edition of the three major Chinese newspapers, the three most frequently covered issue areas of diasporic protests are western criticisms of the Chinese regime before and during the 2008 Beijing Olympics; China's dispute with Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 2012; and Tibetan and other forms of ethno-religious separatism in China. The Chinese regime did not permit domestic protests on two of the three issue areas—anti-Chinese commentaries leading up to the 2008 Olympics and ethno-religious separatism.

There is evidence in support of Hypothesis II (amplification/credibility proof). Diasporic protests that took place in North America, Europe (mostly Western Europe), and Oceania (mostly

Australia) constituted 72.3% and 78.2% of reported diasporic protests in the English and Chinese versions of major state newspapers, respectively. Moreover, during the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute in which the Chinese government demonstrated resolve and permitted domestic protests to occur, diasporic protests on the same issue were reported in the English version of the major newspapers before, during, and after the dispute and with the occurrence of domestic protests, in high frequency.

The findings for Hypothesis III (cheerleading/audience benefits) are mixed and require further elaboration in my case studies. The Chinese state press does report on diasporic protests against Tibetan independence, Taiwan independence, and general separatist activities to their domestic audience. As demonstrated by the timing of its coverage of overseas nationalist protests during the 2008 Olympics and the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, the Chinese state reports on these protests to its domestic audience after it had already decided to take a hawkish stance on these issues. In the former event, it reported on overseas protests extensively even though the Chinese regime generally did not permit domestic protests. For the latter, it stopped reporting on overseas protests once the permitted domestic protests had reached its peak. This may point to a more nuanced explanation that the Chinese state press may attempt to balance between reporting on diasporic protests to achieve the domestic cheerleading effect, while ensuring that domestic protests do not break out or escalate to a more chaotic level than one desired by the Chinese regime.

Hypothesis IV (cuing) does not seem to have much supporting evidence in my thesis. As I will elaborate later on in my case studies, during the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Chinese state press was willing to report on sensitive topics during the lead up to the event even when the

government mostly did not permit domestic protests. In fact, overseas protests during the lead up to the Beijing Olympics constituted 43% of all diasporic protests reported between 2008 - 2018 in the domestic edition of *People's Daily and Global Times*. Moreover, during the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute when the Chinese government had permitted domestic protests, it did not frequently report on diasporic protests prior to the height of tensions in mid-September as a potential mechanism to encourage domestic protests. The domestic coverage of overseas protests commenced after protests at home had already occurred.

As expected, the Chinese state press does not report on anti-regime protests overseas, including pro-democracy and separatist rallies. Moreover, the general trend suggests that the Chinese state media was less rhetorically-ideological during Hu Jintao's tenure (2002 – 2012), but ideological jargons became more ubiquitous after Xi Jinping took office in 2012. The issue areas that allegedly hurt the feelings of Chinese people coincide very closely with issues areas that overseas Chinese patriots were reported to have protested on. A considerable degree of overlap between the two offers preliminary evidence in favor of the aforementioned argument that hurt feelings may indicate that the Chinese state has a certain view of particular issues that are in the realm of nationalist sentiment, one expected to be shared by the Chinese diaspora.

Moreover**,** although there were over 500 relevant articles, the topics of the overseas protests reported can be distilled down to a few key symbolic and territorial issues. The main issues of reported overseas protests include Japanese historical revisionism; movements towards Tibetan independence; criticisms of the Chinese regime during the Beijing Olympics by western media; the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute; and Taiwan's efforts to gain formal independence and

sovereignty. Foreign state actions that allegedly "hurt the feelings of Chinese people" also consist of mostly symbolic issues and territorial issues with historical and reputational salience. They include Japanese historical revisionism; the Dalai Lama's visits to foreign countries and favorable international publicity in general; criticism of the Chinese regime during the Beijing Olympics by western media; anti-Chinese racism; the nomination of Chinese political activists for the Nobel Peace Prize; and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visits to the United States to reaffirm the security alliance between the United States and Japan. As hypothesized, high-stakes issue areas with low emotional salience, such as trade, were not the subject of diasporic protests and emotive rhetoric.

However, surprisingly, diasporic protests in support of China's position in the South China Sea were not reported on frequently in Chinese newspapers for both domestic and international audiences. This is a seemingly counterintuitive observation, as the Chinese state media has scrutinized and reported very extensively on overseas nationalist protests during China's 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute with Japan.

In the sections below, I will analyze my findings according to the four hypotheses I have previously outlined by applying the theoretical frameworks to three case studies: the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, and China's disputes in the South China Sea from 2012 - 2016.

B. Case Study I

The 2008 Beijing Olympics: Ersatz and Domestic Cheerleading

In some ways, it may appear counterintuitive for the Chinese state press to cover overseas protests against Taiwan and Tibetan independence in the Chinese version of their newspapers meant for the consumption by their domestic audience. While there are diasporic protests against Taiwanese independence and Tibetan independence due to a lack of regulations and restrictions overseas, the Chinese government has banned domestic protests on both of these issues since the 1990s (Shirk 2008, 181 - 184). This offers circumstantial evidence that could disaffirm Hypothesis IV (cuing), which expects the Chinese state media to report on overseas protests to encourage domestic protests of the same kind.

By contrast, Hypothesis III (cheerleading/audience benefits) may offer a plausible explanation for this finding. The Chinese state faces a difficult dilemma: the state press could very well not report on these protests pertaining to Taiwan and Tibet, given the fraught nature of the two issues, as well as the potential for these overseas protests to encourage domestic protests. However, at the same time, the Chinese government also does not wish to convey to its domestic public that these issues have escaped their attention, or worse, that the regime is making concessions on its core interests. By signaling to its domestic audience that it has foreign support for its positions on Taiwan and Tibet, the Chinese government could potentially placate domestic nationalist sentiments and strengthen its legitimacy at home. Using the 2008 Olympics as a case study, I will demonstrate the Chinese state press' attempt to strike such balance.

The 2008 Summer Olympic Games was the first Olympics ever to be hosted in China. Beijing had been preparing for such an international showcase since 2001, when its bid to host the 2008 Games was confirmed. Having failed to receive hosting privileges by a close margin for the 2000 Summer Olympics, Beijing regarded this monumental and well-publicized worldwide sporting event as the golden opportunity to showcase its modernization progress and to achieve the great power status (Xu 2006, 94). As a senior Beijing Olympics official proclaimed, "Winning the host rights means winning the respect, trust, and favor of the international community." (Economy and Segal 2008, 47). In addition to regarding the Games as an opportunity to demonstrate strength and modernity to a foreign audience, the Chinese regime had also intended to utilize the Olympics as an opportunity to amass domestic legitimacy, as it provided a chance for the Chinese government to showcase the Communist Party's competence at home, in addition to affirming the country's status as a major power on equal footing with the West (Economy and Segal 2008, 47).

Because the Olympics is a large-scale event with great international exposure (Xu 2006, 95), 2008 was a crucial year for China to maintain its reputation and ensure domestic stability prior to the Opening Ceremony in August 2008. The Beijing government was likely sensitive to any signs of criticism and instability, foreign and domestic alike, leading up to the Olympics. Hence, one could reasonably assume that China would take a hawkish stance on any slight to its reputation and legitimacy, as well as any political events that could detract positive attention away from the Olympics.

Unfortunately for the Chinese regime, the months leading up to the commencement of the Olympics were tumultuous. On March 10, 2008, China witnessed the beginning of the biggest Tibetan challenge to Chinese rule since 1959, known as the Lhasa Violence or Lhasa Riots. This incident consisted of a series of protests, initially led by Tibetan monks, against the Dalai Lama's exile and the repression of Tibetan rights in China, on the 49th anniversary of Tibet's failed independence. On March 14, the demonstrations led to violent clashes between Tibetan protesters and Chinese security forces, resulting in a number of casualties on both sides (Topgyal 2011, 189). According to journalists and reporters, there were at least 95 separate protests in Tibetan areas within China from March 10 to April 5 (Barnett 2009, 3).

The unrest in Tibet imparted negative political resonances for the Chinese regime. It cemented a general international perception of China as an autocratic state at a moment when China seemed about to evolve beyond that. It also prioritized the Tibetan issue in U.S.-China and China-E.U. relation, at a time when China desperately sought to deflect any controversies (Barnett 2009, 3). Moreover, pro-Tibetan independence protests broke out in various European cities during the Olympics torch relay in Spring 2008, and a few European state leaders had publicly revoked their decision to attend the Olympics Opening Ceremony (Economy and Segal 52, 2008).

While Chinese media deemed a rampage by Tibetan rioters and monks in Lhasa responsible for killing 22 people, injuring more than 600, and torching 120 shops, western media focused on the subsequent Chinese crackdown on Tibetans, and cited Tibetan exile sources in claiming that 203 Tibetans had been killed by the Chinese state army and police (Nyiri, Zhang, and Varrall 2010, 29). Following the incident, the Chinese government had decided to close off much of the

affected region, expel foreign journalists from the area, and arrest Tibetan protesters. The regime had also blocked foreign media and television channels in China (Economy and Segal 2008, 51), which meant that most Chinese citizens could only have obtained news about the incident through Chinese media.

Overseas Chinese protests against Tibetan independence flared up in April and May of 2008, when protesters rallied against "biased" western media and voiced their support for Chinese "unity" and harmony. Around the same time, the Chinese state press began accusing western media of being overly sympathetic to Tibetan rioters in their reporting of the Lhasa Riots/Violence. Chinese state newspapers also reported on overseas Chinese efforts to protest against the dominant western narrative of the Lhasa Incident that dented China's reputation, in both its Chinese and English versions.

As shown in Figure 4, the English version of the state newspapers began to cover these diasporic protests from March 23, around a week earlier than the earliest coverage of diasporic protests in the Chinese version of the same newspapers. Moreover, the English version covered overseas protests against the violence in Lhasa and Western media's portrayal of such violence more frequently in the later half March, when the violence first broke out. The English version reportings also extended into mid-June, about two weeks longer than the reportings in the domestic version. The coverage of diasporic protests in both versions peaked at around the same time period of April 15 – 30. Since the Chinese regime viewed the 2008 Olympics as a potential leverage to strengthen both its domestic and international legitimacy, it seems fitting that the

Chinese state press wanted to signal the amount of worldwide support for China's stance in the Lhasa Violence to both domestic and foreign audiences.

The Chinese regime had mostly prohibited domestic protests following the Lhasa Violence in March 2008, a few months before the Opening Ceremony of the Olympics on August 8, 2008. As Jessica Weiss observed, protests in China on the Tibetan issue during the lead up to the Olympics were extremely limited both in frequency, location, and time (Weiss 2014, 238 - 244). Reporting on overseas Chinese protests too frequently for its domestic audience may risk encouraging protests and unrest over these issues at home, especially at a time so close to the commencement of the Olympics. China's domestic audience, upon hearing about these overseas protests against western portrayals of the Lhasa Riots and allegedly "opportunistic" movements to support Tibetan independence, could have been further motivated take to the streets to display their nationalism. However, the Chinese government's inaction and muted response over the Lhasa Riots could also have caused public dissatisfaction with the regime.

Given the Chinese regime's desire to suppress domestic protests months before the Olympics, it seems very unlikely that the Chinese state press had reported on diasporic protests in the Chinese version of their newspapers as a cuing device to encourage domestic mobilization. It seems more plausible that since the Chinese regime had already decided to adopt a firm and assertive stance against any threat to Chinese stability and reputation prior to the Olympics, the Chinese state press reported on these diasporic protests domestically as a means to demonstrate to its domestic audience that its policies enjoyed international support. Therefore, perhaps the Chinese state press chose to disclose the news of overseas protests in order to assure their domestic public that

the regime resolves to stand by its core principles regarding Chinese sovereignty. However, there seems to be a limit to the extent to which the Chinese state press had used reports of overseas protests as a cheerleading device. The domestic coverage of these protests occurred mostly between April to May, whereas the international coverage lasted about a month longer, from mid-March to mid-June. This may point to the plausible explanation that while the Chinese state invokes diasporic protests to build up domestic support and legitimacy, it is also quite weary of the potential for such coverage to instigate domestic protests. This explanation fits with the finding that the Chinese state press reports on diasporic protests in the domestic version of their newspapers, but such coverage extends a shorter period of time than the international version.

Moreover, the Chinese version of these newspapers portrays these overseas protests as victorious and effective. Instead of depicting them as motivated by anger and anti-western resentment, the Chinese press framed these protests as patriotic and contributive to the Olympics fervor. Sometimes, the Chinese press would cite the successful outcomes and policy changes that the overseas Chinese protests have manifested. This may act to bolster domestic sentiments but also to prompt the domestic audience to realize that they do not have to protest themselves, since overseas protests have already achieved desirable results (whether factual or not). As the press makes references to diasporic protests while stating that these protests have generated effective policy outcomes, it could be referencing these protests as an easy way to broadcast their foreign policy victories and to bolster domestic popularity. This fits with the audience benefits logic proposed in Hypothesis III (cheerleading/audience benefits): The Chinese state signals to its domestic audience that it is receptive to the activities and political attitudes of the Chinese

diaspora, and that certain groups of overseas Chinese have been effective in resolving China's symbolic disputes with other states.

For example, an article published in the Chinese version of *Global Times* on May 27, 2008 detailed that as a result of efforts by overseas Chinese protesters, certain western media outlets have started to correct their narratives on China. This article highlighted successful outcomes of the efforts by overseas Chinese in directly prompting changes in the ways western media reports on Tibetan independence and the Lhasa Riots. For example, following overseas protests, the major German newspaper *Berliner Zeitung* had moved away from portraying the Dalai Lama as a martyr, and instead had deemed him a controversial figure. The British press had also started to acknowledge how isolated the Dalai Lama was as a political leader during his meeting with the British Prime Minister. By designating some politically-sensitive symbolic issues as topics that are more effectively dealt with by the patriotic political activism of diasporas, the Chinese government could both discourage protests at home while signaling to the domestic public that it cares about issues that affect Chinese reputation and sovereignty.

In fact, Chinese articles in these major newspapers have argued that, at times, overseas Chinese protests may actually be more effective than domestic protests, owing to the observation that the Dalai Lama is more receptive and fearful of the political opinions of overseas Chinese. This is because the Chinese diaspora, owing to their political leverage in certain host states, may have more effective channels of bringing about policy changes vis-à-vis Tibet in their host states. Moreover, according to an article from *People's Daily*, because Dalai Lama bases a lot of his support on foreign states, his efforts would be thwarted if overseas Chinese could dissuade

foreign audiences from being sympathetic and receptive of his visits and speeches (Wang 2010). Another *People's Daily* article explicitly states that the target(s) of nationalist Chinese protests may take the protests more seriously if they knew that it were not just domestic Chinese nationals in the Chinese mainland protesting, due to the stereotype of their being hyper-nationalistic (Yi 2009). All in all, my findings introduce more nuance to Hypothesis III (cheerleading/audience benefits). While the Chinese government does cite diasporic protests on politically-sensitive topics to elicit domestic legitimacy, it still needs to strike a delicate balance between signaling assertiveness to its domestic audience while not instigating domestic populist mobilization around these issues.

In my interviews with a reporter and an editor of a major Chinese newspaper, the interviewees stated explicitly that the Chinese state media undertakes the responsibility of disseminating governmental messages, which means that the Chinese state press is more likely and willing to focus on protests and activities among the Chinese diaspora that are beneficial for the Chinese regime in various ways. The interviewees stated that while the state press tends to focus on pro-Chinese news, it also cannot completely avoid reporting events such as separatist movements out of a certain degree of transparency. That being said, the interviewees disclosed that anti-Chinese regime activities among the Chinese diaspora are fringe developments not considered newsworthy in the eyes of China's official state media, just as how "major American newspapers often do not report on Native American protests for self-determination and sovereignty [quote from the interviewee]." (Personal interview with an editor, April 4, 2019).

The publicization of diasporic protests in the English version of Chinese state newspapers provides supporting evidence for Hypothesis I (ersatz). While the Chinese regime mostly did not permit domestic protests in the months leading up to the Opening Ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics in August, the Chinese state press reported on overseas patriotic rallies and protests in the English version of the state newspapers between mid-March and mid-June. Perhaps this was a revelation to its foreign audience that there was considerable public and external support for official positions espoused by the Chinese regime, even though China did not want to risk domestic protests on volatile and politically-sensitive issues.

After mid-June, there were very few mentions of overseas protests and unrest in all versions of Chinese state newspapers. This was probably motivated by the Chinese government's strategic goal to maintain stability right before the 2008 Olympics Opening Ceremony in early August. Reporting on protests so close to the Opening Ceremony could signal to the domestic audience that the Chinese government has been ineffective at managing and controlling China's international reputation and agitations before a monumental event. Worse, it could even encourage domestic citizens to take to the streets prior to the Opening Ceremony. Internationally, if the Chinese state press were to report on protests right before the Opening Ceremony, this again could signal the Chinese regime's weakness and inability to properly address controversies that arose in early 2008, detracting attention away from the positive developments of the Beijing Olympics. As Michael Yahuda argues, "2008 was not only the year in which China's leaders first claimed that the balance of power was shifting in their country's favor, it was also the year of the Beijing Olympic Games. The holding of the Olympics was presented as a grand patriotic

occasion in which the rest of the world joined the patriotic Chinese people in celebrating their country's rise." (Yahuda 2013, 454).

C. Case Study II

The 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute: Amplification of Diplomatic Signal and Domestic Cheerleading

During the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, the coverage of overseas Chinese nationalist protests in the English version of state newspapers was well-synchronized with the occurrence of well-publicized domestic protests. As demonstrated by Figure 5, the English version of *People's Daily, Global Times, and China Daily* covered diasporic protests very frequently and repetitively before, during, and after mid-September 2012—this date correlating with the height of permitted domestic anti-Japanese protests and tensions between China and Japan over the islands. The Chinese version of these major newspapers reported on diasporic protests mostly after the permitted domestic protests had already begun, but stopped its coverage of overseas protests after the peak of domestic protests on September 18, 2012.

As Hypothesis II (amplification/credibility proof) posits, the Chinese regime is not ignorant of foreign accusations of China's manufactured domestic protests. Foreign observers may interpret anti-foreign protests in mainland China not as a commitment device but rather as a venting strategy for the Chinese leadership—that these protests are intended for Chinese citizens to channel their domestic grievances and redirect them into hawkish foreign policy (Weiss 2014, 190). As Weiss argues, relative to democrats, autocrats have comparative difficulty in communicating their domestic constraints to foreign observers credibly (Weiss 2013, 1).

Therefore, if the Chinese government were to publicly reference nationalist public opinion as a restraint on their foreign policy and to signal resolve, they would need to emphasize that the protests appear genuine, sincere, and spontaneous. It is possible that the Chinese diaspora can act as some form of credibility check on Chinese domestic claims of nationalism, owing to their relative immunity from direct manipulations by the Chinese state. If the Chinese diaspora were to protest on similar foreign policy-related issues as Chinese domestic citizens, foreign observers would have fewer reasons to regard the foreign policy issue in question as a diversionary cover up for domestic grievances. In this situation, it is possible that foreign governments might be less likely to underestimate the degree to which nationalist protests reveal genuine public sentiments and restrict the government's foreign policy options. The well-documented 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute between China and Japan is an appropriate case study to probe the possible strategic motivations behind the Chinese state press' coverage diasporic protests.

The Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands are a chain of uninhabited islets and barren rocks located in the East China Sea. They are a major contribution to existing hostilities between China, Japan, and Taiwan, with all parties claiming ownership over these islands. Moreover, whichever state that possesses these disputed islands could convey control over a continental shelf believed to potentially contain 10 – 100 billion barrels of oil, according to some geographical surveys (Downs and Saunders 1999, 124). Beyond contestations of sovereignty and access to natural resources, China and Japan also utilize the islands dispute to sculpt nationalist narratives (Downs and Saunders 1999, 126). A recent dispute occurred in 2012, when the Japanese government announced its decision to purchase three of the disputed islands from the islands' private Japanese owner (Gries 2015, 265).

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda announced his government's plan to purchase three of the disputed islands on July 7, 2012, the 75th anniversary of Japan's full-scale World War II invasion of China (Wallace and Weiss 2015, 405). Almost immediately, the Chinese media accused Japan of being insensitive to a historically-significant date, condemning Prime Minister Noda of "playing with fire" (Weiss 2014, 195).

The Chinese government, intending to pressure Noda to postpone Japan's proposed islands purchase, loosened its regulations on anti-Japanese protests as a signal of resolve to defend domestic nationalist interests (Weiss 2014, 198). On August 15, 2012, the anniversary of Japanese World War II surrender, a Chinese protest boat set out from Hong Kong and successfully landed on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands for the first time since 2004 (Reily 2014, 205 - 209). During this incident, the Chinese leadership saw Noda as a moderate leader who would be able and willing to make concessions in Sino-Japanese relations. Believing that Noda could still renegade on the planned purchase, the Chinese government decided to demonstrate resolve to pressure Noda to delay Japan's proposed purchase in favor of shelving the issue and pursuing alternative courses of actions (Weiss 2014, 198). Nevertheless, the Noda government signed a 2.05 billion yen contract on September 11, 2012, seven days prior to the September 18 anniversary of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. The Chinese government condemned this decision, and counter-escalated the crisis by issuing public statements that accused Japan of conspiring to violate Chinese sovereignty and breaking the consensus to shelve the islands dispute (Weiss 2014, 206).

In addition to issuing public statements that challenged Japanese control over the islands, the Chinese government permitted waves of anti-Japanese protests in September to demonstrate the Chinese government's resolve. Protests in mainland China erupted in at least 36 cities in August, peaking by mid-September (Gries, Steiger, and Wang 2016, 273). Some civilians advocated for the boycott of Japanese goods, while others reproached the Chinese Communist Party for being too weak towards Japan (Gries, Steiger, and Wang 2016, 269 - 270).

Although protests around this issue also broke out among nationalist Chinese diasporas, there were far fewer overseas anti-Japanese protests than domestic protests. However, for the overseas protests that did occur, the Chinese state press had reported on them repeatedly, not only in the form of articles but also in the form of editorials commending these protests. For example, both *People's Daily* and *Global Times* had reported on the same protest that occurred in Houston, Texas at least two times in the span of one week in mid-September (*People's Daily* 2012). Moreover, in addition to reporting on the overseas protests separately, the Chinese state press also published articles that grouped the diasporic protests together, potentially to demonstrate overseas Chinese solidarity with domestic protesters in China. *Global Times* had also invited a Chinese-American activist of Chinese interests in the Diaoyu Islands to write an English-language op-ed calling for more Chinese diasporas to support their home state in this dispute against Japan. The op-ed listed specific recommendations for what overseas compatriots, especially those in the U.S., Russia, and Japan could do to defend Chinese ownership of the islands (Young 2012). As expected, the Chinese state press placed an emphasis on the agency and autonomy that overseas Chinese activists possessed. There was no mention of overseas

Chinese protesters being orchestrated by the Chinese embassy or government, whether that was true or not.

However, by September 18, the Chinese government had decided to take precautions to ensure no excessive domestic chaos during the September 18 anniversary of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and the lead up to the Eighteenth Party Congress in early November, where the leadership transition between President Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping was to be announced. Efforts at ensuring that these protests were peaceful began on September 18 (Weiss 2014, 205 - 209), incidentally around the same time that the Chinese state press had stopped reporting on overseas patriotic protests in the Chinese version of their newspapers. This may suggest a degree of correlation between the Chinese government's policies towards domestic protests and the patterns of the state media's reporting of overseas nationalist protests.

In both the domestic and international versions of *People's Daily* and *Global Times*, the coverage of overseas Chinese protests peaked in mid-September. In mid-September, there were repetitive reports of overseas protests in great detail, alongside by op-eds that supported these expressions of patriotism. However, the coverage of overseas protests in the Chinese version had ceased by September 18 – 19, around the same time that the Chinese government decided to curtail domestic protests in order to maintain stability before the Eighteenth Party Congress, although there were more diasporic protests after that date. It is plausible that the cessation of reporting was meant to discourage domestic citizens from escalating their protests or continuing with them. By contrast, the English version of *People's Daily* and *Global Times* was more lenient with their reporting following September 18, possibly because it was directed at the

foreign/international audience. Unlike the Chinese version, the English version had reported on anti-Japanese protests by overseas Chinese that occurred after September 19, once again providing evidence in favor of the hypothesis that the Chinese state had deliberately curated and calibrated its coverage of overseas patriotism for political ends. The journalist and editor I interviewed revealed that while the editorial and publication processes remain quite similar for all versions of a Chinese state newspaper, the English- and Chinese-language departments do publish materials with different targeted audiences in mind in order to sustain and attract readership (Personal interviews with an editor and correspondent of a state-controlled Chinese newspaper, March 8, 2019 and April 4, 2019).

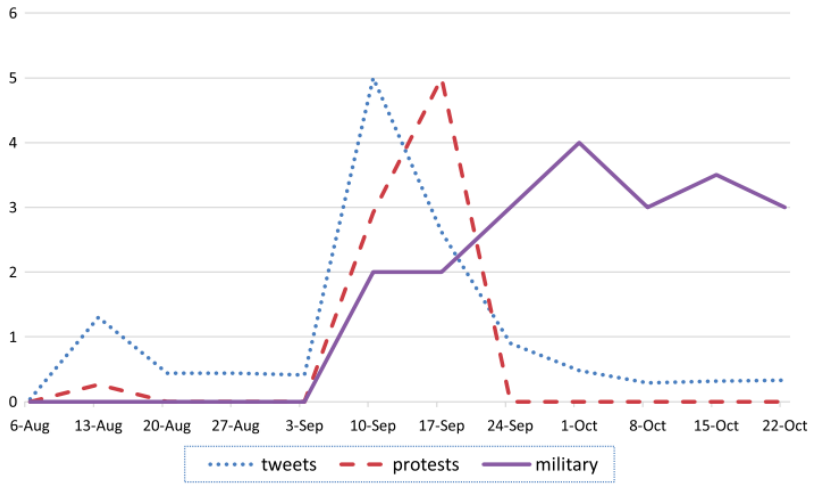


Figure 4. Microblogging, street protests and the hardening of military policy towards Japan over the Diaoyu Islands, August–October 2012.
Note. Tweets are per 3,819,734; street protests are per 38. To display all three lines in the same figure, microblogging and protests were each recoded on a 0–5 scale. This was done by taking the highest single week in volume of both protests and tweets, and dividing the other weeks by that number and then multiplying by 5. The peaks of protests and Weibo activity are thus coded as fives, with other weeks falling below them.

Figure 6. Frequency and Trend of Domestic Protests During the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute (Source: Gries, Steiger, and Wang 2016, 273)

As Figure 6 demonstrates, domestic Chinese protests peaked between September 17 – 18, after which there was a sharp decrescendo that was likely government coordinated. The coverage of diasporic protests in the English version of Chinese state newspapers peaked around September 18 as well as afterwards, and there was also relatively consistent coverage of diasporic protests on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands between early September to September 18. This synchronization between English-language reports of diasporic protests in state newspapers and the occurrence of domestic protests gives support to the hypothesis that the Chinese state wishes to demonstrate that it is not simply domestic audiences that are being mobilized (which it can control), but also those abroad outside of its control. This could amplify and add credibility the signal of resolve China wishes to convey to a foreign audience, as it could render domestic protests more genuine.

Moreover, as hypothesized, the geographical distribution of reported anti-Japanese diasporic protests in the English version tilts heavily towards North America, Europe, and Oceania. This includes multiple reports of the same overseas protests happening in the United States. This finding offers support for the second part of Hypothesis II (amplification/credibility proof), which proposes that the Chinese state press, through reporting on protests that occur in great powers and the hegemon, could convey to its foreign audience the potential for Chinese diasporic communities to pressure their respective governments on said issue.

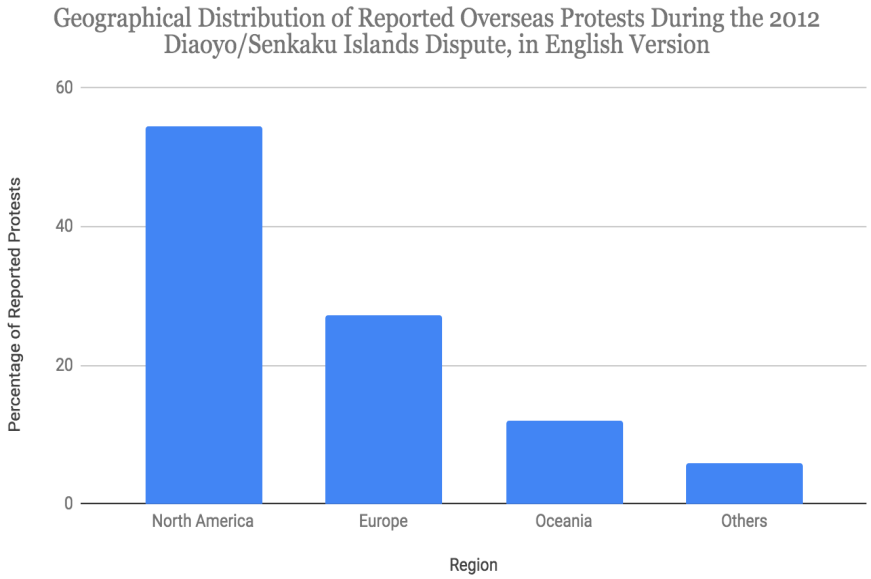


Figure 7. Geographical Distribution of Reported Overseas Protests in English Version of Chinese State Newspapers During the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute

As Figure 7 demonstrates, North America and Europe (mostly Western Europe) make up for 81.8% of reported diasporic protests during the 2012 dispute. One could perhaps attribute this to the geographical concentration of the Chinese diaspora. However, many Southeast Asian states also have significant ethnic Chinese populations—in fact, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia have some of the highest numbers of Chinese diasporas in the world (Liu and van Dogen 2016, 806).

One compelling explanation behind this finding could be that Western European and North American states hold more political power and influence than Southeast Asian states, in the majority of circumstances and issue areas. Moreover, this is compounded by the democratic institutional and social structures of Western Europe and North America that allow for diasporas to form cohesive communities and protest freely. With the exception of ethnic Chinese in

Singapore, Chinese diasporas constitute minorities in most of their host states. Their protests are not likely to trigger instability in the form of domestic chaos per se; it is slightly difficult to imagine that a mere few hundreds or even thousands of diasporas would incite violence to a degree that would be destabilizing for their host society. However, their protests may suggest a political threat of a different kind—namely, their willingness to voice and lobby for their foreign policy objectives in favor of their home state via their host state, pointing to the amplification hypothesis. In this context, even if Japan did not prioritize Chinese interests, it may have been obligated to consider American policy recommendations and preferences due to the close security alliance between Japan and the United States.

Indeed, Chinese state newspapers explicitly describe the power of overseas pro-China lobbying. A September 2, 2012 article that appeared in *China Daily* titled "Islands dispute triggers battling ads in US" detailed Chinese philanthropist Chen Guangbiao's payment for a pro-China advertisement about the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands that appeared in the August 31, 2012 print issue of the *New York Times,* one of the most well-recognized American newspapers (Jia 2012). The advertisement read, "How would Americans feel, and what would Americans do, if Japan announced that Hawaii Was Its Territory?"



Figure 8. The pro-China Diaoyu Islands advertisement that appeared in the August 31, 2012 print issue of the *New York Times*.
(Source: Display Ad, *New York Times,* August 31, 2012. Proquest Historical Newspapers.)

Relatedly, when Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited the United States in 2015 to reaffirm the historical security alliance between Japan and the United States, the Chinese state media reported on protests against Abe's visit by Chinese and Korean-Americans in major cities such as New York and San Francisco, in both the English and Chinese versions of their newspapers (Han 2015; Z. Yang 2015). Likewise, when Prime Minister Abe visited the controversial Yasukuni Shrine often associated with World War II apologia in late 2013, the Chinese state media cited overseas protests waged by Chinese-Americans against Abe's visit (*Global Times* 2014). This arguably acted as a signal that the Chinese state is aware of the pro-China activist efforts of certain Chinese-Americans.[4]

[4] There have been repeated disputes between China and Japan over the "History Problem" and different interpretations of World War II in the Pacific front. Specifically, China has condemned statements and actions by Japanese state leaders and officials that suggest a shift towards

The threat to the American domestic political status quo with new lobbying efforts by Chinese and Korean-Americans could prompt the United States to make concessions and persuade Japan to adopt less revisionist approaches to its wartime history, in order to placate certain ethnic interest groups that may become influential in American domestic politics. Chinese and Korean-Americans, like all American citizens, help elect officials that represent their interests in the U.S. Congress and Senate. This potentially gives them a democratic institutional channel to voice their concerns about Japanese revisionism at a national level. The Comfort Women Justice Coalition and other lobby groups led by the Chinese-American community in San Francisco have successfully petitioned for the establishment of a comfort women statue in the city in 2017, to commemorate the victims of sexual slavery and abuse by the Japanese military in World War II (McGrane 2017). *People's Daily,* when reporting on the protests waged by Chinese-Americans against Abe's visit to the United States in 2015, mentioned names of organizations that aim to lobby the United States to recognize Japanese atrocities in World War II. The newspaper described Chinese-American protesters' efforts at petitioning through President Barack Obama, as well as American lobby and interest groups, to propel Abe to change his rhetoric on wartime Japan. In one of the pictures published in *People's Daily,* a Chinese-American protester was seen holding a sign that read "Abe and Obama: No Cover-Up for War Crimes," with a link to an American petition group, ANSWER coalition (Han 2015). The newspaper also detailed the protesters' efforts at subverting Abe during his speech at the U.S. Congress, illustrating the

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historical revisionism and apologia. Examples include the 1982 Japanese Textbook Controversy and Japanese politicians' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine that commemorates dead Japanese soldiers, including those who have been classified as Class-A war criminals. For more information, please see Suzuki 2007; Qiu 2006.

ability for Chinese-Americans to disrupt the Japanese Prime Minister's important political gestures abroad. According to *People's Daily,* these Chinese-American protests against Abe were also acknowledged by major American newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times* (Han 2015).



Figure 9. Protest Sign During Abe's Visit to Washington, D.C. in 2015
(Source: Xinhua/Bao Dandan, "Chinese Americans urge Abe to admit war crimes," *People's Daily,* April 29, 2015. http://en.people.cn/n/2015/0429/c98649-8885119.html)

In describing patriotic Chinese-American protesters as having agency in lobbying for pro-Chinese interests and disrupting major public speeches, the Chinese press disclosed to its foreign audience that members of the Chinese-American community could possess the ability to propel the United States to persuade Japan to change its official stance on World War II history.

Lastly, the discrepancies between the coverage of diasporic protests in the domestic and foreign versions of Chinese state newspapers also potentially reveal the state's simultaneous willingness to leverage diasporic nationalism for domestic legitimacy and caution as to not encourage undesired populist chaos at home. As Figure 5 demonstrates, the coverage of diasporic protests in the English version of Chinese state newspapers commenced on July 14, 2012, a week

following Japanese Prime Minister Noda's initial announcement to purchase three of the disputed islands. In comparison, the coverage of diasporic protests in the Chinese version started on August 29, 2012, more than one month later. Moreover, the coverage of diasporic protests in the English version did not stop after September 18, when domestic protests had peaked and the Chinese government had decided to curtail the protests. Its coverage extended until September 28. By contrast, the last coverage of diasporic protests in the Chinese version was on September 19, 2012 (and possibly due to time zone differences between the event occurring in Europe and its being reported in China). In other words, the temporal span of the coverage of diasporic protests is wider for the international version. This bears a few consequences for Hypothesis III (cheerleading/audience benefits) and IV (cuing).

First, the absence of coverage of diasporic protests in the domestic version of Chinese state newspapers early on in the dispute's salience seems to provide evidence that disproves the cuing hypothesis. The dispute had already escalated by August 15, when a Chinese protest boat set sail to the disputed islands. However, diasporic protests were first reported in the domestic version once on August 25, and the next time on September 12, when permitted domestic protests had already started.

The patterns of Chinese-language reporting of diasporic protests during this dispute seem more aligned with Hypothesis III (cheerleading/audience benefits). After the Chinese regime had decided to pursue a hawkish stance on the Islands and domestic protests had commenced, the Chinese state press also started to report on diasporic protests in order to demonstrate to its domestic audience that its position had worldwide support. However, unlike the English version,

the Chinese version of these state newspapers had stopped reporting on overseas protests after September 18, the peak of domestic protests. This could point to a limitation to which the Chinese state press was willing to leverage diasporic protests as a domestic cheerleading device. Following the government's decision to curtail protests at home, the domestic version of Chinese state newspapers also stopped reporting on diasporic protests, potentially to avoid inciting further chaos.

D. Case Study III

"Negative Case" of the South China Sea: Muted Coverage to Signal Flexibility, 2012 – 2016

While there was extensive press coverage of overseas Chinese protests during China's dispute with Japan in 2012, there were only a total of five domestic and international reports of diasporic protests over the South China Sea in the three Chinese state newspapers, all of which occurred following the 2016 international ruling against Chinese claims in the South China Sea. As shown in Figure 2, overseas protests and petitions pertaining to the South China Sea constituted less than 2-3 % of all reported diasporic protests in both the domestic and international versions of Chinese state newspapers, respectively. Moreover, China's disputes in the South China Sea were not described by the Chinese state press as events that have "hurt the feelings" of Chinese people. In contrast to the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, the Chinese state press seemed to have shown considerable restraint in their emotive response and coverage of overseas protests regarding the South China Sea issue, both domestically and internationally.

Although conflicts over the South China Sea and the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands are both territorial disputes, what explains the Chinese state's profuse reporting in the latter and the lack of such in the former? A plausible explanation relates to Hypothesis II (amplification/credibility proof),

where I argue that if a state signals resolve on an issue, it would report more frequently on diasporic protests that coincide with domestic protests, and vice versa if it wishes to signal flexibility to compromise. By fine-tuning how much attention the state press decides to pay to overseas nationalism and possible sources of foreign policy disruption, the Chinese state may signal to foreign observers who can "overhear" or infer from the Chinese press the saliency of a diplomatic issue to the Chinese state (Debs and Weiss 2016, 404). The lack of domestic reporting may also be a reversal of Hypothesis III (cheerleading/audience benefits): the Chinese state press could underreport on diasporic protests to discourage the cheerleading effect and disassociate public sentiments from foreign policymaking. Using the South China Sea as a case study, I will outline potential explanations for the Chinese state newspapers' hesitation to portray the South China Sea as an issue that arouses nationalist mobilization and protests among the Chinese diaspora, despite the presence of diasporic protests over the South China Sea.

The South China Sea is located in the Pacific Ocean and borders the Southeast Asian mainland. China, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Philippines all have claims to certain parts of the Sea. While areas along the coastlines of these countries are not the foci of this dispute, the various state claims overlap significantly further off shore in areas such as the Spratly and Paracel Islands and in a number of coral reefs and maritime zones (International Crisis Group 2012, 1). China was involved in three main disputes in the South China Sea over the past decade: the Scarborough Shoal Standoff with the Philippines in 2012, the Oil Rig Incident with Vietnam in 2014, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that ruled against China's claims in the South China Sea in 2016.

There were only three English articles and two Chinese articles on overseas protests against the Hague's ruling in 2016. Furthermore, the articles were not as descriptive and detailed as the reportings of overseas protests against Japan during the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute in 2012. For example, *People's Daily* and *Global Times* circulated identical articles on an overseas Chinese protest in London against the Hague's arbitration decision. There was also an overseas Chinese protest against the same ruling in Australia in 2016, an event that was video recorded by RT (RT/Ruptly, 2016) and reported in Australian newspapers and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (Wen and Flitton 2016; Norman 2018). The protest occurred in the summer of 2016, when the Hague's ruling decision was first announced. However, the English version of *People's Daily* only reported on this incident in December 2016, in the newspaper's annual round up, with one picture and a one-line description. A large-scale protest staged by overseas Chinese in Hong Kong in front of the American consulate, which was covered by the *New York Times* (Ramzy 2016), was barely mentioned in Chinese state newspapers. The one time that the protest was reported in a *Global Times* op-ed, the correspondent adopted a condemning tone accompanied by a pacifying commentary that seemed to have originated from the Chinese government: Beijing denounced the protests as "irrational and disruptive" in the hopes that people could express their love for their country in more appropriate ways (Xu 2016). It is important to note that there is variation observed within this case study: the few reported overseas protests occurred during the 2016 dispute, not during the previous two standoffs.

Interestingly, there were also a few domestic protests that broke out in mainland China following the 2016 UNCLOS decision. Op-eds that appeared in *China Daily* portrayed these protests unfavorably, deeming the protesters as "absurd" and uneducated, calling for bystanders to

prevent such silly violence in the future (Zhang 2016). The negative and dismissive tone the Chinese state press used to describe domestic protests matched its attitude towards overseas protests on the same issue, suggesting that perhaps the lack of reporting on external protests in the domestic version of these newspapers was related to the Chinese regime's desire to discourage protests at home.

The Chinese press rhetoric was not emotive on the South China Sea in both the English and Chinese versions. China's clash with Vietnam during the 2014 Oil Platform Incident, as well as its dispute with the Philippines in the Scarborough Shoal in 2012, were not described in emotive terms. Even when anti-Chinese protests occurred in the Philippines and Vietnam during China's respective crises with them over the South China Sea, the official Chinese diplomatic response was considerably restrained. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson urged Manila to not worsen damaged ties with China and to "respond to Beijing's concerns and return to the right track" (J. Yang 2012). This statement was not accompanied with any real threat of economic boycott or any anti-Filipino retaliation on China's part. There were generally very few portrayals of the disputes in the South China Sea as hurting the feelings of Chinese people.

This finding may seem puzzling given the Chinese state newspapers' extensive coverage of overseas protests during China's dispute with Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 2012. However, as Hypothesis II (amplification/credibility proof) posits, if the Chinese state had intended to demonstrate flexibility in its disputes in the South China Sea, such discrepancy may make more sense. Compared to its policy towards the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, the Chinese

government arguably has chosen to be more strategically-ambiguous when dealing with the South China Sea disputes.

Domestically speaking, the Chinese government seems aware of the potential for populist nationalism to entrap the government in a vicious cycle of aggression, or at least prompt the Chinese government to behave more hawkishly in the South China Sea. As Michael Yahuda argues, increasing Chinese nationalism is already contributing to the Chinese government's pressure to act more offensively in the South China Sea. (Yahuda 2013, 452). As affirmed by Andrew Chubb, the Chinese government does not seem to want public sentiments to influence its decision-making in the Sea. This observation is in line with China's current ambiguity over the Nine-Dash Line and refusal to clarify the borders of its territorial claims in the Sea. China also has not officially designated the South China Sea as one of its core interests (International Crisis Group 2012, 3). Given these considerations, it makes more sense for the Chinese state press to restrain from reporting extensively on diasporic protests in the domestic and international versions of their newspapers, lest it encourages explicit expressions of domestic nationalism or sends too firm of a signal of resolve.

There are currently debates in International Relations regarding the pattern and trajectory of Chinese conduct in the South China Sea. Some scholars believe that China's foreign policy in the South China Sea is becoming increasingly aggressive, as China will naturally seek to expand its territorial control in the Asia-Pacific region as it accumulates more economic and military power (De Castro 2016). Other scholars, however, advance a more nuanced approach, suggesting that

China has adopted a more reactive-defensive policy than an offensive-realist attitude in the South China Sea.

Alice L. Miller and Paul H.B. Godwin contend China has mostly resorted to a strategy of "deterrence calculus"—combination of threat and retaliation diplomatic signals prior to escalating a crisis through the use of military force. Beijing sends signals through a carefully calibrated hierarchy of official protests, authoritative press comment, and leadership statements. Scholars as well as policymakers debate whether or not with increased military capabilities, China will eschew this deterrence calculus in favor of sudden military attacks in response to a crisis (Miller and Godwin 2013, 1-2). Goodwin and Miller argue that China's approach to resort to signaling and bargaining prior to military mobilization has been consistent despite drastic shifts in China's position in the international hierarchy, the proliferation of foreign policy instruments at its disposal, the more complex domestic political environment, and the evolution in the Chinese media over the decades (Miller and Godwin 2013, 1). Despite its commitment to sovereignty over islands in the South and East China Seas, Beijing has been reluctant to prioritize direct military coercion when its claims are challenged. Instead, China is more likely to minimize the possibility that it will have to use the military force on which the deterrence calculus ultimately rests (Miller and Godwin 2013, 3).

Similar to Godwin and Miller, a few other scholars also present a moderate view of the Chinese regime's recent actions in the South China Sea. Andrew Chubb offers evidence for the Chinese regime's diplomatic restraint and ambivalence during the 2012 and 2014 clashes in the South China Sea. During the 2012 Scarborough Shoal Standoff, the Chinese government did not

impose further punishments against the Philippines for detaining Chinese fisherfolk apart from diplomatic statements of opposition. The International Crisis Behavior database also characterized Chinese behavior during the 2012 Scarborough Shoal Standoff as relatively moderate and militarily conservative, stating that "during the standoff, China attempted to protect its territorial sovereignty in an assertive manner while actively avoiding an escalation to military hostilities. Neither the United Nations nor any regional organizations were involved in the crisis." (International Crisis Behavior 2016, 2). Moreover, a review by People's Liberal Army analysts during the crisis concluded that public opinion was "attenuated" effectively during the crisis, successfully avoiding "the irrational result of foreign policy being hijacked by public opinion or sentiments" (Chubb 2018, 11 - 12). In other words, there is evidence to suggest that the Chinese government did not wish to escalate the crisis diplomatically, nor did it wish to involve nationalist sentiments during this crisis.

Similarly, the Chinese government intended to execute policies during the 2014 Oil Platform Incident without the interference of domestic sentiments. Chinese authorities carefully downplayed its oil platform operation's significance. During its clash with Vietnam, instead of informing the public about China's large-scale drilling backed by resolute maritime law enforcement, Chinese media was ordered to rigorously delete any reports of Sino-Vietnamese collisions at sea. (Chubb 2018, 15). The Chinese state made little effort to publicize its actions in the dispute or claim patriotic credit for them (Chubb 2018, 16). If the Chinese government had wished to signal measured restraint and openness to negotiations over the South China Sea, it would be fitting for the Chinese state press to downplay patriotic protests abroad for both international and domestic audiences. This would discourage further domestic nationalism and

mobilization that may force the regime to act more decisively than it wants to, and signals China's diplomatic flexibility.

Compared to its diplomatic reactions in 2012 and 2014, China's response over the 2016 UNCLOS international ruling was more nuanced, which could explain why there were a few brief mentions of overseas protests. As Michael Swaine points out, official Chinese sources consistently indicate that China rejected the 2016 arbitration and viewed its verdict as detrimental to vital Chinese interests and regional stability. Non-official sources believed that China enjoys some type of privileged right to exploit resources throughout the area contained within the "nine-dashed line" and that some civilian and military observers in China are in favor of using escalatory actions in response to the ruling. However, all sources still emphasized China's commitment to peaceful bilateral negotiations to settle disputes in the South China Sea, and implied that China's response to the verdict will depend on how other powers respond to it (Swaine 2016, 1). Therefore, there seems to be some room for flexibility in the Chinese response to the UNCLOS ruling, although the general trend suggests that the Chinese regime is acting increasingly aggressively in the current regime under Xi Jinping, now that he has consolidated more power. China's increasingly assertive diplomatic stance during the 2016 ruling seems to align with the state press' cautious reporting of a few diasporic protests.

There could also exist a few accompanying explanations. For example, it is possible that unlike Japan and to some extent the United States, the Philippines and Vietnam are not states that evoke deep, visceral patriotic sentiments and national identification. Therefore, strategic emotional

responses and protests may not be the most effective medium at demonstrating resolve or signaling diplomatic intention.

Hypotheses	**Observable Implications**	**Supported By Findings?**
I. ***Ersatz*** China does not want to risk permitting domestic protests on a politically-sensitive issue (e.g. Tibet and Taiwan), but still wants to signal the degree of public sentiment and support to a foreign audience. Therefore it suppresses protests at home while reporting on diasporic protests in press for foreign audiences.	The Chinese press reports on diasporic protests on politically-sensitive issues (on which there are no domestic protests permitted) for foreign audiences (in English).	Yes
II. ***Amplification/Proof of Credibility*** China wants to show that it is not simply domestic audiences that are being mobilized (which it can control), but also those abroad outside of its control. This amplifies the signal of resolve China wishes to convey. Moreover, it creates dangers that the diasporic communities will pressure their respective governments on said issue.	It is likely that protests abroad are reported with the occurrence of domestic protests for foreign audiences. It is likely that the Chinese state press would report more frequently on overseas protests that occur in major powers than in middle and small powers, because the latter do not have as much international authority as the former.	Yes
III. ***Cheerleading/Audience Benefits***:		Somewhat. The findings suggest a

After having decided to pursue a hawkish agenda on an issue, China wishes to show its domestic audience that its policies have world-wide support, therefore reports domestically on the solidarity shown by the Chinese diaspora.	The Chinese state press will report on overseas protests in domestic papers, likely after it had already decided to take hawkish policy action and achieved some level of progress on obtaining its policy goal.	more nuanced conclusion that the Chinese state press attempts to manage a delicate balance between using overseas protests as a "rally 'round the flag" device while ensuring that reports of diasporic protests do not encourage undesired domestic chaos.
IV. ***Cuing***: China wants to mobilize domestic actors behind an issue and encourage domestic protests, and does so by revealing to its domestic audience diasporic mobilization and demonstrating that diasporas care.	The Chinese state press will report on overseas protests in the domestic version of its newspapers, and this will happen before domestic protests occur, early on in an issue's salience.	No. During the lead up to the 2008 Olympics, the Chinese state press reported on overseas nationalist protests for its domestic audience while prohibiting protests at home. Moreover, during the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute when the state had permitted domestic protests, the Chinese state press commenced its domestic coverage of overseas protests when protests at home had already begun, and stopped the domestic coverage of diasporic protests at the height of domestic protests.

Table 3. Summary of Hypotheses Evaluated Against Findings

VIII. Alternative Views, Possible Limitations, and Areas for Further Research

By investigating and deciphering between the potential domestic and diplomatic incentives behind the Chinese state press' invocation of overseas nationalist protests, this thesis has found supporting empirical evidence for three strategies that may motivate the Chinese state's acknowledgement of overseas protests: ersatz, amplification/credibility proof, and domestic cheerleading/audience benefits. It is important to recognize that the evidence in support of these hypotheses is not entirely unique; the findings may also corroborate other possible explanations not covered in this thesis. It is also possible that the Chinese state press has not employed a perfectly consistent calculus throughout the past decade, and the variations in their coverage during different diplomatic crises could also reflect changes in their strategic priorities over time.

Moreover, because the state press is only one of many communication channels for the Chinese regime, it could be overreaching and perhaps difficult to entirely extrapolate the intentions of the Chinese state based on an analysis of one information outlet. Further research into other channels of communication, as well as the effectiveness of the signals the Chinese state press sends to outside observers, would yield an even more comprehensive understanding of the strategic deliberations of the Chinese state during diplomatic crises, as well as the effectiveness of extreme expressions of public opinion as a diplomatic signal for autocracies. With the growing popularity of social media and online platforms, newspapers are not the only way for domestic citizens to consume news. Compared to newspapers, social media forums may allow its audience to interact with online news platforms and each other more easily, and this could be potentially consequential. Therefore, one future avenue of research could be to study how the Chinese state

attempts to regulate its online platforms and the types of information it wishes to disseminate through social media.

One could argue that *People's Daily*, *Global Times,* and *China Daily,* as any well-reputed major national newspaper, would usually report on major news about the Chinese diaspora, out of journalistic responsibility. There could very well be no discernible pattern or intentional motivation behind their coverage. However, China, as an authoritarian state, exercises considerable control over its newspapers—especially the ones directly overseen by the Publicity Department. Similar to many newspapers in democracies, Chinese newspapers can still hold politicized perspectives on news. One could reasonably assume that these state-run news agencies make editorial decisions that take into account their audience and their overall political orientation. Moreover, there are anti-Chinese regime protests staged by certain groups of the Chinese diaspora that the state-controlled newspapers do not report on, which indicates that the Chinese state press can be selective about the news it publishes. This observation is further corroborated by the editorial staff I interviewed, who claimed that oftentimes the Chinese state press regards separatist and anti-regime protests as fringe news unworthy of journalistic investigation. Lastly, this alternative counterargument does not account for the potential reasons for the press to report on the same protest multiple times.

Some may also argue that my findings suffer from selection bias—perhaps overseas Chinese are not as passionate about issues such as the South China Sea or China's trade disputes. However, this thesis has attempted to illustrate that there were indeed diasporic protests over the South China Sea that went under-reported and understated by the Chinese state press. Moreover, once

again, this counterargument would not explain variations in the frequency and repetition of the coverage of diasporic protests during different crises. Lastly, my emotive rhetoric observations suggest that there were also no reports of "hurt feelings" over the South China Sea. Even in the absence of protests, the state may still cite "hurt feelings" to portray the South China Sea as an issue that involves nationalist sentiments. This may point to a larger significance beyond a selection bias problem. An avenue of further research could be to determine the factors that lead certain issue areas to be more emotionally-salient than others, and to disaggregate "audience costs" by discerning their potential variations across different issue areas. This would allow scholars to better understand how much influence public opinion is able to yield depending on the issue area in question.

Once again, this thesis does not make claims about any overriding political orientation among the Chinese diaspora. It has focused on how the Chinese state press has consciously chosen to report on the activities of a very specific and select group of the Chinese diaspora—one that is willing and able to politically mobilize for pro-Chinese causes—and how their activism may be invoked ex post by the Chinese regime to achieve certain diplomatic and domestic objectives. However, I recognize that even among this very select group, there are still variations in their political attitudes towards their home states. My anonymized interviews with Chinese-Australian members of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA), an organization that allegedly holds close ties with the Chinese embassy and the Chinese Communist Party, have revealed the diversity of experiences and political orientations even among a very small sample of students whom many in the West believe (falsely or not) are the most culturally and politically attuned to contemporary Chinese politics (e.g. Allen-Ebrahimian 2018; *The Economist* 2018).

My preliminary interviews with select members of the Chinese diaspora serve as promising evidence that there is indeed room for further research on this topic.

One ought to take the content of their response in context and with some degree of skepticism, especially since the organization has been under much scrutiny recently by western media. However, these students I have interviewed provided varying answers about the degree of their political involvement and what they believe are the objectives of the CSSA, political or otherwise. For example, one interviewee described the monetary support and high-profile events between the CSSA and the Chinese embassy in Australia as a cooperative relationship. Another interviewee avoided talking about politics altogether and saw their involvement in the organization as mainly pastoral and not remotely political, having joined the organization in order to network for career opportunities and to socialize with friends (Personal interviews with five members of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association at the University of Canberra and the Australian National University, March 2, 2019). Regardless of the specific content of these interviews, one could at least reasonably speculate that because these students seem to diverge on what they perceive is the main mission of the CSSA and the extent of the Chinese embassy's involvement in the organization, there is some degree of variation in thought, even among a group of Chinese diasporas in a student organization often reputed to be overwhelmingly pro-Chinese. Therefore, it is even more difficult to accurately describe the political dispositions among the Chinese diaspora at large. However, diversity and variation among diasporic attitudes should not go underemphasized. For future research, scholars could study the variations in the political attitudes among the Chinese diaspora, and how much influence diasporas across the political spectrum may exert on international and domestic issues

related to China. It would be interesting to study the political interactions between Taiwanese, Tibetan, and mainland Chinese diasporas in comparative ways to recent scholarship on Kurdish and Turkish diasporas in Western Europe.

IX. Broader Significance

Traditionally, International Relations scholarship has placed an emphasis on physical borders as markers of exclusion and inclusion, of continuity and discontinuity. It is only in the recent few decades that scholars have adopted a new perspective that regards sovereignty and state borders as a political project and process distinct from the conventional military-security model. Inclusion and exclusion—the definition of "us" and "others"—do not simply occur as a result of the existence of state borders (e.g. Adamson 2007; Ragazzi 2009). They happen in civil societies and are inspired by ideologies that may or may not coincide with physical state borders.

This thesis has alluded to how migration and the formation of diasporas have led to the diaspora's penetration of political spaces in states that formerly assumed a singular political ladder and focus for national loyalty, through mechanisms such as identity group-based lobbying. The findings of this thesis pertain to a more consequential line of inquiry: If a home state's diaspora is able to provide support to the home state's domestic legitimacy and diplomatic bargaining position, to what extent would or should the home state consider its patriotic diasporas as a part of its nation? In this case, is sovereignty better defined as a state's influence over a set of populations or a bounded territory? Do conceptions of sovereignty and state control differ along global northern-global southern lines, and/or across different regime types? With an increasing amount of people moving across state borders, International Relations scholarship

needs to better accommodate for certain discrepancies between national identity and spatial boundaries (Adamson 2007, 489), as well as for the role of human agency in border construction. Constructivist scholars need to pay more attention to the discontinuities and contradictions between a territorially-defined states system and deterritorialized practices of collective identity formation (Adamson 2007, 489).

The Chinese version of *People's Daily* seems to use terms such as "Chinese people's national feelings," "Chinese people's feelings," "ethnic Chinese people's feelings" quite interchangeably. There is no discernable pattern behind the usage of these terms, even when cross-referenced with the English translation. This may mean that the Chinese state press does not delineate a noticeable distinction between some members of the Chinese diaspora and Chinese nationals residing within state borders, giving more weight to the plausible conclusion that the Chinese government sometimes views select groups of the Chinese diaspora as a part of "Chinese people," despite the fact that the Chinese diaspora reside outside of China's territorial borders.

In her 2009 article "Change vs. Order: *Shijie* [World] Meets *Tianxia* [Under Heaven] in China's Interactions with the World," Elena Barabantseva postulates that China, as a rising power in the international system, is currently experiencing a tension between its traditional worldview and its increasing adoption of the principles of Westphalian sovereignty and self-determination. China has traditionally subscribed to the concept of *tianxia* ("under heaven") as a way of viewing the international system. The notion of *tianxia* does not fall perfectly in line with the Westphalian concept of sovereignty, where the amount of influence and jurisdiction states exert coincides with their state borders. According to the *tianxia* worldview, the territories covered by the

conquests of Imperial China constitutes the whole world. *Tianxia*, as an abstraction, is employed to underline China's peculiar historic position and its aspired influence in the world not only economically but also as a generator of new ideas and norms. The concept of *tianxia* endows China with qualities that render it a distinct place in the world, one that cannot be grasped through western concepts (Barabantseva 2009, 131 - 132). It is a rather imperialist notion, for China sees itself as not being limited by its current territorial boundaries and being entitled to more power and influence than it currently holds.

Yet, China is also one of the strongest contemporary advocates in the world for territorial sovereignty and integrity in international affairs. The Chinese leadership regards the realm of Chinese culture as inseparable from Chinese sovereignty and requiring protection by the party-state from the potentially harmful effects of globalization. More recently, this priority to protect the national culture has transformed into the active promotion of Chinese culture around the world (Barabantseva 2009, 133-136). Overall, there seems to be a lot of debate regarding whether or not Chinese foreign policy is guided by a more imperialist understanding of *tianxia* or a more western-oriented, pragmatic understanding of Westphalian sovereignty and self-determination, one where China is more cognizant of its locality and limits in the international society.

This thesis provides supporting evidence that perhaps the dichotomy between the two is unproductive. It could be the case that on some issue areas, Chinese foreign policy operates on a *tianxia* paradigm; on others, Chinese foreign policy follows a Westphalian tradition. For example, my findings have illustrated that on symbolic and certain territorial issues, the Chinese

state press invokes the feelings and political activism of patriotic Chinese diasporas; on other issue areas such as trade, the Chinese state press does not seem to engage with its overseas population or invoke its domestic constituents. The Chinese government has demonstrated itself to be deft, shrewd, and strategically flexible. Moreover, as Barabantseva argues in her 2005 article "Transnationalizing Chineseness: Overseas Chinese Policies of the PRC's Central Government," China's adaptability to the flexible nature of the global economic system signifies a departure from its position as a single territorially-restricted unit. China employs a new type of ideology of ethnic nationalism to engage in a single but territorially dispersed project ensuing in the Chinese nation-state being transnationalized as a result of Chinese emigration (Barabantseva 2005, 8). Relatedly, the findings of this thesis suggest that as China rises in power and status, it is becoming increasingly aware of the transnational resources at its disposal. On certain issue areas, the state press may possibly be implying the notion that "all patriotic Chinese" should share similar attitudes towards their country of origin, by virtue of some essentialized Chinese-ness. Scholars can carefully gauge how assertively China intends to act during a crisis by the way the official press reports on the degree nationalist support, both at home and abroad, around the issue.

Overall, this thesis has alluded to the observation that a home state's engagement with their diasporas helps negotiate how a nation-state is constituted, operated, and imagined, as well as how the Chinese nation-state travels outside its state boundaries to operate with contemporary global processes to legitimize itself both inside and outside of its territorial terrain. Emigration is sometimes presented as a process that incurs losses to the home state (Ragazzi 2009, 379). However, my thesis presents findings for the opposite: Emigrants who retain a sense of

patriotism and loyalty to their home state may, under particular circumstances, contribute to the home state's domestic legitimacy and diplomatic standing, whether intentionally or not. This thesis has attempted to illustrate that states could invoke populations outside of their borders as a potentially valuable resource in international diplomacy and domestic politics, which serves as an example of how transnational connections and globalization may change the current facets of Westphalian sovereignty. The field of International Relations could benefit from integrating concepts from Sociology, Economics, and History to study the phenomenon of migration and its impact on international relations, and to understand the possible alternative conceptions of citizenship and belonging articulated by supranational organizations such as the European Union and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Ragazzi 2009, 392).

Lastly, the findings of this thesis may be relevant to international security studies. Future research could analyze the effectiveness of autocratic signaling compared to democratic signaling, and whether or not the democratic peace is attributed to factors apart from regime type and information asymmetry, should new studies find that autocrats also have effective ways of disclosing transparency and intent credibly. As Weiss argues, "nationalist protests should have a lingering effect on foreign beliefs over time (Weiss 2013, 11)." If a state could convey a clearer signal about its resolve, this could help alleviate the informational asymmetry problem that renders interstate conflicts more likely (Fearon 1995, 379 - 384). Conversely, if the signal is not interpreted credibly by foreign powers, this could contribute to information asymmetry and render interstate conflicts more likely.

X. Conclusion

How do autocratic states view and portray their diasporas? Why and under what circumstances do they publicly recognize and report on overseas patriotic activities and protests, despite the fact that diasporas often have less direct influence on their home state's political regime than their domestic counterparts? With China as a case study, this thesis has attempted to answer these research questions based on a systematic analysis of the Chinese state press' coverage of diasporic protests (or the lack thereof) during major diplomatic crises between 2008 - 2018.

Using an original database, on-the-record interviews, and case studies, this thesis has found evidence in support of three hypotheses—ersatz, amplification/credibility proof, and domestic cheerleading/audience benefits. First, empirical evidence suggests that the Chinese state may be utilizing overseas nationalist protests on issues that are too politically-sensitive for domestic protests (e.g. Tibetan and Taiwan independence) to signal public opinion and international support for China's policies, while still suppressing protests at home (ersatz). Second, my findings are considerably consistent with the hypothesis that nationalist activism and protests among diasporas could potentially act to amplify a signal of resolve or flexibility to foreign states. Through recognizing overseas protests, China may be able to demonstrate that it is not simply domestic audiences that are being mobilized (which it can control), but also those abroad outside of its control. This could help add credibility to the signal of resolve China wishes to convey. The Chinese state press tends to report on diasporic protests more extensively and frequently when it signals assertiveness and resolve during diplomatic crises, and vice versa when it signals flexibility. Moreover, the state's coverage of overseas protests creates dangers

that the diasporic communities will pressure their respective governments on said issue (amplification/credibility proof). Lastly, Chinese language reporting follows a pattern in support of the hypothesis that China may publicize overseas protests for its domestic audience to demonstrate that its policies have wide international support, which acts as a leverage for the state to amass legitimacy at home (cheerleading/audience benefits).

Given the scope of the MPhil thesis, I have focused on China as a case study and acknowledged the limitations of this thesis. However, how the Chinese state press manages its coverage of overseas nationalism as a means to establish domestic legitimacy and to signal diplomatic intent might not be unique to the Chinese regime. Autocratic states in general should exercise considerable control over their state press and media. This thesis has found supporting evidence for the hypothesis that the Chinese state press may at times report on overseas nationalist protests as a cheerleading/audience benefits device to shore up domestic support after the regime had decided to pursue a hawkish foreign policy. Therefore, if autocrats, especially those of the single-party, non-personalist variant, are concerned with maintaining domestic legitimacy and political survival (also see Weeks 2012), it is possible that they will utilize the press in their favor, especially during times of diplomatic tension. Many non-democracies have witnessed anti-foreign and anti-western protests, and have also relied on nationalist sentiments to legitimize their regime. Examples include past anti-American protests in Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey. Therefore, these theories I have outlined may apply to other cases across non-democracies.

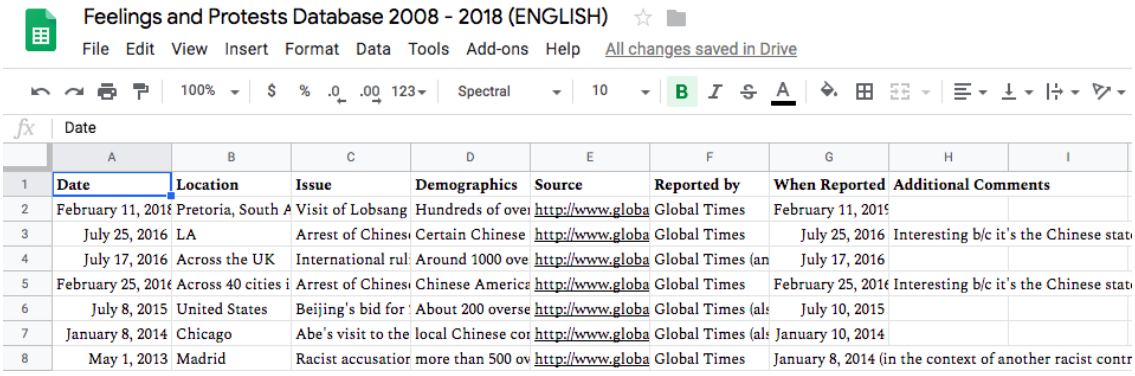
Lastly, how the Chinese state press portrays the Chinese diaspora may offer an indication of how the Chinese regime intends to take advantage of its political resources and loyalties abroad for its

own objectives as it rises in power. If the Chinese government sees value in ensuring consistent nationalist attitudes and support from their diasporas in the form of patriotic protests, economic remittances, etc., the regime may be motivated to build a lasting relationship or partnership with certain groups of the Chinese diaspora and respond to the wishes of them through foreign policy victories or institutionalized forms of consistent engagement. Diasporas could be a worthwhile long-term investment for the state. With increased movements of people across different state boundaries, diasporas are likely to become significant players in international affairs in the future.

Methodological Appendix/Note on Data Collection

I obtained archives of *People's Daily, Global Times,* and *China Daily* through the bilingual platform WiseSearch, which provides news from the Greater China region with over 3 billion archived news items that cover traditional printed media, online news, and social media since 1998.

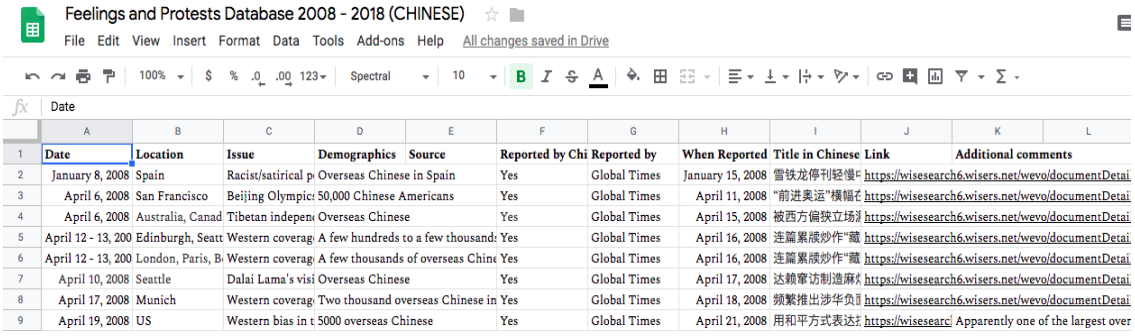
Below is an excerpt from my original database, where I systematically coded relevant articles for various details aforementioned in the Methodology section of my thesis.



Feelings and Protests Database 2008 - 2018 (ENGLISH)

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	Date	Location	Issue	Demographics	Source	Reported by	When Reported	Additional Comments
2	February 11, 2018	Pretoria, South A	Visit of Lobsang	Hundreds of over	http://www.globa	Global Times	February 11, 2015	
3	July 25, 2016	LA	Arrest of Chinese	Certain Chinese	http://www.globa	Global Times	July 25, 2016	Interesting b/c it's the Chinese stat
4	July 17, 2016	Across the UK	International rul	Around 1000 ove	http://www.globa	Global Times (an	July 17, 2016	
5	February 25, 2016	Across 40 cities i	Arrest of Chinese	Chinese America	http://www.globa	Global Times	February 25, 2016	Interesting b/c it's the Chinese stat
6	July 8, 2015	United States	Beijing's bid for	About 200 overse	http://www.globa	Global Times (als	July 10, 2015	
7	January 8, 2014	Chicago	Abe's visit to the	local Chinese cor	http://www.globa	Global Times (als	January 10, 2014	
8	May 1, 2013	Madrid	Racist accusatior	more than 500 ov	http://www.globa	Global Times	January 8, 2014	(in the context of another racist contr



Feelings and Protests Database 2008 - 2018 (CHINESE)

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help All changes saved in Drive

	Date	Location	Issue	Demographics	Source	Reported by Chi	Reported by	When Reported	Title in Chinese	Link	Additional comments
2	January 8, 2008	Spain	Racist/satirical p	Overseas Chinese in Spain		Yes	Global Times	January 15, 2008	雪铁龙停刊轻慢	https://wisesearch6.wisers.net/wevo/documentDetai	
3	April 6, 2008	San Francisco	Beijing Olympic	50,000 Chinese Americans		Yes	Global Times	April 11, 2008	"前进奥运"横幅	https://wisesearch6.wisers.net/wevo/documentDetai	
4	April 6, 2008	Australia, Canad	Tibetan indepen	Overseas Chinese		Yes	Global Times	April 15, 2008	被西方偏狭立场	https://wisesearch6.wisers.net/wevo/documentDetai	
5	April 12 - 13, 200	Edinburgh, Seatt	Western coverag	A few hundreds to a few thousand		Yes	Global Times	April 16, 2008	连篇累牍炒作"藏	https://wisesearch6.wisers.net/wevo/documentDetai	
6	April 12 - 13, 200	London, Paris, B	Western coverag	A few thousands of overseas Chine		Yes	Global Times	April 16, 2008	连篇累牍炒作"藏	https://wisesearch6.wisers.net/wevo/documentDetai	
7	April 10, 2008	Seattle	Dalai Lama's visi	Overseas Chinese		Yes	Global Times	April 17, 2008	达赖窜访制造麻	https://wisesearch6.wisers.net/wevo/documentDetai	
8	April 17, 2008	Munich	Western coverag	Two thousand overseas Chinese in		Yes	Global Times	April 18, 2008	频繁推出涉华负	https://wisesearch6.wisers.net/wevo/documentDetai	
9	April 19, 2008	US	Western bias in t	5000 overseas Chinese		Yes	Global Times	April 21, 2008	用和平方式表达	https://wisesearc	Apparently one of the largest over

Below is an example of a relevant article on a protest staged by the Chinese diaspora in Washington, D.C. during the 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute that appeared in the English version of *Global Times*. This was obtained through the *Global Times* archive.



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HOME >> CHINA

Overseas Chinese protest in Washington D.C. against Japan's provocations over Diaoyu Islands

Source:Xinhua Published: 2012-9-17 10:48:06

About 300 overseas Chinese staged a peaceful protest here against the Japanese government's so-called "purchase" of China's Diaoyu Islands and to commemorate the September 18th incident in 1931.

The demonstrators gathered in front of the Japanese Embassy in Washington D.C. Sunday morning, holding banners and placards in Chinese or English written with slogans such as "The Diaoyu Islands belong to China" and "Chinese United to Support China's Sovereignty over Diaoyu Islands."

The protest was organized by Chinese American Committee for Diaoyu Islands Sovereignty in Washington, an organization formed by dozens of local organizations and business entities for Chinese across the Taiwan Strait.

Wu Huiqiu, chairman of the National Association for China's Peaceful Unification in Washington D.C., told Xinhua that the protest aimed to send a clear message to the Japanese government that they should respect Chinese sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands, cease "all unilateral, irresponsible and provocative actions" regarding the islands and the surrounding waters and take productive actions to resolve the conflict.

Demonstrators have signed a written protest over the Diaoyu Islands and will present it to the Japanese Embassy in Washington D.C. ahead of September 18, the anniversary of Japan's invasion.

On September 18, 1931, Japanese forces attacked the barracks of Chinese troops in Shenyang, marking the beginning of the Japanese invasion and occupation that lasted 14 years.

Ask your questions: Reporting from the danger zone

DAILY QUOTES >>

There is a need to strengthen coordination among countries. If the issue can be dragged, then let it drag. Otherwise, the issue can be modified. If it cannot be modified, let it be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. On the issue of boycotting US sanctions against Iraq, we cannot disregard principles or interests. This is a time to test wisdom.

Global Times

Popular on People's Daily >>

Below is an example of a relevant article on a series of protests staged by the Chinese diaspora in Australia, Canada, Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom against Tibetan independence and disturbances to the Olympics torch relay that appeared in the Chinese version of *Global Times* on April 15, 2008. This was obtained through the *Global Times* archive.



上一篇 下一篇

被西方偏狭立场激怒与"藏独"分子激烈交锋 我在伦敦亲历护圣火

环球时报 07 深度报道·记者调查 | 3718 字 | 2008-04-15

编者按：奥运圣火在伦敦、巴黎和旧金山的传递中遭受了"藏独"分子以及反华势力的骚扰，一些西方媒体也从偏狭的立场出发非难中国，但令他们始料未及的是，这种攻击却激起了海外华人华侨的愤怒。在自发参与保护圣火传递之后，这几天，澳大利亚、加拿大、德国、美国、英国的华人华侨已经举行了多场爱国游行。海外华人华侨虽然人数众多，但通常低调温和，"藏独"分子和西方一些偏见人士在这次圣火传递中的所作所为，令众多海外华人华侨心底的爱国热情突然间释放了出来，这股力量令人惊叹。伦敦是奥运圣火在西方传递的重要一站，留学生贺学林的经历和感受在很大程度上是通过这次活动内心深受触动的海外华人华侨的一个缩影。

我们不孤单

4月6日，星期天。早上一觉醒来，窗外竟然白茫茫一片，是大雪!这在常年气候温和的伦敦十分少见，外面一定很冷，出行肯定不便。还要去看奥运圣火吗?迟疑只在心头停留了几秒钟——一定得去，不只是看热闹，而且要去声援，还可能有斗争!奥运圣火5日晚上从圣彼得堡抵达伦敦。英国广播公司(BBC)网站上称6日抵制北京奥运和支持西藏"独立"的团体将出动500多人抗议伦敦的圣火传递。如果我们不组织起来，抗议势力会非常嚣张。在匆匆赶往市中心的路上碰到几个中国学生，也是自发前去助威的。看来我们应该不会孤单。简单商量后，我们决定先去中国城，那里是火炬要经过的华人社区。

中国城到处是灯笼、彩带和欢迎北京奥运的标语，中英国旗、北京奥运会会标和会旗等布满了大街小巷。操着各种语言和口音的华人华侨拥簇在街道两侧，兴奋地等待圣火到来。身旁一位华人老太太操着很不熟练的普通话告诉我，她在马来西亚出生并长大，在英国工作了20多年，还没去过中国。她前些天到中国城买机票准备回东南亚，看到这里在布置迎接奥运圣火，便决定推迟行程。她说："我一定要亲眼看看北京的奥运火炬。我们现在什么都能行，飞船上天，举办奥运。我们现在什么都不怕。"我用目光搜寻抗议队伍，但好像没有。旁边几个似乎来自中国港澳的华人说，在这华人密集的区域，"藏独"分子是不敢露面的。稍后看到了一个白人女子举着一杆"藏独"的"雪山狮子旗"，在人群中不时喊着什么。很快，几个举着伦敦华人商会旗帜的人靠近她，将她的旗子遮起来，不让她有效地展示。一个瘦高的白人小伙子走到我们面前，双手捧着一个纸牌，陪着笑脸请教一个汉字的写法是否正确。牌子的一面写着"奥运真伟大"，另一面是"中国政府暴戾"，汉字写得笔画笨拙。白人小伙子说他是法国人，今天到伦敦来抗议北京奥运。我问他中国政府如何暴戾，他的英语和中文都很蹩脚。说了半天不知所云。我们对他说纸牌这一面不能给别人看，他就站在我们旁边，把纸牌靠在胸前，将"奥运真伟大"的一面朝外，整个过程他都一直这样展示着。

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